


# THE PROPOSAL OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR A NATIONAL POLICY ON ROMA

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## **Working group report**




**DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

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<b>Title of publication</b> The Proposal of the Working Group for a National Policy on Roma. Working group report		
<b>Summary</b> <p>The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health set up in December 2008 a working group to draft the first Finnish National Policy on Roma. The decision to appoint the working group was based on the assignment given by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen to the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs to draft a memorandum on developing the living conditions of Roma in Finland. The Working Group's term was from 1 January to 30 September 2009. The Policy on Roma has been prepared by a broad-based working group consisting of representatives of authorities, research institutes and Roma in Finland.</p> <p>The vision of the programme is that Finland will be in 2017 a forerunner in Europe in promoting the equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma population. The overall objective of Finland's first National Policy on Roma is to promote the inclusion and equal treatment of the Roma in different spheres of life by mainstreaming the promotion of equal treatment and non-discrimination into different functions in society.</p> <p>The starting point in the Policy on Roma is that the present legislation and service system should create a good foundation for promoting the equal treatment of the Roma population. Furthermore, special measures are needed at all levels of authorities to reach the goal of inclusion and de facto equal treatment of the Roma. A principle in the policy is also to reinforce the Roma population's active involvement and functional capacity by making use of their own strengths.</p> <p>The role of the local authorities in promoting equal treatment is emphasised, since in practice equal treatment and inclusion are realised in everyday life and at the local level. The Policy on Roma includes a proposal for adding to the state budget a particular grant for municipalities that they could use for developing the practices referred to in the Policy to promote the equal treatment of and to complement the basic services for the Roma population.</p> <p>Strengthening the participation of Roma in education and raising their level of education in general are primary objectives in the Policy on Roma. The Romani language is a language under threat, even though the right of the Roma to maintaining their language and culture is safeguarded under the Finnish Constitution. Maintaining the Romani language, among other things by developing its instruction and research at university level, constitutes a prerequisite for implementation of the cultural rights of the Roma.</p>		
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## KUVAILEHTI

<b>Julkaisija</b> Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö	<b>Julkaisun päivämäärä</b> 25.11.2009
<b>Tekijät</b> Romanipoliittisen ohjelman valmistelun työryhmä Puheenjohtaja: Kansanedustaja Pekka Haavisto Sihteerit: Ylitarkastaja Sarita Friman-Korpela Projektikoordinaattori Hannele Syrjä	<b>Toimeksiantaja</b> Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö <b>HARE-numero ja toimielimen asettamispäivä</b> STM129:00/2008; 12.12.2008
<b>Julkaisun nimi</b> Suomen romanipoliittinen ohjelma. Työryhmän esitys	
<b>Tiivistelmä</b> Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö asetti joulukuussa 2008 työryhmän valmistelemaan Suomen ensimmäistä romanipoliittista ohjelmaa. Päätöksen taustalla oli pääministeri Matti Vanhasen antama toimeksianto romaniasiain neuvottelukunnalle valmistella muistio romanien elinolojen kehittämistä Suomessa. Työryhmän toimikausi oli 1.1.-30.9.2009. Romanipoliittista ohjelmaa on valmistellut viranomaisista, tutkimuslaitoksista ja romanien edustajista koostunut laajapohjainen työryhmä.  Suomen ensimmäisen romanipoliittisen ohjelman yleisenä tavoitteena on edistää romanien osallisuutta ja yhdenvertaisuutta elämän eri osa-alueilla valtavirtaistamalla yhdenvertaisuuden ja syrjimättömyyden edistäminen osaksi yhteiskunnan toimintoja.  Ohjelman visio on, että vuonna 2017 Suomi on edelläkävijä romaniväestön yhdenvertaisuuden ja osallisuuden edistämässä Euroopassa. Tavoitteena on, että tehokkailta ja yhtäaikaisilla toimenpiteillä luodaan edellytykset romaniväestön ihmisoikeuksien ja sosioekonomisen aseman huomattavaksi parantamiseksi yhteiskunnassa, ja että romaniväestön vaikuttamismahdollisuudet ja integroituminen yhteiskuntaan vahvistuvat, samalla kun romanikulttuuri ja -identiteetti säilyvät elävinä ja kehittyvät.  Romanipoliittisen ohjelman lähtökohtana on, että nykyinen lainsäädäntö ja palvelujärjestelmä luo hyvän pohjan romaniväestön yhdenvertaisuuden edistämiseksi. Lisäksi kaikilla viranomaistasoilla tarvitaan erityistoimenpiteitä romaniväestön osallisuuden ja tosiasiallisen yhdenvertaisuuden toteutumiseksi. Ohjelman periaatteena on myös romaniväestön oman toimijuuden ja toimintakyvyn vahvistaminen romaniväestön omia vahvuuksia hyödyntäen. Käytännössä yhdenvertaisuus ja osallisuus toteutuvat arjessa ja paikallisella tasolla. Tästä syystä kuntien rooli korostuu yhdenvertaisuuden edistämässä. Romanipoliittisessa ohjelmassa esitetään valtion talousarvioon liitettäväksi erityisavustus kunnille ohjelmassa esitettyjen, romaniväestön yhdenvertaisuutta edistävien ja peruspalveluja täydentävien toimintakäytäntöjen kehittämiseksi.  Romaniväestön koulutukseen osallistumisen vahvistaminen ja yleinen koulutustason nostaminen ovat romanipoliittisen ohjelman ensisijaisia tavoitteita. Koulutus avaa ovet sekä työmarkkinoille ja laajemminkin yhteiskunnalliseen osallisuuteen täysivaltaisina kansalaisina. Sosioekonominen eriytyminen alkaa jo varhaislapsuudessa, minkä vuoksi romanilasten osallistuminen varhaiskasvatukseen ja esiopetukseen on ensiarvoisen tärkeää. Osaa romaniväestöstä uhkaa syrjäytyminen, mikä vuoksi tarvitaan toimenpiteitä sekä lasten, nuorten, perheiden että vanhusten tukemiseksi.  Romanien oikeus omaan kielen ja kulttuurin ylläpitämiseen on turvattu perustuslaissa. Romanikieli on uhanalainen kieli, jonka osaaminen ja käyttö on vähentynyt romaniväestön keskuudessa. Romanikielen säilyminen kehittämällä muun muassa sen yliopistotasoisista opetusta ja tutkimusta on romanien kulttuuristen oikeuksien toteutumisen edellytys.	
<b>Asiasanat</b> romanit, osallisuus, yhdenvertaisuus, romanikieli, romanikulttuuri, kansainvälinen yhteistyö, romaniasiain hallinto	
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**PRESENTATIONSBLAD**

<b>Utgivare</b> Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet	<b>Utgivningsdatum</b> 25.11.2009	
<b>Författare</b> Arbetsgruppen för beredning av ett nationellt politiskt program avseende romer Ordförande: Riksdagsman Pekka Haavisto Sekreterare: Överinspektör Sarita Friman-Korpela Projektkoordinator Hannele Syrjä	<b>Uppdragsgivare</b> Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet	
	<b>Projektnummer och datum för tillsättandet av organet</b> STM129:00/2008; 12.12.2008	
<b>Publikationens titel</b> Förslag från arbetsgruppen för beredning av ett politiskt program avseende romer (ROMPO) till Finlands politiska program avseende romer. Arbetsgruppens promemoria		
<b>Referat</b> <p>Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet tillsatte i december 2008 en arbetsgrupp för att bereda Finlands första politiska program som avser romer. Beslutet baserar sig på statsminister Matti Vanhanens uppdrag till delegationen för romska ärenden att utarbeta en promemoria om utveckling av romernas levnadsförhållanden i Finland. Arbetsgruppens mandatperiod var 1.1–30.9.2009. Det politiska programmet avseende romer har beretts av en bredbaserad arbetsgrupp som består av representanter för myndigheter, forskningsinstitut och romer.</p> <p>Visionen i programmet avseende romer är att Finland ska år 2017 vara en föregångare i Europa när det gäller att främja den romska befolkningens likabehandling och delaktighet. Det allmänna målet för Finlands första politiska program avseende romer är att främja romernas delaktighet och likabehandling inom olika delområden i samhället. Detta ska ske genom att integrera principen om främjandet av likabehandling och icke-diskriminering i samhällets olika verksamheter.</p> <p>Det politiska programmet utgår ifrån att den nuvarande lagstiftningen och servicesystemet ska utgöra ett bra underlag för främjandet av likabehandlingen av den romska befolkningen. Därtill behövs särskilda åtgärder på alla myndighetsnivåer för att säkerställa den romska befolkningens delaktighet och uppnå faktisk likabehandling. En princip i programmet är också att stärka den romska befolkningens aktörskap och funktionsförmåga genom att utnyttja deras egna styrkor.</p> <p>Kommunernas roll vid främjandet av likabehandling framhävs eftersom likabehandling och delaktighet förverkligas i vardagen och på lokal nivå. I programmet föreslås att till statsbudgeten ska fogas specialunderstöd till kommunerna för utveckling av sådan handlingspraxis som hänvisas till i programmet och som främjar den romska befolkningens likabehandling och kompletterar basservicen.</p> <p>Primära mål i programmet är att stärka romernas deltagande i utbildning och att höja deras allmänna utbildningsnivå. Det romska språket, rommani, är ett hotat språk, även om romernas rätt att upprätthålla sitt språk och sin kultur tryggas i grundlagen. En förutsättning för att romernas kulturella rättigheter ska kunna förverkligas är att bevara det romska språket bl.a. genom att utveckla dess undervisning och forskning på universitetsnivå.</p>		
<b>Nyckelord</b> delaktighet, förvaltning av romska ärenden, internationellt samarbete, likabehandling, rom(er), rommani, romsk kultur		
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### **To the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health**

On 12 December 2008, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a Working Group to prepare a specific National Policy on Roma. The Working Group was tasked with drawing up a policy that would enhance the equality and social inclusion of members of the Roma minority in various spheres of life. The term of the Working Group was 1 January – 30 September 2009.

The task of the Working Group was

- 1) to prepare and coordinate a National Policy on Roma aiming at the equal treatment and non-discrimination of the Roma minority
- 2) to cooperate with various administrative sectors in the preparation of the National Policy on Roma
- 3) to draw up, by administrative sector, the recommendations to be recorded in the National Policy on Roma, and to put forward proposals for studies that are needed
- 4) to inform the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs and the key Roma organisations of the preparation of the National Policy on Roma on a regular basis, and to hear various points of view relating to the preparation of the Policy
- 5) to arrange hearings.

The Working Group's Chairman was Pekka Haavisto, MP, who is also Chair of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. The Vice Chair for the Working Group was Viveca Arrhenius, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The composition of the Working Group was as follows (deputy members in parentheses): Maria Biskop, Senior Officer, Ministry of Education (Arja Mäkeläinen, Education Counsellor, Ministry of Education); Sofie From-Emmesberger, Head of Unit, Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Kimmo Granqvist, Senior Research Officer, Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (Anneli Hänninen, Senior Research Officer, Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland); Janette Grönfors, Chairperson, Nevo Roma ry; Päivi Haavisto-Vuori, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Employment and the Economy (Timo Lähdesmäki, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Employment and the Economy); Raila Halmetoja, Editor, Romanitaiteen keskus ry/Centre for Romani Art; Henna Huttu, Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland (until 28 February 2009), after whom Leena Mämmi, Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland (Henry Lindgren, Romani Mediator, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland); Raija Hynynen, Housing Counsellor, Ministry of the Environment (Jorma Pietiläinen, Senior Officer, Ministry of the Environment); Unto Jääpuro, Vice Chair, Suomen romaniyhdistys ry/Finnish Roma Association (Päivi Majaniemi, Secretary, Suomen romaniyhdistys ry/Finnish Roma Association); Timo Kauppinen, Senior Research Officer, National Institute for Welfare and Health (Jouko Karjalainen, Research Officer, National Institute for Welfare and Health); Sinikka Keskinen, Special Adviser, Ministry of the Interior (Timo Makkonen, Senior Officer, Ministry of the Interior); Mirja Kurkinen, Government Counsellor, Ministry of Justice (Ulla Westermarck, Senior Officer, Ministry of Justice); Malla Laiti, Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Southern Finland (Taito Lehmusta, Vice Chair, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Southern Finland); Tuula Lindberg, Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Western Finland (Tenho Lindström, Vocational Qualification in Business and Administration, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Western Finland); Väinö Lindberg, Vice Chair, National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs (Alida Friman, Vocational Qualification in Business and Administration, National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs); Leena Nissilä, Education Counsellor, National Board of Education (Susanna Rajala, Expert, National Board of Education); Tiina Pikkarainen, Intern, Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Helena Valentin, Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Eastern Finland; Tino Varjola, Chair, Suomen Romanifoorumi ry/Finnish Romani Forum (Kyösti Florin, Acting Executive Manager, Suomen Romanifoorumi ry/Finnish Romani Forum; Miranda Vuolasranta, Executive Manager, Suomen Romanifoorumi ry/Finnish Romani Forum); Jaana Viemerö, Expert, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities; Tuula Åkerlund, Executive Manager, Romano Missio ry (Leena Rauhala, MP, Chairperson of the Board, Romano Missio ry); and Katja Ärling, BA in Political Science, Kromana ry (Tuula Lindgren, Work Planner, Kromana ry). Henry Hedman, Research Officer, Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, and Johanna Suurpää, Ombudsman for Minorities, also participated in the Working Group as experts. Several experts from various administrative sectors were also heard by the Working Group while preparing the National Policy on Roma.

Hannele Syrjä, Project Coordinator, State Provincial Office of Southern Finland, and Sarita Friman-Korpela, Senior Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, acted as Secretaries to the Working Group.

The Working Group convened eight times, while the sub-working group preparing the matter held a total of nine meetings. The composition of the sub-working group varied according to the business at hand.

The Working Group was tasked with arranging hearings. Five regional hearings aimed at the Roma population were held: in Helsinki on 18 February 2009, in Oulu on 9 March 2009, in Turku on 10 March 2009, in Jyväskylä on 30 March 2009, and in Savonlinna on 1 April 2009. Furthermore, a special hearing for representatives of Education Department and Social Services management of some municipalities with a large Roma population was held, in cooperation with the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on 13 May 2009.

Having completed its mission, the Working Group hereby respectfully presents the memorandum to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Helsinki, 25 November 2009

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## 1 Foreword

The Finnish Roma are a so-called old minority recognised in the Constitution of Finland who have been living in the area for almost five hundred years. After Finland became independent, the Roma were officially granted citizenship on the basis of the Nationality Act in 1919. The reform of constitutional rights in 1995 and the new Constitution of 2000 both improved the legal and formal status of the Roma as a minority whose cultural and linguistic rights have been recognised.

The Nordic policy of universal welfare has played a major role as a leveller of the socio-economic status of the Finnish Roma. In many respects, however, the Roma population has not been able to bridge the social, economic and educational gap that still exists between them and the majority population. On the other hand, the small number of Finnish Roma, only some 10,000 to 12,000, and their being dispersed all over the country both contribute to the fact that their conditions and needs are not prominent in any reports concerning the general well-being or living conditions of the population, which in turn has led to them being marginalised in terms of development policy.

Although their societal status has improved somewhat through the development of both legislation and the administrative organisation of Romani affairs, the advances in their status cannot be said to have been the result of a sustained development policy. It was towards the very end of the last millennium that the first comprehensive report in close to half a century, *Strategies of the policy on Roma (Romanipolitiikan strategiat, 1999)*, was written with a view to improving the status of the Roma. The measures presented in the report have partly been realised, but many of the development needs highlighted, such as the Roma people's participation in education and in the labour market and the abolition of discrimination against the Roma, are still current today.

In December 2008, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a Working Group to prepare Finland's first National Policy on Roma. The decision was based on the assignment given by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen to the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs to prepare a memorandum on the development of the living conditions of Roma in Finland. The Preliminary Report was published in June 2008. Meanwhile, the Council of Europe and the European Union have taken an active role in the development of the policy on Roma, both on a European level and within the Member States.

According to the Appointment Decision for the Working Group, the mission of the working group was to prepare and coordinate a National Policy on Roma aiming at equal treatment and non-discrimination of the Roma population, with the express purpose of promoting the equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma population in various spheres of life. The main areas of coverage of the National Policy on Roma were outlined in the assignment given to the Working Group. The Working Group's task was to act in cooperation with various administrative sectors to draw up recommendations by administrative sector, and to put forward proposals for studies that are needed.

The preparation of the National Policy on Roma was initiated in January 2009. The Working Group's Chairman was Pekka Haavisto, MP, who is also Chair of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. The Vice Chair for the Working Group was Viveca Arrhenius, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Hannele Syrjä, Project Coordinator, and Sarita

Friman-Korpela, Senior Officer, acted as Secretaries to the Working Group. The broadly-based Working Group consisted of a total of 26 members who represented the Ministries central to Romani affairs and the Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs; the National Board of Education; the National Institute for Welfare and Health; the Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland; the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities; and various Roma organisations. The Ombudsman for Minorities also participated in the Working Group as an expert. The Working Group met eight times. The composition of the Working Group is presented in Appendix 1.

While preparing the policy, it was considered extremely important to ensure that the Roma themselves were provided with sufficient opportunities to be involved in drawing up the National Policy on Roma. In order to support the attainment of this objective, regional hearings for the Roma were held in Helsinki on 18 February 2009, in Oulu on 9 March 2009, in Turku on 10 March 2009, in Jyväskylä on 30 March 2009, and in Savonlinna on 1 April 2009. Furthermore, a special hearing for representatives of the Education Department and Social Services management of some municipalities with a large Roma population was held in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on 13 May 2009. Several experts from various administrative sectors were also heard by the Working Group while preparing the National Policy on Roma.

The aim of the Working Group preparing a National Policy on Roma was to create a comprehensive and concrete programme for the development of the national policy on Roma and its implementation, and the Working Group proposes that the National Policy on Roma, its recommendations and the funding thereof be taken into account in the drawing up of the Government Programme of the next Government.

The main body of the policy document consists of the definition of Policy Guidelines for the promotion of equal treatment and social inclusion of the Roma in various spheres of life. Appendix 2 of the policy document provides a background to the present situation with regard to the definition of Policy Guidelines and their links to other national development measures. A proposal for monitoring the implementation of specific measures is presented in Appendix 3.

## **2 Basis for the National Policy on Roma in Finland**

### **2.1 Basis for the preparation of the National Policy**

In drawing up a National Policy on Roma, the aim was to create a comprehensive and concrete set of measures with a view to making permanent changes in the realisation of equal treatment and social inclusion of the Roma in Finnish society and to prevent their marginalisation.

The preparation of the Policy was based on current data on the socio-economic status of the Roma population and determining the need for development relating to their living conditions and the factors preventing the equal treatment of the Roma. Recent developments in international policy on Roma and the measures aiming at the promotion of equal treatment of the Roma were taken into account in the preparation of the Policy, as were the interconnections between the various themes included in it and national development activities. Representatives of the Roma were in a key role in the preparation work through active participation and hearings.

There are no accurate and comprehensive data available on the number, age structure or socio-economic status of Roma in Finland. This is mainly caused by the fact that as the population in Finland is not registered on ethnic grounds, no relevant statistical data exist. There have been very few ad hoc reports or surveys of the Roma population. The need for development in the promotion of equal treatment and social inclusion of the Roma, as identified in the preparation of the National Policy, is based on the available reports and the expertise of the Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs, as well as the views of Roma organisations, various experts and the Roma population on the need for development.

As the exact number of the Roma population is unknown and interpretations on who is a Roma vary to a great extent, a broad definition based on self-identification will be employed in the National Policy. In the Policy, a member of the Roma population is defined as a person who defines himself or herself as Roma, is of Romani origin, or lives within the Roma community.

### **2.2 Status of the Roma and the policy on Roma**

The policy on Roma with an emphasis on minority rights has increasingly gained ground in Finland since the late 1960s, when changes in the sources of livelihood brought about a major change in social structures in Finnish society. This structural change also had a profound effect on the Roma population. The positive element in this development has been the improvement in the housing conditions of the Roma. In turn, it has led to a gradual stabilisation of participation in education of the Roma and an increase in the number of Roma with a school education. The fact that the housing conditions of the Roma are considerably better nowadays is a good example of a significant improvement in the living conditions of the Roma achieved through special legislation.

The transition from an agrarian society into an industrial one, combined with the fact that the Roma were gradually settling down, meant that their traditional means of livelihood were undermined. As agriculture became more and more mechanised, horse dealing and breeding became increasingly irrelevant, along with craftsmanship, trade and other means of livelihood based on a vagrant lifestyle. It has become evident that the change in housing conditions brought about a transition from the traditional community and extended family of the Roma closer to the nuclear family model, which in turn has had an impact on the continuity of their cultural heritage and the Romani language as well as the gradual decline of communality.

The policy on Roma has especially focused on issues concerning the living conditions of the Roma population, the protection of their culture and the prevention of discrimination. In the 1970s, the central themes were the inclusion of the Roma in the educational system and vocational training in particular. The implementation of the measures concerning the vocational education and training and employment of the Roma has proceeded in fits and starts, however, which is why the raising of their educational level and integration into the labour market have progressed slowly. It has only been in the 2000s that the education and employment of the Roma have more clearly become a central theme in the policy on Roma.

Although the living conditions of the Roma have improved to a considerable extent in the past few decades, they are on average in a weaker educational, economic and social position than other Finns. To a great extent, the educational differentiation and the resulting socio-economic differentiation from the majority population begin in early childhood. Socio-economic polarisation has also been observed within the Roma population, and a part of it is faced with the threat of becoming marginalised. There are also regional differences in the conditions of the Roma.

### **2.3 The administrative structures of the policy on Roma**

Finland has been a forerunner in the development of the administrative structures of the policy on Roma. Founded as early as 1956, the National Board on Romani Affairs is responsible for the monitoring and supervision of the development and improvement of the social conditions of the Roma. The Board also submits proposals necessary for the advancement of these goals. However, it was only in 1968 that the Roma first had a representative on the Board. Supported by the general social atmosphere prevalent at the time, this marked the beginning of the development of an actual policy on Roma with an emphasis on the rights of the Roma.

In 1994, a Roma Education Unit responsible for the development of education for Roma and the promotion of the Romani language and culture was founded under the National Board of Education. As an expert body, it is charged with influencing the planning and development of education in such a manner as to ensure that basic and vocational education for the Roma is realised on an equal basis. Since 1 January 2009, the unit was integrated into the Free Education and Multiculturalism Unit as a Team responsible for Roma education. The unit's activities are steered by a specially appointed Steering Group.

Since 1996, the Ministry of Education's Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland is also responsible for the research and planning of the Romani language. In the same year, the Romani Language Board was appointed as an expert body.

In terms of the implementation of the policy on Roma, a significant step forward was the creation of the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs under four State Provincial Offices, and the establishment of Planning Officer positions within them, in early 2006. This has enhanced the handling of Romani affairs on a regional and local level and facilitated cooperation and communication between authorities and the Roma population.

No established administrative cooperation structures have been created for the implementation of the policy on Roma and the improvement of their status on a local level. However, in some localities with a large Roma population, broad-based Roma working groups have been established to facilitate cooperation between Roma and local authorities. This development was based on initiatives from the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs, voluntary action taken by the municipalities, and the active role of the local Roma population. The operational policies of the Roma working groups are variable, and more often than not they do not possess the funding to initiate any practical measures.

An administrative approach to the improvement of the status of the Roma has been emphasised in Finnish policy on Roma. This approach has created an excellent basis for development and introduced a measure of continuity into the work carried out by the authorities, even if the resources have been scarce. In terms of supervision of the interests of the Roma and their opportunities to participate in social decision-making, a significant step was taken with the creation of the Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. On the other hand, the administrative approach may have had a detrimental effect on the development of civic and organisational activity of the Roma themselves. To increase the social inclusion of the Roma population, it is necessary to create the conditions for their active participation by supporting the Roma population's internal organisation and civic activity.

As far as administrative structures are concerned, various change processes are currently taking place in the operational environment on a national, regional and municipal level. Their impact should be taken into account in the development of the policy on Roma and the strengthening of administrative structures. Special attention should be paid to the implementation structures of the policy on Roma.

## **2.4 The Roma and the policy of equal treatment**

To members of the Roma minority, equal treatment and social inclusion stands for the realisation of individual rights and the opportunity to participate in decision-making in society, as well as the realisation of the cultural rights of a minority. In the promotion of the equal treatment of the Roma, the realisation of constitutional rights, the prevention of discrimination and marginalisation, and inclusion-enhancing measures all become intertwined.

The Finnish Constitution guarantees the Sami, the Roma, and speakers of the Finnish Sign Language the right to maintain and develop the language and culture of their own. The status of these minorities and the structures protecting them are somewhat different depending on the criteria applied in the definition of each minority. As an indigenous people, the Sami are entitled to maintain and develop their own language and culture, which for indigenous peoples also includes their traditional means of livelihood. The status of the Roma minority is based on historical and cultural aspects. Provisions on the Roma people's right to maintain and develop their own language and culture can be found in educational legislation, the Children's Day Care Decree, and the Act on Yleisradio Oy (The Finnish Broadcasting Company).

The interpretation of the provisions concerning cultural and linguistic rights has led to differences in resources and efficacy of implementation between the various linguistic minorities.

According to the Finnish Constitution everyone is equal before the law. The Constitution also contains a general ban on discrimination with additional provisions in other legislation. In terms of the realisation of equal treatment for everyone, the Non-Discrimination Act of 2004 has been especially significant. The Non-Discrimination Act obligates the authorities to seek, purposefully and methodically, to foster equality in all they do and to alter, if necessary, any circumstances that prevent the realisation of equality. All the grounds for discrimination forbidden in the Act are applied to working life; furthermore, the Act also forbids discrimination based on ethnic origin outside working life, in social welfare and health care services, social security benefit decisions, and the provision of services, for example.

In spite of these rights guaranteed by legislation, the Roma population still faces discrimination, both as a group representing an ethnic minority and on an individual level. This discrimination often takes the form of indirect, 'everyday racism', which is characterised by a persistence that often tends to undermine the self-esteem and identity of the targeted individual.

Together with the prejudices, fears and negative stereotypes connected with the Roma, the general inability to accept multiplicity forms a set of attitudes that in a European context is called anti-Gypsyism. The concept is parallel to antisemitism and islamophobia, for example. To increase people's awareness of this phenomenon and to do away with the fears and prejudices, we must increase not only human rights and multiplicity education, but also interaction between the various population groups with the express purpose of creating a culture of equal treatment that recognises multiplicity as part of Finnish identity.

In Finnish society, *equality* is generally seen as similarity and equal treatment, with the idea of an equal society taken for granted. This view often hides factual differences in conditions, because equal treatment does not always guarantee the realisation of equality due to differences in people's opportunities, life situations and circumstances. To remove the differences and obstacles that stand in the way of equality, it is often necessary to initiate affirmative action and to introduce forms of positive discrimination to support those who are socially disadvantaged.

*Positive discrimination* refers to temporary measures aimed at those in an unequal position with the purpose of the realisation of factual equality or the prevention of the adverse effects of discrimination. Thus, it is possible to develop temporary forms of positive discrimination to promote the equality of the Roma population in the areas of education, employment and housing, for example, by including the possibility of positive discrimination in the equality plans required by the Non-Discrimination Act.

The European Union emphasises the *mainstreaming of non-discrimination*, which refers to the inclusion of a non-discriminatory policy and the measures supporting it as part of the legislative process, social planning, decision-making and implementation on all levels. Mainstreaming entails making the conditions and needs of the Roma population visible, sensitivity to identify the factors that prevent the realisation of equality, and the development of operational policies that take into account the situation of the Roma and their inclusion in the mainstream policies and practises.

*Inclusion* is another established concept introduced along with EU membership. It has replaced the opposite concept of 'exclusion', which was felt to be stigmatising and restricting. Inclusion can also be seen as a more dynamic concept: it embraces the inclusion-enhancing dimensions both on a community and individual level, such as social participation, an increase in the opportunities to participate in decision-making, and empowerment, which refers to the strengthening of individuals' capacity to influence matters concerning themselves.

Increased inclusion and social interaction between the Roma and the majority population are necessary conditions for the integration of the Roma population into Finnish society. The Finnish Roma have a long history of keeping to their own culture and community, which is a result of exclusion and a defensive reaction to the assimilation policy prevalent in Finland in the past. The views of the Roma continue to be divided by the extent and degrees of their integration into Finnish society. Cultural interaction has been on the increase during the past few years. This has been facilitated by various joint projects, information campaigns and guides, which have been produced with the aim of disseminating information on the Roma population and their culture among the authorities in particular. However, further information campaigns and increased interaction are still needed to do away with prejudices against the Roma minority, and to increase their inclusion in education and the labour market, the correct allocation of services, and social inclusion. Actions are also needed to change the attitudes of the Roma themselves as well as to increase awareness and to do away with prejudices.

Although the Roma are a cultural and ethnic minority, they are not a homogeneous group. To promote the equal treatment of the Roma we need to see them as a heterogeneous group with many differences and also different internal minorities. In the end, inclusion and equality can only be realised if each person is treated as an individual, not as a representative of his or her ethnic group.

## **2.5 The international framework of the policy on Roma**

### *International human rights agreements and their recommendations*

International agreements on human, economic, social and educational rights have played a significant role in the improvement of the social status of the Roma and the development of the policy on Roma. Both in the UN and the Council of Europe, Finland has committed itself to several international agreements concerning human and minority rights, as well as non-discrimination agreements, which, for their part, obligate Finland to promote the rights and improve the status of ethnic minorities such as the Roma.

In conjunction with monitoring of the implementation of various agreements, Finland also has been urged to improve the status of the Roma and to prevent discrimination against them. In 2007, the committee responsible for the monitoring of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights highlighted the discrimination of the Roma in employment, housing and as service users, as well as the need to integrate the Romani language and culture into the education of Roma children.

In 2005, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child focused on increasing the inclusion of Roma children, and in 2008 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women emphasised the prevention of discrimination against Roma women both within the Roma community and in society at large.

In March 2009, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination gave its Concluding Observations on the periodic reports of Finland. Apart from welcoming several positive developments, such as the introduction of the Non-Discrimination Act, the Committee also expressed concern about the high rate of unemployment among the Roma in Finland and their segregation in housing. The Committee recommends, inter alia, that Finland adopt a strictly non-segregationist policy in the allocation of housing and strengthen work to raise the level of education among members of Roma communities.

Published in 2007, the Concluding Observations of the Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages also contains recommendations for Finland on the improvement of the status of the Romani language and promoting Romani language teaching in Finland. Furthermore, the ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) has also issued numerous recommendations for Finland to abolish discrimination both in the housing and labour market and in everyday life, as well as to introduce more effective measures for the inclusion of the Roma in education.

### ***The development of a goal-directed policy on Roma***

The recent recommendations issued by the Council of Europe and the European Union have underlined the need to introduce new measures to improve the status of the Roma and to promote equality in the Member States.

In its Resolution on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe urged Finland, among others, to draw up jointly with representatives of the Roma a comprehensive strategy for the improvement of the status of the Roma. According to the resolution, the strategy should include projects implemented in various administrative sectors and levels, and it should also introduce new methods for the assessment of the results and the implementation of the objectives.

In 2008, the Council of Europe gathered all its recommendations concerning the development of the rights of the Roma produced during the past twenty years under a General Recommendation (Council of Europe, CM Rec(2008)5), which outlines the general policy for the development of national guidelines concerning the status of the Roma and also includes recommendations for the development of health, housing, employment and education of the Roma.

A comprehensive approach to the development of a European policy on Roma has also gained ground within the European Union. In 2007, the EU's European Council invited the Commission to look for ways to enhance the inclusion of the Roma within the community. The Communication from the European Commission (COM (2008) 420 Final) issued in July 2008, entitled *Non-discrimination and equal opportunities: A renewed commitment*, proposes measures for the creation of an active strategy of non-discrimination and equal opportunities on a general level, and specifically to increase the social inclusion of those Roma suffering from particular discrimination problems. In this document the Commission invites the Member States to prepare national strategies on the Roma. The preparation of the National Policy on Roma in Finland stems from this request. The tools emphasised in the Communication are the mainstreaming of non-discrimination, positive discrimination, dissemination of knowledge, and education. According to the Communication, EU Structural Funds instruments should be better utilised in these actions.



On the basis of the Communication and the EU Roma Summit on 16 September 2008, an extensive summit meeting on Romani affairs, the European Council urged the Member States, in a resolution late in 2008, to strengthen their national strategies on the Roma, which should be based on the renewed EU Social Programme. The Programme aims to eliminate the poverty and marginalisation of all disadvantaged groups, including the Roma.

The Member States are requested to consider the situation of the Roma population when drawing up and implementing policies to uphold basic rights, to eliminate poverty and discrimination, to uphold gender equality, and to ensure the access to education, housing, health care services, employment, legal services, and cultural services. The practical measures planned for the implementation of this policy in 2009 and 2010 should also be itemised. The policies favouring the Roma must be drawn up for all age groups and special attention should be paid to the special problems faced by Roma women.

The European Council Conclusions on Inclusion of the Roma, adopted by the Council on 8 June 2009, emphasise the common basic principles concerning the inclusion of the Roma when designing and implementing policies concerning the full inclusion and human rights of the Roma, fundamental rights, gender equality, discrimination, poverty and marginalisation, to ensure the Roma people's access on equal grounds to education, housing, health, employment, social services, justice, and sports and culture. The document further urges the Member States to continue and develop the work of the EU's and the Member States' Roma Platform network, and to make use of the network to disseminate best practices between the Member States, various cooperating bodies and international organisations.

The Commission and the Member States are committed to strengthening the structure and form of the Roma Platform within the Commission. The purpose of the Roma Platform is to create a discussion and cooperation forum, which would also enable the Roma to participate in the implementation of the EU's policy on Roma and to increase dialogue on Romani affairs between the Member States, the Commission, non-governmental organisations, and various experts.

In terms of the development of a comprehensive policy on Roma, a significant step was taken with the OSCE *Action Plan on Improving the Status of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area* introduced in 2003. The objective of the Action Plan is to support the drawing up of national policies and implementation strategies in the OSCE countries to ensure the realisation of human and minority rights. The politically binding Action Plan has been ratified by 56 OSCE countries, including Finland. Finland has not drawn up a policy on Roma of its own within the Action Plan.

In the OSCE Action Plan, several objectives have been set for the drawing up of national policies. They should (1) respond to the real needs and problems of the Roma community; (2) be comprehensive; (3) introduce a balanced and sustainable approach to combining human rights goals with special policies; and (4) strengthen Roma ownership of the implementation and administrative structures of the policies that affect them. The objective is to find sustainable solutions and to strengthen methods of implementation also on a local level.

Although in many European countries the challenges involved in improving the status of the Roma are far greater than in Finland, comprehensive measures are still needed in Finland in all areas specified in the OSCE Action Plan, with due consideration to the circumstances and situation prevalent in Finnish society.

The experiences of the OSCE in the implementation of the Action Plan clearly demonstrate the need to strengthen the implementation of national strategies on Roma, especially at the local level. The deficiencies in the implementation have been shown to be connected to a lack of efficient mechanisms, such as insufficient funding, a lack of political will, and insufficient planning of objectives and measures at the local level.

Several Roma organisations and cooperation forums are active on a European level which have for their part had an impact on the activation of international organisations to improve the status of the Roma. The activities of the international organisations have focused on cooperation with Roma organisations and on increasing their influence on an international level.

## **2.6 The need for a comprehensive National Policy on Roma**

In 1999, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health commissioned a report with the purpose of acquiring an overview of the situation of the Roma and to draw up basic Policy Guidelines and suggestions for improvement concerning the policy on Roma. The result of this work was an extensive report entitled *Strategies of the policy on Roma*, which highlighted several targets for development for the improvement of the status of the Roma. The report did not, however, lead to sustained and goal-directed development activity at that time, even though some of the measures suggested by the rapporteurs were actually carried out.

Since the 1970s, there have been efforts to improve the status of the Roma in Finland through various projects and temporary measures. The problem with these has been their short duration and localisation, which is why they have not been successful in eliminating the differences that threaten to marginalise the Roma population in Finnish society. It is conceivable that the societal development following the depression in the 1990s slowed down the integration process to some extent. The current economic recession and diminishing resources threaten to continue the increasing trend of socio-economic segregation of the Roma population. The ever-increasing multiculturalism in Finland has led to a large-scale redefinition of the immigration policy and better integration of immigrants into Finnish society. Similar measures are necessary to support the integration of the Roma population.

In the lives of the Roma population, issues connected with education, housing, employment, basic subsistence and welfare become entwined with cultural factors and experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. These often create a vicious circle where measures are needed in many areas simultaneously to ensure the realisation of equality. Improving this situation entails the elimination of negative prejudices and discrimination as well as increasing inclusion and preventing social exclusion. The action taken should be based on the needs of the Roma population as well as a long-term plan which is utilised to narrow the socio-economic gap between the Roma and the majority population and to increase their social inclusion. To achieve this goal, cross-administrative cooperation should be emphasised in the implementation of the policy, and the measures taken should be allocated correctly and effectively. These measures should enable and support the harnessing and activation of the Roma population's own resources.

Carried out as part of the preparation of the National Policy, an analysis of the operational environment highlighted several strengths and opportunities which indicate that the key points of the policy and the measures required to realise them are necessary for the promotion of social inclusion and equality. The essential element here is that existing legislation and social

service structures create the necessary conditions for the development of action enhancing the position of the Roma.

In terms of the realisation of the objectives, one of the strengths and opportunities that emerged in the preparation of the policy was the increasingly active participation of the Roma in improving their own status. Currently the Roma community is engaged in lively discussion on the conditions for the survival of their culture and possible ways of integration into society. The discussion often takes a critical view of the activity of the Roma population in this regard. The Roma community contains active individuals - both men and women - with the ability to perform as trailblazers for the rest of the community. What is clearly needed, however, is a strengthening of the active participation within the Roma community and further development of its organisations to enable broader participation and influence as sovereign individuals in Finnish society.

Education is increasingly seen as a positive thing within the Roma community, and access to the labour market is considered extremely important. However, supportive action taken by society is, for the time being, still needed to achieve this goal. It is important that the communal values of the Roma and the talent reserve latent within the Roma population are allowed to come into play in as many areas as possible. At their best, the educational principles of the Roma lead to a wide range of social skills, an ability to communicate, and the kind of emotional intelligence that is needed both in working life and in the various functions of society in general.

The promotion of the equality of the Roma and their successful integration into Finnish society, which means the strengthening of social inclusion while retaining the Roma population's own identity, entails increasing the active participation and responsibility of the Roma as well as further cross-administrative cooperation and action on a national, regional and local level.

In the hearings held for the Roma population on increasing their equality and inclusion, the following Key Areas of development emerged:

- supporting early childhood education and care, parenting skills and families, as well as the prevention of marginalisation
- strengthening the Roma population's participation in education from basic education all the way to vocational education and training for adults, as well as supporting transitional stages in education with affirmative action
- supporting and promoting their access to the labour market
- strengthening the active social participation of the Roma
- preservation of Romani culture

There are special features within the Roma population, in the lives of both Roma men and women as well as certain age groups, which are connected to different life situations and circumstances and which need to be identified when developing ways to promote equality and inclusion. In the Roma community, the key factors determining an individual's social status are age and gender, which are marked by strong cultural customs, practices and roles. These customs, practices and roles also play an important role in different life situations and stages of life.

Many of the problems and experiences of discrimination relating to the living conditions of the Roma affect children in particular. This is why increasing Roma parents' awareness of the significance of early childhood education and school education, as well as the support given to Roma families, are both extremely important for the children's welfare and future.

It is often said that in the Roma community adolescence only lasts for a very short time. The search for an identity, reaching adulthood early, and starting a family often coincide with that critical period of life when completing one's comprehensive school studies, applying for a study place or finding a job are current. This is why it is extremely important to provide Roma adolescents and their parents with extra support at this stage. The situation is particularly difficult for young Roma men, who are in danger of becoming marginalised and who therefore need positive role models. Young Roma women should also be supported and encouraged to plan their future independently.

It is widely held that issues relating to life management, parenthood and family responsibility are all areas where young adults need support. Single parents are a particularly significant target group in this respect. Due to a lack of education and work experience, the threshold is high for those adult Roma willing to gain access to the labour market and get started in working life. Traditionally Roma women have participated in earning a livelihood outside the home, but they are often faced with negative attitudes when trying to find work. Their efforts to gain access to the labour market are also often frustrated by their duties in raising children and doing housework.

Middle-aged Roma men, who more often than not lack the necessary school education, are often overlooked and do not get the support they need both in employment and other services. The trend in family forms from an extensive family towards a nuclear family has brought about a change in the status of the elderly Roma. As the traditional family unit is disintegrating, more and more elderly Roma are increasingly lonely and this naturally leads to an increase in the demand for services for the elderly. Elderly Roma do not necessarily know how to use the services available for them and their needs often go unnoticed.

## **2.7 Links to national development policies**

The objectives and Policy Guidelines of the National Policy on Roma are interconnected with several policies and development programmes in various administrative sectors. The needs, equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma must be taken into account in the implementation of these policies and programmes. These include: the Government Policy Programme on the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families; the Government Policy Programme for Health Promotion; the National Development Programme for Social Welfare and Health Care (KASTE) (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health); the National Action Plan to Reduce Health Inequalities (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health); the National Development Programme for Child Welfare (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health); the Development Programme for Child and Youth Policy (Ministry of Education); the Internal Security Programme (Ministry of the Interior); and the Housing Policy Action Programme (Ministry of the Environment).

The work and proposals of the SATA Committee, which is currently preparing a reform of basic social security policy, also have a bearing on the position of the Roma. There may be factors involved in the calculation and granting of individual and household-specific social assistance and housing allowance which might turn into incentive traps also for the Roma. For example, the employment of one family member may have a negative effect on the total income of the family, which naturally decreases the motivation to gain access to the labour market as employment is not a viable option in terms of family economy.

The national programmes address a number of themes that are important for the position and conditions of the Roma. The measures listed in the development programmes are often not target group oriented. The small Roma minority and its special needs are easily overlooked in development work. Special action is needed to enhance the socio-economic status of the Roma and to ensure equal treatment for them. This action will make it possible to close the gap between the Roma and the majority population and to create a foundation for the enhancement of the social inclusion of the Roma. To achieve this, the expertise resources and functionality of Roma organisations must be supported and their activities developed further.

## **3 Objectives, policy guidelines and means of the National Policy on Roma**

### **3.1 Objectives and vision**

The general aim of the National Policy on Roma is to promote the social inclusion and equal treatment of the Roma in different spheres of life by mainstreaming the promotion of equal treatment and inclusion into various actions by society. There are both short-term and long-term objectives in the policy.

The National Policy on Roma is based on a comprehensive approach to initiate development measures that meet the needs of the Roma. The purpose of the National Policy is to bring about a permanent and sustainable improvement in the status of the Roma while encouraging them to take responsibility and action themselves. Through the pursuit of efficient and simultaneous measures, the aim is to create the necessary conditions for a significant improvement in the human rights and socioeconomic status of the Roma, to offer them more opportunities for participation in decision-making, and to enhance their integration into Finnish society while keeping alive and developing further the Romani culture and identity.

The vision of the National Policy is ambitious: by 2017, the Centenary of Finnish Independence, Finland will be a forerunner in the promotion of equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma in Europe. Efficient and simultaneous action has created the necessary conditions for the improvement of the human rights and socio-economic status of the Roma both on the labour market and in society at large. The integration of the Roma into Finnish society and their opportunities to make their voice heard have been enhanced while the necessary conditions for the preservation and development of the Romani culture have been created. The Roma are proud, and aware, of their ethnic and cultural identity and active and responsible members of society.

To realise this vision we need the determination of decision-makers and authorities, the active participation and commitment of the Roma, and cooperation- and interaction-enhancing structures on a national, regional and local level. Efficient monitoring of the implementation of the National Policy and systematic development of the policy on Roma are also necessary to achieve these goals.

### **3.2 Key Areas and Policy Guidelines**

The National Policy is based on six Key Areas, with specific Policy Guidelines for each of them, that are necessary for the realisation of the vision and the goals. The Policy Guidelines outline the objectives of the Key Areas and list the detailed sub-objectives and measures included in the Policy. The themes common to all the Policy Guidelines are equality and meeting the needs of the various age groups and both sexes.

The Key Areas of the Policy are as follows:

- Enhancing the participation in education of Roma children and youth on all levels.

- Enhancing the participation in education of the adult Roma population and promoting their access to the labour market.
- Promoting the equal treatment of Roma and their access to various services.
- Supporting the preservation and development of the Romani language and culture.
- Promoting the equality of Roma and preventing discrimination against them.
- Developing the policy on Roma and enhancing their opportunities to participate in decision-making.

### ***Enhancing the participation in education of Roma children and youth on all levels***

Insufficient school education is the main reason for deprivation and one of the main stumbling-blocks for Finnish Roma in finding employment on the Finnish labour market. Therefore, enhancing their participation in education on all levels is one of the key long-term objectives of the National Policy. Educational differentiation starts in early childhood. The aim is to encourage Roma children to participate in early childhood education and care and to support their basic studies and the transition into further studies.

*Policy Guideline 1. Enhancing the participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care*

*Policy Guideline 2. Enhancing the inclusion and equal treatment of Roma children and youth in basic education and upper secondary education*

### ***Enhancing the participation in education of the adult Roma population and promoting their access to the labour market***

Insufficient school education, few vocational qualifications and a lack of work experience are the key factors preventing the Roma from finding work. Vocational education and training aimed specifically at adults is particularly important for the Roma population as many of them only seek training and employment later in life. Integration into the labour market is an essential method of promoting social inclusion and to stop the marginalisation of the Roma population and their dependency on income transfers.

*Policy Guideline 3. Enhancing the inclusion of Roma in vocational education and training*

*Policy Guideline 4. Supporting and promoting the employment of Roma*

### ***Promoting the equal treatment of Roma and their access to various services***

Issues relating to social factors, health and livelihood are essential in all action promoting the welfare of the Roma and the prevention of social exclusion. Research shows that there is a strong correlation between social status and health: the worse an individual's social status, the worse his or her state of health. It has been established that health inequalities among Finns are on the increase, and steps have already been taken to reduce them. However, there are little data on the welfare and health of the Roma population or their need for services and their allocation, which is why more research is clearly needed.

Due to new housing policy measures in particular, the living conditions of Roma have improved. There are still, however, many housing-related problems, and various international organisations have repeatedly criticised Finland for discrimination in the allocation of housing for Roma. There is often a connection between housing-related problems and marginalisation, and this is why the prevention of marginalisation is one of the key objectives of the National Policy.

This Key Area aims to promote equality by establishing operational policies that take into account the special needs of Roma. The aim is to enhance the solving of problems relating to housing and living conditions by ensuring a non-discrimination operational policy, increasing the provision of service-related counselling for Roma, and promoting equal treatment in government offices and services.

Reducing the Roma population's feelings of insecurity entails action aiming at the equal treatment of Roma, especially in the development of the activities of security, justice and criminal sanctions authorities.

*Policy Guideline 5. Promoting the welfare of the Roma and enhancing the allocation of social welfare and health services*

*Policy Guideline 6. Ensuring equal treatment in housing and reducing feelings of insecurity among the Roma*

### ***Supporting the preservation and development of the Romani language and culture***

The Romani language is an endangered language. There are ever fewer speakers of Romani among the Finnish Roma. In terms of the identity of both the Romani minority and individual Roma, knowing their history and cultural heritage and being able to speak Romani are of vital importance. Reviving the Romani language and developing the methods employed in teaching it are some of the biggest challenges in the preservation of the Romani culture. The realisation of the equality of the Roma can also be promoted through the Roma population's own cultural activity, the development of the resources available for creative activity, and participation and inclusion in art and culture.

*Policy Guideline 7. Promoting the development of the Romani language and culture*

### ***Promoting the equality of Roma and preventing discrimination against them***

Due to discrimination and negative prejudices, the Roma are, on average, in a worse position than the majority population as regards access to the labour market, housing, and services that meet their needs. To do away with the prejudices and discrimination faced by the Roma in, for example, employment, education and services, it is necessary to take action to identify and prevent this discrimination and to bring about a change in behavioural models and negative attitudes.

One of the key elements in the policy of the European Union is the mainstreaming of non-discrimination as part of the enhancement of the social inclusion of the Roma. The develop-



ment of a system for the monitoring of discrimination, the implementation of the Non-Discrimination Act, and the qualitative and quantitative development of the equality plans required by the Act, are the principal means of mainstreaming non-discrimination in Finland.

*Policy Guideline 8. Enhancing the equality and non-discrimination of the Roma*

***Developing the policy on Roma and enhancing their opportunities for participation***

The development of a comprehensive policy on Roma and its continued implementation are necessary conditions for the permanent improvement of the status of the Roma population. The implementation of the policy on Roma entails the strengthening of administrative structures and the allocation of sufficient resources. The changes currently taking place both in equality administration and in regional and local administration also have a bearing on this.

In practice, human rights and the integration of the Roma population into Finnish society are realised on a local level. It is necessary to develop especially local cooperation and operational structures to enhance interaction and inclusion. To enhance the social inclusion of the Roma and to increase their opportunities for action, it is also necessary to enhance the expertise, functionality and influence of the Roma organisations.

On a European level the development of the policy on Roma is at an active stage. It is important that Finland participates in the formation of a European strategy on Roma by making its expertise available in the development work. This kind of interaction would provide Finland with an excellent opportunity to learn from the experiences and viable operational policies of other countries.

*Policy Guideline 9. Developing the administrative structures for handling Romani affairs and enhancing the policy on Roma and its implementation*

*Policy Guidelines 10. Promotion of participation in international cooperation on Romani issues*

### **3.3 Means of the implementation of the National Policy on Roma**

To realise the objectives and vision of the Policy, the National Policy on Roma should be based on long-term development work, cooperation between various administrative sectors, and enhancing the active participation and responsibility of the Roma minority. The measures must be simultaneous, mutually supportive in the various administrative sectors, and have sufficient resources. Furthermore, the implementation of the policy on Roma should be interconnected with other national development activities and Structural Funds programmes.

The core idea behind the National Policy is enhancing the equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma population by mainstreaming the equal treatment of Roma into standard procedure, and by enhancing the realisation of factual equality with special action to reduce educational and socio-economic differences, and to prevent the Roma population from becoming permanently marginalised.

### ***Legislative means***

The National Policy on Roma contains legislative proposals, mainly for the development of the administrative structures for handling Romani affairs. The core idea is that the present legislation forms a solid basis for the promotion of the equal treatment and social inclusion of the Roma. In certain contexts, however, it may be necessary to define the provisions more accurately and ensure correct implementation. All provisions concerning the Roma population must also be realised in practice. This applies to the realisation of linguistic and cultural rights as well as the promotion of factual equality through the implementation of non-discrimination and equality legislation.

### ***The principle of mainstreaming non-discrimination***

Means for the promotion of equality include mainstreaming, special measures and affirmative action. The mainstreaming of non-discrimination and equality is supported by the Non-Discrimination Act and the equality plans outlined in it. Enhancing equality planning and taking into account the equal treatment of the Roma in the national development activities based on the Policy are essential means of mainstreaming.

The possibility of positive discrimination, included in the equality plans specified in the Non-Discrimination Act, are a means to promote the equal treatment of a minority group, such as the Roma, in employment and education, for example.

### ***Guidance and recommendations***

Most of the measures proposed in the National Policy can be realised through mainstreaming by enhancing the efficacy of administrative activities and the service system, as well as by developing new operational practices that are better suited to the conditions and service needs of the Roma population. The administrative means of promoting the implementation of the policy on Roma in this respect are performance and information guidance, recommendations, and taking the Roma into account in the equality plans, action plans and development programmes of various administrative sectors.

Most national development programmes are carried out through various projects. When planning a call for applications or when granting funds, it must be made sure that projects that address the needs of the Roma also receive funding, and that the projects take into account the needs of the Roma population from the viewpoint of the promotion of equal treatment.

### ***Budget funding and special measures***

The Policy contains a number of proposals for special measures aimed at the Roma population with the purpose of promoting factual equality. The implementation of the proposals calls for separate funding included in the national budget. These proposals include the proposed government subsidy for Finnish municipalities for the development of basic services and supportive measures aimed at the Roma, as well as the additional funding aimed at the promotion of Romani culture. The strengthening of the implementation structures of the policy on Roma and increasing personnel resources also call for appropriate funding.

### ***EU funding***

The Structural Funds and programmes of the European Union are an important instrument of development for the enhancement of inclusion, education and employment. In its communications, the Commission of the European Union emphasises the utilisation of the Structural Funds for enhancing the inclusion of the Roma population.

In Finland, ESF projects were especially aimed at the Roma population during the second implementation round (2004–2007) of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme carried out in the previous programme period. These projects yielded positive results. During the current programme period, enhancing the status of the Roma and their social inclusion do not receive special emphasis and so far no projects aimed at the Roma population in particular have been initiated. The interim evaluation of the ESF programme period in 2011 offers the opportunity to allocate additional ESF resources for the enhancement of the conditions of the Roma.

The anti-discrimination information campaign ‘YES – Equality is Priority’, which receives funding from the EU’s PROGRESS programme (2007–2013), aims at the promotion of non-discrimination, equal treatment and acceptance of multiplicity. It is also a significant project for the Roma minority as it offers an opportunity to support the realisation of the objectives of the National Policy on Roma.

### ***Surveys and studies***

As no statistical data concerning the number of Roma or their socio-economic status are available in Finland, it will be necessary to carry out special surveys and compile reports for the appropriate allocation of development measures, as well as for the development of the monitoring of the implementation of the policy on Roma or the evaluation of its results.

One of the proposals included in the National Policy on Roma is carrying out an extensive survey with the purpose of acquiring data on the welfare, health and living conditions of the Roma population. Due attention should be paid to the different age groups and both sexes, as well as the effects of the action taken, in all surveys and reports concerning the Roma. To ensure the proper monitoring of the surveys, they should be repeated regularly, every four or five years, for example.

The Roma have a long history of taking a dim view of any surveys aimed at them. Attempts were made to determine the attitudes of the Roma towards such surveys and reports in conjunction with the hearings held while preparing the National Policy. On the basis of the hearings, the Roma have a positive attitude towards surveys, as long as the purpose and aim of the survey is outlined clearly and the reasons behind it (such as enhancing the position of the Roma population) explained. Moreover, the research should be conducted and the data handled and recorded ethically and reliably. It is hoped that persons with a Romani background will participate in the surveys.

### ***Participation of the Roma***

Active participation and responsible action on the part of Roma in matters pertaining to themselves are a prerequisite for the successful implementation of administrative action. The active

participation of the Roma can be enhanced through Roma organisations and Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs, as well as through the development of local and regional cooperation structures. These can also make it possible to increase dialogue within the Roma community.

The National Policy on Roma aims at the creation of the necessary conditions for the enhancement of the inclusion and equality of the Roma. Active participation and responsible action is also needed on the part of the Roma to achieve this goal.

### ***Disseminating best practices***

The National Policy on Roma highlights a number of best practices that have been developed to enhance the equality and inclusion of the Roma population. Best practices have been created in various projects, with funding from Finland's Slot Machine Association and partial funding from the EU. What is needed to make these practices part of mainstream practice are new data gathered on the operational models developed, learning from experience, and active application of existing models and their transfer into various operational environments.

Many of the best practices presented do not so much entail a large-scale financial investment as a strategic approach and determination for the development of existing services, operational procedures and cross-administrative forms of cooperation.

### ***Main proposals for action in the various Policy Guidelines***

- Including in the State budget, for the promotion of the equality of the Roma, a fixed allocation of €3 million as a State grant to municipalities for the development of support measures, services that complement the primary services, and cooperation structures aimed at the Roma population. (*Policy Guideline 9 and Policy Guidelines 1, 2 and 5*)
- Taking into account the special needs of Roma children when revising the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. (*Policy Guideline 1*)
- Enhancing the teaching of the Romani language by producing educational material on Romani culture for day care and pre-primary education for children up to 6 years of age. (*Policy Guideline 1*)
- Supporting the dissemination and inclusion of the best practices created in basic education development projects into educational activities on a national basis. (*Policy Guideline 2*)
- Conducting a survey on the adult Roma population's need for education and utilising these data to draw up a set of proposals for the allocation and development of vocational education and training. (*Policy Guideline 3*)
- In cooperation with regional Economic and Employment Development Centres, implementing a pilot project funded by ESF, with the aim of developing counselling and support services aimed at Roma by training support persons with a Romani background to provide employment counselling for Roma. (*Policy Guideline 4*)
- The National Institute for Health and Welfare will conduct an extensive survey with the aim of acquiring data on the living conditions, health, welfare and housing conditions of the Roma, as well as their need for services. (*Policy Guideline 5*)
- Determining which regional Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare could be charged with the development of social welfare and health services for the Roma and related information and training activities. (*Policy Guideline 5*)

- Looking into the possibility of initiating a separate national project focusing on solving the Roma population's housing problems and the development and dissemination of best practices. (*Policy Guideline 6*)
- Looking into the possibility of introducing university-level teaching of the Romani language in an appropriate manner. (*Policy Guideline 7*)
- Earmarking additional funding in the State budget for the promotion and performance of Romani artistic activity. (*Policy Guideline 7*)
- Starting a national media campaign, aimed at the elimination of prejudices against the Roma population, to raise the profile of the Roma minority and to support the implementation of the National Policy on Roma. (*Policy Guideline 8*)
- Developing the expertise and operational resources of Roma organisations by initiating an empowerment pilot project for the enhancement of the political influence of the Roma population. (*Policy Guideline 9*)
- Strengthening cooperation structures for the enhancement of the inclusion of the Roma by promoting the establishment of local Roma working groups in those municipalities or regions with a Roma population. (*Policy Guideline 9*)
- Enhancing the implementation of the policy on Roma by establishing the position of an expert in the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, and by appointing officials in charge of Romani affairs in Ministries representing various administrative sectors. (*Policy Guideline 9*)
- Including a Government Resolution on the implementation of the National Policy on Roma in the next Government Programme. (*Policy Guideline 9*)
- Drawing up a national and international strategy on Roma for Finland and creating an operational procedure, based on discussion on a ministerial level, for the coordination of the policy on Roma. (*Policy Guideline 10*)

## **4 Policy Guidelines and Measures**

### **4.1 Enhancing the participation in education of Roma children and youth**

All over Europe, raising the level of education of Roma has been recognised as the only viable means of preventing, on a permanent basis, the marginalisation of the Roma population and their dependence on various forms of income support. Insufficient school education is the reason for deprivation and one of the main stumbling-blocks for Roma in finding employment on the Finnish labour market. Accordingly, enhancing participation in education on all levels and creating favourable conditions for an increase in the number of highly educated Roma is one of the main long-term objectives of the National Policy.

The educational differentiation of the Roma population starts in early childhood. Very few Roma children participate in early childhood education and care in Finland. The placing of Roma children in special needs education, school absenteeism, and dropping out of comprehensive school or its completion with the lowest possible grades are common among Finnish Roma. As a result, few Roma youth continue into upper secondary education, and incomplete comprehensive school studies make getting into further education difficult. Moreover, for many Roma youngsters, the completion of comprehensive school coincides with an early stage of adulthood when participation in education is not seen as a priority. The aim is to encourage Roma children to participate in early childhood education and to support their basic studies and the transition to upper secondary education studies.

The Roma population's participation in education and raising their level of education will be supported through objectives and measures included in the Policy Guidelines for the development of early childhood education and care and basic education.

#### **4.1.1 Enhancing the participation and equal treatment of Roma children in early childhood education and care**

The aim is to enhance the participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care and to support the development of their learning abilities and skills. The aim is also to develop the content and operational procedures of early childhood education and care in such a manner as to support the development of Roma children's learning abilities and cultural identity, as well parenting skills in Roma families.

##### **4.1.1.1 Enhancing the participation of Roma children in early childhood education**

Although more and more Roma children nowadays participate in early childhood education and care, their participation should be substantially increased. It is also necessary to ensure that the participation is regular and that participation in especially pre-primary education is comprehensive. Participation in early childhood education and care should also be monitored to detect any regional differences in participation, for example.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining the participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care and in pre-primary education as a Key Area.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	Municipalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing forms of open early childhood education and care and providing Roma parents with more information on it.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare Regional administration Regional ABRAs* Municipalities NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the participation of especially Roma children in pre-primary education by providing Roma parents with more information on the significance of pre-primary education, in conjunction with 3- and 5-year checkups in family centres, for example.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	National Institute for Health and Welfare, National Board of Education Regional administration Regional ABRAs Municipalities

\* In the action tables, the abbreviation ‘ABRA’ refers to the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, whereas ‘Regional ABRA’ refers to Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs.

#### 4.1.1.2 Enhancing the learning skills and abilities of Roma children

The development of the learning skills and school readiness of Roma children entails focusing on their background and enhancing their learning skills and ability. It is particularly important to support the development of their command of Finnish or Swedish, as well as the development of mathematical and fine motor skills. The children’s own cultural background should also be emphasised in early childhood education for Roma children, as should their social skills to facilitate interaction outside their own community. All these factors should be considered in the training of early childhood education and care personnel. This could be achieved by producing educational material and making use of various channels of information, such as Varttua, the Early Childhood Education and Care Web Service of the National Institute for Health and Welfare.

Teachers and day care personnel should receive further training to enhance their ability to cooperate with Roma parents. Employing personnel with a Romani background in both early childhood education and in comprehensive school has proved to be a particularly effective means of supporting children and families.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking into account the special needs of Roma children when revising the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including study modules focusing on the conditions of Roma children and the Romani culture in the training and continuing education of kindergarten teachers, practical nurses and family day care workers.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education National Institute for Health and Welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness of Romani culture and the conditions of Roma children by providing day care, pre-primary education and school personnel with further training to help them identify the special needs of Roma children and the need to support their learning skills.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	National Institute for Health and Welfare National Board of Education Regional administration Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

#### 4.1.1.3 Enhancing the cultural rights of Roma children

Supporting the cultural identity of Roma children is extremely important in terms of the children's rights and welfare. It is possible to support the formation of a cultural identity in early childhood education through the teaching of the Romani language and the employment of preschool teachers with a Romani background. It is of vital importance that Roma children and youth taken in care by child welfare authorities are allowed to maintain a connection with their community and culture.

Another important mission of early childhood education and care is to support the reconciliation of the two cultures – Finnish and Romani – and to lower the threshold for starting school, which is a major life change for a child who has grown up within the Roma community.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the teaching of the Romani language by producing educational material in Romani and on Romani culture for day care and pre-primary education for children up to 6 years of age.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	National Institute for Health and Welfare, National Board of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking into account in early childhood education plans the need to provide non-Roma children and their parents with more information on the Romani culture.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare, Ministry of Education, National Board of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the education and rights to a language and culture of their own of</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs	Regional administration Municipalities



Roma children in substitute care.	and Health	Ombudsman for Children in Finland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the teaching of the Romani language, knowledge of Romani culture and its multiplicity, and the formation of Roma children's cultural identity by encouraging municipalities to employ pre-school teachers with a Romani background and Romani culture instructors in day care centres, and by initiating language nest activities.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Finance Regional administration Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities

#### 4.1.1.4 Developing cooperation and supporting parenting skills

Families and parents are primarily responsible for the education of their children. To enhance the social inclusion of the Roma population, it is necessary to develop cooperation with guidance centres and day care services and to provide more information on family services and the various forms of support available. The needs of the Roma population, and particularly those of single parents, should be considered in the development of services relating to family support.

To enhance social inclusion, it is also important to develop forms of cooperation between day care services and Roma families through education partnership. The recruitment of day care personnel and family workers with a Romani background supports the realisation of social inclusion in early childhood education and the enhancement of family work. Efforts should also be made to meet the needs of Roma families in family centres.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocating support services for Roma families in family centres and municipal family work.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Regional administration Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Local Roma working groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging municipalities to utilise possible state grants in family work aimed at the Roma population, and to employ professionally qualified family workers with a Romani background.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional administration Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups

## **Best practices**

### ***Early childhood education assistants with a Romani background***

Three early childhood education and care projects for Roma children in Turku, Vantaa and Vaasa were funded in 2004–2007 by the Development Project for Social Services of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. All three cities have a relatively large Roma population. The projects aimed to develop an operational model that could be utilised to enhance the participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care services and pre-primary education. An essential element in the implementation of the projects was project workers with a Romani background, who acted as family workers, playgroup supervisors and special needs assistants.

The results show that the measures introduced had positive effects. For example, as a result of family visits and an increase in the provision of information in general, most of the Roma children in the Turku area started pre-primary school in autumn 2004. Additionally, a number of 2–4-year-olds have participated in day care.

Workers with a Romani background brought a measure of regularity into Roma children's participation in day care and pre-primary education. Providing family support added a new dimension to their jobs, while their presence was utilised to create a channel of communication between the parents and the day care centre. The project increased the day care centre personnel's knowledge of Romani culture and the challenges involved in the development of a Roma child.

### ***The Kauhajoki model***

In proportion to total population, Kauhajoki has one of the largest Roma communities in Finland. Based on the active participation of the local Roma population, a Roma working group has been active in the city for years. The city has also employed two professionally qualified special needs assistants with a Romani background. One of them acts as a bridge builder and network builder while supporting the social integration of Roma. The other has, in addition to her regular duties, acted as the coordinator for a state-subsidised basic education project for Roma children.

A guide called 'A Guide to Education Partnership with a Romani Home' was compiled in the project with the purpose of supporting the education of Roma children and youth, including transitional stages of education. The guide advocates the use of a model based on three instructors with a Romani background, where a pre-school teacher provides support for the children and families participating in early childhood; a special needs assistant provides support for comprehensive school pupils; and a case manager supports young adults in further studies and finding employment.

Regional projects aiming at the participation in education of Roma and their employment have been implemented in the area, with the Third Door Project currently in progress. Personal guidance, individual coaching and job coaching play an important role in this project.

#### **4.1.2 Enhancing the social inclusion and equal treatment of Roma children and youth in basic education and upper secondary education**

In basic education there is a lot of development activity in progress, which also supports the education of Roma children. It is vital to ensure that the needs of Roma children are taken into account in the development work. To support the basic education of Roma children, the National Board of Education has allocated a separate state grant for 2008–2010. Other targeted action that takes into account the special needs of the Roma will also be needed.

The aim is to introduce new forms of support to enable Roma children to complete their comprehensive school, to enhance pupil counselling and learning-enhancing support measures, and to increase the number of Roma youth continuing into upper secondary education. Raising the awareness of Roma parents and the enhancement of cooperation with Roma families both have a positive impact on Roma children's participation in education. Employing personnel with a Romani background is particularly beneficial for Roma children in terms of participation in education. They provide the necessary support for the children's cultural identity while acting as cultural interpreters between the Roma and the majority population.

##### **4.1.2.1 Development of measures and forms of cooperation to support the education of Roma children and youth and enabling them to complete comprehensive school**

Roma children and youth are in need of special support in basic education. As many Roma parents lack the ability to support their children in their studies, special support for learning skills and abilities is needed especially in schools. The results of a survey on the welfare of Roma children, conducted by the office of the Ombudsman for Children in Finland, clearly shows that Roma children benefit from the support provided by special needs assistants with a Romani background.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing teachers' ability to provide support for Roma students through continuing education.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Regional administration Municipalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing cooperation and communication between school and home, enhancing cooperation between school authorities and local Roma working groups on a local level.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Municipalities Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring a safe learning environment and efficient intervention on behalf of Roma children with regard to school bullying.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging municipalities to employ special needs assistants with a Romani background.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
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#### 4.1.2.2 Developing practices and operational procedures to support Roma pupils' learning at school

In some cases, learning difficulties may have an impact on Roma pupils' school performance. This is usually caused by impaired learning readiness which is the result of insufficient participation in early childhood education and the parents' lack of resources in supporting their children's learning. Impaired learning readiness may sometimes go unnoticed even in schools.

The key areas in the development of Roma children's education are enhancing their mastery of Finnish/Swedish and mathematical and fine motor skills. Accordingly, special attention should be paid to them from the very start of each Roma child's school education.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Roma pupils' participation in mainstream education. This is supported through the development of special needs teaching, study counselling and pupil welfare services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Municipalities National Institute for Health and Welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on the identification of learning difficulties of Roma children, providing them with special support, and ensuring the correctness of the criteria for placing a pupil in special needs teaching.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Municipalities National Board of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the dissemination and inclusion of the best practices created in basic education development projects for Roma children into educational activities on a national basis.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Roma children's participation in homework clubs and other club activities in support of school studies.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Roma pupils' dual identity by enhancing the teaching of the Romani language and the pupils' Romani skills through language nest activities, for example.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Municipalities Regional administration Education providers Roma organisations

### 4.1.2.3 Development of measures and operational procedures to provide support in transitional stages in education and supporting the entry of Roma youth into upper secondary education

Transitional stages in education have been shown to be crucial in terms of the enhancement of inclusion, the prevention of marginalisation and the transition from basic education into upper secondary education. For Roma children, the first challenging transition is from lower comprehensive into upper comprehensive school. It has been recognised that special support and cooperative methods are necessary for Roma pupils to manage these transitions.

Roma children in upper comprehensive school are at a particularly challenging stage of life, which is why special attention should be paid to motivation, pupil counselling and the completion of their studies. For example, pupil welfare services can also provide Roma youth with the support they need on their way to adulthood.

At present, there are few role models for Roma children of Roma who have educated themselves and found an occupation. This makes pupil and vocational counselling especially important for Roma youth. Roma youth must be given equal opportunities to participate in periods of work experience while at school. It is also crucial to ensure that they do not face discrimination in finding the training places.

To complement the Social Guarantee for Young People initiated in 2005, the education authorities have introduced the Education and Training Guarantee, which aims at expediting transitions into education and training on one hand, and from education and training into working life on the other. The implementation of the Education and Training Guarantee entails enhancement and focusing especially on young people representing ethnic minorities.

Workshop activity based on the Youth Act has proved to be a significant means of preventing marginalisation and promoting employment. The workshops for young people offer coaching and work experience for youth under 29 years of age. The workshops provide young people with support in completing their studies, applying for study places or work, and developing their professional skills. Roma youth without a study place should be especially encouraged to participate in workshop activity. The educational model provided by alternative vocational school should also be utilised in supporting Roma youth.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Roma pupils in transitional stages of education and ensuring completion of comprehensive school with appropriate supportive action.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Regional administration Municipalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into account the needs of Roma children and youth as part of development activities for pupil and student welfare.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Municipalities Education providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging Roma youth through pupil counselling to plan their upper secondary education studies; supporting them in the upper secondary education application</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Regional administration Municipalities

process by enhancing the cooperation between basic education, upper secondary schools and vocational education and training.		Educational institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging and guiding Roma youth through pupil counselling to make use of the flexibility of vocational education and training and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by preparatory and pre-employment training.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Municipalities Vocational institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When necessary, guiding and encouraging Roma youth to make use of the option of special needs teaching included in basic vocational education and training.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Municipalities Vocational institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilising apprenticeship, opportunities offered by alternative vocational school, and workshops for young people as channels for Roma youth to on-the-job learning, entry into further studies, and access to the labour market.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Municipalities Local Roma working groups Employers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into account the special needs of Roma youth in the organisation of broad-based cooperation and outreach youth work.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations

#### 4.1.2.4 Providing more information on Romani culture and the conditions of the Roma in teacher training and teaching materials

The enhancement of equal opportunities entails increased information and interaction. The provision of accurate information on Romani culture and the history and conditions of the Roma minority will enhance the realisation of the individual educational rights of Roma children. As far as pedagogic training is concerned, it is essential to ensure that the training includes study modules focusing on the Roma population and culture.

It is also necessary to ensure, for example, in basic education teaching materials and in social studies and multiplicity education, the accuracy of the information on Roma and its inclusion in the education programme.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging higher education institutions to include studies focusing specifically on Romani culture and the lives of Roma children and youth in their training for class teachers and vocational education teachers.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education Universities and higher education institutions	ABRA Roma organisations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that study modules focusing on the teaching of Roma children and youth as well as the identification of discrimination and means of intervention are included in teachers' annual supplementary education sessions.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Regional administration Municipalities Labour market organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compiling Web-based teaching material on the history and culture of the Roma to be included in school and educational institution curricula and teaching materials.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	ABRA Roma organisations

#### 4.1.2.5 Increasing opportunities for various social participation and leisure activities for Roma children and youth

Although participation in education is paramount for Roma children and youth, childhood and adolescence are not just about studying and preparation for working life. The basis for mature adulthood and sovereign citizenship is created in childhood and adolescence. Hobbies and participation in leisure activities support inclusion and interaction, while also enhancing an individual's ability to function as a member of society.

Young people are under a lot of pressure in searching for an identity of their own and becoming independent. As with immigrant youth, the fact that Roma youth have to reconcile two different cultures only adds to this pressure. Experiences of discrimination also undermine an individual's identity. Reaching adulthood, becoming independent and moving away from home, as well as possibly starting a family, often come early in the lives of Roma youth. Roma boys and girls are in need of special support in planning their future, reaching adulthood, and establishing a balanced dual identity.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking Roma children and youth into account when planning and drawing up municipal welfare plans for children and adolescents in accordance with the Child Welfare Act.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Education Ombudsman for Children in Finland Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting and increasing opportunities for Roma children and youth to participate in leisure activities and clubs in schools and in municipal work with children and adolescents.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations Non-governmental sports organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing Roma children and youth with increased opportunities to participate and</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ombudsman for Children in Finland

make their voices heard and have their say in matters concerning themselves, both in society at large and within the Roma community.	ABRA Regional ABRAs Municipalities Roma organisations
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## Best practices

### *Special needs assistants with a Romani background*

Special needs assistants with a Romani background have been trained and employed in Finland, and the feedback on their presence in school communities has been positive. These professionally qualified assistants support children and youth at school while bringing new expertise into cooperation with the Roma community and Roma parents. This support promotes Roma children's studies and reduces absenteeism and drop-outs. A special needs assistant with a Romani background is also an inspiring role model for Roma children in terms of the reconciliation of a Romani identity with the demands of working life. The professionally qualified special needs assistants provide support for non-Roma pupils as well. The feedback on this operational model shows that it supports the development of equal treatment and cultural multiplicity in the whole school community.

The number of professionally qualified special needs assistants with a Romani background should be increased. So far, special needs assistants with a Romani background have been employed only in certain municipalities. The challenge is to introduce this operational model permanently to localities with a Roma population. The long-term significance of this operational model in the enhancement of the social inclusion of the Roma has not been sufficiently recognised in municipalities.

On the other hand, the small number of weekly hours, that is, the part-time nature of the job, which does not meet basic subsistence needs, reduces the number of applicants for the job of a special needs assistant. The planned combination of the degrees of Special Needs Assistant and Morning and Afternoon Activity Instructor may lead to full-time positions. The introduction of this operational model has been facilitated by the peripatetic special needs assistant model, where the special needs assistant works in more than one school.

### *The Kangasniemi team model*

A project implemented in Kangasniemi to provide educational support for Roma children demonstrates that representatives of the majority population can also participate in building fruitful cooperation between schools and Roma parents. In the project a special needs teacher and a special needs assistant worked as a team. The special needs teacher was responsible for supporting Roma children's learning, while the special needs assistant supported their participation in education and liaised with parents. As a result of the project, cooperation and trust between school and homes were enhanced; children participated regularly in education; learning results improved; and the pupils managed to complete comprehensive school.



### *Youth work aimed at Roma youth*

The City of Helsinki Youth Department workers have developed various operational models to reach Roma youth and to provide them with individual support in life management, school and employment, as well as to increase interaction between Roma and non-Roma youth. A Roma social worker participates in all these forms of support. The various activities include: the Lassila Romani Club, a low-threshold meeting place and peer support group; the employment of Roma youth in youth centres; night cafés; volleyball, which is an activity that brings together young and older Roma men. Many Roma youth have been reached through this activity and as a result of the efforts of the cooperation network, many of them have started studying.

## **4.2 Enhancing the education of Roma adults and the promotion of their access to the labour market**

The Roma are clearly underrepresented in the Finnish education system. According to recent surveys, their willingness to obtain an education is on the increase, but the number of Roma in upper secondary or higher education is still relatively small. According to a study into the promotion of the employment of Roma (Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 22/2008), insufficient education and a lack of work experience are, in addition to discrimination, the main obstacles preventing the employment of Roma. Most unemployed Roma job seekers lack professional qualifications, and many of them have either not completed or possess insufficient basic education.

Apart from enhancing the participation of Roma youth in upper secondary education, it is essential to enhance the vocational education and training of adult Roma, as it is only later in life that many Roma seek access to education and the labour market. The learning readiness and awareness of educational and professional options of adult Roma are often insufficient, which also tends to have a negative impact on study motivation. This is why affirmative action is needed to enhance basic and further vocational education and training for adult Roma and to develop its implementation and structures.

The Roma are a group that is mostly in a weak position in terms of the labour market. Enhancing their employability and developing employment support and counselling services will be necessary to guarantee them access to the labour market. Some of the Roma job seekers need support in completing basic education and acquiring vocational qualifications, whereas others require assistance in finding a job. Crossing the threshold into working life is also difficult for educated Roma. The aim is to enhance public employment services aimed at Roma job seekers and to support Roma in crossing the threshold into working life by endorsing the development of non-discriminatory recruitment and working life practices.

The action to enhance the employability and integration into the labour market of adult Roma is implemented in two key areas, the results of which are based on cross-administrative coordination and cooperation.

#### 4.2.1 Enhancing the participation of Roma in vocational education and training

The aim is to obtain an overview of the educational needs of adult Roma and to increase their participation in vocational education and training. A further aim is to develop the forms and ways of implementing education directed at adult Roma by utilising operational models developed in ESF projects, and to offer the Roma population more options in vocational education and training and vocational choices. Another aim is to enhance the role of voluntary adult education to promote the learning readiness and education of Roma. The development of vocational education and training for Roma in Finland entails the enhancement of cross-administrative cooperation both on a national and local level.

##### 4.2.1.1 Determining the educational needs of adult Roma and aiming vocational education and training at the Roma population

There are no comprehensive studies of the participation in education of Roma or their educational needs. The enhancement of the participation of Roma in vocational education and training entails extensive study into their educational needs in order to allocate and develop the education and training in such a manner that it meets the needs of both the Roma population and working life. It is also necessary to enhance the interaction with education professionals in the field to permanently introduce educational models that meet the criteria of best practices. Likewise, enhancing interaction with working life is needed to increase the opportunities available to Roma for work experience placement and on-the-job learning.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting a survey on the adult Roma population's need for education and utilising these data to draw up a set of proposals for the allocation and development of vocational education and training.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Ministry of Employment and the Economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that education providers and employers are able to identify the effects of discrimination as an obstacle to the employment of Roma; introduction of more effective action to create more jobs for work practice placement.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Ministry of the Interior Regional administration Labour market organisations

##### 4.2.1.2 Supporting and enhancing the participation of Roma in qualification-oriented vocational education and training

The general level of education of the Roma population can be raised by utilising the existing educational services and by developing the implementation of education and training aimed at Roma. It will be necessary to provide part of the adult Roma population with an opportunity to complete their comprehensive school studies.

To enhance their access to vocational education and training and to support their studies, the basic vocational education aimed at adult Roma should include study-enhancing operational models developed within the preparatory training and careers guidance system. The opportunities afforded by the competence-based qualifications system should be utilised by taking into account students' varying learning readiness and by providing individual study plans.

On the basis of experience gained in various educational projects aimed at Roma, there is a need for motivating them and supporting them in their studies, in addition to helping them in learning to learn. Their participation in education and training is often hampered by other factors complicating their lives, which is why counselling is in a key position.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aiming additional basic education at Roma; utilising especially the services offered by folk high schools in additional basic education.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Regional administration Municipalities Liberal adult education organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the resources available to vocational institutions to support Roma youth in their studies through counselling and student welfare services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Municipalities Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aiming preparatory training and study guidance at Roma youth in such a manner as to enhance their resources for integrating into various student groups and the study opportunities provided by the educational system.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Municipalities and joint municipal boards Education providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating operational procedures to remove the practical obstacles preventing adult Roma from participating in education; utilising preparatory training and the individualisation of studies in basic vocational education and training.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Joint municipal boards Education providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into the possibility of developing financial systems providing study incentives for the enhancement of the participation of underrepresented minorities in education; also encouraging municipalities to utilise preventive and supplementary social assistance benefits for this purpose.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Employment and the Economy Regional administration Municipalities

#### 4.2.1.3 Enhancing opportunities for vocational education and training as well as vocational choices for the Roma population

The lack of vocational role models in the Roma community and a lack of awareness of various professions and the education or training required for them have been recognised as factors that prevent the integration of Roma into the educational system and the labour market. The importance of vocational and study counselling for the Roma population has been emphasised in surveys on educational projects aimed at adult Roma in particular.

Workers with a Romani background are needed in social welfare and health services and educational services, for example. They have been shown to play a key role in enhancing the social inclusion and interaction of the Roma population. The number of Roma working in these areas should be supported through various forms of education and training. Furthermore, the participation of Roma, according to their individual skills, in various vocational fields and educational levels should be supported through educational guidance and vocational counselling.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing more information for the Roma population on the guidance and counselling services available in adult education as well as the available educational and vocational options; enhancing vocational and study counselling.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy National Board of Education Regional ABRA Education providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the development of apprenticeship training; enhancing apprenticeship training for Roma in various vocational fields and in the public sector by also making use of subsidised apprenticeship.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Education providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the implementation of action proposed by the AKKU Working Group to enhance the participation in education of adult Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient utilisation in the education of Roma of the study opportunities available in voluntary adult education institutions and general upper schools for adults; taking the Roma population's needs into account in the development of the study voucher system.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Liberal adult education organisations Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the development of cooperation between Roma organisations and liberal adult education organisations to provide more educational opportunities for Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, ABRA	Roma organisations Liberal adult education organisations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointing a working group to determine how to promote the recruitment of representatives of ethnic minorities into public administration duties.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior	Ombudsman for Minorities Ministry of Education ABRA
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## Best practices

### *Education models for adult Roma*

Various education models that take into account the Roma population have been developed in projects partially funded by the European Social Fund. These models were developed to provide support for transitional stages in education in various projects, such as the Romako and Roti Projects, and to support the education and training of adult Roma, as in the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme funded by the European Society Fund.

In the Roti Project, a support person was appointed for each group of students in vocational education and training aimed at Roma. This led to fewer drop-outs and helped the students in solving many problems in their personal lives, which often tend to have a negative effect on motivation or prevent the student from participating in education altogether.

The ROM-EQUAL Project (2004–2007) focused on the development of an education model for qualification-oriented vocational education and training for adult Roma, where the core idea was the development of the educational process itself and ways of supporting it. The essential components of the model are an extensive orientation phase preparing the students for vocational studies, competence-based vocational studies according to an individual study plan, and the alternation of theoretical studies and practical training. While studying, the students were supported by a person familiar with Romani culture, whereas in practical training they were appointed a mentor in the workplace.

Helsinki Deaconess Institute and the Church Training College, which participated in the implementation of the ROM-EQUAL Project, established in 2009 the Tsétanes Training Centre, which focuses on the education and training of Roma. The Centre utilises an education model that takes into account the special needs of the Roma population in social welfare and health education and training.

#### **4.2.2 Supporting and promoting the Roma population's access to the labour market**

The Roma are in a particularly weak position in terms of access to the labour market. This Key Area aims at enhancing their integration into the labour market. This entails enhancing the employability of Roma, which is supported by development action aimed at the enhancement of the skills of Roma and the vocational education and training aimed at them.

Apart from negative attitudes and discrimination, the major obstacle preventing the employment of Roma is their lack of education and work experience. Due to the existing prejudices, it is difficult for even educated Roma to find work. Roma job-seekers need special support in the various stages of the employment process, so enhancing the activities and individual customer service of public employment services and developing support and counselling services

and related processes are some of the central objectives in this Key Area. Further aims are an increase in employer contacts and the development of new forms of employment.

#### **4.2.2.1 Enhancing the integration into the labour market of Roma through the introduction of more efficient public employment services and multi-professional cooperation**

The Roma job seekers are in different situations as far as the obstacles to employability and employment are concerned. Some of them need special support, especially in enhancing their vocational skills and qualifications, whereas skilled and educated Roma are mostly in need of supportive action enhancing their employability. Lately the increased unemployment of young men has received a lot of attention. This also applies not only to young Roma men, but young Roma women as well. However, the Roma population faces considerable difficulty in finding work in all age groups and both sexes.

The simple act of streamlining the standard services of Employment and Economic Development Offices and identifying the special service-related needs of the Roma (mainstreaming) would provide Roma customers with considerable support in finding employment. This entails investment in individual service and intensive customer service in particular, as most Roma job-seekers are not familiar with the educational and vocational options available, have little if any work experience, and possess inadequate information retrieval skills.

Research shows that only a small minority of Roma job-seekers receive special employment administration support. What is needed is the enhancement of service need assessment and the drawing up of individually tailored job-seeking plans to include more appropriate action in terms of employment.

Supportive customer service and counselling are also needed to increase the commitment level of Roma customers. In addition to administrative action, the active participation of Roma of working age needs to be enhanced. This is where Roma organisations, for example, can play a significant role.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing individual service need assessment in customer work by determining the concrete obstacles preventing the employment of Roma job-seekers; increasing the efficacy of service processes and the drawing up of job-seeking plans based on individual needs in both the internal and external cooperation of Employment and Economic Development Offices.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices Regional ABRAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the opportunities for Roma job-seekers to participate in employment training and vocational education and training by increasing their motivation to</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices

educate themselves and enhancing their ability to identify the need for education through the internal cooperation (training, guidance, vocational counselling, other counselling services) of the Employment and Economic Development Offices, and by taking into account their individual needs in enhancing their access to education and training.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the employment and access to education and training of Roma youth covered by the Social Guarantee for Young People, as well as the multi-professional cooperation between Employment and Economic Development Offices and municipalities.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the access to services, such as the employment-enhancing services of Labour Service Centres, of long-term jobless Roma in need of multi-professional services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Municipalities Local Roma working groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active utilisation of the opportunities afforded by workshop activity and rehabilitative work as employment support measures.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Education	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health National Institute for Health and Welfare Municipalities Local Roma working groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the employment of Roma job-seekers on the open labour market by utilising the support measures offered by Employment and Economic Development Offices, such as Job Seeking Allowance, job coaching and salary support, and by informing employers of the option of making use of salary support in apprenticeship contracts or utilising the so-called TOPPIS model.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices

#### 4.2.2.2 Development of services and action supporting the employment of Roma

Compared to other job-seekers, Roma job-seekers are often in a weaker position on the labour market, and therefore they need active and individual support in becoming employed. More often than not, a Roma job-seeker does not possess the necessary skill for independent information retrieval on education and training, employment opportunities or working life issues. Often their awareness of different occupations, the necessary qualifications or other education or training options is also insufficient. Moreover, many Roma need motivation, encouragement and support in the employment process. Accordingly, customer work and efficient guid-

ance entail an intensive approach and support process, which also means that individual service and larger-than-usual temporal resources in service situations are also necessary.

It is important that all Employment and Economic Development Offices invest heavily in the development of the expertise and skills of their entire customer service personnel to facilitate individual customer service for the Roma. Roma job-seekers often lack the necessary social skills and knowledge of the employment administration practices. The lack of a ‘common language’ is often typical of customer service situations. Having counsellors with a Romani background act as interpreters and mediators has proved extremely useful in these situations.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing more extensive Romani Affairs Contact Person services in Employment and Economic Development Offices; developing activities to enhance the development of new forms of employment support and services for Roma customers.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In cooperation with regional Economic and Employment Development Centres, implementing a pilot project funded by ESF, with the aim of developing counselling and support services aimed at Roma by training support persons with a Romani background to provide employment counselling for the Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Regional ABRAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and allocation of job-coaching and job-seeking services for Roma job-seekers through the utilisation of various operational models developed in employment projects for Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Romani Affairs Contact Persons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the crossing of the threshold into working life by encouraging employers and education providers to provide more jobs and work experience placements for Roma job-seekers.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Offices Romani Affairs Contact Persons Education providers

#### 4.2.2.3 Development of new forms of employment for Roma and enhancing their entrepreneurship activities

Trading has always been one of the traditional means of employment for Roma. The Roma population is used to flexible forms of employment, which should be utilised through the development of new forms of employment, such as various kinds of entrepreneurship. Roma women should be encouraged to start their own businesses through cooperative entrepreneurship, for example. Entrepreneurship guidance and training in particular should take into account the Roma population’s need for support in working out business ideas and the planning



of business activities, where the models developed in entrepreneurship training for immigrants could be utilised.

The social welfare activities of many Roma organisations are based on voluntary activities. While an increasing number of the supplementary services offered by municipalities and the public employment services are supplied as purchased services from the third sector, the activities of Roma organisations as service providers, and, accordingly, as employers, should be developed through the enhancement of their know-how and expertise. In the future, this would enable these organisations to provide more and more purchased services, such as care management, service assistance, and other support services aimed at the Roma population.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling the Roma organisations to act as service providers and employers of Roma support persons, also taking advantage of labour market grants for the organisations.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising the potential of the Roma as entrepreneurs in the services provided by Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices; development of entrepreneurship guidance, training and support services aimed at the Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Business and Innovation Centres Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the awareness of the Roma population of the opportunities offered by cooperative entrepreneurship and the available forms of support.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres

#### **4.2.2.4 Raising the awareness of the Roma population of working life practices and providing employers with more information on the prevention of discrimination against Roma and the elimination of prejudices**

More information and the mutual elimination of prejudices and negative attitudes will be needed to promote the employment of Roma. Negative attitudes and discrimination in job-seeking situations still prevent the Roma from becoming employed. What is needed is more accurate information for employers on Romani culture and the discrimination they face, labour market organisations, various authorities, and education providers. The aim is to enhance the development of non-discriminatory recruitment and working life practices.

Due to their lack of working life experience, the Roma population of working age are not familiar with working life practices or issues relating to employment relationships and the promotion of their interests. The initiative of Roma as well as their ability to seek employment independently and their knowledge of the rights and responsibilities involved in employment relationships could be enhanced through an extensive information campaign on issues relating to job-seeking and working-life practices.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication of an extensive guide/Web page on employment relationships and workplace and working-life practices for Roma population of working age.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	ABRA Roma organisations Ombudsman for Minorities Working-life operators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing Employment and Economic Office workers, labour market organisations, and supervising authorities with more information on Romani culture, the conditions of Roma, and the discrimination faced by Roma on the labour market.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of the Interior Regional administration Regional ABRA Working-life operators Occupational Health and Safety authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into ways of carrying out an information campaign in cooperation with employer and entrepreneur organisations with the aim of increasing the number of jobs available for the Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of the Interior	ABRA Roma organisations Working-life operators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting research into discrimination in working life, especially in recruitment, with Roma as one of the groups involved.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of the Interior	ABRA Ombudsman for Minorities Working-life operators

## Best practices

### *The City of Jyväskylä Romani Services and the Social Service Interpreter model*

There are some 500 Roma living in the Jyväskylä region. The City of Jyväskylä appointed a Roma Working Group in 2003. Between 2004–2007, the City of Jyväskylä managed and implemented an EQUAL Development Partnership Project called ‘Roma in Employment’. The ‘TuRom – Bidirectional Integration’ education model and the Cultural Mediator operational model are two examples of the results of the project.

The positive results of the ‘Roma in Employment’ project and the care management system led to the establishment of City of Jyväskylä’s Romani Services, which currently employs three instructors with a Romani background. The unit is placed under the Social Welfare Service for Adults and Basic Security Unit, and the instructors, two women and one man with Romani backgrounds, are employed by the City of Jyväskylä.

Their duties include the provision of support for Roma customers in education- and employment-related issues; supporting Roma youth in the 9th grade and enhancing the cooperation between school and home; supporting children and families; and substance abuse services. They also engage in outreach work aimed at the prevention of marginalisation, where reaching the customers and winning their confidence is facilitated by the instructors’ own Romani background.

The instructors support the customers and provide them with access to the necessary service network. The aim is to support the customer's active participation and initiative in gaining access to education/training and working life, and to refer the customer to the necessary services. If necessary, the instructors accompany the customers on visits to the Employment and Economic Development Office, the Labour Service Centre, the Social Services Office, and other services.

Even though the instructors are basically support persons, in this case they should act more as neutral mediators. The benefits of this procedure are based on the combination of the instructors' administrative expertise and their familiarity with the needs of the customer. In Jyväskylä, this activity is known as service interpretation.

### *Subsidised guidance and job-seeker services*

Initiated in 2008 and funded by Helsinki Deaconess Institute and the Uusimaa Employment and Economic Development Centre, the three-year TEMPO Project provides support for Employment Offices and the employment process for Roma and immigrants. In this project, a personal support person provides support and counselling for poorly educated long-term unemployed in gaining access to further education and training or the labour market. The project provides the participants with job coaching, careers guidance and study counselling, care management, and psychosocial support, for example.

The TEMPO instructors are in direct contact with employers, informing them of the various forms of support and issues relating to the employment of individuals with a Romani or immigrant background. If necessary, the project instructors can accompany the job-seekers in their first meeting with the employer. This type of support and guidance has been found valuable in enhancing the Roma population's access to the labour market.

### *Employment and Economic Development Office information sessions for Roma*

The regular information sessions for Roma organised by the Savonlinna Employment and Economic Development Office have received positive feedback. Especially in small localities, these information sessions are an efficient way of raising the awareness of the Roma population concerning the various services available and of lowering the threshold for seeking assistance in public employment services.

## **4.3 Promotion of the equal treatment of Roma and their access to services through the establishment of operational policies focusing on their needs**

Accurate data on the health, living conditions and income of Roma are needed for the development of action promoting the welfare of Roma and the prevention of discrimination. It has been found in many countries that the morbidity of Roma is higher than for the majority population and that their life expectancy is lower. Similar estimates have been made in Finland. However, no accurate research data on the health and welfare of the Roma population exist. We also need more information on the Roma population's need for welfare services as well as the accessibility and allocation of services.

On the basis of information received from Roma organisations and local operators, it seems that some sort of socio-economic differentiation process is taking place within the Roma population, and some of them are in danger of becoming marginalised, both within their own community and in society at large. In the hearings arranged for the Roma population, the situation of young Roma adults and young families seemed to cause the greatest concern. Many Roma families face problems in terms of parenthood and life management in general.

Thanks especially to the housing policy measures implemented earlier, the living conditions of Roma have improved. There are still, however, many housing-related problems, and various international organisations have repeatedly criticised Finland for discrimination in the allocation of housing for Roma. The Ombudsman for Minorities has repeatedly reported on the discrimination faced by Roma in housing allocation and tenant selection.

The discrimination and everyday racism experienced by Roma tend to increase their feelings of insecurity and to undermine their trust in the majority population and authorities. Efficient action and interaction-enhancing forms of cooperation are needed to reduce this feeling of insecurity.

The action aimed at the enhancement of the equal treatment of Roma and ensuring their access to services is implemented in two Key Areas, one of which is focused on the development of welfare and health services, while the other concentrates on the development of their housing-related problems and the elimination of insecurity.

#### **4.3.1 Promoting the welfare of the Roma population and enhancing the allocation of social welfare and health services**

The aim is to obtain an overview of the living conditions of the Roma population, as well as their need and use of health and social welfare services in different age groups, and to raise the quality of social welfare and health services to better meet the needs of the Roma.

The identification of the Roma population's service needs and the allocation of action taken with a view to enhancing their well-being will be profitable in the long run, not least in terms of reducing the social costs incurred as a result of their marginalisation and the load it places on health care services.

##### **4.3.1.1 Charting the living conditions of Roma as well as their use of and need for health care and welfare services in different age groups**

There are no comprehensive research data currently available on the health and welfare of the Roma population. Likewise, very little data are available of their experiences as customers and service recipients within the service system. Ad hoc surveys are needed to allocate the development measures correctly. The surveys should be repeated regularly to monitor the results of the development measures.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Institute for Health and Welfare will conduct an extensive survey with the aim of acquiring data on the living conditions, health, welfare and housing conditions of the Roma as well as their need for services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare, Ministry of the Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into account the special needs of the Roma population and the development proposals of the survey conducted by the National Institute for Health and Welfare in the planning and development of health care and social welfare services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare Regional administration ABRA, regional ABRAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The needs of the Roma population are specifically taken into account in national health and social welfare and other welfare development programmes.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare Regional administration ABRA

#### **4.3.1.2 Enhancing the prevention of marginalisation and promoting social welfare and health services**

Special attention must be paid to Roma in serious danger of becoming marginalised, as well as Roma children and elderly Roma. The aim is the enhancement of family work and the promotion of broad-based cooperation to enhance social inclusion.

In the allocation of social welfare and health services, information work and the establishment of contacts with the Roma population are necessary prerequisites for a functional service system. In the enhancement of interaction, health and social welfare professionals with a Romani background act as efficient bridge builders, as do the extension and development of the activities of local Roma working groups.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing broad-based cooperation with Roma operators on a local level in the prevention of the marginalisation of Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Municipalities Ministry of Education Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Employment and Economic Development Offices Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeting resources at family work and social welfare work aimed at the Roma</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

population in Finnish municipalities.	and Health	Municipalities Local Roma working groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining which regional Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare could be charged with the development of social welfare and health services for the Roma and related information and training activities.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Advisory Board for Centres of Expertise on Social Welfare Centres of Expertise on Social Welfare ABRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into account Roma families' situation and possible need for support in family centre activities, statutory medical examinations and health education for children and adolescents as laid down in the Primary Health Care Act.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Local Roma working groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging municipalities to take into account the service needs of elderly Roma in municipal strategies on ageing and the development of services for the elderly.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging municipalities to utilise possible special state grants in the recruitment of workers with a Romani background in social welfare and health services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Regional administration Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

#### 4.3.1.3 Enhancing information work aimed at Roma as part of the preventive action taken by social welfare and health services

As Finnish citizens, in principle the Roma are entitled to equal opportunities with the majority population to make use of the services provided by the public service system. In practice, however, the equal treatment of Roma may be hindered by, for example, a lack of knowledge concerning social welfare related issues and the available services, as well as cultural differences that can be observed in interaction relating to social welfare and health services.

Various studies show that the Roma population's awareness of the factors involved in the maintenance of health and welfare is insufficient. Roma youth should be encouraged to take up regular exercise both in schools and in municipal leisure activities.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the awareness of the Roma population and organisations of the available social welfare and health services and social welfare and health NGOs through the development of Web services for Roma, for example.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare ABRA Roma organisations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the preventive substance abuse work aimed at Roma youth; recognising Roma youth as one of the special target groups for preventive substance abuse work.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare Regional administration/Regional State Administrative Agency Municipalities Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In municipal sports services, providing Roma men and women of all ages with more opportunities for exercise and sport; informing the Roma population of the various sports services available.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Regional administration/Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations Non-governmental sports organisations

## Best practices

### *Guides aimed at the social welfare and health sector*

Many of the health care related problems experienced by Roma are related to linguistic and more extensive cultural differences with the majority population. Health care and social welfare services personnel should be aware of such cultural factors in order to enhance the employee-customer encounter and interaction. Various guides for authorities have been compiled with a view to avoiding such cultural problems in service situations. One of these is the 'Romani ja terveystalvelut – Opas terveydenhuollon ammattilaisille' ('Roma and Health Services – Guide for Health Care Professionals') guide published by the National Board of Education. A guide for informal carers has also been published, and a guide for dental nurses is in preparation to enhance services for Roma customers.

The 'Vast vastensa -käsikirja sosiaalialan ammattilaisille' ('A Guide for Social Welfare Professionals', 2006) is an extensive presentation of the history and culture of Roma and employee-customer encounters with them. The guide focuses particularly on special issues relating to social welfare work involving Roma and highlights best practices.

### *Kaalo – a low-threshold day centre for Roma*

In 2005, Helsinki Deaconess Institute started a project with the aim of creating a low-threshold day centre particularly for Roma in danger of becoming marginalised. Another objective of the project, which is partially funded by Finland's Slot Machine Association, was to provide Roma customers with access to education and employment. The project was well received by the Roma population in metropolitan Helsinki, and Kaalo has established itself as a low-threshold day centre.

Kaalo customers are often in a difficult life situation, and substance abuse is common. As a result, working with customers is also particularly challenging. The basic philosophy in Kaalo

is to understand and defuse marginalisation-enhancing problem situations without forgetting the culture and values of the Roma. The service principles include obtaining an overview of the customer's life situation, determining the possible service needs, and referring the customer to the public service system through care management. Some workers perform outreach work outside the day centre.

### ***City of Helsinki Roma family work***

The City of Helsinki Roma family work began as a regional project of the Helsinki Social Service Department between 2001–2004 and was established as a regular service in all Helsinki Family Centres in 2005. Two social advisors with a Romani background are responsible for the Romani work.

The aim in Roma family work is to prevent in advance the emergence of family or children's problems and to provide comprehensive support for families. The work includes case management and service coordination; cultural interpretation services for authorities and Roma families; multi-professional networking; family clubs; home visits; and intensive customer work, which includes support in everyday-life management, individual discussions, and motivational support.

Roma family work has yielded positive results and it has proved a vital form of family work in, for example, the prevention of the marginalisation of Roma youth, particularly in Eastern Helsinki.

### ***Nikula Activity Centre for Roma in Lahti***

The City of Lahti, the Häme Employment and Economic Development Centre and Elämä ja Valo ry ('Light and Life') have opened a new low-threshold activity centre for the Roma population. The facilities are on self-owned property. The Centre's mission statement is to produce culturally sensitive social welfare services that meet the needs of the Roma population, such as domestic help for older Roma, child care services, and leisure and recreational activities aiming at the prevention of marginalisation. The Nikula Activity Centre also employs and trains long-term unemployed Roma. Students in the social welfare sector can apply for work experience placements in the Centre. The Nikula Activity Centre maintains a Romani database and offers lecture and training services on Romani culture. All Activity Centre employees are Roma.

## **4.3.2 Ensuring equal treatment in housing and reducing insecurity**

The aim is to enhance equality by taking into account the needs of the Roma and the effects of cultural factors in administration and services aimed at them by enhancing cooperation between the Roma population and various authorities.

Everyday racism undermines the self-esteem of the Roma population, increases their feelings of insecurity, and fuels their own prejudices. Part of this insecurity is the fear of authorities experienced by Roma. The feelings of insecurity and experiences of discrimination are further



increased by the Roma population's feeling that authorities do not take their reports seriously enough in emergencies or situations involving discrimination.

Thanks to special action taken earlier by the state, the housing conditions of Roma have improved considerably, and for most of them the housing standard is the same today as for the majority population on average. However, Roma are to a significant degree dependent on municipal and non-profit rental housing, as it is difficult for them to secure housing in the private rental market because of their poor economic status and the prejudices against them. The acquisition of an owner-occupied flat is often prevented by difficulties in securing the necessary funding.

No comprehensive survey of the housing-related problems and living conditions of the Roma exists, but the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, the Ombudsman for Minorities, and Roma organisations, such as Romano Missio, face the full extent of these housing problems in their daily work. Most of the communications received by the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs and the reports on discrimination submitted to the Ombudsman for Minorities concern housing.

#### **4.3.2.1 Development of equal treatment in housing services and enhancing the solving of problems relating to the housing and living conditions of the Roma**

Both discrimination and issues caused by marginalisation and customs within the Roma community lie behind the housing-related problems of the Roma. In state-subsidised housing, problems arise in applying for housing, the selection of tenants, finding new housing, the solving of housing-related problems, and the taking of Romani customs and culture into account in housing arrangements. Housing-related problems and homelessness are often linked to other difficulties, such as financial problems and life-management issues. Housing-related problems often have an impact on children's well-being in particular, and may affect their school attendance or prevent them from going to school altogether, which is why solving housing-related problems is crucial for the prevention of marginalisation.

It is necessary to take action to solve the problems of the Roma relating to housing and living conditions by: conducting research into their living conditions; enhancing cross-administrative cooperation; ensuring non-discriminatory operational policies; increasing the provision of housing-related counselling for the Roma population. It is also necessary to promote action that prevents regional segregation in housing and community planning.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting research into the housing conditions of the Roma as part of general research into the health and welfare of the Roma population; drawing up development proposals on the basis of the results.</li> </ul>	Ministry on Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of the Environment	National Institute for Health and Welfare, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ABRA Ombudsman for Minorities Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing cooperation and internal communications on the equal treatment</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Environment,	Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland

<p>of Roma between housing authorities, municipal real estate companies, and regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs to promote the solving of housing-related problems; enhancing the transparency of operational policies through the development of guidelines and internal communications in procedures concerning housing applications, decision-making, and appeals.</p>	<p>Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland</p>	<p>Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Roma organisations Ombudsman for Minorities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing, on a municipal level, cross-administrative cooperation between social welfare services, housing services, debt counselling, and real estate companies; promoting good local governance in solving the housing-related problems of individual Roma families.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of the Environment, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland</p>	<p>Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into the possibility of initiating a separate national project focusing on solving the Roma population's housing problems and the development and dissemination of best practices.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of the Environment</p>	<p>Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ABRA Ombudsman for Minorities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Roma organisations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After the extension of the range of application of the Non-Discrimination Act, monitoring for any discrimination in the allocation of privately financed rental housing; determining the kind of action needed as a result of this monitoring.</li> </ul>	<p>Ombudsman for Minorities</p>	<p>Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Interior</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining the situation in social welfare housing services aimed at Roma; making the necessary development proposals.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Social Affairs and Health</p>	<p>Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities National Institute for Health and Welfare</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the use of existing systems for housing finance where applicable to Roma; enhancing information activities on these systems aimed at municipalities and Roma organisations, for example.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of the Environment, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland</p>	<p>Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing information work relating to housing issues and housing and debt counselling services for the Roma population as part of an extensive development policy on housing counselling.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of the Environment, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Fin-</p>	<p>Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Local Roma working groups</p>

	land Municipalities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting measures aimed at the promotion of non-discrimination within the Roma community and equal treatment in the selection of their place of residence. Active information and media work on procedures promoting good local governance, legality, and the consideration of cultural aspects in the selection of tenants.</li> </ul>	Ombudsman for Minorities	Ministry of the Environment, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ABRA Regional ABRA Municipalities Housing authorities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations

## Best practices

### *Housing advisor experiment, Oulu*

A housing advice project, partnered by the City of Oulu Social Welfare and Health Services, Technical Centre Housing Services, and the Sivakka-yhtymä Oy as a representative of the owners of the rental housing, was carried out in Oulu between 2006–2008.

The aim was to provide housing for the long-term homeless, supporting long-term housing for customers in special groups, and the reduction and prevention of evictions. Another aim was the development of cooperation between various bodies, as well as the creation and training of a network of housing advisors/housing company social managers to act between the owners of the rental housing, social welfare and health services and the third sector.

The housing advisors were tasked with the planning, implementation and development of care management. One of their main duties was network cooperation and the development of housing-enhancing operational models in cooperation with the partners. Here the aim was the development of cooperation between the owners of non-profit housing and social welfare and health services. The cooperation with housing advisors and Roma operators in particular was enhanced by the TuRom training programme, which focuses on social interaction and employee-customer encounters. The TuRom training programme was developed in conjunction with the 'Roma in Employment' project carried out in Jyväskylä.

During the housing advice project, various new policies and practices arising from everyday needs were developed, such as: regional information sessions on housing issues; a systematic contract to secure long-term housing; the 'Balance your finances' course material; the 'Vast Vastensa' guide; conciliation procedures in the payment of rent arrears, for example. These policies have been standardised in daily services, which has led to a decrease in the number of housing-related problems.

#### **4.3.2.2 Promoting the equal treatment of Roma in administrative procedures to reduce insecurity**

In their conclusions and recommendations, the monitoring bodies for international human rights agreements have emphasised the need to enhance mutual confidence between the police and national minorities, and to improve the conditions of Roma in prisons.

One of the key duties of the police in the maintenance of security is the elimination of racism and the promotion of tolerance. According to police guidelines on the prevention of racism, one of the operational duties of the police is to lower the intervention threshold regarding racist acts and to investigate any suspected criminal acts without delay, if possible. The prevention of racism also holds a prominent position in police training and performance guidance. For several years now the Romani culture has been a standard element in the police training programme and it has clearly had an impact on the development of more positive attitudes on both sides. It is vital that the discrimination and insecurity experienced by the Roma population remain a key theme in the basic and advanced training of the police. Since Roma occasionally feel that their reports on racism or discrimination are not dealt with appropriately, it is crucial to raise their awareness of the procedures concerning the reporting of racist acts or discrimination, as well as to make criminal processes concerning discrimination and racist crime more effective through the enhancement of cooperation between the various operators.

The Roma population should be involved in the drawing up of local security plans required by the Internal Security Programme and drawn up by Finnish municipalities through cross-administrative cooperation. Proper attention should also be paid to the action necessary for the prevention of discrimination of Roma and increasing their security. The national recommendations on this will be ready by the end of 2009, and they will be issued to all authorities involved in security planning.

According to a report by a working group appointed by the Criminal Sanctions Agency in 2003, Roma prisoners face special problems in Finnish prisons in terms of resettlement, employment, the need for education and training, the need for substance abuse rehabilitation, and the release process. Many prisoners with a Romani background serve their sentence in isolation, in a segregation unit, because they feel vulnerable in open wards due to discrimination or the threat of violence on the part of the other prisoners. This tends to place them in an unequal position and reduces their opportunities for participation in prison education, for example. The development measures put forward by the working group were: raising the awareness of the prison staff of the Romani culture; the development of cooperation structures; enhancing Roma prisoners' learning readiness; the development of prison education and training; the development of procedures that allow Roma prisoners to participate in normal prison activities and to serve their community service. The proposals of the working group are still current.

As public sector personnel are replaced through the retirement of the baby boomers, it is necessary to ensure the continuity of the information work and training relating to the Romani culture and their conditions in the various administrative sectors. The need for information is vital in the activities of many authorities to ensure non-discrimination and the enhancement of security. The authorities need to be informed of how to encounter Roma as individuals and customers, to facilitate interaction between the Roma population and the service system.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing and increasing information work and training on equality and non-discrimination in the field of security as well as for various authorities, such as emergency response centres, debt counselling, the judicial system and the system of prosecution, the criminal sanctions sector, and police personnel.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health/ABRA Criminal Sanctions Agency ABRA Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Security-enhancing measures for Roma are included in local security plans. The opinions of the Roma are taken into account in security matters concerning themselves.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior	Authorities in charge of local security plans Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paying special attention in local security plans to the prevention of ethnic discrimination and everyday racism in cooperation with local Roma; development of measures and monitoring to eliminate the insecurity experienced by the Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior	Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups and organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the awareness of the Roma population of the correct procedure in reporting discrimination and racist crime; enhancing cooperation between the police and local Roma working groups.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior	ABRA Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the effectiveness of the criminal processes relating to suspected instances of discrimination or racist crimes in the activities of the police, the system of prosecution and the judicial system.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the implementation of the measures proposed by the working group on the status of Roma prisoners in the care of released offenders and prison administration.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Justice	Criminal Sanctions Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the special needs of Roma are taken into account, now and in the future, in the equality plans of the administrative units in the criminal sanctions sector; taking action to enhance the equal treatment of Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Justice	Criminal Sanctions Agency

## **Best practices**

### ***Guides and training on Romani culture***

As part of training aimed at the promotion of multiculturalism and the prevention of racism, Romani culture is a regular theme in police training. The lecturer is a representative of the Roma population. The material produced for this purpose includes the ‘Poliisi ja syrjintä’ (‘The Police and Discrimination’) guide and the ‘Romanin ja poliisin kohdatessa’ (‘Encounters between Roma and the Police’) guide, which focuses on Romani culture and is also included in the self-study material in police training.

## **4.4 Supporting the preservation and development of the Romani language and culture**

The Roma’s right to the maintenance and development of a language and culture of their own is provided for in the Finnish Constitution. The status of the Romani language is also protected by the international agreements on the status of minority languages ratified by Finland. The provisions on the teaching of the Romani language are included in the Children’s Day Care Decree, school legislation, and the Act on Television and Radio Operations. In practice, the teaching of the Romani language has been implemented only in certain regions, mainly in Southern Finland. YLE (The Finnish Broadcasting Company) has been broadcasting a weekly, 15-minute Romani programme on current affairs since 1995.

The preservation of the Romani language and their cultural heritage is in a key position in terms of the cultural identity of the Roma minority. According to their own estimate, approximately 40–50% of the Roma population speak Romani. The importance of Romani as a language used in everyday communication is in decline among the Roma. This is why the Romani language is no longer passed on from one generation to another and the language needs to be revived and developed. The Romani Language Board prepared and published a National Policy on the Romani Language in 2009. The Policy includes various proposals for support measures for the revival of the Romani language and ensuring the teaching of the Romani language in Finland.

The Roma also lack a written history and know very little of their own history. A research project on the history of Finnish Roma will be launched in 2009.

To promote equality and eliminate prejudices, it is necessary to enhance the promotion of the creative activities of the Roma and broadcasting them on a local level and via the YLE network.

### **4.4.1 Promoting the development of the Romani language and culture**

The aim is to enhance the teaching of the Romani language; to support the study of the Romani language and culture; and to increase the visibility of Romani culture and the social inclusion of the Roma both on a local level and in the media. The aim in supporting the Romani language and culture is strengthening the dual identity of the Roma population in such a man-

ner that, aware of their background and history, they can participate as sovereign citizens and operators in the development of their own population and society at large.

#### 4.4.1.1 Developing the teaching of the Romani language and teacher training

The greatest obstacle to the preservation of the Romani language is the dearth or total absence in some parts of the country of teachers of the Romani language. At the moment, very little continuing education for teachers of the Romani language is available in Finland. The challenges include the dearth of potential teachers of the Romani language and their varying basic education, which calls for individually tailored continuing education. Teaching the Romani language at university level and promoting its study will provide easier access to Romani teaching, enhance the development of teaching methods, and bring about the realisation of the linguistic rights of the Roma. Sufficient resources must be made available to make the teaching of the Romani language viable and to enhance its maintenance.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of continuing education for teachers of the Romani language.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into the possibility of introducing university-level teaching of the Romani language, organised in an appropriate manner.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland Romani Language Board

#### 4.4.1.2 Extending and enhancing the teaching of the Romani language in basic and adult education

The teaching of the Romani language calls for development measures. Increasing the teaching of the Romani language is a necessary prerequisite for the maintenance and preservation of the language. However, this is hampered by the statutory number of pupils required in basic education teaching groups, the dearth of teachers of the Romani language, and the lack of up-to-date teaching materials.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating more opportunities for Roma pupils to participate in Romani language lessons by making the statutes more flexible.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating the necessary conditions for teaching Romani in general upper secondary schools in accordance with the curriculum; looking into the possibility of having a ‘Romani as a first language’ test as part of the Finnish matriculation examination.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland The Matriculation Examination Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing more Romani language teaching material in accordance with the National Core Curriculum; as a long-term goal, producing study material for Roma children and youth studying the Romani language for pre-primary and basic education, general upper secondary school, vocational basic education and training, and adult education.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the National Core Curriculum for the Romani language, taking into account international cooperation on the teaching and development of the Romani language.</li> </ul>	National Board of Education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing Romani-language language nest activities and assessing impact.</li> </ul>	National Board of Education	Regional ABRAs Municipalities Roma organisations Education providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating more opportunities for Romani-language studies in liberal adult education.</li> </ul>	National Board of Education	Regional ABRAs Roma organisations Liberal adult education organisations

#### 4.4.1.3 Enhancing the realisation of linguistic rights

Section 17(3) of the Finnish Constitution provides for the right of the Roma to the maintenance and development of their own language. However, the exact definition of this statute in lower-level legislation and its implementation have not been realised in many respects. Apart from the teaching of the Romani language, the resources available for research and maintenance of the language are significantly lower than for the more traditional minority languages, such as Sami and Finnish Sign Language. The interpretation of the provisions concerning cultural and linguistic rights has led to differences in resources and efficacy of implementation between the various linguistic minorities. In terms of teaching and the development of the language, language maintenance and research also need to be enhanced and more resources made available.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring how the Roma population’s right to the maintenance and develop-</li> </ul>	Ministry of Justice	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland



ment of a language of their own is realised in lower-level legislation and its implementation.		YLE ABRA Ministry of Education National Board of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing sufficient resources for university-level research and language maintenance of the Romani language.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland Universities

#### 4.4.1.4 Supporting the development and presentation of Romani cultural activities

Supporting the Romani cultural heritage and their creative cultural activities is in a key position in the realisation of the cultural rights of the Roma minority. The history and traditions of the Roma have been collected and are preserved in the collections of a few museums, such as the National Museum of Finland, the City of Rovaniemi Museum and the City of Pietarsaari Museum. So far, no museum has put Romani culture on permanent display, however. The aim in museum activities is the maintenance and enhancement of the population's understanding of their culture, history and environment. Recording the Romani cultural heritage would provide us with an opportunity to preserve, study and exhibit Romani culture to both the Roma themselves and the general public.

The Roma population's own cultural activity, the development of the resources for creative activity, and participation and inclusion in art and culture in Finland are important factors in the realisation of equality and the rights laid down in the Finnish Constitution.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realisation of the planned research project to record the history of the Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Finnish Literature Society ABRA Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earmarking additional funding in the State budget for the promotion and performance of Romani artistic activity.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	ABRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking into the possibility of founding a Romani cultural centre.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	ABRA Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking into the possibility of setting up a permanent exhibition on Romani history, traditions and culture in an existing museum in Finland.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	ABRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating more opportunities for Roma to practice traditional Romani art forms in municipal cultural services.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	Municipalities Regional authorities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing the measures decided on in the Accessibility of Art and Culture Programme with due consideration to the needs of the Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education	ABRA Roma organisations

#### 4.4.1.5 Enhancing the social inclusion of Roma and coverage of the Romani language and culture in YLE programmes

The media is in a major role in the creation of public images, the promotion of multiculturalism and ethnic equality, and the realisation of linguistic and cultural rights.

According to the law, YLE shall provide services in Sami, Romani and Finnish Sign Language, support tolerance and multiculturalism, and provide programming for minority and special groups. The Sami Parliament has the right to be heard every two years, before the YLE Administrative Council submits its report on the implementation of the public service. No corresponding right for the Roma to be heard exists.

The public use of the Romani language in the media enhances its status as a language that is used in everyday communication and the development of a linguistic identity for the Roma population. Since 1995, YLE has included a 15–20-minute, Romani-language programme on current affairs in its weekly programming. Some documentaries on the Roma population have been included in TV programming in particular, and the Roma population has also featured in individual multiculturalism-enhancing, magazine-type programmes and the Opettaja-TV (‘Teacher TV’).

As far as the media is concerned, the aim is to promote the kind of dissemination of information that eliminates prejudices against the Roma population, provides more information on their history and culture as part of Finnish society, and generally improves their public image.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the coverage of the Roma minority as part of Finnish society in YLE programming; increasing the production of informative programmes and programmes on current affairs aimed at the Roma population, also in Romani; and creating the necessary procedures that allow the Roma minority to be heard in conjunction with the planning of YLE programming.</li> </ul>	YLE	ABRA Regional ABRAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into the possibility of Nordic cooperation in the production of radio and TV programmes in the Romani language and on the Roma.</li> </ul>	YLE	Nordic Council of Ministers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Roma organisations in the creation of a more positive public image through the provision of media training.</li> </ul>	YLE	ABRA Regional ABRAs Roma organisations

## **Best practices**

### *Language nest activity*

Aimed at Roma of all ages, language nest activity has been used with positive results in some localities to revive the Romani language. Starting in 2009, the National Board of Education will fund pilot language nest projects in three localities, with the intention of extending the project to cover more localities in the future.

### *Romani-language summer schools*

So-called language summer camps, which have proved popular, have been organised for the Roma population by the National Board of Education. In 2009 their number was increased and more locations were included. In Savonlinna, the local Roma Association has organised Romani-language courses as part of camp activities aimed at the Roma population.

## **4.5 Promoting the equal treatment of Roma and preventing discrimination**

Due to discrimination and negative prejudices, the Roma on average are in a worse position than the majority population as regards access to the labour market, housing, and services that meet their needs. The Roma population is not sufficiently aware of their rights and often unable to identify the discrimination aimed at them. Attitudes and the fear of discrimination also have an impact on the Roma population's behaviour and on their initiative and willingness to participate.

The aim in this Key Area is to prevent the development of anti-Gypsyism in Finnish society by making discrimination aimed at them transparent, raising awareness of the situation and culture of the Roma, and through the elimination of negative prejudices and attitudes.

Means for the promotion of equality include the mainstreaming of equal treatment, special measures, and positive discrimination. The mainstreaming of non-discrimination and equal treatment is supported by the Non-Discrimination Act and the statutory equality plans outlined in it. One of the most important means of mainstreaming is the enhancement of equality planning.

Compared to the majority population, part of the Roma population is in a disadvantaged position in terms of pre-primary education, basic and vocational education and training, and employment. Accordingly, new forms of positive discrimination are necessary to improve the situation, such as intermediaries and support persons with a Romani background, as well as case managers and various forms of support outside the education system.

The enhancement of the equal treatment of the Roma population and the prevention of discrimination aimed at them are factors that penetrate through the whole structure of society, which is why some of the measures relating to this objective are also listed under other objectives of the National Policy.

#### 4.5.1 Enhancing the equality and non-discrimination of the Roma population

The European Commission emphasises the mainstreaming of non-discrimination as a means of enhancing equality. In practice, the mainstreaming of the non-discrimination of the Roma population entails ensuring that the needs of the Roma minority are taken into account in the setting of objectives and in operational policies in all spheres of life, as well as the establishment of operational practices that prevent discrimination against Roma and enhance their social inclusion and the creation of equal opportunities for them.

##### 4.5.1.1 Enhancing equal opportunities for Roma and their equal treatment and preventing discrimination aimed at them

The monitoring of discrimination and making it transparent are both significant in terms of the prevention of discrimination and the allocation of the correct type of action. As far as the Roma population is concerned, current research data are needed that focus on their living conditions and on various spheres of life. Moreover, the discrimination experienced and faced by the Roma population should be regularly monitored as part of the general monitoring of discrimination.

For the authorities, one of the essential tools in the development of equality is equality planning. According to research data, however, the objectives and action relating to the Roma population have not been included in the majority of the plans. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that all the plans contain concrete action for the enhancement of equal opportunities for Roma and the prevention of discrimination against them.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus, in the development work on the general monitoring of discrimination, on the development of monitoring indicators for the discrimination faced by the Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior/ Monitoring Group for Discrimination	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Ombudsman for Minorities Ministry of Employment and the Economy Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the awareness of the Roma population of their right to non-discriminatory treatment through the enhancement of Roma organisations' expertise in the implementation of anti-discrimination projects.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior/ PROGRESS	Ombudsman for Minorities Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement of authorities' equality planning in cooperation with Roma; ensuring that the equality plans include concrete measures for the creation of equal opportunities for Roma and the prevention of discrimination against them.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior	Ombudsman for Minorities Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging the authorities to include in the equality plans, required by the Non-Discrimination Act, the possibility of positive discrimination in situations where Roma are underrepresented or in a disadvantaged position when compared to the rest of population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior	Ministries Ombudsman for Minorities ABRA / Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities
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#### 4.5.1.2 Elimination of anti-Romani bias and providing more information on the situation of the Roma and Romani culture

Campaigns, events etc. are more likely to be efficient when they are organised in cooperation with other operators. The expertise of Roma organisations and their participation in anti-discrimination activities with other NGOs and authorities should be enhanced through the provision of education and training on equality and the prevention of discrimination. This would also enhance the organisations' ability to provide anti-discrimination information and advice for the Roma population.

To assist authorities and other service providers in the development of their services to better meet the needs of the Roma population, it is important to continue and enhance the training provided for them on Romani culture and the situation of the Roma.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting a national media campaign, aimed at the elimination of prejudices against the Roma population, to raise the profile of the Roma minority and to support the implementation of the National Policy on Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior, PROGRESS	YLE Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing human rights and civic education as part of the promotion of cultural rights and the prevention of discrimination against Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	ABRA Regional ABRAs Roma organisations

#### 4.5.1.3 Intervening in the multiple discrimination experienced by the Roma population as well as the internal discrimination within the group

In the future, the multiple discrimination faced by the Roma population in various spheres of life should be identified better than today among authorities, the Roma population itself, and other bodies representing groups in danger of being discriminated against. The discrimination experienced by Roma women in working life should be prevented through joint action between the various operators in working life, the authorities, and bodies representing the Roma population. Gender equality among the Roma population should be enhanced in cooperation with equality authorities and women's and men's organisations.

The equal treatment of Roma boys and girls in early childhood education and care, basic education and leisure activities must be ensured. Roma pupils should be taken into account in the development of measures against school bullying. In services for the elderly, the personnel should be made aware of the fact that the Roma population is entitled to exactly the same services as the rest of the population, and that due to their background, they may have special needs that the service providers need to address. Special consideration should also be given to the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities with a Romani background and the accessibility of services.

The various minorities within the Roma community, such as persons with disabilities, representatives of sexual and gender minorities, and various moral, ethical and religious groups, should be seen as representatives of the multiplicity of the Roma population. The work of Roma organisations and the National and Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs in the enhancement of the acceptance of multiplicity within the Roma population should be developed further, with due consideration to all the illegal grounds for discrimination, such as gender, religion or moral conviction, age, disability, and sexual orientation.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing action for stopping or preventing multiple discrimination; raising the awareness of the Roma population of multiple discrimination and the legislation relating to it.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior, Monitoring Group for Discrimination	ABRA, regional ABRAs Roma organisations Ombudsman for Minorities and Ombudsman for Equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Roma organisations in their fight against discrimination, and the promotion of equality.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior/PROGRESS	ABRA Regional ABRAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Roma organisations' resources, expertise and attitudinal work for the acceptance of multiplicity among the Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of the Interior, ABRA	Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups Roma organisations

## **Best practices**

### ***Cooperation between authorities and Roma organisations in the prevention of discrimination***

In recent years, Roma organisations have striven to promote the equal treatment of Roma and to eliminate the discrimination aimed at them in cooperation with authorities. Special emphasis has been on influencing the activities of authorities and other service providers through the dissemination of information on the special features of Romani culture. Actual anti-discrimination work, however, is also quite new to Roma organisations, so resources and the enhancement of expertise are sorely needed in this over a wide front.

A good example of anti-discrimination work is Equality is Priority, a joint project of several organisations representing various minorities, carried out in Turku between 2007–2008. The project included information sessions for the Roma population in the Finland Proper region in

Western Finland. The sessions were organised by local Roma organisations and their aim was to enhance the Roma population's ability to better identify discrimination and to learn how to intervene in it. Together with local organisations representing other minorities, the Roma organisations organised a campaign, which was visible on the sides of buses, and on posters placed in public areas. The organisations also produced a book with profiles and biographies of Turku residents with a minority background.

## **4.6 Developing the policy on Roma and enhancing their opportunities for participation**

### **4.6.1 Development of the administrative structures for handling Romani affairs and enhancing the policy on Roma**

The implementation of a long-term policy on Roma entails the strengthening of the administrative structures and constant monitoring of the objectives, implementation and results of the policy on Roma. The purpose of the Policy Guideline is to strengthen the institutional structures of the administration of Romani affairs on a national and regional level. The enhancement of the social inclusion of the Roma and the development of the structures and practices promoting cooperation between the Roma population and the authorities should be supported through the implementation of affirmative action, particularly on a local level. To enhance the equal treatment and social inclusion of Roma, the Roma organisations' expertise and operational resources should be supported and the visibility and opportunities for social participation of the Roma population should be enhanced through the development of hearing procedures. Roma children and youth should also be given the opportunity to make their voices heard.

#### **4.6.1.1 Strengthening the institutional structures of the handling of Romani affairs both on a national and a regional-local level**

The development and implementation of the policy on Roma entails strengthening the structures of the policy and clarifying its mission. This applies to the position of both the National and Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs and other regional and local cooperation structures.

Sufficient resources and supportive administrative action are needed to enhance the activities of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs to meet the challenges of the increasing number of national and international tasks facing it today. Now that the legal reform concerning equality legislation and authorities has been completed, it is time to address the division of duties between the various authorities and boards and the allocation of resources.

The Planning Officer's sphere of activities in the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs is wide-ranging. With the current resources, the dissemination of information for the Roma population, and the maintenance of contact with both them and local-level authorities, is extremely challenging in any given area. Considerable investment in terms of resources by the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs is also required to implement the measures included in the National Policy on Roma, so personnel resources should be increased accordingly, while guaranteeing the new regional authorities' support to the Advisory Boards and their planning officers.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the necessary resources for the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for the promotion of the policy on Roma; enhancing its personnel resources through the establishment on the Board of the new position of expert.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of the provisions relating to the duties and composition of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs as well as the participation of Roma organisations in its activities.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment in the new regional administration authority of Western and Inland Finland of a Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs and the position of a planning officer.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministries Regional administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the personnel resources of the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs; providing the necessary appropriation from the appropriation assigned to regional administration authorities.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Regional administration authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening local cooperation structures between the authorities and the Roma population for the enhancement of the inclusion of the Roma by promoting the establishment of local Roma working groups in municipalities or joint cooperation areas with a Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, ABRA	Regional administration Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that contact persons responsible for Romani affairs are appointed in all Ministries in the main administrative sectors for the enhancement of the implementation and coordination of the policy on Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Environment	Ministries, ABRA



#### 4.6.1.2 Enhancing the realisation of the rights of the Roma minority and their participation in decision-making

The Roma minority's right to the maintenance and development of a language and culture of their own is provided for in the Finnish Constitution. The implementation of this provision is hampered by the disjointedness of lower-level legislation and the lack of a clear definition of the rights and minority status of the Roma. The Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs act as an advisory cooperation forum between the Roma population and the authorities. However, the Roma population still lacks the kind of structures for hearings and participation in decision-making that the Sami or the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland already have, viz. the Sami Parliament and the Swedish Assembly of Finland, respectively.

To enhance the social inclusion of the Roma minority and their participation in decision-making, it is necessary to support the functionality and resources of the organisations representing the Roma population, as well as to develop new ways for the Roma population to make their voices heard and participate in decision-making in matters that concern them. It is also necessary to enhance the interaction and cooperation between Roma organisations, national civic organisations, and local associations.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into ways of better taking into account the views of the Roma population in administration, drafting of legislation and legislative work.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Justice	Ministries Prime Minister's Office ABRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating the necessary framework to facilitate the arrangement of regular hearings for Roma population of all ages on a local/regional level.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health/ABRA	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional administration Regional ABRA's Municipalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking into the possibility of setting up a special portal for the Roma population, which would then act as a two-way information channel between the Roma population and the authorities.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health/ABRA	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Transport and Communications YLE Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing the expertise and operational resources of Roma organisations by initiating an empowerment pilot project to provide more opportunities for the Roma population to participate in decision-making.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that both the provision of support for Roma organisations and the enhancement of cooperation between Roma organisations and other organisations are addressed in the development of the activities of the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Justice	ABRA Roma organisations

#### 4.6.1.3 Creating the necessary conditions for the development, implementation and monitoring of a sustained policy on Roma

A sustained policy on Roma with the appropriate administrative structure in place is needed to complement the development of the National Policy. It is necessary to increase expertise and ensure continuity to successfully implement the policy on Roma. The disappearance from state, provincial and municipal administration of the accumulated expertise of baby boomers retiring in the near future poses a serious threat.

Municipalities occupy a key role in the enhancement of the equal treatment and social inclusion of the Roma population. This is why, in terms of the implementation of the National Policy on Roma, it is crucial to ensure that municipalities realise the advantages of enhancing the status of the Roma in the long run, commit themselves to achieving the goals of the National Policy on Roma, and obtain the necessary support for this.

To promote the policy on Roma successfully and assess the results of its implementation, it is also necessary to extend the knowledge base on the Roma population. As the population in Finland is not registered on ethnic grounds, no relevant statistical data are available on the Roma population. This is why other, safe means of collecting data and extending the knowledge base, such as ad hoc studies and reports, are needed.

To enhance the implementation of the policy on Roma, the promotion of the equal treatment of Roma should be addressed individually in the action plans and development plans of various administrative sectors.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the promotion of the equality of the Roma, the inclusion of a fixed allocation of € million in the state budget as a state grant to municipalities for the development of support measures, services that complement the basic services, and co-operation structures aimed at the Roma population.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Finance Regional administration Municipalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including the Government Resolution on the implementation of the National Policy on Roma in the next Government Programme.</li> </ul>	Ministries Prime Minister's Office	Political parties ABRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a procedure for the holding of regular ministerial discussions for the outlining of the national and international objectives of the policy on Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education	ABRA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including the promotion of social inclusion and the equal treatment of Roma in the action and development plans of various administrative sectors.</li> </ul>	Various ministries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending the knowledge base on the Roma population by identifying the necessary conditions for information retrieval, developing information retrieval methods, and conducting ad hoc studies and reports.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Finance Statistics Finland	Various ministries National Institute for Health and Welfare Ombudsman for Minorities Data Protection Ombudsman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the monitoring of the policy on Roma implementation through the setting of development goals and the development of indicators to assess its results and effects.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	ABRA Ministry of the Interior National Institute for Health and Welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The production at regular intervals of a monitoring report on the implementation and results of the policy on Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health/ABRA	Prime Minister's Office

#### 4.6.2 Promotion of participation in international cooperation in Romani issues

The Roma are a pan-European minority. This is why it is also important to endeavour to influence the development of a European policy on Roma in a wider sense. Finland has been active in many ways in taking up Romani issues in European cooperation bodies. On a European level, there is a tendency toward the comprehensive development of the policy on Roma.

The aim is that Finland will continue to participate and actively influence the formation of a European strategy on Roma by bringing its expertise into the development work and by offering various models and experiences in the enhancement of inclusion and equality. This kind of interaction would provide Finland with an excellent opportunity to learn from the experiences and viable operational policies of other countries.

As a European minority, the Roma also have an impact on Finnish society, of which the most recent example is the appearance of migrant Roma. An international solution is indeed necessary to resolve many of the issues relating to the situation of the Roma.

Finland supports the line taken by the Council of Europe, which is to include the Roma in the planning and decision-making processes concerning themselves on various administrative levels and in international organisations. The European Union has also endeavoured to enhance cooperation with civil society and to create a discussion forum on Roma affairs for the Member States. In its Conclusions published in June 2009, the Council of the European Union committed itself to the development of a stronger structure and form within the Commission for the Roma Platform put forward in the Conclusions. The purpose of the Roma Platform is to create a discussion and cooperation forum which also enables the Roma to participate in the implementation of the EU's policy on Roma, and to increase dialogue on Romani affairs be-

tween the Member States, the Commission, non-governmental organisations, and experts. The mission, structure and objectives of the Roma Platform have not so far been defined.

Finland's active participation in European Romani work entails not only the existence of a political will, but also enhancing our expertise in international issues. In addition to a thorough knowledge of international organisations, Finnish representatives and officials also need to possess a good knowledge of Romani affairs on a European scale to perform this international work successfully.

In the EU Finland has an opportunity to enhance official activities in EU bodies. Within the framework of existing agreements, Finland can actively promote the enhancement of the status of the Roma. For example, as Finnish representatives participate in the work of various programmes, departments, committees and working groups, they are familiar with situation of the Roma minority in Europe and can introduce a Romani viewpoint to the work. This procedure would promote the implementation of the principle of mainstreaming, which is the official policy of the EU.

The representatives and officials dealing with Romani affairs on a European level need political and administrative support. The key ministers of the Government representing the main administrative sectors should, at regular intervals, hold ministerial discussions on Finland's goals in national and international policy on Roma.

Action	Responsible body/bodies	Contributing bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finland actively promotes the development of a European strategy on Roma in the European Union.</li> </ul>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing up a national and international strategy on Roma for Finland; creating an operational procedure, based on discussions on a ministerial level, for the coordination of the policy on Roma.</li> </ul>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ABRA	Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing expertise in international cooperation; allocating resources for international expert and influential work on Romani affairs.</li> </ul>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ABRA	Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging dialogue between international organisations (such as the Council of Europe, the EU and OSCE) and NGOs dealing with Romani affairs, and supporting their further development.</li> </ul>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ABRA	Roma organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the Conclusions on Roma are taken into account in action taken on the basis of the EU's Social Agenda.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry for	ABRA

	Foreign Af-fairs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the utilisation of EU's Structural Funds in national action aimed at Roma; participating in the activities of the European Structural Funds network for the dissemination and utilisation of best practices.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the European Union, the Council of Europe and OSCE, promoting the solving of problems relating to itinerant Roma begging and peddling and moving from one country to another.</li> </ul>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ABRA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing local authorities of the statutes on the status and rights of indigent and homeless EU citizens and the procedures required by these statutes.</li> </ul>	Ministries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the voluntary work performed by the third sector for supporting indigent and homeless Roma arriving from other EU countries.</li> </ul>	Ministries	Parishes Civic organisations

## **5 Implementation and monitoring of the policy**

### **5.1 The main operating bodies of the National Policy on Roma**

The National Policy on Roma is a typical special programme requiring cross-administrative cooperation and coordination, where the responsibility for administrative implementation is divided between several bodies. In terms of the implementation of the programme, the role of Finnish municipalities, the various cooperation bodies and Roma organisations is significant.

In terms of the implementation of the National Policy, the public administration plays a key role in the provision of policy-specific and administrative-sector-specific steering. The main operating bodies for the Policy are: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; the National Institute for Health and Welfare; the Ministry of Education; the National Board of Education; the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of Employment and the Economy; the Ministry of the Environment; the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Finance; and YLE. From the viewpoint of the mainstreaming of equality, the Roma minority should be taken into account in the action and development plans of the various ministries. The proposal, included in the National Policy, concerning the appointment of officials in charge of Romani affairs in the various administrative sectors will enhance the implementation and monitoring of the Policy.

Regional authorities play a significant role in the coordination of the National Policy on Roma and the provision of guidance. It is vital to ensure the continuity of expertise, development of activities and sufficient resources in the regional administration for Romani affairs in conjunction with the regional administration reform.

When it comes to the realisation of the equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma, Finnish municipalities are in a key position. This applies to education and training, youth work, housing, social welfare and health services for different age groups, and sports and cultural activities. In terms of the inclusion and equal treatment of the Roma, it is essential to address the needs of the Roma population in municipal and regional equality plans, action and development plans, and various strategies. The development of operational practices that take into account the needs of the Roma also entails the enhancement of broad-based cooperation on a local level. The key proposal for action in the National Policy is the establishment of local Roma working groups and the further development of their activities to enhance interaction. Municipalities are encouraged to develop operational models that enhance the status of the Roma population through a special state grant.

As a forum for experts and cooperation, the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs plays a major role in supporting the implementation of the National Policy. The role of the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs is emphasised in the practical implementation of the Policy. They act as a link between regional and local authorities and the Roma population. Their resources should be increased to support the implementation of the Policy.

Roma organisations play a significant role in the enhancement of social influence and the development of cooperation. They are familiar with the everyday life of the Roma population. Roma organisations are an important source of information and a channel for interaction, be it the development of authorities actions or the enhancement of the active participation of the Roma population. A necessary precondition for this is the enhancement of the resources and

expertise of Roma organisations, which is what the National Policy aims to do. It is also vital to enhance cooperation between Roma organisations and other civic organisations. Civic activity in general may offer the Roma population a natural way of integrating better into society.

The role of employers, employers' associations and labour organisations as operating bodies is emphasised in the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equality on the labour market. Negative attitudes, prejudices and direct discrimination are still the main obstacles preventing the Roma from being integrated into the labour market. On the other hand, Roma seeking access to the labour market is also in need of enhancement of their knowledge of working life practices.

In implementing the Policy in the various Key Areas, it would be important to enhance contacts with labour market organisations and to find forms of cooperation that support the elimination of prejudices and the promotion of multiplicity in working life. In terms of the implementation of the Policy, various civic organisations, non-governmental sports organisations and parishes are important cooperation bodies.

## **5.2 Implementation and monitoring**

Finland's first National Policy on Roma is a comprehensive and concrete action policy for the promotion of the social inclusion and equal treatment of Roma in various spheres of life. The realisation of the Policy's objectives is dependent on simultaneous development measures and the appropriations allocated for them in the various administrative sectors and levels, as well as the development of cooperation structures and the active participation and commitment of the Roma population and its organisations. The results and their permanence are linked to the efficacy of mainstreaming as well as the results of temporary development measures and their successful adoption in the long run.

The implementation of the National Policy on Roma entails the coordination of cross-administrative development work. With its present composition and resources, the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs lacks the means to be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy. International experience in the implementation of similar Roma strategies has also shown that charging individual units responsible for Romani affairs with the implementation significantly weakens the realisation and efficacy of these programmes. Correspondingly, dividing responsibility among various administrative bodies and broad-based political commitment to the implementation of Roma strategies have proved effective. The Working Group proposes that the Prime Minister's Office and a specially appointed monitoring group be responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the Policy, as well as the monitoring of the implementation in cooperation with the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. The various ministries will be responsible for the implementation of the necessary measures within their administrative sectors. Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs will play a significant role as support organisations for regional and local implementation in particular.

The National Policy on Roma includes both short-term and long-term objectives, which is why the implementation period of the Policy must be sufficiently extensive to yield long-term results and to facilitate their assessment. The implementation of the National Policy on Roma

is linked to the recommendations of the European Union on the development of the policy on Roma.

The first situation assessment of the implementation of the Policy will be drawn up in 2011, which will also be the first opportunity to modify the implementation plan. A progress review will be performed in 2014, and the final assessment is due in 2017. To support the progress review and possible modification of the Policy, an international assessment of the implementation of the National Policy on Roma will be carried out in 2013 through the utilisation of the policy on Roma expertise of the Council of Europe, the European Union, OSCE, and other international institutions. To carry out the assessment, the necessary funds must be made available for this purpose.

A separate cross-administrative monitoring group, consisting of the key ministries, the Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Roma organisations, and other key operational bodies, will be appointed by the Government for the monitoring of the implementation of the National Policy on Roma. The monitoring group will be tasked with confirming the Policy implementation plan as well as determining the profit areas to be monitored and the monitoring indicators for the realisation of objectives.

The monitoring of the National Policy on Roma is divided into two areas: monitoring of the execution of the implementation on one hand, and of the realisation of the objectives set for the Policy on the other. The implementation of the National Policy on Roma and the realisation of its objectives will be monitored separately as regards the measures specified in the Policy. (Appendix 3.) Additionally, each administrative sector will draw up a detailed implementation plan for the measures proposed in the Policy. A report on the realisation of the implementation plan will be submitted to the monitoring group annually.

Due to the lack of statistical data relating to the Roma, the monitoring of the realisation and results of the Policy objectives will be based mainly on qualitative indicators and information gathering, with various questionnaires and surveys as information gathering methods. When determining the monitoring indicators, the expertise of the National Institute for Health and Welfare could be utilised, as well as the results of the development work on the monitoring of European policy on Roma and national work on the development of indicators for the monitoring of discrimination.

Information gathering on Roma and its methods have been the subject of lively discussion both in Finland and abroad. Several countries and international organisations (such as the EU, the FRA, the UNPD and EUROSTAT) have conducted Romani-related information gathering and launched projects for the development of new information gathering methods. So far the information gathering has been project-specific and only met the information needs of the project in question within its own operational environment. In the future, Romani-related information gathering and the development of its methods should be the responsibility of national statistical authorities, as they, being permanent and statutory authorities, possess the necessary continuity, expertise and access to databases.

A separate communications plan will be drawn up for the national Policy on Roma. A national information campaign, included in the Policy and aimed at the elimination of prejudices, will be carried out to support the implementation of the Policy. As the Policy is initiated, information sessions for regional and local authorities, Roma organisations and the Roma population will be arranged in cooperation with Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs.



## **6 Summary on the policy**

### **Background to the National Policy on Roma**

Like all Finnish citizens, the Roma population has equal rights to education and public services, as well as the right to influence and participate in the functions of society. Additionally, the Roma people's right to maintain and develop the language and culture of their own is protected in the Finnish Constitution. Due to historical reasons and many other factors, such as insufficient education, discrimination and negative attitudes, the small Roma population in Finland is, however, in a weaker position than the majority population in many respects. According to current estimates, part of the Roma population is in danger of becoming marginalised.

In December 2008, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a Working Group to prepare Finland's first National Policy on Roma. The decision was based on the assignment given by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen to the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs to prepare a memorandum on how the living conditions of Roma in Finland are developed. The Preliminary Report was published in June 2008. According to the Appointment Decision, the mission of the Working Group was to prepare and coordinate a National Policy on Roma aiming at the equal treatment and non-discrimination of the Roma population. The main areas of coverage of the National Policy were outlined in the assignment given to the Working Group.

The term of the working group was 1 January–30 September 2009. The Working Group preparing the National Policy on Roma was broadly based. It included representatives of all the key administrative sectors, Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs, research institutions, and Roma organisations. The Ombudsman for Minorities also participated in the work of the Working Group. One of the objectives in the preparation of the Policy was the inclusion of representatives of the Roma population in the preparatory work. Accordingly, several hearings were arranged for the Roma population in conjunction with the preparation of the Policy during spring 2009. A separate hearing was held for representatives of municipal educational and social welfare services. Numerous experts from various administrative sectors were also heard during the preparation of the Policy.

The general aim of Finland's first National Policy on Roma is to promote the social inclusion and equal treatment of the Roma in different spheres of life by mainstreaming the promotion of equal treatment and non-discrimination into various functions of society. The recent recommendations issued by the Council of Europe and the European Union entail the comprehensive development of the policy on Roma.

In the lives of the Roma population, issues connected with education, housing, employment, basic subsistence and welfare become entwined with cultural factors and experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. These often create a vicious circle, where measures are needed in many areas simultaneously to ensure the realisation of equality.

The aim in the preparation of the National Policy on Roma was to draw up a comprehensive and concrete policy action programme to bring about permanent and sustainable improvement in the status of the Roma in such a manner as to enhance the Roma population's active participation and their ability to take responsibility. Through the pursuit of efficient and simultaneous measures, the aim is to create the necessary preconditions for a significant improve-

ment in the human rights and socio-economic status of the Roma, to offer them more opportunities for participation in decision-making, and to enhance their integration into Finnish society while keeping alive and further developing the Romani culture and identity.

Even though the National Policy on Roma highlights several areas of development which entail considerable investment on the part of Finnish society and authorities to enhance the equal treatment and social inclusion of Roma, the underlying principle in the Policy is the enhancement of the Roma population's active participation and functionality. This means that the expertise and resources of Roma organisations also need to be enhanced.

The core idea behind the National Policy on Roma is that the present legislation and service system create a solid basis for the promotion of the equal treatment of the Roma. The essential means of enhancing equality proposed in the Policy is the mainstreaming of non-discrimination, which entails addressing the needs of the Roma population in planning and decision-making, and the systematic promotion of equality. In addition to this, special measures will also be necessary to realise the social inclusion and factual equality of the Roma population. In practice, equality and inclusion are realised in everyday life and on a local level. This is why the role of municipalities is paramount in the promotion of equality. The National Policy on Roma proposes that a special grant for municipalities be included in the state budget for the development of the operational policies outlined in the programme, with a view to promoting the equal treatment of the Roma and complementing the existing primary services.

### ***Key Areas and Policy Guidelines of the National Policy on Roma***

The National Policy on Roma is divided into six Key Areas aiming at the promotion of inclusion and equality of Roma. These Key Areas include ten Policy Guidelines with an outline of their sub-objectives and recommended measures.

Enhancing the participation in education of Roma children and youth.

*Policy Guideline 1. Enhancing the participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care*

*Policy Guideline 2. Enhancing the inclusion and equal treatment of Roma children and youth in basic education and upper secondary education*

Enhancing the participation in education of the adult Roma population and promoting their access to the labour market.

*Policy Guideline 3. Enhancing the participation of Roma in vocational education and training*

*Policy Guideline 4. Supporting and promoting the employment of Roma*

Promoting the equal treatment of Roma and their access to various services.

*Policy Guideline 5. Promoting the welfare of the Roma and enhancing the allocation of social welfare and health services*

*Policy Guideline 6. Ensuring equal treatment in housing and reducing feelings of insecurity among the Roma*

Supporting the preservation and development of the Romani language and culture.

*Policy Guideline 7. Promoting the development of the Romani language and culture*

Promoting the equal treatment of Roma and preventing discrimination against them.

*Policy Guideline 8. Enhancing the equality and non-discrimination of the Roma*

Developing the policy on Roma and enhancing their opportunities to participate in decision-making.

*Policy Guideline 9. Developing the administrative structures for handling Romani affairs and enhancing the policy on Roma and its implementation*

*Policy Guidelines 10. Promotion of participation in international cooperation on Romani issues*

The primary objectives of the National Policy on Roma are increasing the number of Roma participating in education and raising their general level of education. Education is the key to both the labour market and, in a wider sense, to a more extensive social inclusion of the Roma as sovereign citizens. Socio-economic segregation begins in early childhood, which is why it is particularly important for Roma children to participate in early childhood education and care and in pre-primary education. Further necessary measures include providing the early childhood education personnel with more information on the Roma population; providing Roma parents with support; and enhancing cooperation with Romani homes. (*Policy Guideline 1*)

The participation in education of Roma children and youth, supporting their school attendance, and the transition from basic education into upper secondary education are Key Areas of development in raising the general level of education of the Roma population. One of the aims of the National Policy on Roma is the promotion of action and operational procedures in education and the school community that support the education of Roma children and youth. (*Policy Guideline 2*)

The lack of an occupation or professional qualifications is one of the main obstacles preventing the Roma population from gaining access to the labour market. The majority of Roma seek education and access to working life only as adults. The reason for this is the differing lifestyle of the Roma, as a result of which they reach adulthood and start a family at a relatively early age. This is why special measures are needed, particularly to enhance the vocational education and training of the adult Roma population and to support their participation in education and their access to the labour market. (*Policy Guideline 3*)

In addition to prejudices and discrimination, the obstacles preventing Roma from gaining access to the labour market include the lack of education and training, the lack of professional qualifications, and insufficient or non-existent work experience. Apart from the enhancement of the education and training of Roma, one of the aims of the National Policy on Roma is to enhance public employment services and to develop support processes that provide the Roma population with better access to the labour market. This entails the strengthening of contacts with working life and raising the awareness of the general public of the discrimination faced by Roma. (*Policy Guideline 4*)

Health inequalities among the population are known to have increased in recent years. The data on the living conditions and welfare-related issues of the Roma population are insufficient or incomplete, as are the data on their needs for social welfare and health services and the allocation of the services. This is why ad hoc studies and reports are needed to get an overview of the situation and to allocate development measures correctly. A part of the Roma

population is in danger of becoming marginalised, which is why urgent measures are needed to support them – children, adolescents, families, and the elderly alike. (*Policy Guideline 5*)

Roma are to a significant degree dependent on state-subsidised housing, as it is difficult for them to secure housing in the private rental market because of prejudices and their poor economic status. There are still several problem areas in Romani housing. A number of measures are put forward in the National Policy on Roma to remove these problem areas and to ensure the equal treatment of Roma. The discrimination and everyday racism experienced by Roma tend to increase their feelings of insecurity and to undermine their confidence in the majority population and authorities. The aim is to develop administrative procedures to reduce this insecurity. (*Policy Guideline 6*)

The Roma's right to a language and culture of their own is protected in the Finnish Constitution. The Romani language is an endangered language with fewer and fewer Roma speakers using it in everyday communication. A necessary precondition for the realisation of the cultural rights of the Roma is the preservation of the Romani language, which can be achieved through the development of its teaching, for example. The aim of the National Policy on Roma is to enhance both the preservation of the Romani language and to enhance the positive image of the Roma population and its cultural rights. (*Policy Guideline 7*)

Due to discrimination and negative prejudices, the Roma are, on average, in a worse position than the majority population as regards access to the labour market, housing, and services that meet their needs. The aim of the National Policy on Roma is the development of measures for the identification and prevention of discrimination, and the systematic promotion of equality through the enhancement of equality planning. (*Policy Guideline 8*)

An effective policy on Roma entails continuity and the enhancement of its implementation. The aim of the National Policy on Roma is to enhance the development of the policy on Roma through the strengthening of administrative structures on different levels, particularly on a local level, the provision of opportunities for Roma to participate in decision-making, and through the enhancement of the implementation of the policy on Roma. (*Policy Guideline 9*)

The Roma are a pan-European minority. Finland has been active in many ways in taking up Romani issues in European cooperation bodies. On a European level, the trend is toward the comprehensive development of the policy on Roma. The aim is that Finland will continue to participate and actively influence the formation of a European strategy on Roma by bringing its expertise into the development work and by offering various models and experiences in the enhancement of inclusion and equality, as well as learning from the experiences of other countries. (*Policy Guideline 10*)

## **Main proposals for action in the various Policy Guidelines**

The National Policy on Roma includes both short-term and long-term objectives and measures. Some of the proposals for action are quite concrete, while others entail more detailed development work. The Working Group suggests that some of the main proposals for action included in the National Policy on Roma be monitored especially closely. These include:

- For the promotion of the equality of the Roma, inclusion in the state budget of a fixed allocation of €3 million as a state grant to municipalities for the development of support

measures aimed at the Roma population, services that complement the basic services, and cooperation structures. *(Policy Guideline 9)*

- Taking into account the special needs of Roma children when preparing and revising the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. *(Policy Guideline 1)*
- Enhancing the teaching of the Romani language by producing educational material on Romani culture for day care and pre-primary education for children up to 6 years of age. *(Policy Guideline 1)*
- Supporting the dissemination and establishment of the best practices created in basic education development projects in educational activities on a national basis. *(Policy Guideline 2)*
- Conducting a survey on the adult Roma population's need for education and utilising these data to draw up a set of proposals for the allocation and development of vocational education and training. *(Policy Guideline 3)*
- In cooperation with regional Economic and Employment Development Centres, implementing a pilot project funded by ESF, with the aim of developing counselling and support services aimed at Roma through the training of support persons with a Romani background to provide employment counselling for the Roma population. *(Policy Guideline 4)*
- The National Institute for Health and Welfare will conduct an extensive survey with the aim of acquiring data on the living conditions, health, welfare and housing conditions of the Roma, as well as their service needs. *(Policy Guideline 5)*
- Determining which regional Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare could be charged with the development of social welfare and health services for the Roma and related information and training activities. *(Policy Guideline 5)*
- Looking into the possibility of launching, in cooperation with the key administrative sectors and operational bodies, a separate national project focusing on solving the Roma population's housing problems and the development and dissemination of best practices. *(Policy Guideline 6)*
- Looking into the possibility of introducing university-level teaching of the Romani language, organised in an appropriate manner. *(Policy Guideline 7)*
- Earmarking additional funding in the state budget for the promotion and performance of Romani artistic activity. *(Policy Guideline 7)*
- Starting a national media campaign, aimed at the elimination of prejudices against the Roma population, to raise the profile of the Roma minority and to support the implementation of the National Policy on Roma. *(Policy Guideline 8)*
- Developing the expertise and operational resources of Roma organisations by initiating an empowerment pilot project to provide more opportunities for the Roma population to participate in decision-making. *(Policy Guideline 9)*
- Strengthening cooperation structures for the enhancement of the inclusion of the Roma by promoting the establishment of local Roma working groups in the municipalities or regions with a Roma population. *(Policy Guideline 9)*
- Enhancing the implementation of the policy on Roma by establishing the position of an expert in the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, and by appointing officials in charge of Romani affairs in Ministries representing various administrative sectors. *(Policy Guideline 9)*
- Including the Government Resolution on the implementation of the National Policy on Roma in the next Government Programme. *(Policy Guideline 9)*

- Drawing up a national and international strategy on Roma for Finland, and creating an operational procedure, based on discussions on a ministerial level, for the coordination of the policy on Roma. (*Policy Guideline 10*)

### **Implementation and monitoring of the National Policy on Roma**

The purpose of the National Policy on Roma is to enhance the equal treatment of Roma and to create the necessary conditions for the utilisation and activation of the Roma population's own resources. The essential means of implementing the Policy are the mainstreaming of non-discrimination and equality as well as the use of special measures. The essential element here is that existing legislation and social service structures create the necessary conditions for the development and mainstreaming of action enhancing the position of the Roma. The results and their permanence are linked to the efficacy of mainstreaming, as well as the results of temporary development measures and their successful adoption in the long run.

The need for cross-administrative cooperation is apparent in the implementation of the National Policy and the practical measures necessary for it. The realisation of the Policy's objectives is dependent on simultaneous development measures and the appropriations allocated for them in the various administrative sectors and levels, as well as the development of cooperation structures, and the active participation and commitment of the Roma population and its organisations.

The implementation of the National Policy on Roma entails the coordination of cross-administrative development work. With its present composition and resources, the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs lacks the means to be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy. International experience in the implementation of similar strategies on Roma has shown that dividing responsibility among various administrative bodies and political commitment to the implementation of strategies on Roma have proved effective in terms of results and efficacy. The Working Group proposes that the Prime Minister's Office and a specially appointed monitoring group be responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the Policy, as well as the monitoring of the implementation in cooperation with the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. The various ministries will be responsible for the implementation of the necessary measures within their administrative sectors. The realisation of the Policy will be evaluated at regular intervals.

Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs will play a significant role as support organisations for regional and local implementation in particular. Municipalities will be encouraged to set up local Roma working groups, and to utilise the proposed state grant in the development of inclusion-enhancing operational procedures.

## **APPENDIX 1. The composition of the Working Group preparing the National Policy on Roma 1 January–30 September 2009**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>
<b>Chair</b>	
Pekka Haavisto	MP, Chair of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs
<b>Vice Chair</b>	
Viveca Arrhenius	Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
<b>Members</b> (Personal deputies given in parentheses)	
Maria Biskop (Arja Mäkeläinen)	Senior Officer, Ministry of Education Education Counsellor, Ministry of Education
Sofie From-Emmesberger	Head of Unit, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (as of 11 August 2009)
Kimmo Granqvist (Anneli Hänninen)	Senior Research Officer, Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland Senior Research Officer, Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland
Janette Grönfors	Chairperson, Nevo Roma ry
Päivi Haavisto-Vuori (Timo Lähdesmäki)	Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Employment and the Economy Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Employment and the Economy
Raila Halmetoja	Editor, Romanitaiteen keskus ry/Centre for Romani Art
Henna Huttu (Henry Lindgren)	Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland (until 28 February 2009) Romani Mediator, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland
Raija Hynynen (Jorma Pietiläinen)	Housing Counsellor, Ministry of the Environment Senior Officer, Ministry of the Environment
Unto Jääpuro (Päivi Majaniemi)	Vice Chair, Suomen romaniyhdistys ry/Finnish Roma Association Secretary, Suomen romaniyhdistys ry/Finnish Roma Association
Timo Kauppinen (Jouko Karjalainen)	Senior Research Officer, National Institute for Welfare and Health Research Officer, National Institute for Welfare and Health
Sinikka Keskinen (Timo Makkonen)	Special Adviser, Ministry of the Interior Senior Officer, Ministry of the Interior
Mirja Kurkinen (Ulla Westermarck)	Government Counsellor, Ministry of Justice Senior Officer, Ministry of Justice
Malla Laiti (Taito Lehmusta)	Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Southern Finland Vice Chair, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Southern Finland
Tuula Lindberg	Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Western Finland

(Tenho Lindström)	Vocational Qualification in Business and Administration, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Western Finland
Väinö Lindberg (Alida Friman)	Vice Chair, National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs Vocational Qualification in Business and Administration, National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs
Leena Mämmi	Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland (as of 1 March 2009)
Leena Nissilä (Susanna Rajala)	Education Counsellor, National Board of Education Expert, National Board of Education
Tiina Pikkarainen	Intern, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (until 28 February 2009)
Helena Valentin	Planning Officer, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Eastern Finland
Tino Varjola (Kyösti Florin)	Chair, Suomen Romani Foorumi ry/Finnish Romani Forum Acting Executive Manager, Suomen Romanifoorumi ry/Finnish Romani Forum
(Miranda Vuolasranta)	Executive Manager, Suomen Romanifoorumi ry/Finnish Romani Forum
Jaana Viemerö	Expert, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
Tuula Åkerlund (Leena Rauhala)	Executive Manager, Romano Missio ry MP, Chairperson of the Board, Romano Missio ry
Katja Ärling (Tuula Lindgren)	BA in Political Science, Kromana ry Work Planner, Kromana ry
<b>Secretaries</b>	
Sarita Friman-Korpela	Senior Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Hannele Syrjä	Secretary to Working Group, Project Coordinator, State Provincial Office of Southern Finland
<b>Experts</b>	
Henry Hedman	Researcher, Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland
Johanna Suurpää	Ombudsman for Minorities



## **APPENDIX 2. Description of the current state of the Policy Guidelines and their links to other development work**

### **1. The promotion of the equal treatment and social inclusion of Roma children in early childhood education and care**

#### **Current situation and need for development**

The educational differentiation of Roma from the majority population begins in early childhood, so raising the level of education of the Roma population should start in early childhood education and care. Only a minority of Roma children participate in day care and pre-primary education. In 2001–2002, the National Board of Education conducted a survey on the basic education of Roma children. According to the survey, few Roma children participated in pre-primary education. It seems likely, however, that some Roma children had participated in pre-primary education in day care centres. No data on their number on a national level are available, though. The problem with Roma children who do participate in pre-primary education and day care has been their numerous absences and, as a result of this, irregular participation in education. This is why even those Roma children who do participate in pre-primary education have not necessarily reached the level of maturity required to start school.

A stimulating childhood environment and the development of school readiness and learning skills are a necessary precondition for Roma children to perform successfully in the education system and to succeed in their studies. Many Roma parents lack the ability to support their children in the acquisition of the skills necessary for school. The traditional Romani educational methods do not favour hobby crafts that develop a child's fine motor skills, so Roma children often have problems with manual skills at school. Neither do Roma children's Finnish skills and vocabulary develop at a rate comparable to their peers. Their linguistic difficulties and limited vocabulary are due to the fact that their language learning is based solely on spoken language. The Finnish language spoken by the Roma population is different from mainstream Finnish both in terms of vocabulary and phraseology. Roma parents' mastery of Finnish may also be incomplete because a mixture of Romani, Finnish and Swedish is often used in communication in Roma homes.

Traditionally, Roma children do not participate in day care. Roma parents are not always aware of the importance of early childhood education in their children's school education. Supporting Roma parents' parenting skills through the development of cooperation models and structures has been recognised as an essential element in the development of Roma children's early childhood education and care. This entails enhanced interaction between family centres, day care centres and Roma families. Acting as mediators between Roma families and the service system, support persons with a Romani background have proved a valuable asset in this cooperation. Single parents in particular are in need of a strong support network to avoid the possible, cross-generational threat of marginalisation.

The development aims are to raise the awareness of Roma parents of the significance of early childhood education, to support their parenting skills, and to increase the participation in early childhood education of Roma children to ensure they have the necessary maturity and skills to attend school. To enhance the participation in early childhood education and care of Roma children, the awareness of day care personnel of the conditions of Roma children should be

raised and participation-enhancing activities and cooperation structures should be developed further.

From the administrative point of view, the development of early childhood education and care entails the creation of best practices for fruitful, multi-professional cooperation. From the Roma population's point of view, this entails the identification of problems at an early stage, awareness of the various forms of support available, and the courage to use the necessary services.

### **Links to other national development work**

This Policy Guideline has links to Government policies and development programmes in various administrative sectors. The Government's Policy Programme on the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families focuses on the enhancement of a child-oriented society, the well-being of families with children, and the prevention of marginalisation. It aims to pay special attention to supporting children and youth; the early identification of threats to well-being and the threat of marginalisation; the reduction of the number of children in foster care; the reduction of health inequalities; and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and mental health. Among the objectives of the Policy Programme is also the development of a family-centred service system that supports parenting skills. This area of development is also significant from the Roma families' point of view.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's National Development Programme for Social Welfare and Health Care (KASTE) for 2008–2011 is a strategic steering tool for the development of services and operational models, as well as the enhancement of the social inclusion of the population and the prevention of marginalisation. Supporting the development of children and youth is an essential element in the Programme. The Programme emphasises preventive action and early intervention. Even though the measures are not aimed at individual target groups, the special needs of the Roma population should be taken into account in the development of services and operational models and the implementation of the Programme.

On a local level, particularly in municipalities with a large Roma population, the situation of Roma families, the early childhood education and care needs of Roma children, and the further development of measures should be addressed in the statutory municipal welfare plans for children and youth.

## **2. Enhancing the social inclusion and equal treatment of Roma children and youth in basic and upper secondary education**

### **Current situation and need for development**

Even though an increasing number of Roma are willing to educate themselves today, some differences in the participation in education within the Roma population can be observed. Some Roma children and youth are in danger of becoming marginalised. Many Roma pupils never complete comprehensive school or fail to acquire the basic skills necessary to gain access to upper secondary education and to pursue their studies successfully. Their poor school record is often the result of both absenteeism and insufficient learning skills, which in turn tends to reduce their motivation to study.

According to a study commissioned by the National Board of Education (2003)<sup>1</sup> the Key Areas in the education of Roma children are having to repeat a year, placement in special needs teaching, dropping out of school, and being a victim of school bullying. These areas call for special measures. According to the study, the percentage of Roma pupils who had to repeat a year was significantly larger than for the majority population. At a certain point in education, the percentage of pupils who had to repeat a year was as high as 19%. Where the percentage of all pupils who received special needs education in some form in 2002 was 20%, the percentage of Roma children included in the study participating in special needs education was 50%. Significantly more than half of the Roma pupils in grades 7–9 who were placed in special needs education studied partially or wholly according to Individual Educational Plans. This is often crucial in terms of access to further education. Roma parents are not always aware of the possible consequences for their children of being placed in special needs education. The study further revealed that Roma children were more often absent from school and dropped out of comprehensive school more often than other children in their age group.

According to law, Roma children are entitled to participate in Romani language lessons. However, only 124 of an estimated one thousand Roma pupils received instruction in the Romani language. In other words, only a small minority of those entitled to Romani-language instruction actually received instruction. According to hearings arranged for Roma parents, their children continue to face school bullying on a regular basis, which for its part tends to lower their self-esteem and reduce their motivation to study.

The number of Finnish youth who choose vocational education and training instead of an upper secondary school education is on the increase. The competition for study places is becoming fiercer, and the comprehensive school certificate is more important than ever in securing access to further education. Roma children at upper comprehensive school age are in a particularly challenging stage of life, which is why special attention should be paid to motivation, pupil counselling and the completion of their studies.

For Roma children and youth, the critical stages are the transitions from lower to upper comprehensive school and from comprehensive school to upper secondary education. Accordingly, the enhancements of study counselling and pupil and student welfare are key areas of development for Roma youth. At present, there are few role models for Roma children of Roma who have educated themselves and found an occupation. This makes pupil and vocational counselling especially important for Roma youth.

According to the National Board of Education study referred to above, deficiencies remain in the cooperation between school and Roma homes. Education services personnel and school staffs are unfamiliar with the Romani culture or the conditions of Roma. The development of the cooperation between school and homes and, on the other hand, measures that aim at the enhancement of parenting skills are both important elements in supporting Roma children's school attendance. Experience shows that the employment of teaching staff and support per-

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<sup>1</sup> National Board of Education, 2004. The Current State of Basic Education for Romani Children (Romanilasten perusopetuksen tila). A Study on the School Year 2001–2002.

sonnel with a Romani background<sup>2</sup> as well as local Roma working groups can, to a significant degree, support the school attendance and school performance of Roma children.

### **Links to other national development work**

There are already several development programmes in place for children and youth, as are the structures necessary for development. There is, however, a special need to ensure that the situation and needs of Roma children and youth are taken into account in the implementation of the programmes and the development of new measures.

Many of the school-related problems faced by Roma children are also reality for thousands of non-Roma youth and their families in Finnish society. For various reasons, a proportion of Finnish youth never seeks access to upper secondary education. The authorities have long been worried about youth in danger of becoming marginalised. Various programmes have been launched and new measures introduced to eliminate school bullying and to provide children and youth with the necessary support in transitional stages in education. While developing these measures, a culturally sensitive approach will facilitate the identification of the problems faced by Roma youth and prevent marginalisation.

The realisation of this Key Area is greatly assisted by the Government Policy Programme on the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families, where the main aims are the promotion of the well-being of children and youth, the prevention of marginalisation, and educational motivation. The Programme also highlights the prevention of school bullying, as does the national KiVa Programme, which will be available for all schools providing basic education, starting with the school year of 2009–2010.

The Child and Youth Policy Programme for 2007–2011, a cross-administrative development programme based on the Youth Act that summarises the objectives of official child and youth policy, forms a basis for the Government Policy Programme on the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families. It includes more than 300 Policy Guidelines for the prevention of the marginalisation of Finnish youth, the enhancement of social inclusion, and the promotion of participation in working life. The programme emphasises diversity, equality and the social enhancement of children and youth belonging to ethnic minorities. Among other things, this means that the civic activity of Roma youth receives increasing support from the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health KASTE Programme also emphasises children and youth as well as early intervention. The promotion of the well-being of children and youth is also supported through municipal welfare plans, which are provided for in the Child Welfare Act and are being drawn up during 2009.

Between 2008–2011, the Ministry of Education implements a programme that aims to develop the quality of basic education in Finland, which provides support for municipalities in the development of education. The programme focuses on development areas that are also

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<sup>2</sup> Pekka Junkala & Sanna Tawah, 2009. More Similar than Different. The Welfare of Roma Children and Youth and the Realisation of their Rights in Finland. Publications of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2009:2.

important in the education of Roma children, such as the improvement of enhanced and special support in basic education; the development of the service structure for pupil counselling; the development of the service structure for pupil and student welfare; the development of cooperation between school and home; and the enhancement of continuing education for teachers. Another point of emphasis is the extension of preparatory training for immigrants. The preparatory training models could also be utilised to provide support for the education and training of Roma youth.

Measures and programmes aiming particularly at the development of basic education for Roma children are currently underway at the National Board of Education. One of these is the Basic Education Project 2 launched in 2007, the key areas of which for 2008-2009 were enhancing the inclusion of parents and cooperation between school and home.

As part of the ongoing development of the quality of basic education, the National Board of Education invited municipalities to submit applications for a special state grant for the enhancement of Roma children's basic education in 2008-2010. The grant allows municipalities to draw up, in cooperation with Roma operators, a comprehensive support plan for Roma children's basic education and to implement this plan. The aim is to establish the operational models developed in the project as standard practice. So far, 20 municipalities have applied for and been granted a special grant for the development of Roma children's basic education. The total amount of the special state grants is €900,000.

In spring 2009, the Government submitted to Parliament its Proposal on the Act on the Amendment of the Basic Education Act. The Government Bill includes a number of significant proposals on the development of enhanced support in education from the viewpoint of early intervention, which is also consistent with the development needs relating to the education of Roma children. Developed for the activation of school drop-outs, the Flexible Basic Education Model combines studies with activity-based methods, providing tools for supporting the school attendance of Roma youth and the transitional stages in education.

In addition, the effects on equal treatment of a pupil's placement in a special class will be studied during 2009 as part of YES, the national anti-discrimination campaign. The results will form a basis for the development of basic education and a reassessment of special class placements.

### **3. Enhancing vocational education and training for adult Roma**

#### **Current situation and need for development**

No comprehensive data exist on the participation in vocational education and training of Roma. In 2007, the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs submitted a proposal to the Minister of Education on looking into the educational needs of the Roma.

The lack of vocational education and training is one of the main obstacles preventing Roma from gaining access to the labour market. Many Roma have dropped out of school and unemployed Roma job-seekers often lack professional qualifications. According to a study into the

necessary conditions for the employment of the Roma<sup>3</sup>, it was estimated that in 2008 the educational background of 70% of the unemployed Roma job-seekers consisted of comprehensive school only, and 60% of the job-seekers lacked vocational qualifications of any kind.

Due to the life cycle of the Roma population – reaching adulthood and starting a family early on – they only seek access to vocational education and training and the labour market relatively late in life. Accordingly, vocational education and training aimed at the adult population and the development of its educational structure is essential for the Roma population. Educational projects aimed at the adult Roma population in particular have produced useful data on educational structures and teaching methods that take into account the needs of the Roma. These projects have also yielded viable educational models.<sup>4</sup>

It is necessary to provide part of the adult Roma population with an opportunity to complete their comprehensive school. Educational structures that enhance the learning skills necessary in vocational studies need to be developed to help Roma gain access to vocational education and training and to support their studies. These include, for example, study guidance and preparatory training along the same lines as the study guidance and preparatory training for vocational studies given to pupils who are about to complete their comprehensive school. According to lessons learned in educational projects aimed at Roma, motivation-enhancing encouragement and support are also needed.

Actual vocational education and training aimed specifically at Roma was initiated in the late 1970s in the form of short-term labour market training. The emphasis in vocational education and training was mainly on the traditional Romani means of livelihood or development work based on them. Past vocational adult education and training did produce some results, in the sense that many middle-aged Roma actually do have an occupation, but the education activities have proceeded in fits and starts and have not always guaranteed permanent employment for Roma. On the other hand, short-term education and training was aimed at enhancing the Roma population's motivation for seeking access to further studies.

Very little vocational labour market training aimed exclusively at Roma has been offered in recent years. The positive aspects of vocational education and training aimed specifically at Roma include the lowering of the threshold for education and training and the peer support provided by the group. Such vocational education and training aimed at the Roma population has been included in various projects, and also in the NOSTE Programme, which offers youth instructor and clothing design training programmes, for example.

It is not possible or expedient to provide separate education or training in all areas, which leaves the alternative of supporting the participation of Roma in general education or training and vocational labour market training. The Roma population also considers participation in general vocational education and training important. It provides them with more options to choose their occupation and facilitates integration into working life. The educational model developed in projects aiming at the development of education for Roma, where study guidance and preparatory training is specifically aimed at Roma, and where each student can, ac-

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<sup>3</sup> Syrjä Hannele – Valtakari Mikko, 2008. The Roma and their Long Journey to the Market of Labour. A Research of the Ways of Promoting the Placement of the Roma in the Labour Market. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Employment and Entrepreneurship 22/2008.

<sup>4</sup> More information on the models developed for educational needs is presented, for example, in the Palkkaisinko romanin? ('Should I employ a Roma?') guide compiled jointly by EQUAL Community Initiative Projects.

ording to an individual study plan, seek access to integrated vocational education and training within the general education system, has proved a viable method of implementation.

The importance of vocational and study counselling for the Roma population has often been emphasised in surveys on educational projects aimed at adult Roma in particular. The Roma population's limited knowledge of the various occupations available, and the education or training required for them, have been considered factors that have an effect on their willingness to seek access to education, and lead to a limited number of available options. Due to insufficient education or training, adult Roma may also face difficulty in making independent choices or planning their studies. As this is something that is taken for granted in adult education, the need for guidance for Roma is obvious.

According to various surveys, Roma are especially interested in qualification-oriented education and training as well as practical forms of education, such as apprenticeship training, for example. Gaining access to apprenticeship training has proved rather challenging for Roma, however, as according to surveys employers are often not willing to offer apprenticeship training positions to Roma. Based on competence-based qualifications, the kind of practical and hands-on training offered by vocational institutes has provided Roma with more educational opportunities.

One of the main issues for Roma in their participation in vocational education and training is securing their livelihood during studies. Due to their uncertain economic circumstances or the uncertainty of employment, many Roma cannot or are unwilling to take out study loans. This is why it is necessary to look into the possibility of further developing the forms of financial support available for students, not only for the Roma but also for all underrepresented minorities.

To reduce inequalities in education and to promote access to the labour market, it is necessary to enhance the participation in qualification-oriented education and training of the Roma in particular. According to studies and surveys, many Roma are interested in the service, social welfare and caring sectors. It is estimated that all these sectors will suffer from a shortage of labour in the future. Such vocational choices are supported by the values inherent in the Romani culture, such as communality, good social skills and caring for others.

### **Links to other national development work**

The Working Group (AKKU) on the present situation and development needs in adult higher education, appointed jointly by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, lists a number of proposals for development in its Interim Report.<sup>5</sup> The aim of the proposals is to encourage the participation in education of underrepresented groups, such as those with little or outdated education. The proposals include measures aimed at lowering the threshold for participation in adult education and the enhancement of educational opportunities for underrepresented groups. In enhancing the educational opportunities for underrepresented groups, the working group high-

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<sup>5</sup> Ammatillisesti suuntautuneen koulutuksen kokonaisuudistus ('Comprehensive reform of vocationally-oriented education and training'). AKKU-johdoryhmän toimenpide-ehdotukset (toinen väliraportti) ('Proposals for Measures by the AKKU Management Team (Second Interim Report)'). Ministry of Education Working Group Memoranda and Reports 2009:11.

lights enhancing the motivation to study, lowering the threshold for participation in education, and encouragement and support for studies. To lower the threshold, the working group proposes an increase in the number of available basic and further education opportunities and the development of incentive-enhancing financial systems. These areas of development are also important in terms of the special educational needs of the adult Roma population.

New educational paths should be developed for the Roma in danger of becoming marginalised. The Roma should also be encouraged to take advantage of them. According to the current Government Programme, more opportunities should be developed for adults in danger of becoming marginalised to utilise the study programmes on offer in liberal adult education institutions. As far as Roma are concerned, the educational opportunities offered by folk high schools, for example, often go unnoticed, and they are insufficiently aware of the study voucher system. The Plan on the Programme for the Development of Liberal Adult Education 2009–2012, submitted by a working group appointed by the Ministry of Education, includes proposals that could also be utilised in the development of education for Roma. As one of the educationally underrepresented groups in Finland, the Roma population as a whole should receive more attention in the field of liberal adult education. The study voucher system could also be utilised with Roma, for whom the costs of education are often a threshold preventing them from participating in education.

#### **4. Enhancing the employment and access to the labour market of the Roma population**

##### **Current situation and need for development**

There are no comprehensive and systematic data on the participation in the labour market of the Roma. As it is illegal, according to Finnish legislation, to register individuals on an ethnic basis, it is not possible to acquire any data on Roma of working age or their employment situation. In 2008, a study<sup>6</sup> was conducted on the conditions necessary for the employment of the Roma, where one of the aims was to determine the number of Roma currently unemployed. A rough estimate of the percentage of unemployed Roma was given as approximately 22%.

According to the study, the main obstacles preventing Roma from being employed have to do with their low level of education, a lack of vocational qualifications due to their insufficient participation in vocational education and training, and insufficient work experience. Discrimination, negative attitudes and deeply-rooted prejudices against the Roma population also continue to have a negative impact on the employment of Roma. On the basis of the results of the study, the Roma can be considered to meet the criteria for a group that, due to various reasons, is in a very weak labour market situation. Therefore they are clearly in need of enhanced services and measures to support their employment.

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<sup>6</sup> Sytjä Hannele – Valtakari Mikko, 2008. The Roma and their Long Journey to the Market of Labour. A Research of the Ways of Promoting the Placement of the Roma in the Labour Market. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Employment and Entrepreneurship 22/2008.



According to the study, unemployed Roma job-seekers see obtaining an education and a job as important in terms of their future. Their activity in seeking access to education is not consistent with this attitude, however. This is to some extent the result of negative experiences, especially of the educational system and in finding work, which has had an effect on their own attitudes and reduced their faith in their own possibilities and abilities. The lack of vocational role models as a motivating factor in the Roma community and a lack of awareness of various occupations and the education or training required for them have been recognised as factors that prevent the integration of Roma into the educational system and the labour market. Thus, the willingness of Roma to seek access to education and measures that support their employment entails encouragement and support from the authorities, for which an efficient customer guidance process and the utilisation of internal cooperation in Employment and Economic Development Offices are needed.

Livelihood issues often act as a threshold, preventing adult Roma from seeking access to vocational education and training. This is why adult Roma are particularly interested in vocational labour market training, which guarantees them a source of livelihood during their studies. However, due to incomplete basic education and few study experiences, it is often difficult for them to gain access to labour market training. Young and adult Roma should be encouraged to participate in careers guidance and preparatory training as a stepping-stone to qualification-oriented education and training. This training should also be developed further to better address the needs of adult Roma.

So far, the enhancement of the employment of the Roma population or supporting their integration into the labour market has not been systematic enough. Various employment projects and employment administration measures have been carried out in an effort to enhance the employment of Roma. To enhance the services and measures of employment administration, specially appointed contact persons for Romani affairs have been employed in Employment and Economic Development Offices since 2004. They have been charged with monitoring and informing issues relating to the Roma population and employment.

According to the results of a study into the conditions necessary for the employment of Roma, the contact person system should be developed further within the employment administration. It should also be enhanced through a more rational assignment of duties to provide support for the development of practical measures. The contact persons for Romani affairs are not officials specifically appointed to serve Roma customers, so it is important to develop the expertise and skills of the entire customer service personnel in Employment and Economic Development Offices to provide individual service for Roma. Roma job-seekers often lack the necessary skills and knowledge of the employment administration practices. Due to a lack of a “common language”, misunderstandings are typical of customer situations. Having counselors with a Romani background act as interpreters and mediators has proved extremely useful in these situations.

The services available for job-seekers in Employment and Economic Development Offices are based on service need assessment and an employment or activation plan drawn up jointly with the customer. The plan should guide the implementation of the measures concerning the employment of the customer. According to a study into the conditions necessary for the employment of Roma, only a few of the unemployed Roma job-seekers had a valid employment plan at the time of the study. According to the study, of the measures offered to Roma job-seekers by Employment Offices, the one used most often was work experience placements followed by, to some extent, other so-called activation measures, such as job coaching, subsidised work, and labour market training.

According to a study into the employment of Roma, in most cases the special needs of various minority groups had not been addressed in the equality plans drawn up in Employment Offices. For example, only a few of the Roma job-seekers had benefited from active measures or received the multi-professional and comprehensive service available in Labour Service Centres.

According to the study, lack of work experience is one of the main obstacles preventing Roma from being employed. Most of the unemployed Roma job-seekers who participated in the study had less than a year of work experience, or none whatsoever. Work experience placements not only offered them a way of acquiring work experience, it was also the most common measure the Roma job-seekers participated in. Work experience placement does not, however, always act as a stepping-stone to more permanent employment.

Despite education and work experience, it has proved difficult for many Roma to be employed. The Roma face severe problems in finding either work experience placements or jobs. According to both the Roma themselves and Employment Office workers, prejudices and discrimination in employment/job-seeking continue to form a significant obstacle to the employment of Roma. The above-mentioned study also focused on the views of companies on the employment of Roma. According to the survey, more than half (57%, N=306) of the companies interviewed would be willing to employ a Roma, providing the applicant meets the requirements of the position in terms of education, work experience and professional skills. According to the results, some of the companies (12%) take a negative view towards the employment of a Roma. More than one fifth of the companies were of the opinion that the employment of a Roma would have a negative effect on the company image or the work community. Companies that had previously employed Roma had a more positive view towards the employment of a Roma.

More effective measures should be introduced to combat the discrimination faced by Roma in the labour market and in job-seeking in particular. Authorities do not always intervene actively in instances of discrimination, nor do the Roma who were subjected to discrimination always report it to the supervising authorities. This is why the supervising authorities, labour market organisations and Employment and Economic Development Office workers should be provided with more information on the discrimination experienced by Roma. Likewise, the Roma population should be informed of how to report instances of discrimination.

### **Links to other national development work**

The Government's Policy Programme for Employment, Entrepreneurship and Worklife emphasises expediting the transition from studies into working life; strong support for the integration of youth into the labour market; the development of the transitional labour market and work incentives for long-term unemployed; and measures in support of the growth of entrepreneurship.

The Social Guarantee for Young People was introduced in 2005. According to the Guarantee, unemployed youth over the age of 17 shall be offered educational, work experience placement or workshop opportunities. The aim is to promote unemployed young people's access to education and the labour market, prevent long-term unemployment, and support sustainable career choices. A study into, among other things, the Social Guarantee for Young People highlighted the need to enhance the realisation of the Social Guarantee for ethnic minorities, including the Roma. The cross-administrative Development Programme for Child and Youth

Policy has as one of its aims the development of the conditions necessary for young people to seek access to education and employment.

Labour policy supports first and foremost the employment of job-seekers in the open labour market. As far as employment administration is concerned, the emphasis here is on efficient labour exchange and a good start in the employment process, as well as on the development of good private customer service and employer service. The need to enhance contacts with working life has emerged as one of the necessary conditions in the employment of immigrants, for example. The same need for development applies in parallel to the Roma population. From a Roma job-seeker's point of view, the measures that support crossing the threshold into working life are primary. The conclusions drawn in a study into, among other things, the effects of activation measures highlight the need to pinpoint the individual problems of an unemployed person, as well as his or her need to find the right kind of encouragement and support, which in turn entails more resources for guidance, support and rehabilitation.

Enhancing the employment of Roma is linked to the development of the necessary conditions for the employment of groups in a very weak labour market situation. This is supported through the development of the transitional labour market, for example. Two useful tools in this work are the ESF Transitional Labour Market Development Programme 2007–2013, launched by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and the development projects under Priority 2 of the regional sections of the ESF Operational Programme for Continental Finland. In conjunction with the allocation and planning of these projects, the Employment and Economic Development Centres should cooperate with regional Roma operators and systematically support projects aimed at the Roma population.

## **5. The promotion of the welfare and health of the Roma population and securing social welfare and health services for them**

### **Current situation and need for development**

Thanks especially to the housing policy measures implemented earlier, the living conditions of Roma have improved. Issues relating to social factors, health and livelihood form a basis to all action promoting the welfare of the Roma and the prevention of discrimination. The identification of the Roma population's service needs and the allocation of action taken with a view to enhancing their well-being will be profitable in the long run, not least in terms of reducing the social costs incurred as a result of their marginalisation and the load it places on health care services.

It has been found in many countries that the morbidity of Roma is higher than for the majority population and that their life expectancy is lower. Similar estimates have been made in Finland. There are no comprehensive research data currently available on the health and welfare of the Roma population. There has not been a comprehensive study into the living conditions of the Roma population in decades. Elderly Roma are known to have a higher incidence of respiratory diseases and diseases of the musculoskeletal system, such as rheumatic diseases and asthma, than the majority population. This is generally thought to result from problems such as cold, damp, and malnutrition, relating to their former itinerant lifestyle and poor housing.

As Finnish citizens, the Roma are, in principle, entitled to the same rights as the majority population in utilising the services provided by the public service system. In practice, however, the equal treatment of Roma may be hindered by, for example, a lack of knowledge concerning social welfare related issues and the available services, as well as cultural differences that can be observed in interaction relating to social welfare and health services.

From the Roma population's point of view, the realisation of equal treatment is connected to the accessibility and quality of social welfare and health services. Likewise, very little data are available of their experiences as customers and service recipients within the service system. This is why more data are needed on their welfare and service needs, as well as the accessibility and allocation of welfare services.

On the basis of individual studies and the experiences of local operators, Roma organisations, among others, have estimated that socio-economic differences within the Roma population are growing. Part of the Roma population is becoming marginalised, which has caused a lot of anxiety in the hearings arranged for the Roma population. In addition to a lack of education and the poor financial situation brought about by unemployment, the marginalisation is also caused by problems relating to family, parenting skills and housing, as well as life management problems and the use of intoxicants. This has increased the number of child welfare cases, for example. In terms of the social inclusion and the prevention of marginalisation of the Roma population, the enhancements of professional family work and parenting skills have emerged as the main challenges. Roma organisations, based mainly on Christian values, have organised family work carried out partially on a voluntary basis, which, however, is not sufficient on its own, without the support of society and the public service system.

Individual, regional studies have been conducted into the service needs of elderly Roma in particular. On the basis of the data from the Vanhat ('The Elderly') Project<sup>7</sup>, the elderly Roma clearly need more information on services, guidance in using them, and more information on health care and maintaining their physical function and mobility. According to the study, rehabilitation and leisure services remain inaccessible to elderly Roma. On the basis of the data, it seems that this is caused by the ambitious savings programmes introduced by Finnish municipalities on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that elderly Roma are unaware of these services. Their use of public elderly services is prevented by the low educational background of elderly Roma and partly by cultural reasons. Likewise, the services offered by the third sector and the various forms of peer support available remain unused, as do the services and information offered by various patient organisations. As the communal features of the Romani culture disappear, elderly Roma often suffer from loneliness and idleness. This cultural transition is leading to the marginalisation of elderly Roma.

According to the recommendations submitted in a study<sup>8</sup> into the elderly care provided for the Vietnamese, Sami and Russian minorities, a culturally sensitive and non-discriminating care environment is a necessary condition for high-quality service. The study recommends basic and continuing training for care personnel, the creation of an individual-oriented service cul-

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<sup>7</sup> Majaniemi Päivi, Viljanen Anna-Maria, 2008. Romanivanhusten palvelutarvekartoitus ('Survey on the Service Needs of Elderly Roma'). Suomen Romaniyhdistys/Finnish Roma Association

<sup>8</sup> Results of the multi-national Minority Elderly Care (MEC) project (2001–2004) participated in by STAKES (currently the National Institute for Health and Welfare).

ture, long-term planning, and preparing for the future through the ageing strategies of Finnish municipalities, for example. Corresponding recommendations should be taken into account in the planning and implementation of services for elderly Roma.

According to the views of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, a thorough study is necessary to form a basis for any steps taken to develop the living conditions of the Roma population. To include as many Roma as possible, the study could be carried out through, for example, family interviews in cooperation with the regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs and Roma associations, as well as by training and using interviewers with a Romani background.

To realise the social inclusion and equal treatment of Roma, it is necessary, within the social welfare and health services, to look into the living conditions and social welfare and health service needs of the Roma and to propose development action on the basis of the survey. Particular attention should be paid to children, the elderly and the Roma in serious danger of becoming marginalised.

### **Links to other national development work**

Several programmes are currently in progress in Finland with the aim of enhancing the accessibility of social welfare and health services, as well as reducing the socio-economic (health) inequalities between the various population groups. The promotion of health and the reduction of health inequalities is, in particular, the aim of the Health 2015 public health programme; the Government's Policy Programme for Health Promotion; the related National Action Plan to Reduce Health Inequalities 2008–2011; and the TEROKA Project, which aims to build up a knowledge base on health inequalities and to develop tools for reducing them.

The aim of the National Development Programme for Social Welfare and Health Care (KASTE) is to promote the welfare and health of the population, to enhance the quality and efficacy of services, to enhance the social inclusion of the population, and to reduce marginalisation. As a strategic tool for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the KASTE Programme lists the general development objectives and measures of social welfare and health services. Many of its objectives and measures are important in terms of the Roma population.

The Policy Programme on the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families also promotes the prevention of marginalisation. The National Plan of Action to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, in particular, provides the framework for the reduction of socio-economic inequalities and the prevention of marginalisation. The prevention of poverty and social exclusion is also the theme for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010.

## **6. Ensuring equal treatment in housing and the reduction of insecurity**

### **Current situation and need for development**

In their conclusions and recommendations, the monitoring bodies for international human rights agreements have drawn attention to the discrimination of the Finnish Roma population in the housing market and various services. The recommendations have also focused on the need to enhance the mutual trust between the police and national minorities and to enhance the conditions of Roma in prisons.

Apart from direct and indirect discrimination, the realisation of equal treatment is prevented by the fact that the Roma population and the authorities or the service system never really encounter each other. Various services are available, but the Roma population is not sufficiently aware of their existence and cannot take advantage of them. On the other hand, the available services often fail to meet the special needs of the Roma population. The authorities also need more training on how to encounter Roma both as individuals and customers.

## **Housing**

Most Roma live in an owned residence and the condition of their housing is on the same level as that of an average Finn. The Roma live in the same areas with the majority population and, unlike in many European countries, no separate housing areas for them have developed. The living conditions of the Roma population were significantly influenced by the housing-related social policy decisions made in the 1970s. The necessary conditions for the enhancement of the living conditions of the Roma population were created between 1975–1981 through temporary special legislation. A special statute obligated all Finnish municipalities to improve the living conditions of the Roma in their area, and a special state financial system was created to subsidise this process.

Some Roma still live in owned or rental housing acquired with a special grant allocated for the improvement of the housing situation. A lot of this housing is in poor condition due to its age and in need of refurbishment. The state has supported refurbishments and the building of new housing for Roma through subsidies and grants. At present, Roma are no longer considered a specific target group for housing funding in state financial systems for housing, which increases the need to inform the Roma population of the available state funding schemes for housing.

Finnish Roma are dependent on municipal and non-profit rental housing, as it is difficult for them to secure housing in the private rental market because of their weak economic status and the prejudices against them. After the reform of the Non-Discrimination Act, some private housing is also subject to equality provisions. This is the case with all publicly available rental housing, such as privately-owned rental housing advertised in papers.

Many Roma families would be willing to purchase a home instead of renting. Poor credit rating may often prevent them from getting a mortgage, however. It is difficult for them to improve their credit rating, even if the data were old and the customer's situation had improved considerably. This is why debt counselling and debt adjustment should also be utilised more often with Roma.

Right-of-occupancy housing and partial ownership housing should also be promoted as housing options for Roma. Increasing the number of housing options available might, for its part, reduce segregation in housing, and also reduce the pressures within the Roma community, which often tend to emerge when the number of Roma in any given rental housing area increases significantly.

Roma continue to be faced with many difficult housing-related problems. Both discrimination and issues caused by marginalisation and customs within the Roma community are behind the housing-related problems of the Roma. Most of the communications received by the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs and the reports on discrimination submitted to the Ombudsman for Minorities concern housing. In state-subsidised housing, problems exist in the selection of

tenants, finding new housing, the solving of housing-related problems when they concern payment defaults or public disturbance, and taking the Romani culture into account in housing arrangements.

According to the Discrimination in Finland 2008 Report<sup>9</sup>, commissioned by the Finnish League for Human Rights, issues pertaining to the selection of tenants are exacerbated in situations where public rental housing is incorporated and municipalities hand over the handling of housing affairs to property companies. In the hearings arranged for the Roma population in conjunction with the preparation of the National Policy on Roma, the Roma expressed their feelings of powerlessness, which were caused by the difficulties they face in getting information on the progress made in the housing application process or the various housing options available, as well as their limited opportunities for expressing their wishes concerning the location or type of the housing allocated for them.

Some Roma families live in crowded quarters, and the homelessness of Roma on the verge of adulthood in particular often tends to be prolonged. Possible housing-related problems in the family may also make it difficult for the young adult Roma of the family to secure housing of their own. Factors relating to the Romani culture and customs may also lead to a vicious circle of frequently having to find new housing. On the basis of the experiences of the Roma population, the Ombudsman for Minorities, and education and social welfare authorities, it is clear that housing-related problems also reflect on the welfare of Roma children in many ways. The Ombudsman for Minorities remarked that in the worst cases, defective or unstable housing conditions have an adverse effect on the school attendance of Roma children or may even prevent it altogether.<sup>10</sup>

A more extensive survey into the housing-related issues of Roma is clearly called for. At the moment, public attention is focused on the selection of tenants for subsidised rental housing. Because of this, problems in social welfare housing services, which are necessary in the application of, for example, the Social Welfare Act, the Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act and the Child Welfare Act, have largely gone unnoticed.

There is significant variation in how the housing authorities take factors relating to Romani culture into account. One of the current problems is the authorities' attitude towards discriminatory practices within the Roma community in issues pertaining to the selection of their place of residence. Romani customs, such as the obligation to stay out of the way of certain Roma or the practice to request permission for moving house, may influence the lives of Roma individuals and families to a considerable extent. Among others, the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs has drawn attention to discriminatory practices and stated that illegal activity cannot be allowed on the plea of Romani culture. These practices present a threat to general security, which is also highlighted in the Internal Security Programme. The Romani culture is variable and each region has its own way of observing its customs. To abolish these discriminatory practices and to create new guidelines for observing Romani customs, a constructive discussion forum should be created with the active participation of Roma organisations and Roma communities.

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<sup>9</sup> Discrimination in Finland 2008. Finnish League for Human Rights, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Annual Report of the Ombudsman for Minorities 2008.

## Reducing insecurity

The reduction of the discrimination and insecurity experienced by the Roma concerns many different authorities. It involves, for example, security and judicial authorities, such as the police, emergency response centres and prison administration. The Roma feel that their calls for help are not taken seriously enough in emergencies or situations involving racist discrimination. Part of this insecurity is caused by the Roma population's fear of authorities. On the basis of various studies, it is clearly necessary to provide many authorities, such as recovery authorities, debt counselling authorities and prosecuting and judicial authorities, with more information on the Roma population and culture.

It is generally felt that the interaction between the police and the Roma population has improved, which is at least partially the result of the inclusion of Romani-related themes in police training. The police administration has also invested heavily in the enhancement of tolerance and prevention of racism through the issuance of new orders, participation in cross-administrative projects, and the development of police training. There is also a police representative on both the National and Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. A policeman with a Romani background offers an impressive role model for young Roma men, and the job of a policeman or a security guard is nowadays a dream job for many young Roma men. As police training becomes more diversified, the Roma should be encouraged to join the police forces.

Prison administration is an example of how the stereotypes and negative attitudes towards Roma are reflected in the activities of authorities and problems within various institutions. According to the Prison Act, prisoners may not be placed in an unequal position on the grounds of discrimination, because of their ethnic origin, for example. The Government Resolution of 1997 also urges prison authorities to promote tolerance and to prevent racism.

In 2003, a working group appointed by the Criminal Sanctions Agency looked into the status of Roma prisoners and Roma serving community sanctions. As far as community service is concerned, the problem most often encountered is negative prejudices against the Roma. In some areas it has proved difficult to find community service places. According to the report submitted by the working group<sup>11</sup>, Roma prisoners face special problems in Finnish prisons in terms of resettlement, employment, the need for education and training, the need for substance abuse rehabilitation, and the release process.

According to a study carried out in 2005, it is estimated that there are some 170–180 prisoners with a Romani background in Finnish prisons. In 2009 the number of Roma prisoners was estimated to be somewhat higher. In open institutions the situation of the Roma is generally good. In closed prisons Roma prisoners are mainly accommodated in standard dormitories, and they can be integrated into the daily routines of the prison. In a few closed prisons, however, the Roma are, for their own security, in a position that undermines their equality and reduces their opportunities for bettering their conditions, such as studying during their time in prison. There is not enough staff to guarantee the security of those belonging to a minority, and the bullies often remain unidentified. As some prisoners with a Romani background feel vulnerable in general wards, they have to serve their sentence in segregation units, isolated

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<sup>11</sup> The Status and Conditions of Roma in Prisons and in Community Service. Report by the Working Group, 20 January 2003. The Criminal Sanctions Agency 2/2003.



from the rest of the prisoners. However, the prison staffs try to provide them with some activities that are possible in a segregation unit. Usually Roma prisoners are able to participate in all the education and training available in prison. There is considerable variation in the amount and type of educational or other activity on offer in prisons.

The development measures put forward by the working group were: raising the awareness of the personnel of the Romani culture; the development of cooperation structures; enhancing Roma prisoners' learning ability; the development of prison education and training; the development of procedures that allow Roma prisoners to participate in normal prison activities and to serve their community service. The proposals of the working group are still current.

In 2006, the Prison Service introduced a new, enhanced equality plan, which aims to promote the realisation of equal treatment for minorities. The recommended measures include intervention in racist phenomena; familiarity with the customs of the various groups; staff training; and the creation of an atmosphere that is more conducive to the enhancement of equality and diversity. The Roma are recognised as a separate entity in the programme. At that time there was a contact person for Romani affairs in two Finnish prisons with the task of acting as a liaison between the Roma prisoners, the Roma organisations and the authorities.

A few surveys have been conducted on the implementation of the equality plan in Finnish prisons. There were considerable differences in how the equality plan and its implementation were taken into account in prisons. It is urged in the target results to pay special attention to the equal opportunities of special groups, such as young people, Roma, and foreigners who remain in Finland permanently, in the allocation of educational or other activities or the organisation of activities in accordance with the term of imprisonment plan. When it comes to Roma prisoners, the enhancement of their basic training and the need for substance abuse rehabilitation emerge as the key areas. A few prisons have arranged separate training for Roma with lessons on Romani culture, for example.

In its recommendations concerning Finland in 2009, the European Commission of Human Rights, in accordance with the proposals submitted earlier, calls for measures to enhance the status and conditions in prison of Finnish Roma.

### **Links to other national development work**

This Key Area is linked to the Equality in Housing project. The Ministry of the Interior has examined equality in housing in the Helsinki metropolitan area. This revealed numerous problem points in terms of the Roma population's experiences of discrimination relating to housing and housing environments.

On 8 May 2008, the Government approved a Resolution on the Internal Security Programme. The Safety First Programme defines the key objectives and measures for internal security in a cross-administrative manner. The objective of the programme is for Finland to be the safest country in Europe in 2015.

Local security plans, which are drawn up as a cross-administrative cooperation project between the authorities, NGOs, and business and industry, will address the security issues concerning Roma and specify the steps to be taken to prevent the discrimination of the Roma and to increase their security.

## 7. Promotion of the Romani language and culture

### Current situation and need for development

Section 17(3) of the Finnish Constitution provides on the right of the Roma for the maintenance and development of their own language. In practice, this provision has realised weakly, however. This is probably due to several factors, such as the lack of comprehensive legislation with regard to the development of Romani language and its teaching.

In spring 2009, the Romani Language Board published its Language Policy Programme for Romani<sup>12</sup>. According to the programme, the Finnish Romani language dialect, Kaalo, is in danger of becoming extinct, unless sufficient funding is promptly made available for the revival of the language and its teaching is ensured through earmarked funding, as is the case with Sami. The Language Policy Programme for Romani proposes that a language act be instituted to guarantee the position of the Romani language. The act would combine the existing, widely dispersed provisions into a single act, while providing cohesion, instructions and resources for the teaching and research of Romani, as well as the production of Romani-language teaching materials and the training of Romani language teachers. The Board proposes that the Ministry of Education appoint a working group to look into the matter and to draw up a proposal for a Romani language act.

The Romani language is on the UNESCO list of endangered languages. In Finland, the Romani language is no longer used in everyday communication among the Roma. Approximately 40–50% of the Roma population speak the language. This is why the Romani language is no longer passed on from one generation to another and the language is in need of revival.

According to the Basic Education Act, the language of instruction in Finnish schools is either Finnish or Swedish, but the language of instruction may also be Sami, Romani, or Finnish Sign Language. Moreover, Romani, Finnish Sign Language or another language may also be taught as mother tongue, at the discretion of the pupil's parent and carer. The teaching of Romani language and culture enhances the identity of Roma children.

Of the approximately one thousand Roma pupils in basic education today, only some 120 receive Romani language instruction. Schools are not always aware of the significance of Romani language instruction, or there may not be enough pupils in the school to warrant the establishment of a study group. There is a shortage of Romani-language teachers and teacher training personnel. Roma parents may not be aware that an opportunity exists for their children to participate in Romani language instruction.

It is possible for the education provider to apply to the National Board of Education for a state grant for the provision of Romani language instruction, provided that there are no fewer than four pupils in the school's Romani language pupil group at the start of the term. The calculated cost for a single lesson is €22. Since 2007, a state grant has been available for a maxi-

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<sup>12</sup> Language Policy Programme for Romani, 2009. Publications of the Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland 156.

mum of 2.5 weekly lessons per each calculated pupil group. At the start of 2007, the number of lessons was raised from 2 to 2.5 weekly lessons.

For the past three years, the Education Department of the Council of Europe has been working on a European Curriculum Framework for Romani, which is expected to harmonise the teaching, teaching materials and research of the Romani language, which in turn will enhance its status as a European mother tongue. The Council of Europe recommends that the Curriculum Framework be translated into national languages and Romani dialects and be implemented in all its Member States.

There is also an obvious need for the commencement of university-level Romani instruction for the training of qualified teachers of Romani. Among the European universities that offer Romani Linguistics programmes are Manchester and the Sorbonne, for example, along with various universities in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Austria. No Finnish university has the Finnish Romani dialect Kaalo in its curriculum.

At the very minimum, intermediate studies of Romani should be possible in Finnish universities, preferably advanced studies, which would make it possible for students to major in Romani. Two options could be offered, one for prospective Romani teachers, focusing on the Finnish Romani dialect Kaalo, and the other for potential researchers, focusing on other European Romani dialects and language history.

At present, the only resources available in Finland for the study and maintenance of Romani are the two researcher positions in the Finnish Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. This is considerably less than the resources provided for other minorities, such as Sami and Finnish Sign Language, for example. The need for new operators in language maintenance is clear. The knowledge base in the Romani language has grown significantly in the 1990s and 2000s, both in Finland and abroad. To ensure the up-to-dateness and appropriateness of the teaching of Romani, this should be reflected in both the teaching itself and the teaching materials available. As with the teaching materials for Finnish and other languages, the teaching materials for Romani should be up-to-date.

Currently there is a lot of interest in the Romani culture and its history among the majority population in Finland. One example of this is the popularity of various exhibitions depicting aspects of Romani culture. Positive coverage of the Roma population in the media will enhance cultural interaction and eliminate prejudices. More information on the history and culture of the Roma and the development of their living conditions is needed to eliminate the stereotypes and negative prejudices against Roma. The planned History of Finnish Roma Project is essential in terms of both raising awareness of the Roma and enhancing the Roma population's own identity.

School is an important institution in Finnish society. Accordingly, it should be present in the lives of the Roma minority and support the favourable development of Roma children's identity. The basic and continuing training of teachers should be developed further to create an atmosphere of tolerance and positive interaction within school communities. It is also vital to ensure that all pupils in basic education receive sufficient and appropriate information on Finnish minorities. A portal similar to the one created on Sami culture, past and present, in conjunction with the Progress programme, should be made on Romani culture to provide teaching material for comprehensive schools.

The Language Policy Programme for Romani draws attention to the scarcity of Romani-language cultural services. It points out that there are no library or information services whatsoever available in Romani, and the same goes for museum services and established cultural and artistic institutions. Of the other linguistic or cultural minorities provided for in the Finnish Constitution, Sami-language library services are available in the Sami Region, for example. There is also a special Sami library and a Sami museum with a cultural centre in the planning stage. With the support of various organisations, cultural and artistic events are organised for speakers of the Finnish Sign Language. The Finnish Association of the Deaf also maintains the Totti Theatre and provides funding for a special library and the Finnish Museum of the Deaf.

These cultural and artistic services should also be available for the Roma. The Ministry of Education aims to secure all linguistic and cultural minorities' rights to participate in culture and to exhibit their own creativity on equal terms with the majority population. The Ministry supports projects and activities that enhance multiculturalism and the accessibility of cultural services. The various grants it makes are aimed at supporting the identity and development of cultural minorities and the promotion of interaction between cultural minorities and the majority population.

The Ministry of Education subsidises the activities of Roma associations with state grants from the funding reserved for the promotion of multiculturalism. In practice very few Roma projects have actually received funding due to the small number of applications or their being inappropriately prepared. In recent years the number of grants has been on the increase, however. Compared to the size of the Roma population, there are quite a many Roma artists in Finland, which should be reflected in the number of grants and artist pensions awarded.

### **Links to other national development work**

According to the Government Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second cabinet, the values of a civilised society include equality, tolerance, internationality, environmental responsibility, and gender equality. The Government commits itself to the promotion of multiculturalism, to address the needs of various linguistic groups, and to promote the equality of all citizens. Special mention is made of the cultural rights of children, persons with disabilities and minority groups.

On 4 February 2005, the Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy appointed a working group to prepare an Action Programme for 2006–2010 for the enhancement of the accessibility of art and culture. In the preparation of the programme, the working group was instructed to focus on measures that can be implemented by the Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy and its administrative structure, or which can be influenced by the Ministry of Education through performance guidance. The accessibility of public cultural services was specified as the Key Area of the programme, but the programme was also to look into the opportunities available for minority and special groups to engage in cultural activities individually.

The Accessibility of Art and Culture Programme primarily aims to enhance the equality of linguistic and cultural minorities (such as the Sami, Roma, Finnish Sign Language speakers, and immigrants) and persons with disabilities as users of cultural services. The way to enhance the accessibility of culture is to remove the obstacles in the way of participation. These obstacles may relate to sensory deficiencies, lack of information, incomprehension, attitudes,

physical or economic factors, or deficiencies in decision-making. Good accessibility entails that the producers and financiers of cultural services and decision-makers responsible for funding are aware of these obstacles and of the ways to remove them.

In the field of sports, various measures supporting the sports services offered for immigrants and special groups have been implemented in the form of support for the standard activities of sports NGOs. Efforts have also been made to improve the accessibility of sports services, such as sports facilities, for example. In the youth services, the needs of special groups, such as persons with disabilities and youth belonging to cultural minorities, for example, have also been addressed as part of the general subsidy policy. The needs of various minorities have also been taken into account in the preparation of special legislation for the sector in question. The measures included in the action programme are in many ways similar to those implemented in conjunction with Young Culture activities and in supporting youth culture in general.

The accessibility of art and culture is primarily enhanced through the resource, information and performance guidance provided by the Ministry of Education. If equality objectives are not achieved through standard measures and systems, it is possible, if necessary, to develop special forms of support for linguistic, cultural and disabled minorities. However, the accessibility of culture can only be enhanced if artistic and cultural institutions, other cultural operators, regional art administration, and municipal cultural administration all agree to review their policies from the point of view of accessibility.

## **8. Promotion of equality and the prevention of discrimination**

### **Current situation and need for development**

The authorities are obliged by law to draw up an equality plan to define the objectives, tools and measures used to promote the creation of equal opportunities in their activities and as employers. According to studies<sup>13</sup>, at least one third of the authorities do not have an equality plan in place, and the situation of the Roma is addressed in only one fourth of the plans that do exist. Some of the equality plans are combined equality and equal treatment plans, often with the emphasis on personnel. Very few concrete objectives relating to actual administrative action are included in them.

The Non-Discrimination Act also provides for positive discrimination. This is not the same as favouring one group over another; instead, it refers to special action where the aim is the realisation of factual equality and the prevention or mitigation of the adverse effects of discrimination.

Stigmatisation and direct or indirect discrimination are part of everyday life for the Roma population. According to the results of the Eurobarometer on discrimination, Finns recognise

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<sup>13</sup> Lundström Birgitta, Miettinen Tarmo, Keinänen Anssi, Airaksinen Jenni, Korhonen Anne, 2007. Evaluation of the Effects of the Non-Discrimination Act. A study conducted in the University of Joensuu Faculty of Law, Economics and Business Administration.

ethnic origin as the most common ground for discrimination. In the barometer, considerably more Finns report having a person with a Romani background within their circle of friends than do the citizens of any other EU Member State. Still, the Roma are the least welcome neighbours both in Finland and elsewhere in Europe.

Discrimination means that an individual is, has been, or would be treated less favourably than another individual in a comparable situation (direct discrimination), or that a provision, criterion or an apparently neutral practice could put persons at a particular disadvantage (indirect discrimination). Discrimination can also take the form of harassment, which refers to a situation where unwanted conduct is exhibited with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or a group and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

The monitoring authorities for discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin are the occupational safety and health authorities (work discrimination) and the Ombudsman for Minorities. Roma do not often report discrimination in job-seeking, for example. Most of the reports on discrimination submitted to the Ombudsman for Minorities by Roma pertain to housing, the availability of private services, and the accessibility of social welfare and health services. In most of the instances of discrimination reported to the police in 2007, the complainant was a Roma and the suspected discrimination was related to the accessibility of services. Roma organisations have drawn public attention to the need to enhance the reporting procedure concerning instances of discrimination relating to racist crime and to expedite the investigation process. According to a study<sup>14</sup> carried out by the Police College of Finland, the percentage of solved cases of criminal discrimination was quite high.

The Finnish Roma are a heterogeneous group, just like the majority population. Roma are subjected to so-called multiple discrimination in various stages of life: for example, Roma women in working life, elderly Roma in services for the elderly, and disabled Roma in the accessibility of services. In addition to discrimination from the outside, there are also tensions within the Roma community, as a result of which certain groups and individuals may feel they are in a disadvantaged position compared to others, or they may be excluded within the Roma community.

In recent years increasing attention has been paid to the multiple and intersectional discrimination experienced by various groups. Not only ethnic origin, but also gender or age may lead to discrimination. For example, due to their traditional way of dressing, Roma women in particular are subjected to multiple discrimination. This discrimination may manifest itself in employment situations. For example, in order to get the job, the applicant is told that she has to stop wearing the traditional costume even if continuing to wear it would not inhibit performance of the work. In 2008, the CEDAW Committee, monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, last expressed its concern over the unemployment of Roma women, their difficulties in gaining access to services, and discrimination within the Roma community.

There are also experiences within the Roma community of multiple and intersectional discrimination involving all the other grounds for discrimination. The services for the elderly do

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<sup>14</sup> Joronen, Mikko, 2008. Suspected Racially Motivated Offences Reported to the Police in 2007. Reports by the Police College of Finland 72/2008.

not always meet the needs of elderly Roma or they are not equally accessible. Pupils with a Romani background become targets for school bullying more easily than other pupils. Participation in the activities of disability organisations of persons with disabilities belonging to the Roma population has so far been infrequent. More active measures are needed on the part of both the Roma population and the organisations to provide these individuals with access to the support and opportunities of participation in decision-making offered by the organisations.

Roma families need more information on issues relating to gender equality, because the division of authority, housework and childcare within families is at present unequal. Roma women's opportunities to study or participate in social activities are sometimes very limited. The family or clan violence that occasionally emerges is a serious threat to Roma women and children, who may have to leave their homes, schools or jobs and start from scratch somewhere else.

Members of sexual or gender minorities may be subjected to multiple discrimination not only in society at large, but also in their own community. Often they are faced with the choice of hiding their sexual orientation or sexual identity or exposing themselves to the possible threat of being excluded from their own community. The Roma population is further divided by issues relating to religion or conviction.

### **Links to other national development work**

The objectives of this Key Area are supported by the various provisions concerning the prevention and monitoring of discrimination and the promotion of equality and the implementation thereof.

Steered by a broad-based monitoring group, the implementation of the National Discrimination Monitoring System has already been commenced. As part of the implementation process, up-to-date monitoring data will be collected and published, ad hoc studies will be conducted, and annual reports on discrimination will be published, as well as a more extensive report during each Government's period in office. The discrimination experienced by Roma has been monitored through annual reports on discrimination. Ad hoc research can also be conducted as part of the monitoring system.

This Key Area is linked to the European Commission's new proposal for an Equality Directive; the work of the Equality Committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice; the development process for equality planning; and the implementation of the National Discrimination Monitoring System. Furthermore, it is also linked to the implementation of the national anti-discrimination campaign (Equality is Priority-YES), which is carried out as a joint cooperation project between the self-government and cooperation bodies (advisory committees) of various ministries and umbrella organisations representing various groups.

## **9. Development of the administration of Romani affairs and policy on Roma**

### **1. Development of the administration and cooperation structures for handling Romani affairs**

#### *Administrative structures*

In a European context, Finland has been a forerunner in the development of the administrative structures for handling Romani affairs. Administrative structures that focus especially on Romani issues include the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, the Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, and educational services for the Roma population. The rights of various minorities and ethnic equality are also supervised and promoted by specialised authorities, such as the Ombudsman for Minorities, for example.

The National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs is a Ministry of Social Affairs and Health cooperation body for Roma and the authorities. The Board is appointed by the Government (1019/2003) for three years at a time.

The task of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs is to:

- 1) monitor the development of the social participation and living conditions of the Roma in order to promote equality, and to issue statements on these for various authorities;
- 2) improve the social and economic position and promote the culture and employment of the Roma population by taking initiative and making proposals;
- 3) work to eliminate discrimination against the Roma;
- 4) promote the enhancement of Romani language and culture;
- 5) support the activities of the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs; and
- 6) take part in Nordic, European and other international cooperation in order to enhance the rights of the Roma and improve their conditions.

The same decree provides for both the Regional and National Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. In their respective regions, the four Regional Boards are responsible for the same tasks as the National Board. The Provinces of Oulu and Lapland are both represented in the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Northern Finland. The Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chair, and 8–12 members, at least half of whom represent the local Roma population. Since 2006, the Advisory Boards also employ planning officers.

The National Board of Education supports the Finnish Roma through the planning and development of educational services for the Roma population. This activity is based on position papers and decisions made by the Parliament, the Government and the Ministry of Education on the development of education for the Roma population and the support of their culture. The activities are guided by a steering group with a Roma representative included. The primary task of the educational services for Roma is the development of education for Roma in Finland. Its secondary task is the promotion of the Romani language and culture. The educa-



tional services for Roma are also responsible for information services and international affairs.

#### *Other authorities promoting ethnic equality*

The tasks of the Ministry of the Interior include the promotion of equality and good ethnic relations and the prevention of racism and discrimination. The Ministry carries out its equality- and discrimination-related duties in cross-administrative cooperation with other public administration bodies, local and regional authorities, civic organisations, labour market operators, and particularly the organisations, communities and advisory boards representing various groups.

According to the Non-Discrimination Act, all authorities are under obligation to promote equality and to prevent discrimination in their sector. In order to promote ethnic equality, all authorities are required to draw up an equality plan.

Working under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ombudsman for Minorities is responsible for the promotion of good ethnic relations and the monitoring and enhancement of the status and rights of Finnish minorities. In cooperation with other authorities, the Ombudsman also monitors the realisation of equal treatment regardless of ethnic origin. There is also an Advisory Body on Minority Issues under the auspices of the Ombudsman for Minorities.

The observation of the Non-Discrimination Act and labour legislation in employment and service relationships is monitored by labour protection authorities. In other areas the monitoring of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin is the task of the Ombudsman for Minorities and the National Discrimination Tribunal.

The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) is a broad-based advisory body dealing with matters pertaining to refugees, immigration, racism, and ethnic relations. Minority rights are also upheld by the Advisory Board for International Human Rights Affairs, operating under the auspices of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

#### *The composition of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs and the representation of Roma organisations*

The number of Roma organisations has increased rapidly in the past few years. The number of national organisations is estimated at eight, with a few dozen local ones currently in the Register of Associations. According to the Decree on the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, half of its 16 members shall represent organisations with a Romani background. The Decree further states that of the eight organisations with a Romani background, representatives of four shall be appointed from the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. This leaves the organisations with four seats, which is not sufficient for all eight organisations in the present situation.

To enable all Roma organisations defining themselves as operating on a national scale to participate in the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, the composition of the Board should be reviewed and reformed. To preserve the functionality of the Board and to have an equal number of representatives of the authorities and the Roma population, it is not expedient to increase the number of the members to match the number of Roma organisations. More-

over, the number of active Roma organisations is not constant as organisations come and go and only some of them remain active in the long run.

An alternative to the current composition of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs would be arranging the representation of national Roma organisations on an alternating basis where, for example, two organisations at a time are replaced every three years. The composition of the Board should also be reformed through the introduction of personal deputies which are in use, for example, in the National Council on Disability operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Appointing personal deputies for all Board members would ensure the equal representation of all parties even if a member were absent.

In conjunction with the appointment of the Board, the Government appoints, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, a Chairperson and Vice-Chair for the Board. The Chairperson is usually an MP in office, which provides the Board with a link to parliamentary decision-making.

The Vice-Chair is usually a member of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs with a Romani background. A more democratic alternative to the present system, one where the members elect a Vice-Chair from among themselves, could be considered as an option. If the number of members is increased, the Board could also have a second Vice-Chair, in which case both a man and a woman could be elected.

#### *Administrative location of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs*

Throughout its existence, the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs has operated under the auspices of either the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health or the Ministry of Social Affairs. Its administrative location reflects the trend of seeing the Romani question primarily as a social issue. The change in focus from a social issue into a human rights issue and the principle of active participation of the Roma population have occasionally prompted discussion of the administrative location of the Board.

Several proposals for development concerning the administration of Romani affairs were included in the Strategies of the policy on Roma of 1999, as a result of which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed an Administrative Working Group on Romani Affairs to look into alternatives for administrative solutions. Based on the urgent need for the development of education for Roma, the rapporteurs proposed placing the Board under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. In its statement, the Ministry of Education did not agree with the proposal, however. Apart from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, another possible location under consideration was the Ministry of Employment, which at the time was also responsible for discrimination issues.

In its memorandum (2001:24), the Administrative Working Group on Romani Affairs resolved to recommend that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health continue as the administrative location for the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. The Working Group did, however, suggest that the location of the Board under the auspices of the Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities be reconsidered with a view to achieving possible synergy benefits, for example. This reconsideration was to take place on the initiative of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, however.

The National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs has not submitted a proposal concerning its administrative relocation. Now that the legal reform concerning equality legislation and authorities has been completed, it is time to address the division of duties between the various authorities and boards and the allocation of resources.

#### *Total reform of equality and discrimination affairs*

After the introduction of EU's equality directives in the 2000s, Finnish equality legislation has been enhanced to a considerable extent. In 2008, the promotion of equality was included in the duties of the Ministry of the Interior as the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Trade and Industry were merged. In the reform, the Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities was also placed under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior.

The national implementation of the EU's equality directives has entailed significant changes both in equality legislation and the authorities responsible for it. The Ministry of Justice appointed a committee to look into the reform of equality legislation, or the provisions pertaining to equality, equal treatment and discrimination.

The aim of the committee is to reform equality legislation to enhance the equal treatment of all Finnish citizens by covering, more completely than today, all grounds for discrimination and being more easily applicable to all spheres of life. The legal remedies and sanctions employed in different discrimination situations should also be as uniform as possible. If necessary, the status, duties and power of the authorities handling discrimination issues would also be reviewed in conjunction with the reform. This would be carried out with due consideration for Finland's basic and human rights monitoring activities as a whole and the international standards set for this type of action.

The committee has submitted an interim report on the possible extent of the reform, the various alternatives for reform, and other issues of principle relating to it. The committee preparing the proposal is set to finish its work by late October 2009.

When decisions are made on the possible centralisation of the administration responsible for the promotion of ethnic equality, the resources and the necessary conditions for the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, acting as an expert body on Romani affairs and as a platform for the development and monitoring of a more extensive and comprehensive Policy on Roma, must be guaranteed. The enhancement of the status of the Roma population is a more complicated issue than the prevention of discrimination and ensuring the rights of minorities, important as they are in their own right.

#### *Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs*

The regional administration reform, set to come into force in 2010, will also have an impact on the administrative location and sphere of activities of the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. In the preliminary plan, the Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs will, in accordance with their wishes, be placed under the auspices of Regional Administrative Authorities to be established as part of the reform. The number of regional administration authorities and their regional distribution will not be the same as the current number of State Provincial Offices and their spheres of activity. The termination of the activities of the Province of Western Finland and the introduction of the Regional Administration Authority for Southwestern Finland and the Regional Administration Authority for Western and Inland Fin-

land will, in terms of the regional administration for Romani affairs, mean that the Roma population currently living in Central Finland and the Pirkanmaa, Kanta-Häme and Päijät-Häme regions will be left outside the sphere of activity of what are now the Provinces of Western and Southern Finland.

The aim of the Decree on Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs is to ensure that the entire Roma population of Finland is regionally represented on the Board, with the exception of the Region of Åland. It is vital to ensure that the Roma living in the new administrative region to be created in the provisional regional distribution of authorities will be in an equal position to participate in regional activities that concern themselves. Thus, the regional administration reform necessitates the amendment of the Decree on Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. On the basis of national representation and the large Roma population living there, a Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, along with a position for a planning officer, should also be established in the new Regional Administration Authority for Western and Inland Finland.

*Development of the administration and cooperation structures for handling Romani affairs on a local level*

Small in number, the Finnish Roma minority is dispersed all over the country, although to some extent the Roma population is concentrated in certain localities and regions. Being a small minority, the needs of the Roma are seldom addressed on a local level. The need to take the Roma population into account in the development of local services and the strengthening of municipal-level cross-administrative cooperation have both been recognised as areas of development in fostering the equality of the Roma. To enhance the social inclusion of the Roma, more active interaction and cooperation structures on a local level are needed, as is the promotion of the active participation of Roma themselves.

So far the development of the local structures of the administration for Romani affairs has been occasional and insufficient. On a local level, some officials or workers have been coordinating Romani affairs in individual municipalities. As early as 1968, the City of Helsinki did create a position for a Romani Welfare Officer, but the position did not, however, become established within the city organisation. Since 2005 the City of Helsinki, in its Family Services area of responsibility of the Social Welfare Office, has employed a special form of family work for Roma, where two social workers with a Romani background are responsible for family work and cultural interpretation. Some other municipalities also employ workers with a Romani background to enhance network cooperation and services aimed at the Roma population.

In Strategies of the policy on Roma (1999), the proposal was put forward of creating local Roma working groups or appointing Roma contact persons to enhance cooperation between the Roma population and the authorities. In its 2001 memorandum, the Administrative Working Group on Romani Affairs did not deem it necessary, however, to extend advisory board type activities to a municipal level.

The cooperation models and structures have developed in fits and starts, often through local initiative and voluntary work. In the 1990s, Roma contact persons were first introduced, both on a provincial and municipal level, to enhance interaction between the Roma and the authorities and to raise authorities' awareness of the Romani culture. Established in 1993, Ryhdys ry was the first organisation to employ a Roma contact person in its activities. The contact per-

sons' task was to act as intermediaries between authorities and the Roma population in Finnish municipalities. Municipalities did not provide funding for this activity, which instead was based solely on voluntary participation. The City of Helsinki did, however, provide the association with facilities, and the Ministry of Employment subsidised the employment costs of the association's secretary up until the early 2000s.

The National Board of Education Roma Education Unit was responsible for the training of the contact persons, which between 2001–2004 was carried out as a Drom-Edu Project under the Sokrates Programme. The original aim was to employ Roma contact persons as cultural mediators and interpreters throughout the service system, but as the training programme was initiated, the activities were increasingly focused on supporting children's school attendance. While this activity gradually died down and no permanent cultural mediator programme ensued, it did create a solid base for the current vocational qualifications for a Romani culture instructor and special needs assistant. In 2009, there were only two persons with Roma contact person training working as Roma contact persons in Finland.

The use of Roma contact persons has also yielded other than positive results, however. Their status as unofficial mediators between municipalities and local Roma has proved problematic when dealing with the affairs of individuals or individual families. Confidentiality statutes forbid the participation of a third party in the handling of a matter pertaining to an individual person. Moreover, the making of administrative decisions in the selection of tenants, for example, is based on the powers and public liability invested in the office.

There has been a considerable increase in the development of cooperation structures between the Roma population and local authorities in recent years. A Roma working group has already been active in the City of Vantaa since 1993. The Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Western Finland, in particular, has shown great initiative and supported the establishment of local Roma working groups in various municipalities or regions. At the moment, there are 13 officially established local Roma working groups active within the Province of Western Finland. Encouraged by the example of the Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for Western Finland, there have also been many initiatives towards the establishment of working groups in other Provinces. In 2009 there were Roma working groups, either in operation or in the process of being established, in more than 20 Finnish municipalities.

Experience gained elsewhere in Europe also emphasises the need to develop local-level structures to enhance the social inclusion of the Roma. Local networks have sprung up all over Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, which act as cooperation platforms for authorities and Roma communities. Facilitators have also been appointed as 'cultural mediators' and process support persons.

## **2. Increasing the Roma population's opportunities to participate in decision-making**

It is possible to create some of the necessary conditions for the social inclusion of the Roma in Finnish society by developing interaction between administration and Roma organisations, ensuring the provision of the necessary resources for Roma organisations, and by organising training that supports inclusion. The Roma population should be encouraged to engage in social participation and to participate in decision-making. On the other hand, internal dialogue within the Roma community is also necessary, dialogue that supports social participation and encourages involvement. Roma organisations play a significant role in this.

The Roma lack the kind of statutory representative organ on a national level that the Sami possess in the Sami Parliament, or the Swedish-speaking minority in the Swedish Assembly of Finland. As the Roma population is small and dispersed, it is difficult for them to have their candidates elected in general elections, particularly on a national level. Roma have participated in municipal elections, however, and some of them have also been elected. To increase the Roma population's opportunities to participate in decision-making, it has been proposed that the hearings arranged for them be developed further, both on a local and a national level. Some national Roma organisations are of the opinion that like with the Sami or the Swedish-speaking minority, the independent representation of Roma should be developed to become more uniform.

Despite a communal culture and a common history, efforts by the Roma to become organised in taking up their own cause and making a social statement have been few and far between. Most national Roma organisations are associations operating on a religious basis, and religious communities play a significant role among the Roma population. Some of the major organisations are charitable or focused on cultural issues. There are also several local Roma organisations around the country, some of them with numerous activities in their programme. Their number has been on the increase in the past few years. The first associations for Roma women were founded in the 2000s. Many of the associations founded by Roma have been rather short-lived, however, or their activity has been minimal.

In terms of the development of mutual cooperation between Roma organisations and the enhancement of their participation in decision-making, a significant step forward was the establishment in 2007 of Fintiko Romano Forum, an umbrella organisation that brings together all Roma organisations. The establishment of this organisation is part of a European trend in which Finland has taken the initiative in many cases. The Finnish Romani Forum is a National Member of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, which after several years of preparation was eventually founded in 2004. The Forum operates as an independent international organisation under the auspices of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. The Finnish Romani Forum consists of 13 currently active Roma organisations, but some national organisations and local associations have remained outside the Forum.

When the Finnish Romani Forum was about to be established, hearings were arranged for Roma organisations in the various provinces between 2006–2007 to obtain an overview of the Roma organisation field. The main problems that emerged in the course of the hearings were the disjointedness of the organisations, lack of cooperation skills, and few opportunities to participate in decision-making. It was felt that the well-developed administrative cooperation between the authorities and the Roma actually hindered the Roma population's political participation and the development of their participation in decision-making.

After the Citizen Participation Policy Programme, included in the Government Programme and implemented between 2003-2007, the work on the enhancement of citizens' opportunities for active political participation is continued in KANE, the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministries' Democracy Network. Currently in preparation, the National Policy Document on Democracy highlights several areas in need of development in terms of citizens' opportunities for political participation and decision-making. The proposals focus on the enhancement of the Civil Society and the status of civic organisations, democracy education, and the development of administrative interaction and hearing practices.

### **3. Development of the policy on Roma and enhancement of its implementation**

Although the social status of the Roma has been significantly improved through the development of legislation and the administrative structures for Romani affairs, Finland still lacks a comprehensive and goal-directed action programme on the policy on Roma. It was towards the very end of the last millennium that the first comprehensive report, *Strategies of the policy on Roma (Romanipolitiikan strategiati, 1999)*, was written with a view to improving the social status of the Roma. The measures put forward in the report have only partially been realised.

The development of a European-level strategy on Roma, currently in progress, also supports the development of a comprehensive policy on Roma in Finland. The development of the policy on Roma entails the strengthening of implementation structures, goal-setting for national and international policy on Roma, and the development of the monitoring system for the realisation of the objectives. What is also necessary is the enhancement of expertise on Romani affairs in various administrative sectors, as well as due consideration to the needs of the Roma population in research, various development programmes, and equality and action plans.

Monitoring the implementation and results of the policy on Roma entails an extension of the knowledge base on the Roma population. At present, we do not have a comprehensive overview of the socio-economic status of the Roma population or the discrimination they face. To extend the knowledge base and enhance the monitoring of the policy on Roma, it will be necessary to conduct ad hoc reports and studies, to develop various surveys, barometers and customer feedback systems aimed at the Roma, and in general address the needs of the Roma population as part of research and development activities.

### **4. International cooperation on Romani issues**

Along with the expansion of the EU in particular, increasing attention has been paid to the policy on Roma and the enhancement of their status in Europe. Compared to Finland, the size of the Roma population in many other European countries is considerably larger. The number of European Roma is estimated at 8–12 million. Compared to the majority population, the socio-economic status of the Roma population is significantly weaker in many countries. This has led to the emergence of new phenomena, such as the large-scale movement of itinerant and mendicant Roma within the EU area.

The policy on Roma and the need to create European and national strategies on Roma have emerged in the 2000s in particular. Cooperation structures have also been created for the development and implementation of the policy on Roma. On a European level, the main cooperation bodies on Romani issues are the Council of Europe, the European Union, and OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). Additionally, Finland has established cooperation relations with Sweden on Romani affairs.

The oldest human rights organisation in Europe and a cooperation organisation for European governments, the Council of Europe, as part of the general promotion of human rights and the rights of national minorities in particular, has for three decades worked to enhance the social equality and human rights of European Roma. The aim of the Council of Europe is to encourage its Member States to take comprehensive action to improve the status of the Roma. According to Council of Europe policy, permanent effects and improvement can be achieved through a long-term solution plan and measures that have an impact on various spheres of life.

The Directorate General of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe employs a Roma and Travellers Division, whose legal basis is to be found in international human rights agreements. MG-S-ROM, the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers was founded in 1995. Finland is also represented. Among other things, the Committee is tasked with drawing up reports and recommendations for its Member States to enhance the status of the Roma and to encourage international operators to take a more active role in Romani issues.

There has been considerable improvement within the EU in the activities for the development of a European policy on Roma, but the administration of Romani affairs and related forms of cooperation still need to be developed further. The Council of the European Union made decisions on the enhancement of the social inclusion and integration of the Roma in December 2007 and June 2008, with further reference in December 2008, followed by Conclusions in June 2009.

Steps have been taken in the EU to develop cooperation and to enhance the active participation of the Roma themselves. During the French presidency, the Commission held its first Roma Summit in autumn 2008. During the Czech presidency, the European Platform for Roma Inclusion, an initiative on the social inclusion of the Roma, was introduced in April 2009. The Commission and the Member States are committed to strengthening the structure and form of the Roma Platform within the Commission. The purpose of the Roma Platform is to create a discussion and cooperation forum which also enables the Roma to participate in the implementation of the EU's policy on Roma and to increase dialogue on Romani affairs between the Member States, the Commission, non-governmental organisations, and experts.

During the Finnish presidency of OSCE in 2008, the implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area was actively enhanced. An interim report was drawn up on the implementation of the Action Plan, and a conference held to focus on local-level implementation of the measures put forward. The Resolution of the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2008 once again enhanced the implementation of the Action Plan and placed the OSCE focus on fostering the participation of Roma children in early childhood education.

A joint project involving international organisations, the World Bank and individual countries, the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 aims to enhance the status of the Roma, particularly in the area of education, health care, employment and housing, with the focus on Eastern Europe. The Roma Decade Project also aims at the more efficient implementation of national strategies on Roma. Finland has financed the project but is not an actual project member. Currently the project is being extended to other European countries, and Finland may need to consider active participation in the Roma Decade project.



*European institutions and cooperation structures for Romani affairs*

<b>European cooperation structures</b>		
<b>Council of Europe (CoE)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 member states</li> <li>• Directorate General of Social Cohesion; Roma and Travellers Division</li> <li>• ECRI</li> <li>• Commissioner for Human Rights</li> <li>• MG-S-ROM, Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers</li> <li>• <i>Recommendation for the development of strategies on Roma</i></li> </ul>	<b>The European Union</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Council</li> <li>• Employment and Social Affairs Council</li> <li>• Unofficial network of experts on Roma and Sinti</li> <li>• Roma Platform</li> <li>• <i>Enhancement of the social inclusion of the Roma; mainstreaming of non-discrimination</i></li> </ul>	<b>OSCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</li> <li>• Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI)</li> <li>• Ombudsman for Minorities</li> <li>• <i>Action Plan, 2003</i></li> </ul>
<b>Roma civic organisations and cooperation forums</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERTF – European Roma and Travellers Forum</li> <li>• Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roma National Congress (RNC)</li> <li>- International Romani Union (IRU)</li> <li>- International Roma Women Network (IRWN)</li> <li>- Forum for European Roma Youth (FERYP)</li> <li>- Free Evangelical Roma Churches (CIMERI)</li> <li>- Gypsies and Travellers Int. Evang. Fellowship –Life and Light (GATIEF)</li> <li>- National representatives</li> <li>- Finnish Romani Forum</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Partnership agreement with the Council of Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)</li> <li>• European Roma Information Office (ERIO)</li> <li>• Roma Education Fund</li> <li>• Open Society – Roma Decade (OSI)</li> <li>• Minority Rights Group (MRG)</li> </ul>	

*International cooperation among Roma organisations*

There are several Roma organisations and cooperation forums for Roma operating on a European level. European Romani cooperation was launched in 1971 with the first World Romani Congress in London. In the 1990s, as international organisations started to pay increasing attention to human rights issues and the weak social status of the Roma, the European Romani movement set as their goal the common representation of all European Roma.

Tarja Halonen, the President of Finland, submitted an initiative for the creation of a forum for all European Roma in the Parliamentary Plenary Session of the Council of Europe in 2001. Finland's support was also crucial in the establishment, on the basis of the above-mentioned initiative, of the European Roma and Travellers Forum under the auspices of the Council of

Europe in 2004. The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) is an international umbrella organisation for the various national and international Roma organisations in the Member States. The Forum operates under the auspices of the Council of Europe with its headquarters in Strasbourg, France. Finland has supported the activities of the European Roma and Travellers Forum through an annual grant.

The national members of the European Roma and Travellers Forum are the national Romani umbrella organisations as well as international Roma organisations and their representatives. The aim of this cooperation structure is to enhance the organisation of the Roma population from local level all the way to international level, and thus to enable them to represent themselves as national minorities as well as a pan-European minority.

In addition to the activities of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also started to hold an official meeting on Romani issues in conjunction with its annual Human Dimension Implementation Meetings. The European Union has also endeavoured to enhance cooperation with civil society and create a discussion forum on Roma affairs for the Member States. The EU has committed itself to promoting and monitoring the steps taken to enhance the integration of the Roma population by, for example, holding a summit meeting on Romani issues every two years, presided over by the EU Presidency country, and by appointing a European Roma Inclusion Platform Working Group to monitor this development and to strive to find ways to harmonise the operational practices of the Member States.

The Romani cooperation is still in its infancy, and its current mission is the enhancement of the active participation of the Roma themselves, addressing their needs, and general commitment to the planning, implementation and monitoring of the integration and other political development objectives concerning themselves.

#### *Freedom of movement and mendicancy*

The previous expansion of the EU in 2004, in particular, clearly showed that policy guidelines are needed to address the situation that has arisen through the freedom of movement of indigent EU citizens. The great inequalities in the standard of living, basic social security and non-discrimination in different European countries force people to set off in the hope of securing a better standard of living for themselves and their families. As such, the freedom of movement does not constitute a problem in itself. However, it leads to a range of side effects and problems that are currently unsolved, such as the status of mendicant and peddling persons and their children in both the country of origin and the country of destination; enforced mendicancy by an outsider or a family member; addressing the needs of children, persons with disabilities and the elderly; and the issues relating to the provision of social welfare and health services for persons without a European social security card.

The European Union and its Member States should actively seek solutions to enhance the status of mendicant persons as the poor part of the European population that, more easily than others, becomes the target of discrimination. In addition to discrimination on the grounds of ethnic background, this phenomenon also includes issues such as extreme poverty, lack of education, income-related problems, insufficient social security, and a future with no prospects.

### APPENDIX 3. Implementation and Monitoring Plan for the National Policy on Roma

A report on the realisation of the implementation of the Policy is submitted annually to the Monitoring Group for the National Policy on Roma. Additionally, some measures included in the Policy will be monitored separately in terms of the implementation of the Policy and the realisation of its objectives as follows:

<b>Policy Guideline 1. Enhancing the participation and equal treatment of Roma children in early childhood education and care</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Enhancing participation in early childhood education and care	Including the participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care and in pre-primary education as a key area in the action plans of the relevant administrative sectors.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	Municipalities
	Particular enhancement of the participation of Roma children in pre-primary education by providing Roma parents with more information on the significance of pre-primary education, in conjunction with 3- and 5-year checkups in family centres, for example.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	National Institute for Health and Welfare, National Board of Education Regional administration Regional ABRAs Municipalities
Enhancing the school readiness and learning skills of Roma children	Taking into account the special needs of Roma children when revising the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Education
Enhancing the cultural rights of Roma children	Enhancing the teaching of the Romani language by producing educational material on Romani culture for day care and pre-primary education for children up to 6 years of age.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education	National Institute for Health and Welfare, National Board of Education
Enhancement of activities that support cooperation and parenting skills	Allocating support services for Roma families in family centres and municipal family work.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Regional administration Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Local Roma working groups

	Encouraging municipalities to utilise possible state grants in family work aimed at the Roma population, and to employ professionally qualified family workers with a Romani background.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional administration Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups
<b>Policy Guideline 2. Enhancing the social inclusion and equal treatment of Roma children and youth in basic education and upper secondary education</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Developing measures and forms of cooperation for the enhancement of school attendance and completion of comprehensive school	Enhancing teachers' ability to support Roma students through continuing education and training; enhancing cooperation between school and home as well as providing parents with more information.	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Regional administration Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
	Encouraging municipalities to employ special needs assistants with a Romani background.	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
Developing practices and operational procedures to support Roma pupils' learning at school	Supporting the dissemination and inclusion of the best practices, created in basic education development projects for Roma children, in educational activities on a national basis.	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
	Development of Roma pupils' participation in mainstream education. This is supported through the development of special needs teaching, study counselling and pupil welfare services.	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Municipalities National Institute for Health and Welfare
Development of measures and operational procedures to provide support in transitional stages in education and supporting the entry of Roma youth into upper secondary education	Encouraging Roma youth through pupil counselling to plan their upper secondary education studies and supporting them in the upper secondary education application process by enhancing the cooperation between basic education, upper secondary schools and vocational education and training.	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Regional administration Municipalities Educational institutions

Providing more information on Romani culture and the conditions of the Roma in teacher training and teaching materials	Encouraging higher education institutes to include studies focusing specifically on Romani culture and the lives of Roma children and youth in their training for class teachers and vocational education teachers.	Universities and higher education institutions	Roma organisations
Providing more opportunities for various social participation and leisure activities for Roma children and youth	Taking Roma children and youth into account when planning and drawing up municipal welfare plans for children and adolescents in accordance with the Child Welfare Act.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Education Ombudsman for Children in Finland Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRA's Municipalities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
<b>Policy Guideline 3.</b>			
<b>Enhancing the participation in vocational education and training of adult Roma</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Determining the educational needs of adult Roma; ensuring that the vocational education and training aimed at the Roma population meets the needs of both the Roma and the labour market	Conducting a survey on the adult Roma population's need for education and utilising these data to draw up a set of proposals for the allocation and development of vocational education and training.	Ministry of Education	National Board of Education Ministry of Employment and the Economy
Supporting and enhancing the participation of Roma in qualification-oriented vocational education and training	Aiming preparatory training and study guidance at Roma youth in such a manner as to enhance their readiness to integrate into various student groups and the study opportunities provided by the educational system.	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Municipalities and joint municipal boards Education providers
	Creating operational procedures to remove the practical obstacles preventing adult Roma from participating in education and utilising preparatory training and the individualisation of studies in basic vocational education and training.	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Joint municipal boards Education providers
	Looking into the possibility of developing financial systems providing study incentives for the enhancement of the participation of underrepresented minorities in education, and also encouraging municipalities to utilise preventive and supplementary social assistance for this purpose.	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Employment and the Economy Regional administration Municipalities

Enhancing opportunities for vocational education and training for the Roma population and their vocational choices	Supporting the development of apprenticeship training; enhancing apprenticeship training for Roma in various vocational fields and in the public sector by also making use of subsidised apprenticeship.	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and the Economy Education providers
<b>Policy Guideline 4. Supporting and promoting the Roma population's access to the labour market</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Enhancing the Roma population's integration into the labour market through more efficient employment administration services and multi-professional cooperation	Enhancing the opportunities for job-seeking Roma to participate in labour market and vocational education and training by increasing their motivation to educate themselves and enhancing their ability to identify the need for education through the internal cooperation (training, guidance, vocational counselling, other counselling services) of the Employment and Economic Development Offices, and by taking into account their individual needs in enhancing their access to education and training.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices
	Enhancing the employment of job-seeking Roma on the open labour market by utilising the support measures offered by Employment and Economic Development Offices, such as Job Seeking Allowance, job coaching and salary support, and by informing employers of the option of making use of salary support in apprenticeship contracts or utilising the so-called TOPPIS Model.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices
	Introducing more extensive Romani Affairs Contact Person services in Employment and Economic Development Offices; developing activities to enhance the development of new forms of employment support and services for Roma customers.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
	Implementing in cooperation with regional Economic and Employment Development Centres a pilot project funded by ESF, with the aim of developing counselling and support services aimed at Roma through the training of support persons with a Romani background to provide employment counselling for the Roma population.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Regional ABRAs

Development of new forms of employment for Roma and enhancing their entrepreneurship activities	Enabling the Roma organisations to act as service providers and employers of Roma support persons, also taking advantage of labour market grants for the organisations.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
	Recognising the potential of the Roma as entrepreneurs in the services provided by Employment and Economic Development Centres and Offices; development of entrepreneurship guidance, training and support services aimed at the Roma.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment and Economic Development Centres Business and Innovation centres Roma organisations
Raising the awareness of the Roma population of working life practices and providing employers with more information for the prevention of discrimination against Roma and the elimination of prejudices	Publication of an extensive guide or Web page on employment relationships and workplace and working life practices for Roma population of working age.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	ABRA Roma organisations Ombudsman for Minorities Working life operators
	Looking into ways of carrying out an awareness-raising campaign in cooperation with employer and entrepreneur organisations with the aim of increasing the number of jobs available for the Roma.	Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of the Interior	ABRA Roma organisations Working life operators

**Policy Guideline 5.****Promoting the welfare of the Roma population and enhancing the allocation of social welfare and health services**

<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Charting the living conditions of Roma as well as their use of and need for health care and welfare services in different age groups; submitting proposals for development on the basis of the study	The National Institute for Health and Welfare will conduct an extensive survey with the aim of acquiring data on the living conditions, health, welfare and housing conditions of the Roma, as well as their service needs. The survey will take into account all age groups and the situation for both sexes.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare, Ministry of the Environment
Enhancing the prevention of marginalisation and promoting social welfare and health services	Targeting resources at family work and social welfare work aimed at the Roma population in Finnish municipalities.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Local Roma working groups
	Determining which regional Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare could be charged with the development of social welfare and health services for the Roma and related information and training activities.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Advisory Board on Centres of Excellence on Social Welfare Centres of Expertise on Social Welfare ABRA
Enhancing information work aimed at Roma as part of the preventive action taken by social welfare and health care services	Raising the awareness of the Roma population and organisations of the available social welfare and health services and social welfare and health NGOs through the development of Web services for Roma, for example.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	National Institute for Health and Welfare ABRA Roma organisations

<b>Policy Guideline 6. Ensuring equal treatment in housing and reducing insecurity</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Development of equal treatment in housing services and enhancing the solving of problems relating to the housing and living conditions of the Roma	Enhancing, on a municipal level, cross-administrative cooperation between social welfare services, housing services, debt counselling, and real estate companies; promoting good local governance in solving the housing-related problems of individual Roma families.	Ministry of the Environment, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups
	Looking into the possibility of initiating a separate national project focusing on solving the Roma population's housing problems and the development and dissemination of best practices.	Ministry of the Environment	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ABRA Ombudsman for Minorities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Roma organisations
	Supporting measures aimed at the promotion of non-discrimination within the Roma community and equal treatment in the selection of their place of residence. Active information and media work on procedures promoting good local governance, legality, and the consideration of cultural aspects in the selection of tenants.	Ombudsman for Minorities	Ministry of the Environment, Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ABRA Regional ABRAs Municipalities Housing authorities Local Roma working groups Roma organisations
Promoting the equal treatment of Roma in administrative procedures to reduce insecurity	Paying special attention in local security plans to the prevention of ethnic discrimination and everyday racism in cooperation with local Roma; development of measures and monitoring to eliminate the insecurity experienced by the Roma population.	Ministry of the Interior	Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups and organisations
	Enhancing the implementation of the measures proposed by the working group on the status of Roma prisoners in the care of released offenders and prison administration.	Ministry of Justice	Criminal Sanctions Agency



<b>Policy Guideline 7. Promoting the development of the Romani language and culture</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Development of the teaching of the Romani language and the training of Romani language teachers	Looking into the possibility of introducing university-level teaching of the Romani language, organised in an appropriate manner.	Ministry of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland Romani Language Board
	Development of continuing education for teachers of the Romani language.	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland
Extending and enhancing the teaching of the Romani language in basic and adult education	Creating more opportunities for Roma pupils to participate in Romani-language lessons by making the statutes more flexible.	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Municipalities Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
	Producing more Romani-language teaching material in accordance with the National Core Curriculum; as a long-term goal, producing study material for Roma children and youth studying the Romani language in pre-primary and basic education, general upper secondary school, vocational basic education and training, and adult education.	Ministry of Education, National Board of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland
Enhancing the realisation of linguistic rights	Monitoring how the Roma population's right to the maintenance and development of a language of their own is realised in lower-level legislation and its implementation.	Ministry of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland YLE ABRA National Board of Education, Ministry of Education
	Securing sufficient resources for university-level research and language maintenance of the Romani language.	Ministry of Education	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland
Supporting the development of Romani culture and its presentation	Earmarking additional funding in the state budget for the promotion and performance of Romani artistic activity.	Ministry of Education	ABRA
	Looking into the possibility of founding a Romani cultural centre.	Ministry of Education	ABRA Roma organisations
	Looking into the possibility of setting up a permanent exhibition on Romani history, traditions and culture in an existing museum in Finland.	Ministry of Education	ABRA

Enhancing the inclusion of the Roma and the coverage of the Romani language and culture in YLE programmes	Increasing the coverage of the Roma minority as part of Finnish society in YLE programming; increasing the production of informative programmes and programmes on current affairs aimed at the Roma population, also in Romani; and creating the necessary procedures that allow the Roma population to be heard in conjunction with the planning of YLE programming.	YLE	ABRA Regional ABRAs
<b>Policy Guideline 8. Enhancing the equality and non-discrimination of the Roma</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Enhancing equal opportunities for Roma and their equal treatment and preventing discrimination aimed at them	Enhancement of authorities' equality planning in cooperation with Roma; ensuring that the equality plans include concrete action for the creation of equal opportunities for Roma and the prevention of discrimination against them.	Ministry of the Interior	Ombudsman for Minorities Regional ABRAs Municipalities Local Roma working groups
	Encouraging the authorities to include in the equality plans, required by the Non-Discrimination Act, the possibility of positive discrimination in situations where Roma are underrepresented or in a disadvantaged position when compared to the rest of population.	Ministry of the Interior	Ministries Ombudsman for Minorities ABRA / Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities
Elimination of anti-Romani bias and providing more information on the situation of the Roma and Romani culture	Starting a national media campaign, aimed at the elimination of prejudices against the Roma population, to raise the profile of the Roma minority and to support the implementation of the National Policy on Roma.	Ministry of the Interior, PROGRESS	YLE Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Regional ABRAs Roma organisations
Intervening in the multiple discrimination experienced by the Roma population as well as the internal discrimination within the group	Enhancing action for stopping or preventing multiple discrimination; raising the awareness of the Roma population of multiple discrimination and the legislation relating to it.	Ministry of the Interior, Monitoring Group for Discrimination	ABRA, regional ABRAs Roma organisations Ombudsman for Minorities Ombudsman for Equality
	Development of Roma organisations' resources, expertise and attitudinal work for the acceptance of multiplicity among the Roma population.	Ministry of the Interior, ABRA	Regional ABRAs Local Roma working groups Roma organisations

<b>Policy Guideline 9. Development of the administrative structures for handling Romani affairs and enhancing the policy on Roma</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Strengthening the institutional structures for the handling of Romani affairs both on a national and a regional-local level	Strengthening local cooperation structures between the authorities and the Roma population for the enhancement of the inclusion of the Roma by promoting the establishment of local Roma working groups in those municipalities or joint co-operation areas with a Roma population.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, ABRA	Regional administration Regional ABRAs Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities Municipalities
	Ensuring that contact persons responsible for Romani affairs are appointed in all Ministries in the main administrative sectors for the enhancement of the implementation and coordination of the Policy on Roma.	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Environment	Ministries ABRA
Enhancing the realisation of the rights of the Roma minority and their participation in decision-making	Developing the expertise and operational resources of Roma organisations by initiating an empowerment pilot project to provide more opportunities for the Roma population to participate in decision-making.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy Roma organisations
Creating the necessary conditions for the development, implementation and monitoring of a sustained policy on Roma	For the promotion of the equality of the Roma, inclusion in the state budget of a fixed allocation (€3 million) as a state grant to municipalities for the development of support measures aimed at the Roma population, services that complement the basic services, and cooperation structures.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of Finance Regional administration, municipalities
	Including the Government Resolution on the implementation of the National Policy on Roma in the next Government Programme.	Ministries Prime Minister's Office	Political parties ABRA
	Creating a procedure for the holding of regular ministerial discussions for the outlining of national and international objectives of the Policy on Roma.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education	ABRA

<b>Policy Guideline 10.</b>			
<b>Promotion of participation in international cooperation on Romani issues</b>			
<b>Target area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible body/bodies</b>	<b>Contributing bodies</b>
Active participation in the formation of a European strategy on Roma; enhancement of expertise in international cooperation	Drawing up a national and international strategy on Roma for Finland, which sets the objectives for multilateral international cooperation in Romani affairs.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ABRA	Ministries

## APPENDIX 4. List of abbreviations

AKKU	Ammatillisesti suuntautuneen koulutuksen kokonaisuudistus ('Comprehensive reform of vocationally-oriented education and training')
Regional ABRA	Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs
ARA	Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland
CEDAW Committee	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ECRI	The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EC	Council of Europe
EQUAL	The aim of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme was, through international cooperation, to find new tools to combat marginalisation, discrimination and inequality in the labour market. (2000–2006)
ESF	European Social Fund
OSCE	OSCE– Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
EU	The European Union
EUROSTAT	The Statistical Office of the European Communities Up-to-date statistical information for the European Union
FRA	The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Euroopan unionin perusoikeusvirasto)
KANE	Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy
KASTE Programme	The National Development Programme for Social Welfare and Health Care The KASTE Programme outlines the general development objectives and measures for the social welfare and health care services for 2008–2011.
KiVa Programme	An anti-bullying action programme for schools
KOTUS	Finnish Research Institute for Languages of Finland
LVM	Ministry of Transport and Communications
MG-S-ROM	EC Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers
NOSTE Programme	NOSTE is a programme mainly aimed at the enhancement of the expertise of working adults. It is aimed at the least educated part of the adult population.
OM	Ministry of Justice
OPH	National Board of Education
OPM	Ministry of Education
Progress	EU programme on employment and social solidarity
RISE	Criminal Sanctions Agency
ROMAKO Project	Employment and education project for the Roma population (1996–1998, 1999–2000, 2001–2002)
RomEqual	RomEqual developed new support models for the education of adult Roma. In the project, Roma adults were trained to become special needs assistants to assist Roma children and youth in comprehensive schools. (2004–2007)
ABRA	National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs
ROTI Project	Romaninuoren tie työelämään ('The path into working life of Roma youth')
SATA Committee	The Committee for reforming Social Protection The aim of the Social Protection reform is to make accepting a job always profitable, reduce poverty and secure an individual's livelihood in all life situations.
SKS	Finnish Literature Society
SM	Ministry of the Interior
SOKRATES	EU training programme (1995–1999, 2000–2006)
STM	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
TE Centre	Employment and Economic Development Centre
TEM	Ministry of Employment and the Economy
TEROKA Project	Project for the reduction of socio-economic health inequalities
THL	National Institute for Welfare and Health

TOPPIS	Supplementary vocational training, the combination of labour market training with subsidised work. The aim is to enhance the vocational skills of long-term unemployed. The skills are developed to meet the needs of working life.
TuRom	Tuki Romanille ('Support the Roma') (2003–2007)
UM	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme (Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien kehitysohjelma)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien kasvatus-, tiede- ja kulttuurijärjestö
VM	Ministry of Finance
VNK	Prime Minister's Office
YES Project	Yhdenvertaisuus etusijalle ('Equality is Priority')
UN	United Nations
YLE	YLE (Finnish Broadcasting Company)
YPM	Ministry of the Environment

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