



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005 - 2015

PROGRESS REPORT 2010

GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA

June 2011



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1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

According to the most recent estimates by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the population in Serbia under UNSCR 1244 totaled 7.307 million in January 2010 representing a 191 thousand decline in population since the 2002 census. According to the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: National Strategy), the estimated Roma population in Serbia under UNSCR 1244 is between 250 and 500 thousand (108,129 according to 2002 census).

According to the Living Standard Measurement Survey (hereinafter: LSMS) poverty among the Roma was extremely high in 2007. Almost half of the Roma population (49.2 percent) was poor. Notwithstanding such a high percentage of the poor, there were 6.4 percent of extremely poor Roma. However, it should be taken into account that the LSMS covered only those Roma people who were integrated into the general population (who may be better-off) while Roma from Roma settlements, who are potentially the most severely affected groups, have not been covered by this survey. A comparison of Roma poverty in 2007 and 2002 was not possible given that LSMS of 2002 did not collect data on ethnicity.¹ According to research undertaken by UNICEF in 2006², almost 70% of Roma children are poor and more than 60% of Roma households with children live below the poverty line.

There were no significant changes in the number of excluded Roma communities in Serbia during 2010, although there is potential for increases, since Roma are at special risk of return on the basis of readmission agreements, and having so returned, settle mostly in unhygienic settlements³.

¹ Living Standard Measurement Study, 2008

² Status of Children in Serbia, UNICEF, 2006

³ Source: *Strategija reintegracije povratnika po osnovu Sporazuma o readmisiji*, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 15/09.

According to a 2002 survey⁴, there were 593 Roma settlements in the Republic of Serbia of which 285 were urban and the others suburban and rural. The highest number of settlements were located in the City of Belgrade (137 settlements and localities), followed by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and certain districts in South Serbia. The majority of settlements are informal (not regulated in the urban plans), with inadequate infrastructure, poor accessibility to institutions (the nearest school to almost 50% of settlements is more than 1km away, a health care institution for some 60% of them and shops for almost 80% of settlements), and high levels of unemployment/informal employment. See details in below sections. The GDP per capita in 2010 was Euro 4,138.

2. INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION AND EVALUATION OF ROMA INTEGRATION POLICY

In 2010, around Euro 3.749 million from the budget of the Republic of Serbia was spent on the implementation of priority measures foreseen by the Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy. The initiatives are detailed in the below sections of the report.

The Republic of Serbia also developed policies targeting other vulnerable groups (children, women, etc.) in which Roma issues are mainstreamed, with support to the Roma integrated into employment, education and social welfare programs. For example, the Serbian Government in 2010 secured a EUR 32 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to support capacity building of institutional stakeholders in social sectors (education, social welfare and health care) through improvement of efficiency, quality and access to services. Part of the funds is allocated for the improvement of access for vulnerable groups, including the Roma, to social services.

In 2010, the Serbian Government reinforced its efforts towards gender mainstreaming and awareness raising in the context of the Law on Gender Equality and National Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Women and Improvement of Gender Equality, which were both adopted in December 2009. The Strategy addresses issues of vulnerable groups, inter alia Roma women, through a series of defined objectives. In 2010, the Serbian Government initiated the development of a National Action Plan for the Strategy implementation. Furthermore, Roma women are represented in the Gender Equality Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and members of the Roma Women Network effectively lobbied for Roma participation in the local gender equality councils.

1. Association of Roma, Novi Becej

SOS telephone on minority languages (including Roma language); free legal assistance for Roma; free legal representation at court for Roma; and workshop for women on discrimination issues;

2. Association of Roma Women “Osvit“, Nis

Campaign for women against violence; SOS telephone; education seminars for

⁴ Jakšić, B., Bašić, G. (2005): *Umetnost preživljavanja – Gde i kako žive Romi u Srbiji*. Belgrade: Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory.

Roma women; mediation between Roma and different public institutions; cooperation with Center for Social Work; and assistance in obtaining personal identification cards;

3. Bibija, Belgrade

Programme of mediators between Roma women and hospitals; round tables in 15 municipalities with the aim of empowering Roma women's NGOs; and mediation between the Roma community and local authorities in Cukarica municipality (Belgrade);

4. Center for Minority Rights, Belgrade

Project to enhance political participation among Roma in public institutions; survey concerning representation and employment of Roma in public institutions; and various legal interventions and monitoring initiatives;

5. Children's Roma Center, Belgrade

Project for prevention of early marriage among Roma; monitoring of enrollment of Roma children in primary school; public representation of Roma in health Centers; and capacity building training of Roma organizations.,

6. Civic Initiatives, Belgrade

Organized public tribunes and roundtables relating to the election of the Roma National Council; trainings for Roma Women Network; and trainings for understanding of relevant legislation among Roma community;

7. Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization/Roma Resource Centre, Novi Sad.

Assistance in Roma settlements in improving sanitation and house up-grading; promotion of employment and income; information and counseling services for returnees; dialogue facilitation, lobbying and advocacy; and networking and cooperation with governmental bodies.

8. Roma Information Centre, Kragujevac

Projects for the education of Roma children and adults; empowering Roma to better position themselves in the labour market; monitoring local budget design for Roma citizens; and strengthening of the network against human trafficking in the Western Balkan.

9. Roma Hart, Belgrade

Workshops on women's and children's rights; seminars for unemployed Roma; education seminars concerning health issues; and social entrepreneurship.

10. Romano Alav, Krusevac, TV news every day in Romani language; TV shows every Saturday in Romani language; education programs; health campaigns; and campaign for Roma National Council elections.

11. YUROM Centre, Nis

Projects for the economical empowerment of Roma; establishment of labour union of Roma collectors of recycled material; public representation, various local initiatives and consultancies for Roma inclusion;

12. Youth Forum for Roma Education, Bujanovac

Cooperation and coordination with local and republic institutions; distribution of free school books and information on affirmative actions for universities and high schools; and campaign for Roma National Council elections.

13. Women Space, Nis

Activism in creating systemic solutions for Roma women (project took place in 15 municipalities); and informing Roma women about importance of elections for Roma National Council (project took place in 30 municipalities).

Ministries supported partnerships between Roma civil society organizations and State institutions through grants approved for projects implemented by consortiums founded in this way. These projects were financed respectively by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, and Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government.

Roma representatives are members of the highest bodies for Roma policy at the National level. The Serbian Government maintains three principle bodies for decision making on policy and implementation issues relating to the realization of the Roma National Strategy, namely the Council for the Improvement of the Position of the Roma, coordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration; the inter-Ministerial working group for Roma inclusion, chaired in 2010 by the Assistant Minister for Human and Minority Rights (and member of the Roma community); and intra-Ministerial working groups within the 9 ministries and Commissariat for Refugees. The members of these bodies are representatives of Roma civil society organizations, National Council of the Roma National Minority (hereinafter: Roma National Council) and representatives of the competent state authorities – line Ministries.

In June 2010, the 35 members of the Roma National Council were directly elected by 30,811 caste votes, from a voters list of 56,076 (55% voter turnout). It was a significant achievement that the Roma community was able to qualify for direct elections, by exceeding the threshold of 43,277 persons registered on the voters list. The direct elections have added greatly to the perceived legitimacy of the council. The Council has a four year mandate, and like the other (18) National Minority Councils in Republic of Serbia, has competency in law on four issues, namely education, culture, use of Romani language and script, and media and information. State institutions are legally obligated to consult with the council as a part of the decision making relating to these issues. The state budget in 2010 for the Roma National Council amounted to RSD 11,772,747 (circa Euro 113,200).

Roma civil society organizations have many coalitions which are very active in the advocacy field and whose representatives are involved in all phases-from policy planning and development to implementation and monitoring, through participation in stated established working groups and councils as well as in implementation of projects at the national and local level. One of the important principles for implementation of state (co) funded projects in the area of Roma inclusion is partnership between the institution(s) in charge and Roma civil society organizations. The most significant networks are the League for the Decade, Roma Women

Network, and network of Roma Women from the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. There are two Romani members of parliament from the newly established Democratic Leftist Party of Roma⁵ and Social Democratic Party. According to the NGO National Democratic Institute, there are 26 elected Roma municipal assembly councilors in 24 municipalities in the Republic of Serbia.

The Government's Council for Improving the Position of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, see section above, met twice in 2010 to evaluate the implementation of the National Strategy and provide guidance as appropriate.

The National Strategy assigns responsibility to the respective Ministries for monitoring and evaluating progress against the defined goals and measures specified in the Strategy, with overall coordination provided by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government (formally the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights). In 2010, the documents prepared by the Ministry, included a consolidated report on the measures taken and state funds allocated by Ministries in 2010 for the implementation of the National Strategy.

The Serbian Government supports structures for the implementation of the National strategy at the local level that are appropriate to the local circumstances and needs, and as defined jointly by the local self-governments and local Roma communities. At the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina there is also an Office for Roma Inclusion.

In 54 local self-governments in the Republic of Serbia there are local Roma coordinators engaged, including 23 coordinators in the autonomous Province of Vojvodina (two new coordinators appointed in Stara Pazova Municipality and City of Pancevo in 2010). They are part of the municipal administrations and their role is to advance the position of Roma in their respective municipalities, to make better use of opportunities from the central level and donors, etc. The local coordinators chair various working groups at the municipal level relating to the implementation of the local action plans for Roma inclusion Ministry of Health engaged 75 Roma health mediators in 59 local health care centers, all of them women, which are facilitating access to health care for the Roma population in their municipalities.

There are 180 pedagogical assistants working in the pre and primary schools in the Republic of Serbia. The Ministry of Education signed contracts with 40 municipalities for the implementation of the local education policies and supported initial projects with Euro 35,000 per municipality.

Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government is starting a three-year program for the implementation of the National Strategy which will support 5 local self-governments to develop and implement local Roma Inclusion Policies focusing on durable housing solutions and active employment measures with Euro 250,000 per municipality; and around 40 municipalities with small grants.

⁵ The party was formed in 2010, after Mr Jovan Damjanovic left the Radical Party

In December 2010, the City of Belgrade formed a Council for the “Social Inclusion of Roma Temporarily Settled in Informal Settlements”, chaired by the Deputy Mayor, Mr Krkobabic. The Council draws together representatives of the respective City Secretariats, State Ministries and Roma communities. The City of Belgrade also established a new office for Roma inclusion within the Secretariat for Social Affairs, which is responsible for the planning and implementation of measures to support Roma inclusion.

3. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION

Studies indicate that interventions aimed at increasing enrollment and reducing the drop-out rates of Roma children are showing initial results. See below sections for details. The interventions are implemented under the Action Plan for Roma Education of the Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma: the Manual for Providing Support to Creating an Anti-discriminatory Environment in Educational Institutions⁶ was developed and staff are being trained in its implementation; preemptive activities and procedures for dealing with violence have been defined in the Protocol for Protection of Children/Pupils from Violence, Abuse and Neglect⁷, which schools are obliged to implement; the Serbian language teaching curriculum has been developed for children of Roma returnees from abroad; and grants aimed at the systemic inclusion of Roma children into education are being developed for 40 poor municipalities with a high concentration of Roma. The model for the subsequent registration of children into birth registries was developed through a UNICEF project and implemented in 19 municipalities. To date, 500 undocumented children were identified and subsequently enrolled in schools. A total of 178 pedagogical assistants were trained and employed in preschools and primary schools. A training plan for school and kindergarten principals was drawn, along with additional qualifications for pedagogical assistants, employees in institutions and educational advisors as well as activities that should increase understanding among Roma communities about the value of education and learning (project Education for All – Improving the Accessibility and Quality of Education of Children from Marginalized Groups, with a total budget of 1.8 million Euro from IPA 2008, launched in early 2010).

An array of education related policies, measures and activities were implemented in 2010, and are set-out in the sections below, the most important of these relate to the implementation of three pieces of key legalization:

Law on the Foundations of the Education System (adopted in 2009 and came into force in 2010) sets the preconditions for the non-segregated inclusion of children into education and continued schooling: extending the mandatory and free-of-charge Preparatory Preschool Programme (hereinafter: PPP) from six to nine months, facilitating the enrolment of children from socially vulnerable groups, legally regulating an inclusive approach and ensuring support mechanisms for children and teaching staff. The Law also introduced general and specific outcomes and standards of education, stipulated higher competencies for teaching staff and school management structures and established a system for quality insurance in institutions.

⁶ In cooperation with REF, MoE and the Centre for Minority Rights.

⁷ Official Gazette of RS, No. 30/10.

The role of student parliaments was strengthened through involvement in self-evaluation and development planning processes and the role of parents' councils in the work of schools was more clearly defined. Penalties for the violation of the rights of children and pupils were defined and raised. The role of schools in the socialization of pupils was enhanced by specific regulations on the prohibition of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect.

Law on Textbooks and Teaching Aids (2009) equalizes the operations of private and state publishers. The Law sets down standards for the quality of textbooks. With regard to content, the Law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion, sexual orientation, developmental disorders, disability, physical or mental characteristics, property status, health status or political affiliation, in addition to other grounds.

Law on Preschool Education (2010) prioritizes the enrolment of children from vulnerable groups, enabling the execution of special, specialized and alternative curricula. Curricula may be conducted in Serbian and in foreign languages, as well as in the languages of ethnic minorities. The Preparatory Preschool Programme was established as a special component of the preschool programme in order to allow children in the year prior to enrolment in primary school to acquire knowledge, skills and experience relevant to future education. and is free of charge for parents whose children attend public institutions. Transportation of children and their companions is ensured by local governments.

The reforms introduced under the new legislation, particularly in regard to preschool education, give a more prominent role to local self-governments, which are better positioned to partner with local Roma communities to define local needs and find locally appropriate solutions. These new executive powers allow for instance for local self-governments to establish networks of preschool institutions and primary schools and take part in the managerial structures of educational institutions. With the exception of salaries of teachers implementing the mandatory preschool programme, preschool education as a whole is within the mandate of local governments. The process of reform and decentralization was supported in 2010 by three substantial programmes:

Education for All: systematization of Pedagogic Assistants (Roma Teacher Assistants), capacity building of schools, raising awareness of Roma parents on the importance of education (EU funded)

Improvement of the Preschool Education in Serbia: expansion of the capacities of preschool institutions and widening access for vulnerable groups, development of legal framework and bylaws and capacity building of local self governments for planning of preschool networks etc (EU funded)

Second Chance: supports to adult education, and development of curricula for education of adults (EU funded)

Delivery of Improved Local Services (DILS): grants for schools for the development of inclusive education practice (World Bank funded)

Segregation in the educational system in Serbia is not seen as a consequence of any systematic measure but variation of different factors such as “natural geographical” segregation (i.e. proximity of larger Roma settlement), discrimination of teachers or “white flight”. The Ministry of Education and Sciences has developed and several anti-segregation measures to address the key barriers that limit educational chances and access to quality education. The measures are detailed in the below sections. There is no detailed information available on the segregation of Roma children in the education system. That said, there are several schools which were known as “Roma schools” and which are/will be covered by anti-segregation measures of the Ministry of Education and Sciences.

The new Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System requires schools to introduce new mechanisms that aim to establish an inclusive environment and practices in the educational system. The measures are detailed in the sections below. The preparations for the implementation of these measures started in 2010, and should be introduced in 2011/12. It is expected that a new financial mechanism in 2014/2015 will support implementation of inclusive education, improve equity and efficiency of the education system.

The main approach adopted by local authorities to address educational issues of the Roma community is through Local Action Plans (hereinafter: LAP). A LAP could be general and covering all fields for the improvement of position of Roma or addressing education only. Every LAP should be complementary to the National Action Plan for Education of Roma. In 2010, 40 municipalities developed Local Action Plans for Inclusive Roma Education.

In September 2010, the number of Pedagogical Assistants (former Roma Teaching Assistants) assigned to schools increased by the Ministry from 55 to 178: preschool (50) and elementary (128) education. The 2009 IPA-funded project Improvement of Preschool Education is expected to start in early 2011. It will target preschool institutions in poor municipalities, and local communities with a high concentration of Roma in particular. It will deal with capacity building of local governments for monitoring and adjustment of preschool services to the needs of children from vulnerable groups and local communities. Mobile kindergartens, minivans and prefabricated buildings will be procured and rehabilitation/adaptation of existing facilities to the needs of preschool children will be undertaken. The target group is children aged 3+.

A number of subsidies exist for children/youths in the education system, of which some exclusively target Roma children:

- Free textbooks for all children in the first to third grades (in some municipalities for all grades of primary schools);
- Free meals/snacks in school for vulnerable and poor children, the main beneficiaries being Roma children. The scope of this assistance varies between schools, and often does not meet the assessed needs.
- Scholarships for Roma children in secondary schools and certain faculties
- Accommodation in student dormitories
- Area of early care and pre-school education

The Preparatory Preschool Programme in the 2009/2010 school year covered 88% of all eligible children, albeit well below the EU average, the figure represents a significant improvement on the situation prior to the introduction of the programme. The Roma community also benefited from the programme, although it is understood that participation in 2009/10 remained well below the average for the general population. Available data for the 2008/2009 school year estimated that around 45% of children from the Roma community participated in pre-school classes. The coverage of nursery age children (0 – 3 years of old) is low at 16.1%; and while there is no official data, recent research has indicated that Roma children have a negligible participation in nursery schools.

The new Law on Preschool Education revised the preschool enrolment policy, which previously indirectly discriminated against Roma parents, as preference was given to the children of employed parents. The new legislation gives priority to children from marginalized families.

Compulsory preparatory preschool for all children between five and six and a half years old was introduced in 2006, and for the 2009/2010 school year, the duration of the program was extended to nine months. In terms of barriers to accessing the preparatory classes, the principle barrier in urban areas is the lack of existing capacity, with 14,000 children on waiting lists for the 2009/10 school year; whereas in rural areas it is the travel distance to the nearest preschool institution, which is addressed under the new legislation, by placing an obligation on local self-governments to provide transportation for preschool children as needed. In terms of specific barriers to Roma children, there exist possible language barriers, as well as barriers issues from parents being simply unaware of the programmes or not recognizing their value and consequently not feeling motivated to send their children. The Law on Preschool education envisages the deployment of pedagogical assistants to the preschools/communities to help address these issues.

A. Primary education

According to data for the 2010/11 school year, 38% of primary schools in the Republic of Serbia (463 schools) enrolled 31,417 children in the first grade. Of the total number of enrolled children, Roma children account for 2,136 (7.41%). The percentage of Roma children enrolled in the first grade of primary school increased by approximately 9.87% relative to the previous school year.

Enrollment policy regarding special schools has changed according to the new Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System. The main change related to the introduction of the municipal Inter-Sector Committee which is responsible for the assessment and potential provision of additional support to children. The Committee makes the decision, together with the parents, about the provision of additional educational support to children in the mainstream schools or about the enrollment to special schools. It is important to emphasize that, according to the new policy, special schools will enroll only children with multiple or serious disabilities. All other children with any kind of additional educational or other needs will be enrolled into

the mainstream schools. A study of the 2007/2008 school year, carried out in 2010, identified that around 30% of students in special schools are Roma.⁸

The Ministry of Education introduced two measures to prevent segregation:

- A coordinated local enrollment policy gathers local schools, parents and local officials to discuss the equal distribution of Roma pupils amongst local schools. For example, Roma parents would be advised to enroll their children into different schools, while avoiding the schools with already high percentages of Roma pupils. Segregated Roma classes or branch schools with only Roma pupils are dismantled and the pupils mainstreamed into other classes or transported to the main school.

The inclusion of marginalized groups is legally regulated and the Ministry of Education has introduced a number of measures:

- **School Inclusive Team and Individual Educational Plan (IOP):**
The Ministry of Education prepared and adopted a Rulebook on Detailed Instructions in Defining the Rights to Individual Education Plans, their Implementation and Evaluation. A total of 7,500 representatives of expert teams for inclusive education and all primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Serbia were trained in inclusive education and the implementation of individual education plans. There is a monitoring of the implementation of the IOPs.
- **Inter-sector committees:**
The Ministry of Education established mechanisms of intersectoral cooperation and coordination at the local level towards supporting children from vulnerable groups to full social inclusion and progress. The Rulebook for Additional Educational, Health Care and Social Support to Children and Pupils was adopted for children who require additional support in education, health care or social protection due to social deprivation, developmental disorders, disabilities, learning disorders and other reasons. Additional support refers to the rights and services allowing a child to overcome physical and social barriers towards the unimpeded performance of everyday activities relevant for inclusion into the educational process, community life and successful advancement. In line with this Rulebook, municipal and city administrations need to establish committees and appoint coordinators and standing expert members. The Ministry of Education prepared and adopted a Manual on Operation of the Committees and a Guide for Parents of Children Needing Additional Support.
- **Anti-discrimination/violence policies:**
The Ministry of Education prepared and adopted a Manual for Providing Support to Creating an Anti-discriminatory Environment in Educational Institutions; and staff are being trained in its implementation. Preemptive activities and procedures for dealing with violence have been defined in the

⁸ 'Roma in Special Education in Serbia', Open Society Institute, 2010

Protocol for Protection of Children/Pupils from Violence, Abuse and Neglect, which schools are obliged to implement.

- **Pedagogic Assistants:**
A total of 178 pedagogical assistants were trained and employed in preschools and primary schools; and a training programme for school and kindergarten principals is planned.
- **Language support:**
The Serbian language teaching curriculum has been developed/adapted for children of Roma returnees from abroad.
- **Grants for inclusion practice:**
Grants aimed at the systemic inclusion of Roma children into education are approved for 42 poor municipalities with a high concentration of Roma, while the additional 14 municipalities submitted their revised proposal for approval in early June

According to statistics prepared by the Ministry of Education, 5,997 children or 7% of the total pupil number dropped out of the 2000 – 2008 primary school generation. It is estimated that Roma children represent the majority of those children who either do not continue education or continue in schools for adult education.

According to data for the 2009/10 school year, the highest drop-out rates at 2.5% are recorded in the first to third grades of primary school, and the rate for the seventh and eighth grades are on average 2.1%. There is no available data on the dropout rates of Roma children.

Many reasons are identified for high dropout rate amongst Roma children while the most common are discrimination from peers and teachers, poverty and lack of awareness of the value of education amongst Roma parents.

Ministry of Education and Science started the EU funded project- Second Chance, that supports adult education, and development of curricula for basic and vocational training for adults (EU funded). It is expected that the project will have high impact on vulnerable population, especially Roma.

C. Secondary education

There is no available data for the 2009/10 school year on the total number of Roma students in secondary schools. Comparative data for the 2004/05 and 2008/09 school years shows a positive trend regarding the enrolment rate in secondary schools amongst Roma children, with 8% and 15-20% respectively. There is every indication that this positive trend continued for the subsequent school years.

The main obstacles faced by Roma children in transitioning to secondary school result from low educational achievement in primary school, leading to lower points towards the marking scheme for entry to secondary school; higher cost of secondary education (in comparison to primary) and lost income; and lack of motivation of Roma children and parents for continued education.

Currently, a modern methodology of adult education is being developed.⁹ A new methodology was developed through the project Functional Primary Education of Adult Roma, where participants also acquired an occupation, fundamentals of entrepreneurship and various skills in addition to literacy. An expansion of the project and its mainstreaming into the system will be enabled through implementation of an IPA project entitled The Second Chance¹⁰, entailing the development of educational standards for the completion of particular cycles of the primary education for adults, the completion of their primary education and the training of teachers to work with adults.

There is a scholarship scheme for Roma children enrolled in secondary schools in the autonomous province of Vojvodina. In the 2009/10 school year, the Vojvodina Provincial Secretariat for Education disbursed scholarships to 355 Roma secondary school students. According to available data, the scheme has a 7% drop out rate, and 47% of the students achieved excellent or very good academic results.

In addition to this scheme, there is the state scholarships scheme, which targets children from marginalized groups. There is no available date regarding Roma beneficiaries in the 2009/10 school year.

D. Tertiary education

The participation of Roma students in university education remains at a low level. According to available estimates, in the 2009/10 academic year, there were fewer than 200 Roma students studying at university out of a total student population of 226,973. The principle barriers are the low numbers of Roma children completing four-year secondary education, and the high costs of university studies.

The Provincial Secretariat for Education is disbursing scholarships to 355 Roma secondary school students. Judging by the results of the project, the percentage of drop-out is 7.32% and the achievement of students improved (47% are excellent and very good). The number of Roma students pursuing education at vocational colleges or faculties increased by 171.87% (from 31 to 87 students).

Since school year 2003/2004, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Ministry of Education have implemented affirmative action measures for enrollment of children at Universities and around 700 Roma students enrolled at Universities in this way.

4. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF EMPLOYMENT

The unemployment of working age persons (15-64) reached 20% in October 2010., whereas, according to research undertaken by the World Bank¹¹, only 21% of working age Roma were employed in 2010. Since the onset of the financial crisis in 2009, employment in the general population dropped by 12.6%, and it additionally worsened the position of vulnerable groups, and notably the Roma.

⁹ Current adult education programmes are neither adapted to adult participants and nor attractive as they reproduce 50% of the curricula taught to children in primary schools.

¹⁰ Launched in October 2010.

¹¹ "Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion", World Bank, April 2010

Unemployed Roma represent an extremely vulnerable group on the labour market. The situation of Roma on the labour market is characterized by a high unemployment rate and a low rate of participation and employment. A total of 13,731 Roma¹² registered with the National Employment Service, which represents 1.9% of the total number of unemployed persons registered with the NES. With regard to duration, 40% of Roma actively search for a job for less than one year. The greatest problem remains the low standard of Roma employment, which is dominated by informal employment.

In 2010 the Serbian Government implemented the following initiatives to support Roma employment (detailed in the sections below):

- Further developed the database and relevant records within the National Employment Service relating to unemployed Roma.
- Provision of careers advice and vocational education and training.
- Organized job and employment fairs targeting Roma communities.
- Provision of monetary incentives to employers to create additional positions to be filled by Roma men and women.
- Organized training programmes for entrepreneurship, and provision of start-up grants for small scale enterprises.

Implemented extensive public work's programmes targeting the Roma community:

- Revised the national system of classification of occupations to recognize the collectors of recyclable materials as a new occupation.
- With respect to implementation of the Roma Inclusion Decade, the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia was adopted, with integral measures and activities in the employment sector taken into account during development of the National Action Plans/Employment for 2009, 2010 and 2011. Wishing to promote the employment of Roma in 2010, the National Employment Service opened special public calls for disbursing subsidies for self-employment and to employers for employment of members of the Roma community. Both subsidies are paid as cash grants amounting to RSD 160,000. By October 31, 2010, 117 Roma, including 38 women, received self-employment subsidies. A total of 66 Roma, including 30 women, were employed through subsidies to employers. Roma interest in participating in active labour market programmes increased in 2010. In the period January 1–October 31, 2010, the information system of the National Employment Service recorded 22,160 cases of in which Roma utilized one of the measures of active labour market programmes. In 2010, some 2,000 Roma were employed¹³.
- Certain progress was made through public works, with advantages for projects that included higher numbers of Roma, as well as those submitted by associations aiming to exercise or advance the rights of Roma. In 2010, 352 public works were approved, 21 of which targeted the Roma population. Roma also participated in other public works, rendering the total number of

¹² National Employment Service, October 2010.

¹³ Of this number, 2,964 Roma (2,313 women) were included in group information activities, 750 Roma (286 women) visited job fairs, and 436 Roma (120 women) participated in trainings for entrepreneurship.

employed Roma higher, i.e. approximately 360 persons. In 2009, a total of 450 Roma were engaged on public works,¹⁴ and 275 in 2008.

The funds allocated in the 2010 budget of the Republic of Serbia for implementation of active labour market programmes totaled RSD 3.7 billion, with RSD 65 million earmarked for Roma employment initiatives, while in practice this allocation was exceeded, with RSD 102 million spent on active labour market programmes and employment measures during the first ten months of 2010.

The above mentioned research carried out by the World Bank in 2010 has shown that the labour force participation rates among Roma males in Serbia are 72%, which are marginally higher than for the general male population; and there is not a wide margin in rates between Roma woman and the majority female population, namely 40 and 55% respectively.

While research demonstrates that the Roma are willing to work, often they cannot find jobs, and employment is most often characterized by low quality jobs, such as, low paying, high turnover or casual jobs. In general, the Serbian economy is increasingly knowledge based, and the demand for workers in elementary occupations is very low compared to the supply of low-skilled workers. In 2010, only ten Roma with university degrees registered with the National employment service, and 87% or 11,918 of the Roma registered with the service had no qualifications. See below table. Unemployed Roma constitute a particularly vulnerable group on the labour market, the greatest problem being the quality of their employment with dominant informal employment.

Educational structure of total Roma population and employed Roma¹⁵

		Total		Roma	
		Employed (15-64)	Total (15-64)	Employed (15-64)	Total (15-64)
Educational Structure	primary	20.0%	29.2%	80.7%	88.4%
	Secondary	59.9%	56.0%	19.3%	11.6%
	post secondary and university	20.1%	14.9%	-	-

Low levels of education attainment (including lack of secondary education), functional literacy and previous work experience among the Roma population remain major impediment to labor market participation. The Roma living in marginalized settlements in poor housing conditions face additional constraints in entering the labour market, for example, a lack of financial means limits their capacity to commute or relocate where work exists. Direct and indirect discrimination also plays a role in the market place exclusion of the Roma.

¹⁴ National Employment Service.

¹⁵ Living Standards Measurement Study, Serbia, 2007

As a consequence of their exclusion from the labour market and a lack of income generation, the Republic of Serbia loses some 231 million Euro in productivity and 58 Euro in fiscal contributions at the annual level.¹⁶

The implementation of mutually complimentary, active employment measures are regarded by the Serbian Government as central to efforts to improving the position of Roma in the labour market. In the period January to October 2010, a total of 22,157 Roma participated in active labour market programmes (budget of the Republic of Serbia, and it should be noted that one person may avail him/herself of several active labour market programmes. The Republic of Serbia earmarked RSD 65 million (circa Euro 625,000) from the 2010 state budget for measures targeted at the Roma community, with the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and National Employment Service undertaking the following initiatives:

- Organized employment fairs with participation of 1,325 persons from the Roma population (616 Roma woman).
- Monetary incentives provided to private enterprises for employment of people from the Roma population, thereby generating additional opportunities for long-term formal employment. The average incentive for each new position created was RSD 160,000 (circa Euro 1,500), and the scheme led to the employment of 208 persons (78 woman) in 2010.
- The selection of public works projects financed by the Government, favored projects that included higher numbers of Roma, as well as those submitted by associations aiming to exercise or advance the rights of Roma. In 2010, 352 public works were approved, 21 of which targeted the Roma population. Roma also participated in other public works, rendering the total number of employed Roma higher, i.e. approximately 487 persons (115 women). Government financing for these projects in 2010 amounted to RSD 53,182,190 (circa Euro 530,000).
- Training for entrepreneurship was delivered to 436 persons (120 woman) from the Roma community, accompanied by self-employment subsidies in the amount of RSD 160,000 (circa Euro 1,500) per person, for 18 persons (9 women). In addition, subsidies granted by the autonomous province of Vojvodina supported the start-up of 50 small-scale firms.
- Progress was achieved in formalizing the employment/legal status of collectors of recyclable material through the introduction of the occupation of ‘waste collector’ in the Integrated Nomenclature of Occupations (within Group 9 - simple occupations).

The ‘Sustainable Waste Management Initiative for a Healthier Tomorrow’ (SWIFT) was initiated in 2010 in the City of Belgrade, with the overall objective to convert current informal waste “scavenging” into an effective and credible means of income generation through the establishment of a SWIFT recycling centre and cooperative. The initiative was developed by the World Health Organization in partnership with the respective Roma communities and local and state authorities.

The SWIFT Cooperative was legally established in November 2010 with 12 founding members from the local Roma communities. The SWIFT Recycling Centre

¹⁶ “Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion”, World Bank, 2010

commenced its start up phase of business in February 2011 in the Municipality of Zvezdara in Belgrade. The revenues collected by the SWIFT Cooperative are sufficient to meet its running costs and provide income to its members, who receive a basic salary of Euro 200, and profit and performance related bonuses. The employees are assisted with access to health, educational and social services for themselves and their families.

Integral elements of the SWIFT initiative are Health and Environment – Improving access to health services, raising awareness in health and environment, developing occupational health and safety awareness; and Social mobilization – Increasing public awareness and engagement in the SWIFT recycling centre; addressing the lack of personal identification cards and mobilizing the collectors into a cooperative; and improving access to public and social services (education, social welfare).

The Government of Serbia has allocated European Union funds from the 2010 Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for the further expansion of the SWIFT scheme in 2011.

The Youth Employment Fund¹⁷ has started in the beginning of 2010, is fully functional, and as of 31 December 2010 supports 1,899 beneficiaries (936 funded by the programme, 963 funded by the government), of which an estimated 45% are women, 17% Roma, and 6% young people with disabilities.

The Serbian Government continued with efforts to ensure that the offices of the National Employment Service throughout the Republic of Serbia do not function merely as registration offices, but also act as intermediaries between the Roma job seekers and perspective employers.

To this end, in 2010, the National Employment Service further strengthened its outreach to the Roma community and developed its national database of job seekers from the Roma population. A total of 13,731 Roma¹⁸ registered with the National Employment Service, which represented 1.9% of the total number of unemployed persons registered with the service. With regard to duration, 40% of Roma actively search for a job for less than one year. The greatest problem remains the low standard of Roma employment, which is dominated by informal employment.

The database allows for an individualized approach to Roma jobseekers through the employment service providing assessment and counseling for 12,796 persons (5,398 women) in 2010 and assisting in the preparation of individual employment plans. During 2010, the employment service identified and referred 2,846 Roma persons for available vacancies issued by employers. Training, advice and assistance was provided for persons registering with the national employment service (see above).

In addition to the collective formed under the SWIFT initiative (see section above), the NGO YUROM Center led the Roma community in Nis to form a labour union of Roma workers in the recycling sector. The Union aims to represent the interests of the workers, and in particular in advocating for measures that would ensure the Roma community are appropriately rewarded for their labour (current criticism is leveled at

¹⁷ *Youth Employment and Migration* (YEM) joint UN program <http://rs.one.un.org/yem/what-we-do/>

¹⁸ National Employment Service, October 2010.

the middle men for excessive profit taking). The Union collaborated closely with the relevant local and State authorities in preparing a project proposal for submission to the Council of Europe Development Bank, in the amount of Euro 4.2 million, which envisages the establishment of a new recycling center in Nis, that would directly employ 250 Roma, as well as providing a collection point to be used by other Roma workers.

In 2010, the Serbian Government further strengthened its institutional capacity and mechanisms to address discrimination, inter-alia in employment, by established the office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, according to the Law on Anti-Discrimination, which was promulgated in April 2009. The first Commission, Ms Nevena Petrusic, was appointed in May 2010. Furthermore, the Serbian Government adopted a new 2010 Law on the Prevention of Mobbing.

5. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF HOUSING

Description of the housing situation of the Roma population, especially in excluded communities (e.g. quality and price of housing, accessibility in general, development of a concept for social housing on the local level for disadvantaged families) and identification of obstacles that prevent access to acceptable housing conditions.

The housing conditions of Roma are considerably worse than those of other vulnerable groups as well as the general population. A high proportion of illegal Roma settlements, their inadequate access to infrastructure and the poor housing fund are but a few of the characteristic problems. Roma internally displaced persons and Roma returnees on the basis of the Readmission Agreement between the Republic of Serbia and the European Union face a particularly difficult housing situation. The programmes to resolve the housing problems of Roma are few and the funds invested are inadequate.

According to the 2002 survey¹⁹ of the 593 Roma settlements in the Republic of Serbia, approximately 70% had no property and planning status regulated, while some 44% of them displayed characteristics of unhygienic settlements and slums. The infrastructure of settlements was inadequate - there was no water supply network in approximately 30% of settlements, sewage did not exist in more than 60% of them, and electricity in 35% of settlements.

In 2010, the Ministry of Health, through the field offices of the Institute for Public Health and with the assistance of Roma civil society organizations, conducted an epidemiological and hygienic assessment for 228 settlements in Serbia, covering 3,297 households. The assessment had the following finding:

Number of households that benefited from public health interventions in 2010²⁰
876 :

¹⁹ Jakšić, B., Bašić, G. (2005): *Umetnost preživljavanja – Gde i kako žive Romi u Srbiji*. Belgrade: Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory.

²⁰ *Dezinfekcija, Dezinskcija i Deratizacija*: Action to disinfect settlements and exterminate insects and rodents

Households connected to a sewage network	15.22%
Households benefiting from a regular (public) rubbish collection service	20.07%
Households with potable water ²¹	19.74%
Sources of household water private/public well	5.6%
Dwelling connect to mains water system (internal taps)	13%
Communal stand-pipe (external tap)	81.4%

The most frequent reasons for eviction of Roma families are related to the development of the land that they occupy for economic use or public infrastructure. These cases are particular to urban areas, where families occupy land without title, and the land has a high economic value.

The solutions found by evictees depend on their personal circumstances, and according to the Ministry of Environment, Urban Planning and Mining, most often involve the families being ‘absorbed’ into the other (often informal) Roma settlements in same urban area. Internally displaced persons have a right to alternative accommodation provided by the Commissariat for Refugees; and the City of Belgrade will provide alternative accommodation to all families evicted from informal Roma settlements in the City and who are registered in Belgrade, and for evicted internal/economic migrants the City authorities have provided transportation assistance for the families to return their municipalities of origin.

The relocation of settlements is unavoidable in certain circumstances, and efforts are ongoing to ensure that the process is an appropriate one and respects international standards and best practice, for example, affected families are fully consulted at the planning stage. To this end, the City of Belgrade in 2010 created its Council for the “Social Inclusion of Roma Temporarily Settled in Informal Settlements” and created a new Roma office (see section 3 above).

Eight towns in the Republic of Serbia have developed local housing strategies providing for measures and actions for resolution of housing problems of vulnerable population. Local housing agencies were established in 8 municipalities with a view to implementation of local housing policies, and construction and management of municipal housing funds. The measures related to resolution of housing problems of certain vulnerable groups (Roma, refugees and internally displaced persons) have also been defined in local action plans for improvement of the situation of these groups. Some local governments subsidize electricity and housing costs to the poorest categories of population.

In 2010, there were two recorded relocations of so called informal Roma settlements in the City of Belgrade: April 2010 – 40 Roma families from Cukarica municipality, Belgrade; and October 2010 – 8 Roma families from Vojvodjanska street, New Belgrade, Belgrade.

The Government recognizes that discriminatory practices exist in the housing market, for example in the private rental sector, and has legislated on this issue within the 2009 Law on Anti-Discrimination.

²¹ Ministry tested samples from 472 households, using private water sources (non-mains water supply)

The process of legalization of so-called informal Roma settlements lies in the competencies of the respective local self-governments, with the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Mining maintaining a coordination, monitoring and expert role. The local self-governments face many obstacles in the legalization process, including weak political incentives, unreliable cadastre data, unclear land ownership, and the cost of developing planning documents. The support of the Ministry is crucial to the success of the process, and in particular through awareness raising, financial support for preparation of planning documents, and monitoring to ensure the effective and efficient use of state funding.

During 2010, the Ministry of Environment, Urban Planning and Mining provided financial and technical assistance to 8 municipalities in development of 10 urban planning documents for Roma settlements. Two of the 8 municipalities, namely Knjazevac and Srbobran, completed the 'legalization' of their respective settlements (total of 960 residents), which provides the base for further improvement of housing conditions, both infrastructure and individual.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy spent around RSD 6,000,000.00 (circa Euro 57,700) for the housing and reintegration of 53 Roma families (240 persons) resettled from the informal Roma settlement under the Gazela Bridge in Belgrade.

The Roma constitute approximately 20% of the some 950 refugees and internally displaced persons accommodated in collective centers throughout Serbia. In 2010, the Commissariat for Refugees spent RSD 26,000,000 (circa Euro 250,000) for the housing of the Roma families (20% of the total RSD 130,000,000).

According to the Ministry of Environment, Urban Planning and Mining the initiatives to allocate abandon dwellings in the countryside, along with agricultural land, to Roma families have met with limited success, due to the lack of interest within the Roma community in the agricultural sector.

The conference "Access to Social and Affordable Housing – Exchange of Experiences on Housing Policies in Serbia and other Countries in Europe" was held in Belgrade on 11 February 2010. The draft Social Housing Strategy was discussed and attention was paid to the models of social housing, eligibility criteria for social housing and analysis of housing of the poor in Serbia.

The authorities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina constructed new roads in the Roma settlements in the municipalities of Vrsac and Novi Becej, and it is planned to erect street lights in those settlements, powered by alternative energy.

Following the November 2010 earthquake in Kraljevo, the Ministry of Environment, Urban Planning and Mining began implementation of an 8 million euro reconstruction programme, funded by the Council of Europe Development Bank, which includes the development of additional social houses, which will be allocated in part to Roma families.

The Commissariat for Refugees provided durable solutions for Roma internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija, with 32 families receiving packages of construction material and 20 families allocated pre-fabricated houses. The assistance was provided under EU IPA 2007 and IPA 2008.

6. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF HEALTH

The fieldwork and reports of the Roma health mediators document that the same diseases are prevalent in the Roma population, as the majority population, namely those related to heart and blood vessels, diabetes, cancer and asthma. That said, the socio-economic conditions and marginalisation of the communities has an impact on the health and health awareness of the Roma population. In particular, Roma women, like children, have poorer access to healthcare as compared to the general population. The 2007 Living Standards Measurement Survey²² found that 17% of Roma people in the Republic of Serbia have no health insurance coverage, double that of the general population. Roma living in marginalized settlements also tend to have a lower awareness of health risks and issues, such as reproductive health care and knowledge of HIV transmission. This is combined with more risky behavior, such as early pregnancy, which results in a particular vulnerability of Roma women in terms of their health.

Furthermore, the 2005 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey²³ found that Mothers were less likely to receive antenatal care, or to have the assistance of a doctor during delivery; and children in Roma settlements as compared to the general population were significantly more likely to be malnourished, had higher infant and child mortality (25 versus 8.9 infant deaths per 1000 live births), and were less than half as likely to have all vaccinations (26.6% of Roma children had all vaccinations compared to 58.5% of other children sampled). The below table is extracted from the Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy²⁴.

Indicator	General population		Roma settlements in	
	2003	2005	Boys	Girls
Mortality rate of children below the age of 5 (per 1,000)	10.4	9.2	36	23
Mortality rate of children up to one year (per 1,000)	9.1	8.0	32	20
Share of newborns with a low birth weight (<2,500g)	-	5.0%	9.3%	

It is understood that the relative health and health awareness of the Roma population improved over the course of 2010, as a consequence of the measures taken by the Ministry of Health, as outlined below.

²² Living Standards Measurement Survey 2007, conducted by Statistics Institute of the Republic of Serbia

²³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2005, conducted by Statistics Institute of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF

²⁴ Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy²⁴, Government of the Republic of Serbia (2007), p102

In order to access (non-emergency) public health services, persons should register with a local doctor in the primary health care service and be in possession of a health insurance card. In 2010, the Ministry of Health, through the Roma health mediator's scheme, facilitated 13,256 inhabitants of Roma settlements to register with a local doctor and assisted 7,768 inhabitants to gain health insurance cards. In addition, the health mediators assisted 4,638 women to register with a gynecologist for the first time, and organized general health checks for 4,581 woman, 2,009 health checks for expectant and nursing mothers and 612 mammograms. Details are provided in the below section.

During the 2010, the Ministry of Health implemented various activities that covered a total of 36,600 families and 120,708 Roma persons. Health mediators conducted a total of 138,106 visits to Roma families, 34,494 promotional health leaflets were handed out, 5,740 workshops with nurses were organized in Roma settlements. Mediators have thus far collected data on the status of 850 Roma settlements in 50 towns in line with the indicators of the World Health Organizations. As of December 2010, a total of 87,227 Roma and 25,900 Roma families were registered in the database developed for use by the Health Mediators.

In 2010, the Ministry of Health dedicated significant efforts and resources to strengthening the scheme of Roma health mediators. Roma health mediators, 75 of them in total, are working in 59 municipalities in Serbia. The Roma Health Mediator program is financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, from the World Bank loan as well as from the donations of the Open Society Fund Serbia. The Roma Health Mediators are all Roma women, they facilitate access to health care for Roma, carry out household visits to Roma families, organize healthcare related workshops in Roma settlements, maintain protocols about the health, as well as socio/economic status, of the Roma, and provide support in securing personal documentation and benefits in the area of social care. In addition, the Ministry provided funding in 2010 in the amount of RSD 3,138,204 (circa Euro 30,200) for 16 Roma related health projects implemented by civil society organizations in partnership with the respective health centers.

The issuance of health cards was facilitated as of July 2010 by the new Rules of Procedure on the Methodology and the Procedure for Exercising the Rights of Mandatory Health Insurance of the Republic Institute for Health Insurance²⁵, which stipulates in Article 11 the right to mandatory health insurance of Roma citizens based on a personal statement that the person is of Roma nationality and the residence certificate or a personal statement on the place of temporary residence; and provides under article 12 for funds to be allocated for this purpose from the compulsory health insurance fund and the national budget. The same provision is found in Article 22 of the Law on Health Insurance (Official Gazette, No. 107/05).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health began implementation of the project "Employment of Roma Health Mediators: an economic analysis of the introduction of Roma health mediators into the system of public health institutions in Serbia", funded by the Open Society Institute. One of the components of the project is the economic analysis, which should be produced by the Institute of Economic Sciences, with the

²⁵ Official Gazette of RS, Nos 10/10, 18/10-correction, 46/10, 52/10 and 80/10.

purpose to determine how the work of health mediators enhance the health of the Roma and how much does it cost to the health system of Serbia.

7. SITUATION OF ROMA IN THE AREA OF SECURITY

7.1. Extremism

On the night of 9th June 2010, a 17-year old Roma boy, killed with a knife a 17-year-old non-Roma boy in Jabuka, a multi-ethnic village near the City of Pancevo. The non-Roma community sought retaliation for the murder and organized anti-Roma riots calling for the lynching of the Roma and their expulsion from the village. For several nights, citizens gathered and marched through the Roma populated areas shouting threats to Roma and throwing stones at Roma houses, which caused property damage and injury to several people. At this time, the Roma were generally afraid to leave their homes and go freely to work and the shops. Shortly after the incident, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights reacted by sending its assistant Minister for minority rights to the village to meet with the Roma community; and police reacted by sending special units to prevent further violence. The police arrested five people under suspicion of committing the criminal offence of instigating racial, ethnic and religious hatred (Article 317 of Criminal Code). In January 2011, the Higher Court in Pancevo sentenced the Roma youth to 4 years imprisonment, which caused further (non-violent) public reaction, and an appeal was submitted by the Higher Public Prosecution Office [note: the maximum sentence for this criminal offence when committed by a minor is 5 years].

The NGO Minority Rights Center has extensive experience in monitoring and reporting on hate crimes in Serbia, and recorded five alleged cases in 2010. According to the report of the NGO:

- Case 1
Date: January 1st, 2010
Location: Belgrade
Sources: Minority Rights Center
Victim: Roma man (M.J.) – male
Type: physical violence-welt on right side of ribs
Perpetrator: 10 unknown persons
Evidence: victim's statement

Ten persons attacked the Roma victim on 1 January 2010. Firstly, they swore at him and shouted racial slurs. Since he did not react on the insults, they attacked him physically. He was kicked and hit with an object (victim could not see the object). During the attack a bystander yelled at the perpetrators and threatened them with the police, and they ran from the scene. Following the attack, the victim had to stay in bed ten days, and could not go to the doctors because he did not possess health insurance.

- Case 2
Date: 03.03.2010.
Location: Belgrade, Zemun
Sources: Minority Rights Center
Victim: Roma family, three men E.D. (38), N.D. (58) and S.D. (77)
Type: property damage; verbal violence, death threats;
Perpetrator: M.G. (35), male
Evidence: victim's statement

Roma family D. from Zemun, Belgrade, had property disputes with M.G. On 3 March, 2010 M.G. came with two other men to the home of E.D., N.D. and S.D. and with the chainsaw started to cut down the fence and trees in their front yard. At that moment only N.D. and S.D. were present. N.D. called his son E.D. to inform him about the incident. E.D. instantly reported this to the local police. When E.D. arrived home, he tried to protect his father and grandfather and M.G. started yelling insults. After a few minutes, the police arrived and took statements from the victims. The same night, Roma family D. received threatening phone calls. Immediately, E.D. went to the police station to report the threats. The next morning, the family received the same threats and, again, they went to the police to report the incident.

The Minority Rights Center provided legal support to the victims and submitted criminal complaint (27.04.2010) to the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office for the criminal offence instigating racial, ethnic and religious hatred and intolerance (article 317 Criminal Code) against M.G. At the same time, MRC initiated civil lawsuit (30.04.2010) based on the Law against Discrimination. Both procedures are in progress. In the meantime, Roma family D. had a hand grenade thrown into their yard and, afterwards, their car was set on fire. Both incidents occurred in November 2010.

- Case 3
Date: 27.04.2010.
Location: Belgrade, Surcin
Sources: Minority Rights Center
Victim: Roma man R.B. (44 years)
Perpetrator: two unidentified men
Type: Physical violence – broken shoulder and laceration on the head
Evidence: victims' statement, medical documentation

The Roma victim was attacked while he was talking with his friends (all Roma) in front of a shop. A car pulled up and two men (one dressed all in black and one wearing jeans and white sweatshirt) got out holding a black flag with white signs, and they started shouting ethnic slurs and threats. The man holding the flag approached R.B. and hit him to the ground, where he lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness, R.B. managed to crawl to his car and hide, waiting for the attackers to leave. After few minutes they left and R.B. managed to call his wife and daughter, who arrived at the scene and called an ambulance. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance.

- Case 4
Date: 10.05.2010.
Location: Kraljevo
Sources: Minority Rights Center
Victim: two Roma women V.S. (31) and O.S. (16)
Perpetrator: five unidentified men in their twenties
Type: Verbal violence - slurs and threats
Evidence: victim's statement

A Roma woman, her sister and a friend while shopping, were shouted at by a group of men, who also threw grapefruits. The victims rushed into the shop and one of the perpetrators also entered, and whispered to V.S. "I'm gonna kill you and your friend! I'm gonna kill all Gypsies!" The other men were standing outside, some 20 meters away from the shop. The saleswoman called the police. The perpetrator went outside but kept provoking and insulting. The perpetrators left before the police arrived. The police took statements from the victims, witness and saleswoman and offered to escort them to their home. The victims refused. Later, B.S. found out that the perpetrators had asked for their addresses, but until now there were no further attacks or threats from their side.

- Case 5
Date: 01.12.2010.
Location: Belgrade downtown, in front of hotel "Mazestik"
Sources: press clipping, Blic news, December 3, 2010
Victim: Dzej Ramadanovski; Roma; singer;
Perpetrator: two unidentified men
Type: physical violence

Two unknown men attacked famous singer Dzej Ramadanovski on the night of 1 December 2010 in front of the hotel "Mazestik" in Belgrade downtown while he was walking with his girlfriend. He thought these men were fans and wanted to shake hands with them, but perpetrators responded with slurs and punched him in the face. Mr. Ramadanovski was knocked over and the attackers continued to kick him in his stomach and back. The singer did not report the incident to the police.

National policy and actions on the fight against extremists, the creation and implementation of targeted strategies on the local level, evaluation of their impacts on the life of people:

- Progress was made in 2010 in strengthening the networking and collaboration between the National Focal Point on Hate Crimes in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the civil society organizations working on Roma related issues in Serbia. In 2010, an introductory workshop was organized for 25 civil society organizations to build their capacity to identify, monitor and report on hate crimes. Further capacity building activities are planned for 2011.
- In the City of Nis, the civil society organizations 'Committee of Human Rights', 'YUROM center', 'Center for Development of Civil Resources' and

‘Women’s Space’ successfully organized an event to mark International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March 2010.

7.2. Crime and other risk factors in excluded environment

There is anecdotal evidence that higher incidence of drug use, begging and prostitution exist within the excluded Roma communities, as compared to the general population, which reflects the socio-economic vulnerability of the communities. However, there has been no systematic research on this topic and there is no available reliable data. Support was provided to strengthen the existing 30 municipal safety councils, which bring together representatives of local-self governments, law enforcement authorities and local community, including representatives of the Roma communities.

In 2010, the Ministry of Interior established a Unit for Diversity within the Department for Organization, Prevention and Community Policing, which includes a police officer/focal point from the Roma national minority. Agreement was also reached to appoint a Community Liaison Officer to each of the 27 police districts in the Republic of Serbia. The training and deployment of the officers will take place in 2011.

7.3. Migration of Roma

Regional disparities in the Republic of Serbia are among the highest in Europe. The situation in southern parts of the country is less favorable in comparison to the north, and in rural areas in comparison to urban ones. Of a total of 150 municipalities, 46 are extremely underdeveloped, with 40 of these classified as devastated i.e. their development levels are lower than 50% of the national average. These regional disparities influence the patterns of internal migration for society as a whole, and have the strongest influence on the migration of those groups which are marginalized within their communities. In the case of the Roma, there has been a strong rural-urban migration, with a particularly strong flow from South Serbia to the principle cities, and notably Belgrade. The consequence being that a significant proportion of the families occupying the relatively recently established, informal and often impoverished settlements in Belgrade, are economic migrants from south Serbia and elsewhere.

The seriousness of the implications of the migration patterns are recognized by the Serbian Government, which has undertaken a number of measures, including the implementation, through the National Employment Service, of the project “Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration”. The project provides for a set of active labour market measures that targets vulnerable groups, including the Roma community.

The European Union is the principle destination, and during 2010, the main axis was with Belgium and Sweden.

Returnees from EU member states under the readmission scheme, most of them being Roma, face numerous administrative and other difficulties on returning to the

Republic of Serbia.²⁶ According to the data of the Commissariat for Refugees, an average of one thousand people return to the Republic of Serbia each year. As most of these people return via Nikola Tesla Airport, a Readmission Office was established there in 2006; it is still operational and nowadays is part of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government.

Number of returnees under the readmission scheme²⁷

Year	Total number of deported persons	Number of persons deported through the Readmission Office (at Nikola Tesla Airport)	Number of members of the Roma national minority returning under the readmission scheme
2008	568	355	149
2009	814	552	378
2010	1711	1064	632

8. DEVELOPMENT OF ROMA CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Level of support of Roma culture and language on national and local level (if there is a will to support Roma culture and language, or it is a marginalized topic), initiators of the development of Roma culture and language (such as NGOs or local authorities, educational institutions);

The Serbian Government in 2010 provided funding in the amount of RSD 4,719,912 (circa Euro 47,000) for the quarterly publication in 2,000 copies of the free bilingual magazine ‘Romano Nevipe’ of the Roma National Council. Support was also provided for the children’s magazine ‘Čhavrikona Nevipe’, in the amount of RSD 2,100,000 (circa Euro 21,000).

Over the course of 2010, the Ministry of Culture provided co-funding in the amount of RSD 3,100,000 (circa Euro 29,800) for three bi-lingual theater productions, namely a production by the Suno Romengo theater from Novi Karlovac, a production of the ‘Invisible Gipsy’ performed by the NGO Intercultural Theater from Novi Sad, and a production of ‘brother’ at the Smederevo Cultural Center. Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture provided co-funding in the amount of RSD 6,614,745 (circa Euro 63,600) for 10 media projects to promote the use of Romani language; and co-funding in the amount of RSD 1,010,000 (circa Euro 9,700) for 8 projects in the field of cultural creativity and Roma culture, including support for the Roma museum in Belgrade, which organized several exhibitions and cultural events. Selection of projects followed an open call for proposals.

In 2010, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Ministry of Culture supported numerous exhibitions and cultural events to celebrate and promote the

²⁶ Praxis report on readmission 2009 – in the same year, this organisation provided direct legal aid to 119 returnees under the readmission scheme from Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Norway and the Netherlands. A total of 251 requests for birth certificates (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, administration authorities and various consulates in the Republic of Serbia), citizenship certificates, granting of citizenship status, entry into the register of births and re-entry into vital records were filed.

²⁷ According to annual reports of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government

International Roma Day, 'Djurdjedan' and 'Bibija', with a budget of RSD 3,697,176 (circa Euro 35,500).

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights published and is distributing 1,500 copies of the Council of Europe publication 'Fact sheets of Roma History', in Serbian and Roma language.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education developed programs for the subject Roma language with elements of culture, and advancement took place in publishing in Romani language. This program was implemented in 27 primary schools in Vojvodina and covered 723 Roma children.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government took an important step towards resolving the issue of access to personal documentation: it initiated changes in the respective laws so that the procedure of the subsequent registration is now tax free (both taxes-administrative and court): it issued the Instruction on registration of birth and sent it to all local authorities which are in charge of birth registration. In 2011, the Ministry plans to organize a public campaign relating to subsequent registration, and it would important this campaign, and implementation of the instruction, proceeds in a timely manner.

The participation of Roma in policy planning and implementation should be further strengthened, and efforts are needed to ensure a fuller participation of the Roma population in the 2011 census. To this end the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government and Roma National Council plan to organize a public campaign relating to the census in marginalized Roma communities. The Ministry will also provide technical assistance to the principle NGO networks working on Roma issues, in order to develop their organizational capacity, and strengthen their role as partner organizations of the state institutions.

Recommendations for systemic changes on national level:

1. Ensure sufficient funds for the implementation of the National Strategy and the Action Plan for Improvement of the Position of Roma;
2. Improve coordination and ensure synergy of the current sources of funding and the ongoing projects;
3. Prioritize projects targeting Roma in programming IPA funds, coordinate donor activities and linkages with resources of international financing institutions, and strengthen cooperation with respective EU institutions and bodies (eg European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights);
4. Develop specific active programs for employment and housing of Roma, contributing to their social inclusion; in line with EU and other recommendations, and including to a greater extent, functional acquisition of literacy of Roma or provide for small loans for those who collect secondary raw materials;
5. Improve monitoring, including data collection and disaggregation, for the implementation of measures targeting Roma;
6. Strengthening the position and capacity of local Roma coordinators, as agents for the planning and implementation of Roma inclusion at the local level.