



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005 - 2015

PROGRESS REPORT 2010

GOVERNMENT OF CROATIA

June 2011



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1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

The Government of the Republic of Croatia pays particular attention to the rights of Roma national minority, and continuously undertakes measures, just as it does for members of other national minorities and other citizens of Croatia, enabling them to enjoy their rights under same conditions.

In order to further improve living conditions of this vulnerable minority and continue fighting against all forms of discrimination, the Government has adopted a National Roma Program (NRP) in October 2003. In 2005, Croatia has joined several other European countries and has been participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 with a view to co-coordinating its efforts for Europe's biggest minority, by focusing mainly on education, health care, employment and housing, and improvement of its living conditions. The support for this policy in the Republic of Croatia comes from the highest places, since the Prime Minister is also the president of the Commission for the Implementation of the NRP, and the National Coordinator of the Roma Inclusion Decade.

In order to be able to put the figures from four key areas into a perspective, it is necessary to point out that according to the 2001 census there were 9,463 Roma in Croatia, while most would agree on the estimate of 30-40,000 Roma. The total population according to the census 2001 is 4,437,460, and EUROSTAT estimate for 2010 is 4,425,747. Nominal GDP per capita in 2010, according to the EUROSTAT (provisional) is 10,400 EUR.

2. INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION AND EVALUATION OF ROMA INTEGRATION POLICY

In regard to institutional arrangements, on 16th June 2010 the Croatian Parliament, with the support of all national minority members of the Parliament, adopted changes in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and in the Constitutional Law on the Rights on National Minorities. Two changes are particularly relevant for the Roma minority: according to the Constitutional Law on the Rights on National Minorities, in

addition to the universal suffrage, national minorities comprising less than 1.5 % of the population of the Republic of Croatia are guaranteed five seats in the Croatian Parliament on the basis of the special suffrage through elections in a single electoral unit, comprising the whole country. Roma national minority belongs to this category. The second change is that now, instead of 10, all of the 22 constitutionally recognized national minorities in Croatia are being stated in the Preamble of the Constitution, including the Roma national minority.

Members of the Roma national minority participate in the decision making process from the level of the Croatian Parliament to the level of local communities. Apart from the fact that a member of the Roma national minority has been elected to the Croatian Parliament, the Roma have also their representatives on the local level. Three Roma members have been elected to representative bodies at the municipal level in the Međimurje County, while there are 17 councils and 9 representatives of the Roma national minority in Croatia, allowing the Roma national minority to participate in the decision-making process in local and regional self-government units.

Roma representatives are members of the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the NPR and all five of the Commission's working groups. Roma minority has their representatives also in the Working Group monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan of the Decade.

Though many efforts have been invested in the capacity building of councils of national minorities, still there are a very few examples (such as some employment initiatives) of successful cooperation of local Roma minority councils with respective self-governments and/or other institutions. Also, the capacity of Roma NGOs remains limited, and networking with other Roma and non-Roma organizations is still poor. While there are almost 120 Roma associations in Croatia, and several 'umbrella-associations', only few are capable to implement a more complex project, and the activities of most of them remain limited. This has been also noted in the report of the National Council for National Minorities. Though there are positive examples, opportunities available for civil society organizations in general are not used by Roma to the extent possible. Notable is a training of Roma NGOs for the advocacy of minority rights, supported by the Finnish Embassy.

Among others, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the Government office for Human Rights announce annually calls for proposals and tenders for financial aid for projects aimed at raising and promoting multiculturalism, tolerance, human rights education and non-violent behavior among children. Thus, the Government Office for Human Rights had as one of priorities awareness rising of Roma women on human rights. Two projects were co-financed under this priority with 5,500 EUR.

Due to the reporting system, the complete list of Roma projects funded by the state bodies will be available only after the cut-off date for this report. Also unavailable are data support provided to Roma NGOs through other channels, such as annual tenders supported by corporate social responsibility programs of private sector or other local philanthropic initiatives.

Particularly important are EU funded projects, such as a PHARE 2006 Roma in the Spotlight (2009-2010), conducted by the NGO ZaMirNet in partnership with "Better Future" (association of Roma Women). The key objectives were to build capacity of Roma for effective public relations contributing thus to visibility of their advocacy actions, to highlight the obstacles to full equality of opportunities for Roma and enable analysis of the Decade Action Plan by the Roma, and to raise awareness of the wider audience of the human rights and specific position of the Roma in the society.

There were several projects targeting Roma minorities implemented within cross-border cooperation schemes, particularly in cooperation with Hungary and Slovenia, and within supports to civil society development. Examples include municipalities of Orehovica (Croatia) and Črešnovci (Slovenia) established a cross-border Roma cultural transversal „DROM“, and developed and promoted an integrated Roma culture products for tourists. The project value is cca 160,000 EUR. There is a project which will be implemented until 2011, with a total value of 480.000€, with participation of local Roma NGOs, health authorities of Medjimurje County and other relevant institutions with a goal to develop an innovative approach to capacity building and inclusion of Roma minority, raising awareness in the area of health, and capacity building of health workers working with Roma. In another project, Croatian-Hungarian Expert Academy for Employment, one component deals with employment of Roma. The project is currently being implemented, with a total value of 200,600 EUR.

In 2010 The Government of Croatia has provided in the state budget 1, 460,000 EUR. However, this figure does not take into account state funds which were not specifically initially designated for Roma, but were used for their benefit, nor funds provided on regional and local level. That is another of recognized weaknesses of the data collection system.

Significant amounts have been used to create preconditions for cultural autonomy of the Roma national minority and to preserve the traditional Roma culture. There are 114 registered Roma associations active in Croatia. Funding is available through various channels, including the Council for National Minorities, state bodies, local and regional authorities, and EU and other international funds. Council of National Minorities has provided 177,600 EUR 2010 for Roma associations. However, in its report for 2010, the Council notes frequent problems with associations' reporting on usage of funds. The Government Office for National Minorities every year finances traditional Roma culture, activities of choreographers and teachers, acquisition of musical instruments and folk costumes, and other programmes. For these purposes 24,000 were allocated to Roma associations in 2010. The Ministry of Culture has provided for amateurism in culture, international culture cooperation, publishing, and an international symposium on Roma language a total of 9,500 EUR.

In relation to fostering Roma language, culture and tradition, and the languages and cultures of other national minorities in the Republic of Croatia, it is important to note that the National Framework Curriculum for education, published in 2010, includes guidelines pertaining to the development of respect towards minority languages, histories and cultures as integral parts of Croatian cultural heritage, and of respect towards all peoples living in the Republic of Croatia. Within the school subject of

history, the recognition and appraisal of influence exerted by national minorities and other European nations upon the formation of Croatian society and culture are promoted, while the notion of minority rights is discussed within a wider topic concerning the political system, democracy and human rights within the framework of multicultural societies.

The following provides some basic information on progress in the implementation of the Croatian Action Plan in key areas. While there are some structures on regional (county) level responsible for the implementation of their own action programs, the structures are basically non-existent on the local level. As mentioned above, most local Roma minority councils and NGOs do not have sufficient capacity to make a significant impact in implementation on the local level.

3. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION

In the field of education, there is a constant increase in Roma children involved in the educational system on all levels. Since 2005, when there were 350 Roma children involved in preschool education, significant progress has been made, and in the school year 2009/2010 there were 734 in preschool education. The newest data shows that at the beginning of school year 2010/2011 799 children were involved in preschool education. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport has continued encouraging involvement of Roma children into pre-school education, also through a mobile team, and involving welfare advisors and Roma teaching assistants, through direct contacts with cities and municipalities, since they are responsible for preschool and basic education. The team provides in-service support based on needs assessment in Ministry of Science, Education and Sport has also increased covering for the Roma children of the parental part of the pre-school education fee. The total amount provided by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for preschool education in 2010 is approximately 128,000 EUR, including 21,820 EUR provided by REF.

Figures in primary school education show an even more evident improvement, with the number of Roma pupils increasing by a fourfold: from 1,013 in the school year 2005/2006 up to 4,186 pupils in the school year 2009/2010. Recent data shows that the number of Roma pupils is further increasing and that there were 4,435 pupils in primary education at the beginning of school year 2010/2011. Increase is also visible in high schools: at the end of the 2009/2010 school year there were 290 (154 m/136f) pupils in high schools, and in the beginning of 2010/2011 there were 341 pupils (177m/164f).

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports provides scholarships to all high school (68 EUR a month) and university students (136 EUR a month). In school year 2009/2010 there were 323 (128 f, 195 m) high school students' recipients of scholarship. In school year there were 26 (15 m, 11f) recipients of university students scholarships, while currently there are 31.

An important contribution introduced in 2009 is the Government decision to cover the share of costs usually paid by parents for preschool education in integrated classes. Since the school year 2010/2011, a measure concerning the inclusion of all children in

the pre-school programme has been implemented in Međimurje County. The measure, which provides a daily pre-school programme, including transport and a meal, in the period between 15 September 2010 and 15 June 2011, will encompass all Roma children who will enroll at primary school in the school year 2011/2012. The Government Office for National Minorities, through the Commission for the Monitoring and Implementation of the NRP, allocated 20,550 EUR in September 2010 to Međimurje County, to cover a share of the costs of this programme.

The Education and Teachers Training Agency, Government Office for National Minorities and Government Office for Human Rights organized a series of seminars and panels aimed at preventing stereotypes and prejudice against national minorities in general. The National Curriculum for Preschool, General Compulsory and Secondary Education was adopted in July 2010 and defines basic principles and goals of the educational system as a whole and in particular education areas. Some of the principles mentioned are high quality education for everyone, equal education opportunities, involvement of all children in the education system, European dimension of the education and multiculturalism. A series of appropriate bylaws have been adopted.

As regards the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case Oršuš et al. versus Croatia, in June 2010 measures to enforce the judgment were adopted, including: (1) improvement of the legislative framework with a view to learning the Croatian language and setting up classes; (2) development of an educational model for children/pupils who are members of the Roma national minority with the aim of promoting their successful acquisition of the Croatian language and their scholastic and extra-scholastic socialization and integration. The adoption of the National Curriculum for Pre-School Education and General Mandatory and Secondary Education in July 2010 enabled a more flexible organization of classes and monitoring of individual pupils' achievements. In combination with the external evaluation of Roma educational results, this will make it possible to adequately assess problems and improve the education of members of the Roma national minority. (3) The involvement of all factors that have a direct or indirect impact on the education of children/pupils who are members of the Roma national minority will result in an increase in their primary-school completion rate, and, thereby, the secondary education enrolment rate. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports provides scholarships for all Roma students attending secondary schools and institutes of higher education. (4) A database on the integration of members of the Roma national minority in the education system has been developed. The data are regularly updated at the beginning and end of each school year. Monitoring of some data, introduced in 2009 is now used not only for planning purposes, but serves also as an early warning system.

There are no schools with Roma only children in Croatia. However, in 2008 there were 52 Roma only classes, in 2009 the figure fell to 37 classes, while in 2010 there was an increase (44 classes), also due to the decision to establish classes with a smaller number of children.

It is also important to note that according to the reports of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sport, the educational inspection service has not received any report or complaint of any violation of the right to education related to Roma children unable to attend school because of lack of identity documents.

4. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF EMPLOYMENT

Regarding the employment, Given that the Croatian Employment Service (CES) does not track unemployed by ethnicity, the number of unemployed Roma is estimated by place of residence of job seekers, according to certificates under the social welfare system, and knowledge of the Romani language. This is an imperfect way to mitigate the aggravating factor in creating a database of unemployed Roma, the fact that the members of the Roma national minority declare differently. This database is continuously updated, since services are available in the same way in all regional offices (22), and offices (95). According to these estimates in 2009 there were 4,731 unemployed Roma and 4,553 unemployed Roma in 2010.

From December 30, 2009 until December 29 2010 CES also implemented a PROGRESS project, promoting equality in the Croatian labor market, with total value of 149.835 EUR. The project was implemented by the Croatian Employment Service in cooperation with the Office of Human Rights and other entities. The first study on discrimination in the Croatian labour market was conducted within the project. Further, practical tools for combating discrimination and diversity management (primarily intended for employers) were prepared, as well as guidelines for combating discrimination and promoting diversity in the Croatian labour market, as well as a collection of examples of good practice in promoting diversity and application of anti-discrimination measures on the Croatian market. Also, CES established a help-desk for employers, which serves as a support to employers in implementing the principles of diversity and anti-discrimination measures.

CES is responsible for carrying out policies aimed at improving opportunities in the labour market for vulnerable groups, and a special set of measures within the Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Details of the programs are as follows:

- Literacy programs for adults: 243 participants (162 m, 81 f); programs for first occupation: 7 participants (5 m, 2 f). The total cost of both programs was 70,700 EUR. Creating conditions for training and employment in all industries (particularly youth and women), the preparatory workshop for the training and self-employment: 8112 persons, including 3909 women, were involved;
- Informing about the Roma employment opportunities, services, and subsidies for education and employment: 1,103 persons (568 f) were involved in the activity of group information;
- Assistance in the definition of profiles and defining individual job plan: 6,440 (3,150 f) persons involved in the activity of individual counseling; Training on job searching skills: 265 persons (107f);
- Co-financing employment for 272 persons (75 f); Financing of education for 32 persons (9 f); Co-financing employment for 24 months : 4 persons (2 f); Public works: 268 persons (73 f);
- Co-financing education: 32 persons (9 f); 493 persons (135 f) were included in the activity of professional information and counseling, out of which 107 (48 f) persons over age of 45;

- Creating the preconditions for establishing a positive climate among employers to hire Roma: 1,511 target visits to employers, informing about job opportunities of the Roma;
- Meetings of stakeholders at the local job market to improve opportunities for employment and education of Roma: 79 meetings were held with employers' associations, unions, associations of Roma at local level; 226 persons (91 f) were employed on the open labour market;
- 24 on self-employment. In total CES has provided 671,100 EUR for the implementation of these programs. However, some studies suggest that some of these programs might benefit from evaluation, particularly from clients feedback, and it is planned to conduct appropriate analysis in the future.

5. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF HOUSING

In the area of housing 13 out of 14 counties with a larger number of Roma now have their county Roma housing improvement programs. They are the basis for further activities on local level regarding space planning, and infrastructure and housing improvement programs. Special efforts were invested to resolve the issue of space plans in the only county (out of 14) which has not yet prepared County program for improvement of Roma settlements, Primorsko-goranska County. Activities towards legalization of illegally built houses are continuing. In 6 more local detailed urban plans have been developed in 2010, bringing the total number of locations for which basic conditions for legalization of houses are met at 15 locations in 14 municipalities in 5 counties.

Positive steps were continued in the area of infrastructure (re)construction in Međimurje County, using EU funds. Within the framework of the PHARE 2006 project, the infrastructure in three Roma settlements in the Međimurje County has been reconstructed, with the total amount of 3,771,429,00 EU, while the Government has provided funds for legalization (information on the total amount spent for this purpose in 2010 is not yet available), and documents prepared for further projects. Also, lessons learned revealed poor ownership on the local level, and led to some legislative changes, including a waiver for Roma on supplementary tax on illegal houses. However, lengthy legalization process, in spite of direct financial contribution of the Government, means that citizens are still unable to fully benefit from the full range of services, even though it is now physically available. Government funds were used to reconstruct infrastructure in the village of Darda, a best practice example involving local Roma minority council, with the amount of 510,000 EUR.

Also, serious problems were noted in relation to waste management in some locations in Međimurje. While local, regional, and central authorities have generously provided funds for ad hoc solutions, more sustainable approach is yet to become a rule.

Another important aspect is granting of the state owned land. In cases when Roma settlements are built illegally on the state owned land, the Croatian Government donates the land to the local government, which arranges with the local Roma council the mode of transfer of ownership to Roma. In 2010 there were 2 such cases. However, serious obstacles are encountered if buildings are on the private-owned land

or plots on which construction is not allowed for other reasons. Lengthy procedures and other factors are contributing to the fact that in these circumstances in some locations it is legally impossible to make significant improvement of infrastructure, making conditions for living difficult or extremely difficult (Slavonski Brod, Zagreb). Finally, the lack of data from the local level and lack of ethnically disaggregated data from the Ministry of Regional Development (responsible for the large-scale government programs of reconstruction of objects) means, that, apart from the City of Zagreb, the information on the number of housing units allocated to Roma remains unavailable.

6. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF HEALTH

In the field of health care, systematic efforts have been made to improve the health status of Roma. A programme of health education has been implemented in several Counties, with efforts also being made to increase the level of hygiene in the houses. Various measures have been aimed at raising the health awareness of Roma parents and both preventive and curative health protection measures have been carried out.

There are systematic efforts to increase the vaccination coverage of Roma children, and reports of the Ministry of Health and Social Care for 2010 note that the progress is visible, reaching in most places the vaccination coverage rates of the rest of population. A survey in Primorsko-Goranska County has shown that 75.8 % of Roma children were included in the complete vaccination programs, while 6.41 % were partially vaccinated. In Međimurje County doctors in primary health care are informing the regional Public Health Institute, which is conducting field visits and also providing health awareness activities.

It is also important to note the increased interest of Roma students in education registered on the level of high schools (12) and higher education (2). The health authorities have also expressed interest in developing programs for health mediators. However, health remains a concern for several reasons, including a lack of comprehensive data, particularly from the regional level.

As regards security, there were no cases of organized politically or ideologically motivated physical or verbal attacks against the Roma in 2010. All registered cases were individual and sporadic incidents: in 2010 there were 5 criminal offenses against Roma considered to be motivated by the ethnic or racial affiliation.

Ministry of Interior conducted wide education programs on effective fight against hate crimes and all forms of extremism. Trainings are conducted in accordance with the program of training of police officers to combat hate crimes that has been developed and accepted by the OSCE / ODIHR. Instructions regulate handling and tracking issues of hate crimes in terms of track record, emphasizing a need for careful monitoring of hate crimes and other criminal acts threaten the human rights.

Roma and other citizens are encouraged through the media and otherwise to report of national, racial and other forms of violence against them, and all known cases of violence are recorded and analytically monitored. Police officers on patrol in local

communities and in cooperation with the Roma community implement proactive and preventive measures to combat all violence. Through the implementation of the strategy on "Community Policing", 7 County Police Departments are actively involved in monitoring and resolving the situation in Roma settlements. In these regions one point is also resolving the issues between inhabitants of surrounding villages and the Roma settlements. Numerous other activities, such as direct contacts with citizens and act upon grievances and complaints, contacts and lectures in schools, contacts with media representatives, advising on prevention and self-protective behavior, education of children and youth, community actions, participation on the level of local self-government, etc.

With regard to the inclusion of Roma in the implementation of measures aimed at crime prevention, Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2010 established specialist lines of prevention in all police departments. In addition, in 2010 cooperation has started with other relevant state bodies and institutions of higher education and scientific institutions, and international organizations, on the implementation of measures aimed at encouraging and strengthening of systematic model of Crime Prevention Councils, crime prevention, and improving the visibility of models of community policing activities. Roma settlements were also involved in activities such as project on disarmament, conducted in cooperation with UNDP "Less Arms, Less Tragedies".

As regards criminal offences and misdemeanors, the following data for 2010 has been provided by the Ministry of Interior:

	CRIMINAL ACTS			MISDEMEANOURS		
	No of acts	No of perpetrators	No. of persons against whom crimes were committed	No of acts	No of perpetrators	No. of persons against whom misd. were committed
AGAINST ROMA						
2010	61	36	72	40	45	51
2009	66			69		
Increase/decrease 2010/2009	-8 %			- 43 %		
WITHIN ROMA COMMUNITY						
2010	134	191	206	373	676	675
2009	90			424	424	
Increase/decrease 2010/2009	+ 33 %			- 13 %		
BY ROMA AGAINST OTHERS						
2010	659	1311	407	909	1030	270
2009	683			754		
Increase/decrease 2010/2009	- 4 %			+ 18 %		

With regard to the Roma migration, Ministry of Interior points out Italy, Federal Republic of Germany and France, as main destinations, mainly for economic or family reasons. A large part of the Croatian Roma has work and residence permit for EU countries, while a small percentage of Roma in these countries reside illegally. In cases when they are subject to return to Croatia, they are accepted in accordance with legal provisions identical for all Croatian citizens.

Special efforts are continuously invested to resolve status issues of Roma minority members. Mobile teams formed in counties with a larger number of Roma have to a large extent finished their work, and they continue their activities in areas subject to needs. Important is also project conducted.

Free legal aid system has been further improved in 2010. At the request of civil society organizations, application form has been simplified, and the Croatian Government has increased the amount of value points for the calculation of fees for primary and secondary legal aid from 3 to 5 HRK. Ministry of Justice continues further education of all involved in this process, especially the civil servants approving requests of citizens to use free legal, authorized non-governmental organizations, and representatives of the judiciary. The budget for 2010 provided 514,000 EUR for providers of free legal aid. However, ethnically disaggregated data on beneficiaries is not available.

An important contribution in 2010 was made by Ombudsman's Office and UNHCR, implementing a project "Free Legal Assistance to Roma in Civil Registration in Croatia", a branch of an MB IPA 2009 project. The beneficiary group of the project was the domestic and displaced Roma population in need of civil registration and documentation and accompanying legal counseling and aid. Comprehensive field visits (9 counties and the City of Zagreb) led to the total number of registered cases in Croatia as 269.