



DECADE OF  
ROMA  
INCLUSION  
2005-2015

**PROGRESS REPORT 2010**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

June 2011



# PROGRESS REPORT 2010

## ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2010

### 1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

According to the Czech Statistical Office, the population of the Czech Republic in the first quarter of 2011 was 10,535,800. According to the 2001 census, only 11,716 people openly claimed Roma nationality, which is far lower than in the 1991 census (32,903 people). The results of the census are inconsistent with experts' educated estimates of the number of Roma in the Czech Republic, which are much higher. According to these estimates, 150–200,000 Roma live in the Czech Republic,<sup>1</sup> indicating that approximately 90% of Roma declined to name their nationality in the 2001 census. One reason for the low number of people who openly claim Roma ethnic origin is the long and deep-rooted Roma distrust of any records. This distrust stems from past negative experience of records associated with the implementation of anti-Roma measures, probably the most serious of which took place at the time of the Second World War.

The low number of people openly claiming Roma nationality has resulted in a situation where some public institutions in the Czech Republic, citing this small official number, tend not to pay attention to Roma issues to the degree they deserve locally, regionally and nationally.

According to Eurostat data from early 2010, only 9% of the population lives below the poverty line. Of this percentage, it is impossible to identify how many of them are Roma because the Czech Republic does not collect ethnicity-related data. The figure cited by Eurostat is questioned by Czech experts, who believe that the number of people living below the poverty line in the Czech Republic is much higher.

According to Gabal's 2006 Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Communities (*Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit*), between sixty and eighty thousand people live in socially excluded Roma communities, the overwhelming majority of them Roma. Considering that the situation of the Roma has not improved, the figure for 2010 is hardly likely to be any better.

Gross domestic product per capita in 2010 was CZK 348,928.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of Roma as estimated by the sociologists Ivan Gabal and Petr Víšek in *Background to the Strategy to Combat Social Exclusion [Východiska Strategie boje se sociálním vyloučením]*, approved by the Government in June 2010.

One of the barriers impairing the accuracy of the data below is the lack of exact ethnic statistical data on the Roma. The collection of ethnic data is regulated in the Czech Republic by Act No 273/2001 on the protection of national minorities (Section 4)<sup>2</sup> and Act No 101/2000 on the protection of personal data. Information on the situation of the Roma minority in the individual chapters is therefore mostly based on experts' educated guesses or on the results of targeted and locally or narrowly thematic research.

## 2. ROMA INTEGRATION POLICY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

### 2.1 Basic framework of Roma integration policy

The main objective pursued by the Czech Government in the field of Roma integration is the full integration of Roma into society and the improvement of their position in all spheres of life. In particular, the Government aims to achieve improvements in their situation in education, employment, housing, health, social protection and security, with a view to achieving understanding between members of Roma communities and the rest of society. The social inclusion of Roma is accompanied by government efforts to preserve and develop Roma cultural heritage and history and to keep the Romani language alive.

The basic framework of the Roma integration policy is defined by the *Concept of Roma Integration 2010–13*, approved by the Government on 21 December 2009 under Resolution No 1572. This is a strategy document containing measures aimed to address the disadvantages of the Roma which prevent them from participating fully in the cultural, social, economic and political life of mainstream society. The Government aims to achieve improvements in the social status of Roma in key areas of their lives, such as education and the labour market, housing, and social and health protection. It seeks to achieve an understanding between members of the Roma minority and the rest of society. Besides addressing social issues, the document also focuses on the development and preservation of the Romani language and on a dignified tribute to the victims of the Roma Holocaust. The document includes the *Implementation Plan for the Concept of Roma Integration 2010–13*, which is a general list of tasks for individual ministries and recommendations to other entities in relation to specific measures. Measures also involve regions and municipalities, although they are not subject to mandatory tasks because the Government is barred from this by legislation on local governments; instead, they are given recommendations reflecting best practices and examples of good practices that improve the situation of Roma communities. The Concept was based also on the Czech Government's long-term plan to pursue policies of Roma integration, which is part of the *Principles of the Long-term Concept of Roma Integration to 2025*<sup>3</sup>, adopted by the Government in 2006.

The Czech Government's long-term plan to implement Roma integration policies is set out in the *Principles of Long-term Concept of Roma Integration to 2025*, adopted by the Government in 2005. By 2025, the Government aims to achieve an improvement in the lives of the Roma in key areas such as education and the labour market to the extent that specific measures to integrate

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<sup>2</sup> Public authorities do not keep records of membership of ethnic minorities. The acquisition, processing and use of personal data relating to membership of an ethnic minority is governed by special legislation. Information on ethnicity obtained by these authorities in the census or under a special law allowing membership of an ethnic minority to be determined must not be used for any purpose other than for which they were collected and stored, and thereafter the statistical records must be destroyed.

<sup>3</sup> The principles were adopted as an annex to Government Resolution No 393 of 12 April 2006

Roma communities in the form of “affirmative action” are no longer necessary. Any remaining minor problems could then be effectively addressed within mainstream policies in these sectors. These principles are in harmony with internationally accepted principles, standards of protection, and the experience and recommendations of international institutions and organizations, while taking into account progress in Roma integration locally and projected trends stemming, in particular, from the Czech Republic’s membership in the European Union and from the Czech Republic’s accession to the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015.

On 14 June 2010, the Government acknowledged the *Basis for a Strategy to Combat Social Exclusion* and, under Government Resolution No 462 of 14 June 2010, the Government Commissioner for Human Rights was given the task of working with the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, the Minister of Regional Development, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Justice, and the Minister of the Interior to prepare the draft of short-, medium- and long-term measures in keeping with the background to the Strategy to Combat Social Exclusion, and to present them to the Government by 31 December 2010. The Government has also called for cooperation with the Association of Towns and Municipalities, and with governors, especially of the Moravian, Ústí nad Labem, Karlovy Vary and Olomouc Regions, where there are higher concentrations of socially excluded Roma communities, in the preparation of the document. Under this Government resolution, the Government Commissioner for Human Rights charged the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities with the coordination of draft preparations of short-, medium- and long-term measures under the *Strategy to Combat Social Exclusion* as a key document offering a systemic solution to one of the Czech Republic’s biggest social problems, to be submitted to the Government by 31 December 2010. In November, this deadline was extended until 30 June 2011 by a Government resolution. To deal with this task, the Agency set up working groups to create measures in key areas in the fight against social exclusion.

The situation of socially excluded persons and persons at risk of social exclusion, including socially excluded Roma, was also targeted in 2010 by the *National Action Plan of Social Inclusion 2008–2010*<sup>4</sup> (the NAPSI), the implementation of which was coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The situation of excluded Roma is addressed by the *Commission for Social Inclusion* operating under the same Ministry, whose members include representatives of the Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs and certain regional coordinators for Roma issues. The Commission is composed of entities whose activities can significantly affect the social inclusion of excluded groups (i.e. central government officials, local and regional government officials, government agencies and experts).

The measures in the above documents also support the implementation of the priorities and goals under the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15 and—in addition to employment, education, housing, social issues and health—spill over into other areas important for strengthening the social position of the Roma and ensuring their safety.

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<sup>4</sup> The primary objective of this document is to promote the integration of disadvantaged groups through a wide range of measures in social services, education, employment support schemes and programmes to promote the prevention of socially pathological phenomena. The objectives and implementation of the plan are addressed by the MoLSA in the *National Report on Strategies of Social Protection and Social Inclusion* [Národní zprávu o strategiích sociální ochrany a sociálního začleňování], submitted by the Czech Republic to the European Commission.

## 2.2 Institutional arrangements for Roma integration and evaluation of the Roma integration policy

At the national level, Roma integration is addressed by the *Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs*<sup>5</sup> in collaboration with the *Government Council for National Minorities*<sup>6</sup>, which is involved in the integration of the Roma minority from the ethnicity perspective. The *Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs* (the “Council”) is an advisory body to the Government and acts as an inter-ministerial organ whose mission is to unify the integration activities of ministries, central government institutions and, in particular, regions in relation to the Roma. The Council initiates systemic changes and the removal of barriers that prevent Roma from living full and dignified lives in Czech society. The Council’s activities are overseen by the Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs, which is also the coordinating body for the international initiative the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15, which the Czech Government joined in 2005. The Office of the Council is part of the structure of the Office of the Government, which is organizationally classified under the Section for Human Rights, led by the Government Commissioner for Human Rights and the section’s executive director.

In 2010, the *National Decade Coordinator* and Chairman of the *Committee on the European Platform for Roma Inclusion and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015* was the Minister for Human Rights, Michael Kocáb. Following his resignation from the post of minister in March 2010, he became the Government Commissioner for Human Rights and also served as national coordinator of the Decade until his removal in September 2010. Following his departure, the position of national coordinator remained vacant through the end of 2010; on 18 May 2011, the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, Monika Šimůnková, was appointed as the national coordinator for the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

Another entity involved locally in the promotion of Roma integration and the transmission of national strategies, including the Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, is the *Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities* (the “Agency”). The Agency is a project overseen by the Office of the Government, specifically the Department for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities. Its mandate is to gradually eliminate the emergence and spread of socially excluded Roma localities. The Agency project<sup>7</sup> is rooted in work with towns/municipalities/regions, based on the establishment of *local partnerships* that are formed by the leadership of the municipality/town and other relevant stakeholders in social integration, i.e. including representatives of nongovernmental organizations, authorities, schools, the Czech Police Force, etc. In 2010, this Agency collaborated, in the form of local partnerships, in all 23 localities with 240 institutions. Working within local partnerships, it promotes exchanges of experience between regional partners and the dissemination of examples of good practice. It provides individual partners in selected locations with guidance and assistance in the preparation and implementation

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<sup>5</sup> The Government Council for Roma Affairs was established by Government Resolution No 581 of 17 September 1997, initially as the Interdepartmental Commission for Roma Community Affairs; in 2001 it was transformed into a Government Council.

<sup>6</sup> The current Council was established in accordance with Section 6 of Act No 273/2001 on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and amending certain laws, as amended.

<sup>7</sup> The key activities under the project are the promotion of cooperation with municipalities and the creation of local partnerships, the creation of situational analyses, the creation of local social inclusion strategies, the implementation of measures envisaged in social inclusion strategies, evaluations and supervision of the work of local partnerships, activities by the concept and analysis department, the training of local consultants and methodological guidance, PR presentations of the project, and project management and coordination.

of projects aimed at Roma integration (i.e. the dissemination of information on suitable grants, analysis of the needs in each community, and the gauging of the correct targeting and the efficiency of existing integration measures).

An important element for the promotion of Roma integration policy in the regions are the **regional Roma affairs coordinators**, existing in all 14 regions in 2010. Their work was supported by the Office of the Government through the grant scheme “Support for Roma Affairs Coordinators” with disbursements of CZK 4,668,250 (not including the City of Prague). This is a positive trend because the amount is higher than in 2009 (when CZK 4,520,100 was disbursed). Regional coordinators concentrated, as usual, on guidance and coordination with *Roma advisers at municipal authorities of municipalities with extended powers* and other local institutions and agencies with a view to improving the socio-economic status and cultural and political situation of the Roma. Regional coordinators participated in the preparation of regional conceptual documents, especially regional strategies for Roma integration and medium-term plans for the development of social services, drew up documentation for the concepts of other departments and ministries, were involved in the creation of the long-term plan for education and the development of the education system in the region, and took part in the comment procedure for the legislative and non-legislative materials drawn up by the regions and ministries. They were also members of working groups (information provided by the coordinators themselves shows that they tended to be members of groups dealing with crime prevention or the targeted integration of the Roma), where they advocated the interests and needs of the Roma. Their role was to monitor the situation of the Roma and evaluate their needs and the success of regional integration policy and of integration projects implemented by public and non-profit organizations. Most coordinators were involved in regional grant policy, evaluating the projects submitted or providing local organizations with guidance on how to prepare project applications.

As mentioned above, **Roma advisers** work for municipalities with extended powers. They are the initiators of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the situation of socially excluded Roma, and they support service networking and dialogue between institutions and social service providers whose actions affect the situation of the Roma minority. Roma advisers are often the focal point coordinating and guiding the activities of outreach workers operating in municipalities or the organizations they subsidize. **Municipal outreach workers** are the final link in the support of Roma integration at public institutions. They help socially excluded Roma to address the social problems they face in their daily lives and contribute to their social inclusion.

In addition to regional coordinators and Roma advisers, regions and municipalities also have **Committees for National Minorities**. A regional committee is established if at least 5% of the population claim to be members of a national minority in a census. These committees tend to have Roma representatives alongside the representatives of other minorities. Municipal committees are also established if, according to the census results, at least 10% of the population claims to belong to a national minority. The committees exist to advocate the right of national minorities to participate actively in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, especially those relating to the national minorities of which they are members. **Civic initiatives** are also highly active in the field of Roma integration, taking the form of Roma nongovernmental organizations involved in the creation and implementation of a number of pro-inclusive projects and, to this end, hiring Roma employees. Since 1989, the network of civic associations set up and run by Roma has evolved over time in the Czech Republic. These associations are mostly engaged in the provision of social services, the organization of educational and leisure activities

for people of different ages, and the staging of cultural events and festivals to promote Roma culture. A minority of these organizations are involved in the media (e.g. Romea, o.s.) or are politically active. This is a positive trend in that it evidences the increasing interest of representatives of the Roma minority in playing a hands-on role in addressing Roma issues, especially when dealing with the situation of other Roma who, as a result of social exclusion, find themselves in need.

### 2.3 Funding arrangements for Roma integration in 2010

In 2010, CZK 85,558,478 was allocated to the Roma from the national budget, an amount significantly lower than in 2009 (CZK 157,383,278) and 2008 (CZK 117,693,690). The reduction in financial aid can be explained by budgetary constraints, which have affected certain grant schemes intended to promote Roma integration—as well as the activities of the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities, which was awarded fewer funds for its activities (a decrease of CZK 1,829,000 compared to 2009)—and by the halting of research activities (e.g. the *Long-term Monitoring of Excluded Roma Communities* did not take place, despite plans for annual implementation under Resolution No 8 of 4 January 2006). The amount of funding available was also influenced in 2009 by the financing of modifications to the commemorative sites in Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu.

Ministry	Aid in 2004	Aid in 2005	Aid in 2006	Aid in 2007	Aid in 2008	Aid in 2009	Aid in 2010
MoEYS	14,700,000	24,700,000	27,500,000	25,000,000	25,519,400	22,161,200	12,783,400
MoC	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	20,525,760	21,843,524	20,449,435
MoLSA	16,245,000	34,185,000	59,715,000	42,000,000	0	0	0
MoI	5,000,000	5,000,000	0	0	0	0	0
General Treasury Administration	55,000,000	35,000,000	5,250,000	7,100,000	0	0	0
MRD	0	0	0	0	0	1,704,000	2,894,642
OoGCR		10,000,000	27,000,000		71,648,530	55,244,054	49,431,001
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,945,000</b>	<b>110,885,000</b>	<b>121,465,000</b>	<b>76,100,000</b>	<b>117,693,690</b>	<b>157,383,278</b>	<b>85,558,478</b>
<b>Total in 2004–10</b>							<b>762,030,446</b>

## 3. THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA IN EDUCATION

### 3.1 A policy framework aimed at promoting the education of the Roma

Support for the education of the Roma is also pursued by the *Concept of Roma Integration in 2010–13*, which aims to increase the level of education of the Roma, to prevent their segregation in education and to increase the openness of mainstream schools to the education of underprivileged Roma children. Measures under the Concept aim to encourage timely care for disadvantaged Roma children and to increase their participation in preschool education. There is a focus on comprehensive work with families, where educational intervention is combined with social intervention to compensate for the disadvantages faced by Roma children and to increase their academic success; this should stabilize the family situation and develop parents' skills so that they can create the right stimulating environment for the development and education of their children. This Concept supports measures facilitating the successful transfer of Roma pupils to secondary and tertiary education and encourages the further education of adult Roma, particularly those who are difficult to employ.

On 15 March 2010, the *National Action Plan of Inclusive Education* (the “NAPIE”) was approved under Resolution No 206. This document defined the framework of activities to be carried out in order to ensure equal access and equal opportunities for all people in education. It included the introduction of measures necessary to end the persistent practice of segregation in Czech schools and to prevent any discriminatory phenomena encountered by Roma children. The basic aim of the plan was to increase the intensity of the inclusive concept of education in the Czech educational system; the ultimate objective was then to act preventively against the social exclusion of individuals and social groups. The NAPIE originally had 12 pillars, which covered the entire education system from pre-school to tertiary education at colleges and universities. The proposed measures relate to areas important for the overall concept of the Czech educational system, such as changes to legislation, teacher training, diagnosis and counselling, support for research, PR and media coverage of the topic of inclusive education.

The National Action Plan of Inclusive Education was submitted to the Czech Government in an incomplete form in the preparatory phase, where the basic pillars of pro-inclusive reform were presented only in outline, along with general objectives and measures with a freely set timetable for implementation. The plan was to develop and then implement the NAPIE in 2010–13. The elaboration of the NAPIE, the creation of measures and support for their implementation in the Czech educational system was meant to be the task of a working group composed of more than one hundred experts from academia, schools and school counselling facilities, social service providers and providers of other educational activities for children with special educational needs. Members of the working group met once, in July 2010, at an initial meeting where they were introduced to the system of work, the coordination of activities and structure of the working groups. However, following the change in leadership at the education ministry and disbandment of those who had worked on the NAPIE, the group of experts was not convened up to the end of 2010 and work on the NAPIE was halted.

The same fate as that of the National Action Plan of Inclusive Education awaited the *Action Plan for the Concept of Timely Care for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*, which was approved by the Government on 20 April 2009 under Resolution No 454. This document defines the scope of activities carried out in order to prevent social handicaps which result in the de-socializing of children and leave them stuck in a socially disadvantaged environment, unable to fulfil their educational potential and prompting them to drop out. The document aims to create conditions to increase their school success, extend their educational career and subsequently obtain qualifications, starting with very young and preschool-aged disadvantaged children.

Naturally, education is also a focus of the *Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15*, which tasks the education ministry with the following: Task 1 “Create a comprehensive system of preschool care for socially disadvantaged groups”; Task 2 “Introduce mechanisms for access to education (free attendance in the last year of nursery school) and incorporate them into the Schools Act”; Task 3 “Promote a revision of the prescriptive funding of schools”; Task 4 “Hold discussions with university representatives on a mechanism to support Roma students at universities”; Task 5 “Promote the establishment of an education agency”.

### **3.2 Institutional arrangements and implementation of inclusive measures in the education of Roma and an overview of their funding**



In order to compensate for the social disadvantages of Roma pupils, compensatory measures can be used which should enable this target group to be educated, as a matter of preference, in a mainstream school. These measures include the use of teachers or special education methods and procedures that meet the educational needs of students, providing individual support in teaching and preparations for teaching, use of the advisory services of schools and school counselling facilities, an individual educational plan and, for socially disadvantaged pupils, the services of a teaching assistant.

Regarding the institutional arrangements of inclusive education and compensatory measures, their design and legislative basis and, partially, their funding, is the responsibility of the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**, which is also the founder of certain schools. It is also the managing authority for grants from the ESF and coordinates the allocation of funds under the *Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme*. It is not possible to state how much money was redistributed under this programme specifically for the Roma, because the grants are not distributed on the basis of ethnicity of the beneficiaries. Roma projects were supported in 2010, but it is not possible to accurately determine the exact amount of the aid.

The aim in the field of inclusive education is primarily set out in the ministry's strategy documents – the *National Action Plan of Inclusive Education*, the *Action Plan Concept of Timely Care for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*, and the **Long-term Plan of Education and the Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic**, according to which similar plans are prepared by the regions. **Regional authorities** also play an important role – they set up certain schools, participate in the financing of compensatory measures and provide guidance in education, thus affecting the concept of education for disadvantaged Roma children in the region. Individual **municipalities and towns** play a similar role.

The quality of teaching and fulfilment of the right to education and the compliance of schools with current legislation are supervised by the **Czech Schools Inspectorate**.

A possible source of support to schools that are interested in creating pro-inclusive conditions for the education of their pupils is a comprehensive individual national project – the **Support Centre for Individual Education** (SCIE), which is funded primarily by European Structural Funds and by the national budget. The project is run by the **Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling in Prague**. In 2010, the centre had 11 branches in selected locations (Plzeň, Most, Liberec, České Budějovice, Prague, Hradec Králové, Jihlava, Brno, Olomouc, Opava and Karviná), whose services covered the needs of schools in all regions of the Czech Republic. The project focuses on verifying and setting conditions of inclusive education, particularly in primary schools. The centres offer the services of psychologists, special educators, social workers, teaching methodologists, project managers, and cultural anthropologists to schools. Project staff assist in the creation of conditions for the provision of education according to the possibilities and abilities of students, establish and monitor rules of equality in access to education, especially for pupils needing for supportive measures and pupils with special educational needs. In the 2009/2010 school year, the project involved a total of 105 nursery, primary and secondary schools. The mapping of the current state of inclusion in schools formed the basis of plans for the further training of teaching staff at schools, methodical readiness was probed, and schools were equipped with aids, including teaching assistants. SCIE employees work with the school support system, participate in the process of social rehabilitation, provide mentoring services to schools, create networks of service providers in individual regions, and offer their own services, including assistance to schools in the field of project support. For the

schools involved, school support programmes are set up as a strategy for the launch of inclusive education. Plans were made for all schools involved in the 2009/2010 school year.

Compensatory measures can be difficult for mainstream schools to provide in the current circumstances because of the way the education of pupils with special educational needs is funded. The big obstacle tends to be the prescriptive method for the funding of primary schools, which is one of root causes of the current discrimination against socially disadvantaged Roma pupils. Their education is not accompanied by an increase in the prescriptive limit, as in the case of pupils with disabilities and physical handicaps. This situation makes it impossible for schools to adapt current conditions for the education of socially disadvantaged pupils to the nature of their special educational needs.

- **Implementation of specific inclusive measures to support socially disadvantaged Roma children and students in 2010**

- 1) **Preparatory classes**

Pre-school education in the Czech Republic mainly takes the form of attendance at nursery schools. In addition to this form of preschool education, another opportunity to prepare socially disadvantaged Roma children for primary school is their placement in a preparatory grade. For this purpose, preparatory classes are established in the regions for the education of socially disadvantaged children. In 2010, 176 schools in the Czech Republic set up 208 preparatory classes, which were attended by 2,609 children. Compared to 2009, there was a slight increase in the number of preparatory classes (in 2009, 162 schools established 181 preparatory classes, which were attended by 2,132 socially disadvantaged children). Preparatory grades are partially financed by the schools' "founders"; considering the large number and wide range of founders throughout the Czech Republic, it is impossible to give precise information about the financing of preparatory classes for 2010.

- 2) **Programme of teaching assistants for socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students**

In 2010, under its development programme the Ministry of Education financially supported 442 jobs for assistants in schools run by the regions and municipalities, as well as in private schools and church schools, with a total amount of CZK 74,926,147 and covered 75% of schools' requirements. Only two of the 14 regions contributed to the funding of these measures, with CZK 8,144,000. In 2010, these compensatory measures were mainly used by special primary schools (*základní praktické školy*) attended by large numbers of Roma pupils. The table below shows the availability of the programme in each region.

- 3) **Support of Roma pupils in secondary schools**

This is a grant scheme run by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to promote the study of Roma pupils whose families are pushed into considerable financial difficulties by costs associated with secondary and post-secondary vocational studies. In the first round of this programme (i.e. January–June 2010) CZK 5,303,800 was disbursed in support of 880 pupils. In the second round (September–December 2010) CZK 4,980,400 was disbursed in support of 1,017 pupils. This represented a decline in the level of funding, as CZK 10,825,400 was disbursed overall in 2009, compared to CZK 10,284,200 in 2010.

#### **4) Support for the integration of the Roma community**

Every year, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) announces the grant scheme Support for the Integration of the Roma Community. In 2010, this programme supported 12 projects aimed at pre-school preparation of Roma children with total funding of CZK 1,958,000. Under these projects, pre-school preparations took three forms:

1. regular everyday educational intervention (programmes encompassing the work of nursery schools and preparatory classes),
2. periodic educational intervention (e.g. drop-in centres),
3. periodic intervention (e.g. NGOs dedicated to free-time activities).

### **3.3 The situation of the Roma in education in 2010**

By 2010, three years had passed since the European Court of Human Rights handed down its judgment in *D.H. and Others v Czech Republic*. In those three years, the Czech Republic had failed to comply with the requirements imposed on it by the judgment; practices for which the Czech Republic had been criticized not only by the European Court of Human Rights, but also by other major international institutions, had not been abandoned.

Despite numerous research studies evidencing the lower educational opportunities available to Roma children and pinpointing basic systemic barriers preventing the Roma from achieving educational results on a par with other students, the pro-inclusive reform of Czech education had failed to materialize, and 2010 was no exception. Roma children in the Czech Republic continued to face segregation in education and were disproportionately often placed in special schools.

#### **A. The situation of Roma children in preschool education**

##### **• The participation of Roma children in preschool education**

Although attending nursery school is not mandatory in the Czech Republic, most children (94%) in the Czech population do go to nursery school. One of the population groups with lower preschool attendance is children from socially excluded Roma families. Research by GAC in 2010 entitled “*Sociological Analysis of the Transfer of Roma Pupils from Disadvantaged Backgrounds from Primary to Secondary School*” [*Sociologická analýza přechodu romských žáků ze sociálně vyloučeného prostředí ze základních na střední školy*] noted that the proportion of Roma children from a disadvantaged background entering primary school without having attended preschool facilities was approximately 41% (in absolute terms this equates to 412 children per 1,000 children), whereas for other children the figure was just 6%. As a result of their lower rate of preschool attendance, Roma children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less prepared to enter mainstream primary schools and to remain there successfully.

##### **• Availability of nursery schools and identification of basic barriers hampering Roma children’s access to preschool education**

The placement of preschool child in nursery schools is currently severely hindered for all groups of the population in the Czech Republic by the insufficient capacity of these facilities, many of which have fairly recently been closed in response to the decrease in births; however, when those born in years of strong population growth started contributing to the birth rates, this was reflected locally in the insufficient capacity of nursery schools, which now routinely refuse children because of overcrowding. An additional barrier for socially excluded Roma families is that they live in excluded areas where access to nursery schools is generally worse than normal. The worst off are those Roma families who live in rural socially excluded Roma communities, where it is often necessary to commute to nursery school and thus the need to factor in the cost of transport. Nongovernmental organizations are very active in tackling this problem by offering alternative preschool programmes which Roma mothers are more willing to use than mainstream nurseries, where they are also concerned that their children will be bullied and will not be properly looked after.

Another disadvantage is the poor financial situation of excluded Roma families, as low-income Roma households unable or unwilling to pay the costs associated with preschool education (estimated at up to 50% of the costs). This is compounded by the attitudes of Roma parents and their failure to grasp the importance of preschool education to the future success of their children at primary school. Nursery schools are perceived to some extent as a “special” service as many Roma mothers are homemakers and can provide or arrange for child care free of charge.

- **Availability of preparatory classes**

In 2010, 176 schools in the Czech Republic set up 208 preparatory classes that were attended by 2,609 children. Compared to 2009, there was a slight increase in the number of preparatory classes (in 2009, 162 preparatory schools established 181 preparatory classes, which were attended by 2,132 socially disadvantaged children). Research studies conducted in recent years have shown that attending this foundation year is no substitute for the longer-term, intensive preparation of children for compulsory schooling provided by nursery schools. Nevertheless, the parents of Roma children prefer this shorter form of pre-school preparation to nursery school.

A risky trend in this area is the establishment of preparatory classes at special primary schools. This phenomenon is one of the gateways to the segregation of Roma children, who – often in accordance with the wishes of their own parents – automatically start compulsory schooling in the first grade of a special primary school.

- **Ensuring timely care at local level**

Although timely care is viewed in all strategy documents as a springboard that will increase the readiness of disadvantaged Roma children to successfully enter and remain in a mainstream primary school, local arrangements remain insufficient. Timely care consists of the early diagnosis of special educational needs, followed up by early educational intervention combined with social intervention in the form of targeted awareness and social work with the parents of Roma children. The aim should be to stabilize, in general, the overall family backdrop so that parents are able to create a stimulating environment for the child’s proper development. However, meeting this goal requires a multidisciplinary approach and the coordination of

procedures applying case management between educational and medical institutions, between child protection agencies and social service providers. Unfortunately, this need for interdisciplinary cooperation is often ignored in practice, and there are not enough staff to work with children in the homes of socially disadvantaged Roma families. The availability of social stimulation services for families with children that could effectively develop Roma parents' skills to care properly for their children and develop their potential is rising only slowly. There is no long-term solution to the subsidy system in this area, which is developing sluggishly. It could be argued that timely care in the Czech Republic is still taking its first steps, and efforts are needed to expand it, to provide a conceptual and legislative anchor, and to identify suitable sources of funding.

## **B. The situation of Roma pupils in primary education**

### **• Enrolment of Roma children at primary school, parental informed consent**

The first people to evaluate how prepared and ready a child is to attend school are teaching staff. Teachers who find any signs of immaturity refer the child, through the nursery school principal, for an examination at an education advisory facility using diagnostic tools, subject to the consent of legal guardians. The question remains as to whether such consent is informed. To successfully manage the process of assessing a child's readiness to start primary school and avoid potential errors that could occur during the assessment, it is very important for teachers and staff of education advisory centres to be professionally trained to recognize special educational needs early on, to identify the causes of the disadvantages faced by a Roma child, and to be capable of offering support intended, in particular, to ease the child into mainstream education.

In this respect, during 2010 it was absolutely necessary to amend decrees governing the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs<sup>8</sup> in order to end the practice where Roma children, on account of their special educational needs arising from their socially and culturally disadvantaged background, are placed in schools where they are educated in conditions and according to a curriculum designed for pupils with mild mental disabilities. It was also vital to start working intensively on the development of preschool measures under the National Action Plan of Inclusive Education in 2010 as a foundation for a teacher training system and the standardization of preschool education.

Unfortunately, none of these requirements had been met by the end of 2010. As a result, Roma children enrolling for the first grade in the 2011/2012 school year were once again exposed to the risk that their social disadvantage would force them into classes for children with disabilities and that parents would be insufficiently informed about the consequences of their decision to place their child in this type of education.

As regards the actual testing of Roma children's readiness to embark on their compulsory schooling, it is striking that, statistically, Roma children in the Czech Republic are eleven times more likely to be rated as mildly mentally disabled in intelligence tests compared to the overall

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<sup>8</sup> In particular, radical changes were needed in Decree 72/2005 on the provision of consulting services in schools and school counselling facilities, and in Decree No 73/2005 on the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and exceptionally gifted children and pupils.

incidence of mild mental disability in the general population.<sup>9</sup> This should be a cause of major concern to professionals, because there remains no adequate justification as to why children associated with one particular ethnic minority and mostly coming from one particular social class consistently fail to make the grade in mainstream schools even though a number of research studies show that these children are not unsuccessful in their natural environment.

The authors of a Prague Open Society Fund study carried out by People in Need [*Člověk v tísni, o.p.s.*], entitled “*The Disease of the Defenceless: Mild Mental Retardation*” [*Nemoc Bezmocných: Lehká mentální retardace*], set out to chronicle this phenomenon in 2010. The study dealt with the use of one of the diagnostic tools (SON-R) commonly used on socially disadvantaged Roma children. The authors conclude that the current practices used to test social ability and the capacity for self-care among Roma children largely fail to take into account consistently the child’s natural and domestic environment. If they had, it would be impossible for mild mental disability to be diagnosed in Roma children who are quite capable of looking after themselves in their natural setting, even when they face the difficult conditions of social exclusion.

In March 2010, the Czech Schools Inspectorate (the “CSI”) published a report entitled “*Summary Findings of the Thematic Monitoring of Activities in the Former Special-needs Schools*” [*Souhrnné poznatky z tématické kontrolní činnosti v bývalých zvláštních školách*].<sup>10</sup> The CSI identified and assessed the impacts of amendments to the Schools Act on the education of pupils in former special-needs schools (*zvláštní školy*) (“SNS”).<sup>11</sup> In its investigation, the CSI focused on compliance with school regulations on the placement of pupils in support programmes for pupils with mild mental disabilities, the informed consent of legal guardians to the placement of children in such programmes, the efficacy of inpatient diagnostic stays, and the possibility of returning pupils to mainstream education, areas that were also identified by the European Court of Human Rights in *D.H. and Others* as problematic in relation to Roma children.

During the investigation, it was found that the schools visited were unable to prove that parents had been adequately informed about the fact that they specialize in the education of children with disabilities and/or acquainted with the implications of such education for the future

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<sup>9</sup> The investigation by the Institute for Information on Education (2009) shows that more than a quarter of Roma children (26.7%) are taught under the framework primary curriculum for pupils with mild mental disabilities and the Special School Programme. In the mainstream primary curriculum and the Primary, General and the National School Programme, the participating schools reported that only 3.22% of pupils were Roma children. In contrast, Roma pupils account for more than a third of the total (35.32%) under the framework primary curriculum for pupils with mild mental disabilities and the Special School Programme. These figures are consistent with the data of the Demographic Information Centre, which states that during the 2009/2010 school year 50% of the total number of 70,000 pupils requiring special access were individually integrated into mainstream school. Of these 50%, only 4% of students diagnosed with mild mental disability were individually integrated (source: *Nemoc Bezmocných: Lehká mentální retardace*).

<sup>10</sup> Act No 29/1984 on the system of primary schools, secondary schools and post-secondary vocational schools (the Schools Act) defined a special-needs school under Section 31(1) as a school for pupils with such intellectual deficiencies preventing them from being successfully taught in a primary school or in a special primary school for hearing-impaired or disabled pupils, for pupils with multiple disabilities, for pupils difficult to control, or for sick and weakened pupils placed in medical facilities. The main criterion for admission to a special school was academic failure in mainstream education. Act No 29/1984 did not specifically distinguish different categories of socially disadvantaged pupils and pupils with mental disabilities.

<sup>11</sup> The summary observations are made on the basis of findings in those schools which, in accordance with Section 185(3) of Act No 561/2004 on preschool, primary, secondary, and post-secondary vocational schools and other education (the Schools Act), became primary schools on 1 January 2005.

educational opportunities of children without disabilities. In isolated cases, unacceptable procedures were reported in which schools engaged in self-promotion and the recruitment of pupils among socially excluded families. The consent of the pupils' legal guardians to their admission or transfer to a framework primary curriculum for pupils with mild mental disabilities was not reliably demonstrated for 173 pupils. On the other hand, the schools reported that 60% of pupils were admitted to these schools directly at the request of their legal guardian.

Of the total number of pupils reported at the schools visited in the 2009/2010 school year, 110 were educated according to the annex to the framework primary curriculum for pupils with mild mental disabilities without a valid diagnosis or recommendation from a school advisory facility. Of these 26.4% were Roma pupils. In this group, pupils from 34 schools were wrongly reported as students with mild mental disabilities in Section VII of Statement S 3-01 on primary schools. In this respect, the use of increased funds from the national budget must also be viewed as unlawful; the statistics indicate that 34 schools improperly claimed increased funding of at least CZK 2,250,000.

- **The proportion of Roma children educated in special schools outside the mainstream**

Research studies conducted in recent years have shown that one third of Roma children are educated in primary schools outside the mainstream. The probability that Roma children will begin to attend a primary school intended for pupils with disabilities is six times higher than that for their non-Roma peers. The Sociological Analysis of the Transfer of Roma Pupils from Disadvantaged Backgrounds from Primary to Secondary School (GAC, 2010)<sup>12</sup> indicates that approximately one fifth of Roma children who join mainstream primary schools in the course of their compulsory schooling switch to non-mainstream schools for pupils with disabilities and more than a quarter of them repeat at least one grade of mainstream primary school.

One of the ingrained problems of the former special-needs schools was the high levels of Roma children attending them. An inspection by the Czech Schools Inspectorate in 2010 observed that, of the 171 former special-needs school surveyed, which reported 17,455 pupils in the 2009/2010 school year, 68.2% were diagnosed as children with mild mental disabilities. According to educated guesses by the head teachers of primary schools and school counsellors, 35% were Roma pupils with mild mental disabilities, which is a figure that even exceeds the results of a 2009 investigation by the Institute for Information on Education, which stated that 26.7% of pupils following the curriculum for pupils with mild intellectual disabilities were Roma. The highest incidence of diagnoses of mild mental disabilities was found among Roma children in the Ústí nad Labem Region (53.1%), followed by Karlovy Vary (48.5%) and Liberec (41.8%).

Another area studied was the success achieved by pupils during their education and the possibility of their return to mainstream education. One of the objectives of the framework primary curriculum for pupils with mild mental disabilities is to prepare students with the potential to return to mainstream education for this transition. The CSI found children were reintegrated into mainstream schools only in isolated cases; in the 2009/2010 school year, 100 pupils were recommended for reintegration, but transfers were made only in 36 cases. In 2008, there were 43 transfers, and in 2007 38.

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<sup>12</sup> Sociologická analýza přechodů romských dětí ze sociálně vyloučeného prostředí ze základních na střední školy, GAC, Prague 2010.

The above figures bear witness to the high degree of segregation of Roma pupils in primary schools. A specific tool intended to encourage desegregation is *Centres for Inclusive Education*, which operate in all regions of the Czech Republic; they help schools to foster pro-inclusive conditions for the education of disadvantaged children, offer them support in the implementation of inclusive measures and arrange for the training of teachers so that they are able to respond to the needs of disadvantaged children. Nevertheless, regions and municipalities lack targeted strategies to make inroads in the desegregation of Roma children.

Although inclusive education is a theme of the *Long-term Plan of Education and the Development of the Education System*, the targeted desegregation of special primary schools and Roma-intensive school catchments occurs in isolated cases in practice. The founders of schools are reticent to engage in desegregation as they are often under pressure from parents of other children and the public, who do not want the share of Roma pupils in other schools in their towns or municipalities to increase. The decision of a head teacher or founder of an ordinary mainstream school to admit Roma children usually results in the outflow of non-Roma pupils soon thereafter. Non-Roma pupils tend to be removed from such schools because their parents are discouraged by the constructive approach to inclusion taken by the head teachers or founders of mainstream schools, seeing it as a sign that the school is geared towards students with lower educational accomplishment; they also believe that the quality of teaching will fall and that teachers will be overburdened, so their own children will not receive a quality education. Town and municipal representatives tend to respect the voice of non-Roma parents, to shun desegregation and to try to keep the problem of disadvantaged Roma children within the boundaries of segregated schools in order to prevent it from spreading to other non-Roma schools. On the other side of the fence, the education of Roma children in mainstream schools is not even supported by Roma parents, because they themselves have experiences of education in segregated schools, they are familiar with the background, and they do not have to worry that their children will be unable to handle the curriculum or that, among Roma classmates, they will be bullied.

- **Inclusive measures in primary schools**

- 1) *Teaching assistants for socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students*

One of the inclusive tools commonly used in the education of disadvantaged Roma children is a teaching assistant for socially disadvantaged children, pupils and students. Research studies have shown that teaching assistants in the classroom yield positive results and extend the period that Roma children are capable of continuing in mainstream education.<sup>13</sup> However, in the Czech Republic this scheme has long been exposed to numerous systemic barriers. A standard definition of the tasks of teaching assistants for socially disadvantaged pupils has yet to be articulated.

The biggest problem is the fragmented way the scheme is funded in the Czech Republic. Part of the implementation cost is met by the MoEYS development programme “Funding of Teaching Assistants for Socially Disadvantaged Children, Pupils and Students”, the aim of

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<sup>13</sup> Educational Careers and Educational Opportunities of Primary School Roma Pupils in the Vicinity of Socially Excluded Roma Communities [*Vzdělanostní dráhy a vzdělanostní šance romských žáků a žákyně základních škol v okolí sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit*], MoEYS, Prague 2009



which is not to cover the full cost of the assistants but only to form a financial base for the funding of these positions. Regional and local government bodies are also expected to contribute, but in practice their involvement is sporadic. In 2010, only two regions provided co-funding. This poor practice makes it impossible for schools to implement the scheme to the extent needed to cope with the requirements of socially disadvantaged pupils (see table below).

Table 6 Teaching assistant scheme in 2010

Applicant (region)	Places sought in 2010	Grant approved by the MoEYS	Financial support from the region
South Bohemia	20	3,538,263	0
South Moravia	33.78	5,643,832	0
Hradec Králové	18.5	3,089,093	0
Liberec	23.2	3,752,434	0
Moravia-Silesia	75	12,602,487	3,860,000
Pardubice	24	4,046,610	0
Plzeň	11.4	2,081,385	0
City of Prague	17	2,474,016	
Central Bohemia	32.06	5,810,344	0
Ústí nad Labem	74.7	13,419,033	4,284,000
Vysočina	8.83	1,528,137	0
Karlovy Vary	24	3,938,832	0
Zlín	16.525	2,543,276	0
Olomouc	44.31	7,311,344	0
Jihlava Christian Primary School	1	152,358	0
P. Pittr Church Primary and nursery school, Ostrava	10	1,648,541	0
Children's home with school, primary school and canteen, Sedlec-Prčice	3	744,089	0
J. Ježek School – nursery, primary, special and art school for the visually impaired, Praha 1	3	602,073	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>440.305</b>	<b>74,926,147</b>	<b>8,144,000</b>

Another tool that could increase the educational success of disadvantaged Roma children is the creation and implementation of individual educational plans for children. However, widespread use of such plans is hindered by the large numbers of pupils in classes and the small

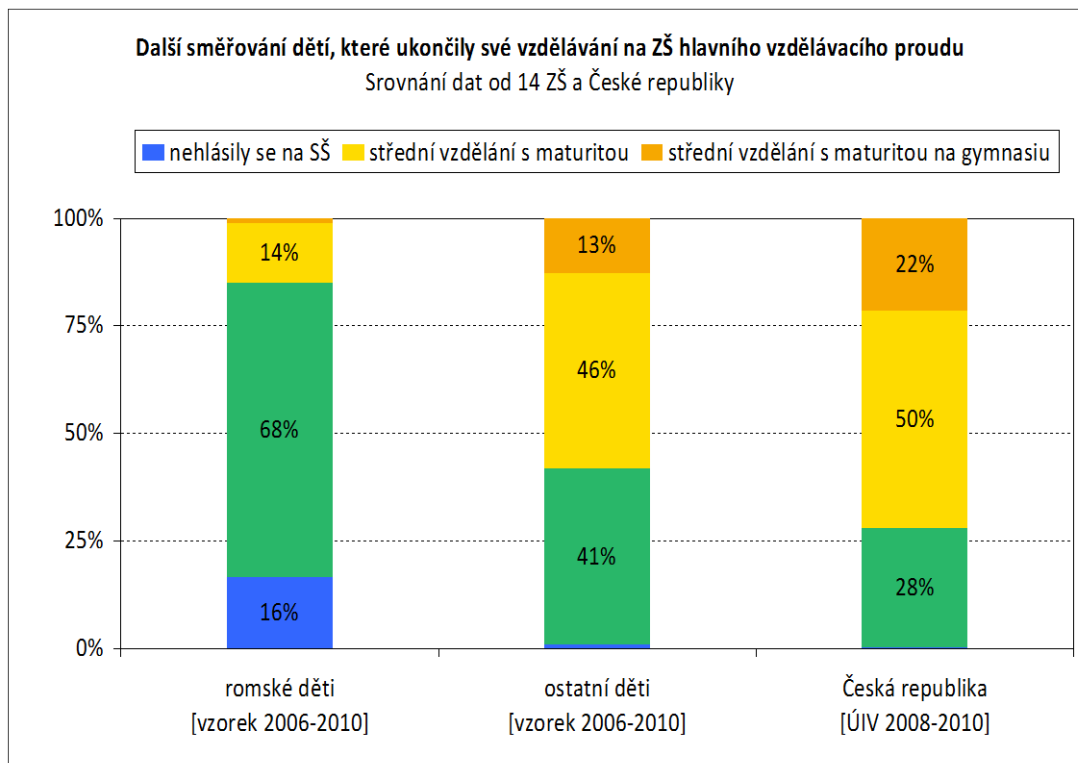
number of teachers with sufficient capacity to provide disadvantaged students with individualized support during lessons.

This area of support for socially disadvantaged pupils was the subject of an investigation in 2010 by the Czech Schools Inspectorate, which found that, in the schools observed, the former special-needs schools offered a very high standard of special teaching care specifically aimed at pupils with mild mental disabilities. In general, though, little distinction was made between the needs and specific conditions for the assistance of socially disadvantaged pupils and pupils with mild mental disabilities, which had a significant impact on the chances of Roma pupils to transfer to mainstream schools. The monitoring results showed that support projects are largely focused on supporting pupils with mild mental disabilities. Apart from funding for the teaching assistant scheme and for preparatory classes, no projects at these schools targeted support for Roma pupils.

### **C. The situation of Roma pupils in secondary education**

- **The number of Roma students in apprenticeship programmes and in secondary school fields**

As the Czech Republic does not collect data on the basis of ethnicity, it is not possible to give an exact number of Roma students in various types of secondary schools. The above-mentioned *Sociological Analysis of the Transfer of Roma Pupils from Disadvantaged Backgrounds from Primary to Secondary School (GAC, 2010)* addressed the transition of Roma pupils from primary to secondary school. At present, pupils must have completed all nine grades of primary school in order to attain a full primary education. Approximately a third of Roma children leave mainstream primary school before the ninth grade, i.e. they end up with an incomplete primary education. The researchers found that, out of every 1,000 Roma children, only 419 of them will not drop out of school early or be educated in educational institutions for pupils with disabilities. The proportion of Roma children choosing not to continue their education at secondary school immediately after completing primary school is high, at 16% by some estimates, whereas the figure for other pupils is less than 1%. The research results show that, out of every 1,000 Roma children, only eight will go on to study at grammar school, while out of every 1,000 other children, 120 make the progression to grammar school; in the remainder of the population, the figure is more than 200 children out of a thousand. There is also a difference in the transition of Roma pupils to apprenticeship programmes, because the predominant type is E (i.e. less demanding apprenticeships which provide skills only for various odd jobs and which are often less available – in some regions more than others – compared to the more demanding type-H fields), again in contrast with other children. As regards the dropout rate for Roma children in secondary education, approximately 58% of Roma children complete their secondary education by earning a vocational certificate in the field of study they entered; among those taking the school-leaving examination (*maturita*), approximately 70% of Roma students pass.



[Subsequent education of children on completing mainstream primary education]

[- did not enrol at secondary school]

[- secondary with school-leaving examination]

[- secondary with school-leaving examination at grammar school]

[Roma children (sample: 2006–2010)]

[other children (sample: 2006–2010)]

[Czech Republic (Institute for Information on Education)]

- **Programmes supporting the transition of Roma students to secondary school**

- 1) **Support of Roma pupils in secondary schools**

The programme aims to promote the study of Roma pupils whose families are faced with the prospect of considerable financial difficulties due to the costs associated with secondary and post-secondary vocational education. Support is provided to Roma pupils studying full time at state-registered schools providing secondary education, secondary education with a vocational certificate, secondary education with a school-leaving examination, post-secondary vocational education and post-secondary vocational education at a conservatory. These may be schools established by a region or municipality, private schools or church schools. The programme may admit only students who are not yet 27 years old, have a good attendance record (i.e., no unexcused absences) and have no reduced marks for bad behaviour.

Criteria for the disbursement of funds are that the pupil must be of Roma ethnicity and must be at a social disadvantage, so that funds from the grant can be used only by the families of Roma pupils who would otherwise be prevented from studying for financial reasons. The assessment of social need requires a duly completed application submitted to the head teacher by the pupil together with notification of the award of state social support or a welfare allowance in accordance with Act No 117/1995 on state social support, as amended. In this way, applicants implicitly declare voluntarily their social status or provide confirmation of allowances. In the first

round (January to June 2010) CZK 5,303,800 was disbursed to 880 pupils. In the second round (September to December 2010) CZK 4,980,400 was disbursed to 1,017 pupils.

## **2) Career guidance provided by primary schools**

At the local level, schools provide career guidance in the last two years before the completion of compulsory schooling. Research on the transition of Roma students from primary to secondary school, however, notes that the guidance schemes run by schools are relatively incompatible with Roma pupils' needs. Most employees at the primary schools visited agreed that they need to work for longer periods of time with children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds if they are to increase their chances of attending secondary school or studying a demanding field, and thus to complete their secondary education. Among primary schools, however, there is a large gap between the level of assistance provided to socially disadvantaged students in selecting a field to study at secondary school and their motivation to study. Schools that have little experience of children needing assistance in choosing a vocation often lack strong support mechanisms or the professional capacity to provide guidance. Most of the teachers and NGOs addressed believe that waiting until the final or penultimate year of primary school before providing career guidance is inadequate. Regardless of how actively the individual schools approach this preparation, schools and NGOs agree that socially disadvantaged Roma children have no clear idea about what field of study to apply for. As a result, they tend to make up their minds at the last minute or subsequently have a change of heart.

## **3) NGO programmes to promote the transition of Roma pupils from primary to secondary school**

NGOs play an important role in the support of Roma pupils as they make the transition to secondary school by offering programmes to enhance their educational achievement: for example, by providing tutoring, motivating and stimulating activities, education guidance, and schemes to prepare them for entrance exams. To this end, these organizations frequently cooperate with primary schools where Roma pupils are taught and with secondary schools.

### **• The situation of Roma students in tertiary education**

The low number of Roma pupils who successfully make the leap to secondary school and complete their studies there with a school-leaving examination is logically reflected in the very low numbers of Roma secondary school graduates who go on to colleges and universities. The transition of Roma students to tertiary education is a poorly chronicled phenomenon; no research has been conducted on this topic.

Factors deterring Roma secondary school graduates from going on to university are the long duration and financial demands of higher education and the uncertainty of whether the student will complete the studies successfully. Roma secondary school students also have no aspirations to study further if they are in a community where the higher education attainment is an unusual phenomenon. Successful Roma university graduates usually leave the backdrop of their excluded community behind them, so they are unable to set a good example to Roma children and young people. Those Roma studying at college or university tend to be from middle-class families rather

than from social excluded communities with a peripheral position in Czech society. Secondary school graduates from socially excluded Roma families prefer to follow avenues that will enable them to earn money as soon as possible in order to contribute to the household budget or to achieve economic independence as quickly as possible. There are also important economic factors at play here, as most low-income Roma families do not have a large enough budget to fund a student at university for long; the situation is all the more complicated if the student has to commute to a university in another region.

- **Programmes to support Roma students in higher education**

The financial demands of studying faced by poor Roma students can be compensated by an MoEYS grant to maintain socially disadvantaged students, disbursed from the national budget. Subsidies are awarded to private and public universities in order to make higher education available to students from low-income households (including disadvantaged Roma students). In 2010, under this scheme private universities received subsidies of CZK 2,622,920 for social scholarships and CZK 11,693,080 to support the accommodation of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Public universities received subsidies of CZK 56,125,000 for social scholarships and CZK 960,361,000 to support the accommodation of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Scholarships for Roma university students are also available from the Roma Education Fund (REF), specifically for Roma university students studying bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes (either as full-time students or via distance learning). The main objective of the scheme is to use subsidies to increase the level of education of the Roma minority and to have a desegregating effect on the education system. In 2010, 65 applications were lodged, resulting in 35 scholarships. The total amount awarded to recipients in the academic year was EUR 32,400.

An example of good practice in the promotion of higher education for the Roma is a project by the Slovo 21 civic association called "*Ja dureder – Keep Going II*". The project duration runs from September 2009 to August and is funded by the European Social Fund and the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme. The project aims to support Roma students as they complete secondary school and to prepare them well for university admission proceedings, thus helping to increase the admission success rate. The success rate of those taking part in courses aimed at university admission has a long-term average of above 50%, which is a major achievement. The range of preparatory courses for entrance examinations depends on the fields that Roma secondary school students are interested in studying and on the university selected. The preparatory course is then modified in line with the Roma students' needs and the entrance exam requirements of the universities selected. In addition to preparatory courses, the project offers extended guidance on the selection of a field of study. Participants take a free series of tests designed to determine academic and personal qualities of university candidates. The results of tests and interviews with a psychologist serve as a basis for participant to make a final choice on a subject to study.

#### 4. THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN EMPLOYMENT

- **The average unemployment rate in the Czech Republic in 2010 and the average unemployment rate in the Roma population**

There was no relief in the situation faced by unemployed Roma in 2010, when the Czech Republic, along with other European countries, was exposed to the effects of the global and economic crisis (the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic increased in December 2010 to 9.6%). The labour market was characterized by a lower number of vacancies matching the skills and profile of Roma job-seekers. In 2010, there were low unemployment rates among degree holders (2.9%) and persons who had completed their secondary education with a school-leaving exam (5.5%). A high unemployment rate remained among those with only primary education (23.6%) and was slightly above average in the large group of people with secondary education who had not taken a school-leaving examination, including those who had undertaken apprenticeship schemes (8.0%). Many Roma job-seekers rank among the last two groups. However, socially excluded Roma suffer not only from a high unemployment rate, but also from the generally low participation of Roma in the labour market (those who give up on finding employment).

The latest research on the employment of Roma was a Labour Force Survey conducted in the Czech Republic by the World Bank, resulting in the study “The Czech Republic – A Chance to Improve the Employment of the Roma.”

According to the results of the study:

- 56% of working-age Roma (15–64 years) did not participate in the labour market;
- only 5% of Roma were among the unemployed actively seeking a job;
- only 27% of excluded working-age Roma had jobs (the national average was 66%), of which 12% had casual employment;
- 42% of Roma youth aged 15-24 years prematurely enter the labour market, compared with a national average of 32% among non-Roma youth);
- Roma women in the most productive age participate in the labour market less (31%) than the overall share of Czech women (62%).

According to the Report on the Situation of the Roma minority in the regions in 2010, it is indeed an alarming situation for inhabitants of socially excluded Roma communities living in remote areas of municipalities and towns, where unemployment ranges between 70 and 100%.

- **Strategy documents aimed at increasing the employment of the Roma**

Employment is another focal point of the *Concept of Roma Integration 2010–13*, which seeks to increase employment and the employability of disadvantaged Roma and to fight against discrimination in the labour market. It proposes measures aimed at the reorganization of employment offices (the *profiling of job seekers* according to their specific needs, the *intensification and individualization of support for disadvantaged Roma*, the *specialization of employment office staff*), schemes for the timely prevention of future unemployment, with an

emphasis on the need to promote the inclusive education of Roma in the mainstream (*vocational guidance at primary school – vocational orientation, the stimulation of pupils and their parents to upgrade their qualifications, programmes of “second chance” support to return to school and continue studies*), support for social entrepreneurship, support for small and medium enterprises run by Roma themselves, the creation and implementation of strategies for labour market development in marginalized Roma localities and an overall emphasis on regional development.

The starting points for employment measures geared towards this target group are the *European Employment Strategy*, the *Lisbon Strategy* and the *National Reform Programme 2008–11*.

The *Basis for a Strategy to Combat Social Exclusion*, approved by the Government on 14 June 2010 also concentrates on employment, setting the Government Commissioner for Human Rights the task of working with the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, the Minister for Education, Youth and Sports, the Minister for Regional Development, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Justice, and the Minister of the Interior to draft short-, medium- and long-term employment-related measures. To create these measures, working groups were established, and the material is now in the comment procedure in which individual ministries and other public institutions participate and contribute suggestions.

Naturally, employment is also a focus of the *Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15*, which tasks the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with the following: Task 1 “Increase the efficiency of Roma recruitment in the labour market by interlinking existing tools”; Task 2 “Increase Roma motivation to work by changing the ratio of social benefits to the minimum wage”; Task 3 “Increase job prospects for young Roma”; Task 4 “Support nongovernmental organizations in the development of schemes aimed at training the Roma and mediating employment”; Task 5 “Support employers employing long-term unemployed Roma”; Task 6 “Complete legislative changes in the field of anti-discrimination measures”; Task 7 “Train staff from employment offices in antidiscrimination measures”; Task 9 “Organize promotional events aimed at entrepreneurs”.

- **Evaluation of the position of the Roma in the labour market, access to job opportunities and barriers that prevent them from obtaining employment**

A large proportion of socially excluded Roma belong to the group of those with primary education and with apprenticeships without a school-leaving examination, i.e. the group of job-seekers with above-average unemployment. The Roma are faced with long-term, repeated and concentrated household unemployment (where multiple members of a working age are unemployed) much more often than the majority population. Roma unemployment is also structural, as Roma applicants are unable to meet the requirements placed by employers on job vacancies because of their low level of education, which is, *inter alia*, due to segregation in education, and their low skills. A certain role in this regard, however, is also played by the prejudices of employers, who attribute to the Roma characteristics such as unwillingness to work and unreliability and other negative stereotypes and prejudices, without giving a specific Roma job-seeker a chance. The World Bank study “*Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion from the Labour Market*” identified the most serious obstacles to the participation of Roma in the labour market to be an insufficient level of human capital and low levels of educational attainment. According to the results of the study, only one in five working age Roma has attained at least

secondary or further education. Compared to the Roma, the majority population meets qualification and educational requirements four to six times more frequently than excluded Roma, which is naturally also reflected in the lower unemployment rate of the general population compared with the Roma.

Another area where an inadequate level of education continues to be reflected is income from employment. The average monthly income of employed Roma is 58% lower than that of the majority population in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, the study also shows that Roma who have attained higher levels of education can expect up to 110% higher income from employment.

Repeated setbacks in the search for employment, combined with life in a setting where long-term unemployment is a normal part of life for the local Roma community, substantially reduce the incentive to keep looking for legal jobs. A role here is played by the expected wage, which, in view of the unskilled jobs available, is not high, and is reduced by the expected cost of employment, in particular the cost of commuting for people in remote socially excluded localities.

Another discouraging factor is the high level of debt in socially excluded Roma families, where income from legal employment is at risk of garnishment. For these reasons, the Roma tend to resort to illegal jobs, which are more readily available compared to the number of legal jobs in socially excluded Roma localities.

The situation of socially excluded Roma communities living in remote parts of municipalities and towns is quite alarming. The reports on the situation of the Roma minority in the regions in 2010 show that the unemployment rate in these locations ranges from 70% to 100%. These sites are characterized by the dysfunctional labour market on which their inhabitants depend, where going to work outside the area would be associated with high travel costs, which reduces willingness to seek employment outside the area. In this labour market, the low numbers of vacancies are often seasonal, with rather precarious employment contracts and remuneration for work done. A slight rise in employment can be seen in the spring and summer, when more seasonal jobs are available. A way out of the current situation faced by the Roma in the labour market is to look for alternative sources of livelihood, often the illegal work mentioned above, the use of financial products, which, in view of the solvency of their users, are frequently disadvantageous (commonly resulting in usury), the collection of scrap and other short-term activities that can be a source of income for poor Roma households.

Every year, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs conducts a questionnaire survey among workers of designated regional employment offices focusing on the Roma situation in the labour market and Roma participation in the active employment policy. One of the areas monitored is the extent to which Roma have had success in the individual segments of the labour market. It was found that Roma were more successful in the secondary labour market (accounting for 80% of Roma finding a job), which cannot be considered a positive trend. The secondary labour market condemns this target group to jobs with lower prestige, generally low-skilled, poorly-paid jobs and work in shoddy conditions. In this market, there is also a higher risk of job loss and greater staff turnover. According to the survey, only 19.8% of candidates managed to find a job in the primary labour market, which, in contrast to the secondary market, offers better and more stable jobs, opportunities for career growth, better working conditions, greater protection from dismissal, and less staff turnover. In the future, it is necessary to increase the number of Roma participating in the primary labour market, which would guarantee them not



only protection against social exclusion, but would also improve their social status and the prestige of the Roma in the eyes of mainstream society.

Total			Primary labour market			Secondary labour market		
Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
58%	41.4%	100%	60.3%	39.7%	19.8%	58%	41.4%	80.2%

- **Use of active employment policy in relation to disadvantaged Roma job-seekers**

Roma seeking employment may participate in the public employment services offered by employment offices in conjunction with municipalities, employers, and educational institutions. They include active employment policy instruments (such as guidance, retraining, public works, socially useful jobs, inclusion allowances for employers, etc.).

Employment offices run active employment policy programmes in general for all groups of disadvantaged job seekers who are unable to find a job in a short period of time, regardless of their ethnicity. The vulnerable groups of Roma under the active employment policy are viewed through the lens of Section 33 of Act No 435/2004 on employment, encompassing persons over 50 years, long-term unemployed job-seekers, job-seekers who are difficult to place in the labour market, single mothers with children, people with disabilities and young people up to 20 years. Roma job-seekers can be found in these groups and receive increased attention from the staff of employment offices.

The table below shows the proportion of Roma job-seekers in various active employment policy programmes. The table shows that the Roma are the most involved in public works, followed by retraining programmes. Although retraining programmes are rated as highly necessary, unfortunately the number of retraining courses in the Czech Republic designed to guarantee a job to participants is limited. For this reason, many Roma participating in retraining courses still end up without employment. The least used tool in relation to Roma job-seekers is “socially useful jobs”.

Proportion of Roma job-seekers included in AEP tools								
Public works		Socially useful jobs		Retraining		Others		Total
Total	of which women	Total	of which women	Total	of which women	Total	of which women	
38%	50.9%	6.7%	58.1%	31.7%	48.2%	10.8%	55%	100%

It also follows from the above table that Roma women account for a fair share of participation in the active employment policy, making up an average of 50% in active employment policy programmes. This can be viewed as a positive trend in view of the accumulated disadvantages they face in the labour market. Socially excluded Roma women achieve lower levels of education and qualifications than men. They are also divorced from labour market participation for a long time because of their childcare duties. Numerous women have had no opportunity to embark on a career because they become mothers; therefore, they lack initial working experience and have had no chance of obtaining the necessary work habits or improving their skills. Long-term

absence from the labour market has a negative effect on their employability, accounting for the sizeable participation of Roma women in schemes to promote the development of their human capital. Of the Roma participants in counselling programmes, 46% are women, with individual action plans drawn up for 49% of the Roma women.

In addition to conventional public employment services, Roma job-seekers have been involved in projects funded by the European Social Fund. The largest level of participation was recorded in the Ústí nad Labem Region (10,200 participants, including 4,900 women), followed by the Moravian-Silesian Region (484 participants, 226 women) and the Central Bohemian Region (330, including 170 women).

A factor increasing the chances of socially excluded Roma job-seekers is the interlinking of public employment services with the social schemes of other providers, mostly nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), aimed at the social inclusion of Roma and responding to problems that complicate their circumstances. The range of associated social problems often prevent socially excluded job-seekers from pursuing a full job search or increasing their skills, e.g. by participating in further education or in vocational training. Certain types of social problems directly discourage job-seekers from looking for legal jobs (e.g. debt). Social programmes which include targeted social work focus on associated social problems and support job-seekers as they try to address them, thereby stabilizing their situation so that they can devote time and energy to finding a job. It is also critical to increase the employment of Roma job-seekers in cooperation with employers. As for cooperation with NGOs, most of them worked with employment offices in Central Bohemia (15 cooperating NGOs, 5 Roma organizations), the Plzeň Region (13 cooperating NGOs, 5 Roma organizations), Moravia-Silesia (13 cooperating NGOs, 5 Roma organizations), and the Olomouc region (11 NGOs, 3 Roma). Most cooperating employers in relation to increased Roma employment were recorded in the Plzeň Region (50 cooperating employers), followed by South Bohemia and Moravia-Silesia (38 cooperating employers), and Central Bohemia (36 cooperating employers).

- **Other programmes aimed at promoting Roma employment**

In addition to the active employment policy, which is part of the public employment services, Roma may participate in *specific social programmes*, which tend to be offered by NGOs in different localities. These activities are mostly financed by the ESF (currently under the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme) and partly by the national budget. These programmes include activities such as employment and labour-law counselling, job placement, job clubs, vocational training and retraining, further education (computer courses, language courses), and social economics.

Another tool designed to activate long-term recipients of allowances is public service. Public service is legally anchored in Act No 111/2006 on allowances for those in material need. In reports on the situation in the regions, this tool is thought to be beneficial, and many Roma are interested in it. Public service helps those who have long been unable to get a job to develop their social and working skills in order to increase their chances on the labour market. Public service also helps municipalities in matters that are in their interest. Significant positive effects are the fight against prejudice and improvements in the image of Roma people involved in public service in the eyes of the local population. A positive trend in 2010 was the expansion of public service providers, which led to an increase in opportunities for Roma beneficiaries of allowances in

material need. In 2010 the MoLSA also produced the publication “The Municipality and Public Service” [*Obec a veřejná služba*] to raise awareness among municipalities and other persons interested in public service.

- **Availability of employment offices in structurally backward regions**

The local availability of public employment services is relatively good in the Czech Republic. In April 2011, employment offices were reorganized, giving rise to a Central Employment Office with 14 regional branches and 409 branches in delegated municipalities. However, problems lie in the lack of individualized support for disadvantaged job-seekers, the high number of job-seekers per counsellor and a certain lack of readiness among members of staff to work with this target group. In two structurally backward regions (the Ústí nad Labem Region and Moravia-Silesia), the availability of ESF-funded programmes to promote the employment and employability of the Roma is better than elsewhere. In the Ústí nad Labem Region, these programmes were attended in 2010 by 10,200 Roma participants, including 4,900 women; in Moravia-Silesia, they were attended by 484 Roma participants, including 226 women. Accessibility can be a problem for the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities in the country. Here, it is difficult for Roma to travel because of their adverse socio-economic situation, and they may not be able to cover the cost of reaching the employment office.

- **Use of the social economy to address the situation of disadvantaged Roma**

Enterprises engaged in the social economy with the Roma as a target group are not common at the local level. These activities are carried out rather sporadically. One of the reasons for this is that social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic is not clearly conceptually and legislatively anchored, nor is the stable funding of these bodies guaranteed. Social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic has yet to develop properly.

In promoting socio-economic activities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs draws on resources from the *European Social Fund* (ESF) via the *Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme* (HREOP). Under Call No 30 *Social economy*, which is not focused exclusively on supporting socially excluded Roma, nine Roma projects received support totalling CZK 27,963,357 in 2010. New business activities fulfilling the principles of social entrepreneurship and the new business activities of self-employed persons (without employees), who are also the persons referred to in the target groups, were supported under the call. This positive trend is geared towards the implementation of measures in support of social entrepreneurship under the Concept of Roma Integration 2010–13.

In addition to support from the European Social Fund, the social economy can depend on the *European Regional Development Fund* via the *Integrated Operational Programme* (IOP). In area of intervention 3.1 of the IOP, Call No 1 (Activity C) was notified, again with a focus on the support of new business activities meeting the principles of social entrepreneurship and new self-employed persons, under which CZK 6,457,050 was distributed to four projects in 2010.

- **Incidence of labour market discrimination**

Experience shows that the Roma face discrimination in the labour market. Unfortunately, the problem is that this discrimination tends to be latent. The Roma at the receiving end of this discrimination have generally given up on finding a solution. In the Czech Republic, there has

been no investigation focusing on discrimination against Roma, so it is impossible here to cite specific data on the occurrence of specific acts of discrimination. Not even the Ombudsman collects ethnic data, by reference to which it would be possible to directly determine how many cases of discrimination against Roma in the labour market were handled in 2010. Nevertheless, he does state that these cases were part of his agenda.

According to the 2009 EUMIDIS survey, 33% of Roma respondents had met with discrimination from employers. This trend could be reversed by consistent and active monitoring of labour market discrimination and awareness among disadvantaged Roma so that they know how to tackle discrimination. Another problem is the unavailability of a free antidiscrimination service, a type of service offered by few providers in the Czech Republic. A certain barrier preventing the expansion of this service is the absence of legislation on free legal assistance, work on which was shelved in the past because of the high cost and excessive burden on those public budgets associated with free legal assistance. On the other hand, in the Czech Republic it is essential to focus on employers and promote the principle of non-discrimination among them. An example of good practice in this respect is the Ethnic Friendly Employer project.

#### *Ethnic Friendly Employer project*

One of these projects is that of the Brno-based civic association IQ Roma servis, entitled “*Ethnic Friendly Employer*”. Since 2007, the project awarded the Ethnic Friendly Employer accolade for employers who are committed to the principle of equal treatment and do not discriminate against job-seekers and workers on grounds of ethnic origin and nationality or for other reasons. This employer award is a clear signal not only for job-seekers of different ethnic origin, but also for the public, that the employer gives the same opportunities to ethnically different persons and others.

The project aims to highlight those employers who adhere to principles of equal treatment. Support of these positive examples should help to spread this principle so that it becomes a common standard of behaviour among employers in the labour market. A major effect of the media coverage and gradual spread of knowledge about this accolade has also helped to increase awareness of equal opportunities and discrimination based on ethnic origin in other areas of life and to eliminate negative stereotypes and prejudices burdening those of different ethnicity.

The Ethnic Friendly Employer project contributes primarily to the cultural liberalization of the labour market itself. These activities aim to achieve the cultural openness of employment services. Holders of the award include five employment offices (City of Brno, Blansko, Kroměříž, Vyškov and Zlín), even though they have no organized systematic training in intercultural skills. Since 2007, 36 employers have been named Ethnic Friendly Employers.

Discrimination in the labour market is addressed by the control departments of employment offices, where those who have encountered discrimination at work can report this fact, which the employment office then investigates. Another entity is that of the district labour inspectorates, although these institutions are lukewarm about tackling discrimination and do not actively monitor and test discrimination; this tends to be an initiative of NGOs. The Ombudsman is heavily involved in antidiscrimination; in June 2011, he published a report on discrimination against job-seekers, the result of analyses of advertisements published on the Internet.

## 5. THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA IN THE HOUSING SECTOR

- **A description of the situation of the Roma as regards housing, particularly in socially deprived areas (the quality and cost of housing, developing the concept of social housing, identifying barriers to access to housing for the Roma).**

The Roma have long been one of the more vulnerable participants in the housing market, where they are more likely to face structural barriers and discrimination. The exclusion of Roma from the housing market is reflected in their geographical segregation and the concentration of socially marginalised households in a particular market segment of insecure housing of lower quality.

The geographical segregation of Roma in housing in certain areas of towns and municipalities is the result of interactions between a whole range of mechanisms and actors. Segregation may occur voluntarily through the spontaneous relocation of wider Roma families seeking to maintain their links and family solidarity, which can be seen as a culturally conditioned determinant of the geographical segregation of the Roma, but may also be involuntary, resulting from inequalities that are contingent on individual and structural factors.

Involuntary segregation often results from a worsening of the socio-economic situation of low-income Roma households, which, as a result of their poverty and the unfavourable housing situation, become dependent on the market for cheap flats that are available in certain areas where residential properties have fallen into neglect. The criterion of low prices prevails over the criterion of quality housing in low-income households. These locations differ in terms of the varying levels of segregation and the concentration of Roma families. Over recent years there has been a movement of marginalised Roma families from urban areas to rural locations, where they are more successful in purchasing private housing than in the towns. However, this results in an aggravation of their geographical segregation and also, frequently, to a deepening of their social exclusion.

Their poverty means that it is difficult for low-income Roma families not only to find suitable housing, but also to maintain it, because of their financial situation and the rising cost of housing (e.g. resulting from rising energy prices and the gradual deregulation of rents). The financial cost of living increases the likelihood that these households will find themselves burdened with debts associating with housing. These debts do not necessarily arise solely because of insufficient income, related problems such as debts to other creditors, where the family is under pressure to prioritise the settlement of these claims can also play a role in this regard, as can the low level of financial literacy of family members and a certain tendency to rely on the fact that the loss of housing is not an immediate risk for the household.

A major barrier blocking low-income households from access to housing is the *lack of access to social forms of housing* at the municipal level where, thanks to the massive privatisation of the municipal housing stock, the opportunity to set aside a certain portion of public housing for social purposes has been lost. Experience at local government level suggests that there is a segment of households that are unable to obtain suitable housing without public assistance and for whom social forms of housing would best suit their needs. The results of a number of other research studies show that the rapid acquisition of long-term and secure rental housing stabilises the situation for marginalised persons and has a positive impact on other aspects of their integration

into society. Separate housing forces tenants to become accountable and motivates them to find and retain work, as well as having a positive effect on children's education.

The area of social housing grant support is slowly developing in the Czech Republic, using financial aid from the European structural funds, but the conceptual and legal infrastructure for this sector is still inadequate, which makes it appear insecure and unanchored, providing no guarantees of return on investment for potential providers, which reduces their motivation to build social forms of housing. In this context, the *guaranteed permeable housing* model developed by the Agency for social inclusion in Roma areas appears very innovative. The basic pillars are multi-level housing models, which are linked to social programmes and also to a system of guarantees that helps municipalities, non-profit making organisations and private owners to reduce the risk of operating social housing<sup>14</sup>.

In accordance with Act No. 108/2006 Coll. on social services, a number of municipalities, towns and, particularly, non-governmental non-profit making organisations have established shelters. Demand for this type of housing from Roma families without accommodation frequently exceeds its supply. Very rarely this service is offered to complete families with a number of children. In practice though, not even shelters provide an adequate solution for homeless Roma families.

One on-going problem is the poor technical condition of housing for socially marginalised Roma. Low-quality housing and unsanitary conditions adversely affect their health and have a negative impact, particularly on the care and upbringing of children. Poor quality housing does not allow marginalised Roma families to create a suitable and stimulating environment for the upbringing and development of children, housing that prevents any quality preparation for school while not offering any opportunities for the effective use of their leisure time. The poor construction and technical conditions of these buildings also increases housing costs, particularly energy costs.

- **Strategy for Roma families in solving the critical housing situation**

Homeless families are extremely segregated in the housing sector, reduced to living in ghettos, commercial hostels and other forms of temporary housing and relying on informal sources of finance provided by their extended families. The fact of families moving in with their relations results in overcrowding and the faster deterioration of the flat, the entire household is also under threat of eviction for failure to comply with tenancy reporting obligations to the lessor regarding the presence of other persons in the flat. Families without permanent housing also frequently move between different relatives or other forms of temporary accommodation within a particular town or district, which also impacts on them in a number of negative ways and impedes the efforts of institutions that are working towards the social integration of the family. Homeless

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<sup>14</sup> The aim of this concept is to provide long-term rental accommodation for households that are unable to obtain reasonable, non-exclusive rental accommodation on today's housing market. Non-profit organisations, which have expressed long-term interest in building social housing but have been unable to provide rental accommodation outside socially-marginalised areas for their target group, thereby successfully completing the reintegration process for vulnerable households, play a vital role in the proposed concept. The barriers preventing vocational training of socially marginalised households also include the fact that they are ineligible for housing allowance when living in sublets.

families also often seek housing in commercial hostels, which have disproportionately high rents, do not conform to quality housing standards, and do not offer a contract that would entitle families to long-term housing. At a local level, this type of hostel and its surroundings often become a socially marginalised location with a high concentration of social problems such as unemployment, indebtedness, and the emergence of high-risk forms of behaviour, etc. The area surrounding the hostels also experience problems of coexistence between the hostel residents and other parts of the population.

- **Practices employed by landlords and local authorities in relation to the marginalised Roma**

However, the causes of involuntary segregation of Roma in the housing sector also lie in the relations between the majority population and the marginalised Roma minority, in the failure of the majority to accept the Roma, which, in practice, also translates into *local government policies*. At the same time, local governments have access to instruments that can significantly influence the availability and quality of Roma housing. Municipalities may use territorial development policies to initiate the desegregation of marginalised groups and to revitalise marginalised areas, they manage the municipal housing stock and can use this to allocate a certain portion of available flats to social cases, they also coordinate the activities of entities operating in the area of housing policy, using early prevention tools to avoid the loss of housing due to unpaid rent. Experience shows that many municipalities fail in their housing policies as these affect the socially marginalised Roma, tending to promote activities that reinforce their geographical segregation.

An important systemic barrier is *discrimination in the housing market* (i.e. most frequently by private landlords, municipalities or estate agents), which blocks access to housing for even financially well-off Roma. Unfortunately, unequal treatment of Roma housing applicants is rarely punished in practice, despite the fact that anti-discrimination legislation is in force and can be applied in cases of unequal treatment. A certain insight into the level of discrimination against Roma in the housing sector and the reasons why this discrimination is not dealt with is offered in a study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2009 “*Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the European Union*”, which claims that 20% of Roma respondents in the Czech Republic have faced discrimination in access to housing in the past 5 years, while only 27% of Roma questioned were aware the antidiscrimination legislation already exists in the country prohibiting discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. Despite the high rates of perceived discrimination, Roma brought an extremely low number of complaints to those authorities dealing with equal treatment, discrimination in access to housing was notified by only 11.5% of Roma, 71% of Roma were of the opinion that even after notification of cases of discrimination nothing had changed, 41% of Roma did not know whom to notify and 26% of Roma were afraid of the consequences if they reported discrimination. The Ombudsman identified the most frequent criterion used for indirect discrimination against Roma in access to municipal housing as “fewer children (household members)”, where it is apparent from the statistical data in the 2001 census that Roma women have a higher number of births and also that Roma households have higher numbers of members (these are often multi-generational families).

Because of their low level of legal knowledge, disadvantaged Roma are also faced with practices used by landlords that can be described at least as contrary to good morals and are

sometimes in breach of the law. Landlords exploit their ignorance, low levels of functional literacy and their critical housing situation and rent accommodation under unfavourable conditions. Homeless families are willing to accept these conditions in order to avert a crisis that could result in the removal of minor children, even though their agreement with the landlord does not provide them with adequate guarantees or secure accommodation. The most commonly used practice by landlords is collecting exorbitant rents that do not in any way reflect the quality of housing or inappropriate interventions into the private lives of Roma families. A high proportion of the disproportionately high rent is paid from housing benefits, which means financial losses for public budgets.

- **Strategic materials and other housing policy measures aimed at improving the situation for Roma in the housing sector**

Improvements in the situation of the Roma in the housing sector is again the focus of the *Concept for Roma integration during the period from 2010 – 2013*. In this part the Concept focuses on the overall revitalisation of marginalised Roma areas and on increasing the geographical mobility of Roma to ensure they are able to leave these areas. The Concept supports the development and availability of social housing, as well as the linking of social housing with social programmes whose goal should be to stabilise the situation of tenants, to develop their skills in terms of obtaining and retaining accommodation in the housing market, to stimulate the active participation of Roma in the labour market, as well as to use early prevention tools to deal with housing-related debts, which are a common cause of eviction.

The Ministry for Regional Development is drafting a medium-term *Housing Policy Concept*, in which the Roma are perceived as one of the disadvantaged groups and measures to deal with them focus on the availability of subsidised housing.

The *Basic strategy to combat social exclusion*, which was approved by the Government on 14 June 2010, also focused on the housing area in the area of housing, where the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Youth and Sport, Regional Development, Finance, Health, Justice and the Interior will prepare a proposal for short-term, medium-term and long-term measures i.e. for measures in the housing sector. Working groups were set up to produce draft measures and these materials are currently at the consultation stage, where the individual ministries and other public institutions are commenting on their form.

The *Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015* focuses on the housing issue and the Ministry of Regional Development has set the following tasks: Task no. 1 “Ensuring equal access to all forms of housing for Roma”; Task no. 2 “Preventing eviction of Roma households”; Task no. 3 “The failure to integrate socially marginalised Roma”; Task no. 4 “Improving access to housing for poor Roma households”.

- **The use of European Structural Funds to improve the housing situation for Roma.**

The Ministry for Regional Development (hereinafter referred to as the MRD) provides subsidies to regions and municipalities through financing from the European structural funds that is targeted at solutions to common regional problems, i.e. to prevent the spread of social exclusion in Roma areas. The MRD as the Managing Authority (hereinafter referred to as the



“MA”) carries out a number of measures that facilitate the integration of marginalised Roma communities through the *Integrated operational programme (hereinafter referred to as the IOP)*.

This programme covers a number of areas of intervention, whereas Priority 5.2 focuses on problem areas in towns<sup>15</sup> with populations of over 20 thousand inhabitants and aims to avert the threat of social exclusion for their inhabitants. In order to obtain financial support from this grant programme, a prerequisite is the drafting of an *Integrated Urban Development Plan* (hereinafter referred to as the IUDP), which contains a set of time-related actions (projects or integrated projects, aimed at the social integration of marginalised people), which are directly implemented within the urban area. The minimum financial volume for the IUDP has been set at 3 million EUR for towns with a population of over 50,000. The minimum volume for the IUDP in towns with a population of between 20-50,000 is set at 2 million EUR.

Assistance in this area is provided for three types of activity:

- 5.2a) the revitalisation of public spaces;
- 5.2b) the restoration of apartment blocks;
- 5.2c) pilot projects aimed at working with Roma communities at risk of social exclusion.

In terms of ensuring access to social housing, the third activity is particularly important, i.e. area of intervention 5.2c. The primary task of pilot projects carried out in Roma areas is not the condition of the apartment blocks, but mainly to deal with other problems such as unemployment, risky forms of behaviour (criminality, substance abuse) and the low level of education achieved. For this reason, intervention in the housing sector, targeted at the regeneration of public spaces and the renovation of apartment blocks, or the conversion of commercial buildings to social housing, will be in the nature of complementary activities linked to social and community care work, intervention in human resources, employment, etc. The projects must be designed in such a way as to link building renovation activities with social inclusion activities (are of intervention 3.1b Services in the area of social integration under the IOP, or with activities falling under the OP HRE – area of intervention 3.2 aimed at non-investment aid for Roma areas.

A total of six towns have signed up for pilot projects: Kladno, Most, Brno, Přerov, Orlová and Ostrava. In addition to these towns, included under Activity 5.2c, a number of other towns are focusing on addressing problems concerning the Roma community under Activities 5.2a and 5.2b: Havířov, Karviná, Bohumín, Cheb, Vsetín, Olomouc, Ústí nad Labem, Chomutov, Litvínov, Most, Jirkov, Příbram, Písek and České Budějovice.

- **Expenditure of funds from the state budget in 2010**

By using funds from the state budget and the European structural funds, the state is supporting the revitalisation of socially marginalised locations and also increasing the availability of housing for people who do not have access to the open housing market because of their low income or other specific housing needs.

The Ministry for Regional Development also supports the targeted revitalisation of marginalised areas in the rural environment, in towns and municipalities, which would not be

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<sup>15</sup> By problematic housing estates we mean a specific part of the municipality where apartment blocks have been built, where these estates contain at least 500 flats.

able to obtain subsidies from the European structural funds using funds from the state budget within the framework of the “*Support for Rural Renewal*” national programme. Since 2009 activities that can be shown to involve the participation of members of the Roma minority in their selection, preparation and implementation have received support under this programme. The condition that there must be active participation by the Roma in the revitalisation of marginalised rural areas can be seen as an example of good practice. Municipalities of up to 3,000 inhabitants (excluding municipalities established as a legal entity), which have at least 4% of its registered population of Roma origin, may receive grants. The proportion of Roma out of the population of the municipality must be supported by a declaration by the mayor, referencing to relevant documents or studies, or a qualified estimate by the regional coordinator for national minorities.

A subsidy of up to 70% of eligible costs actual incurred for the project may be granted. The lower limit of the subsidy for each individual project is 50,000 CZK. The upper limit of the subsidy for a project is 500,000 CZK. Subsidies may be provided for:

- the restoration and maintenance of public facilities (schools, pre-school facilities, cultural facilities),
- the reconstruction or construction of facilities for leisure activities (clubhouses, playgrounds, etc. ),
- the construction or reconstruction of municipal infrastructure for facilities primarily serving the Roma community.

The table below shows the number of applications and the funds provided for subsidies under category no. 5 in 2009 and 2010. To date the grant programme has shown a positive trend, which has resulted in increased grant support

Year of grant	Number of projects	Amount of funding provided
2009	5	1,704,000 CZK
2010	7	2,894,642 CZK

Support for investment into social housing has existed since 2003, when the original untargeted programmes to support rental accommodation were fully replaced by new measures. Since 2003 the state has almost exclusively subsidised rental flats for social housing. These are rental flats for low-income people and subsidised flats destined for people with reduced self-sufficiency due to their age or state of health and people who have reduced access to housing because of other social handicaps. The table below shows the number of flats built between 2003 and 2010 for people on low incomes and socially disadvantaged individuals.

Table: Subsidised social housing in 2003 – 2010 (Rental flats for low income people - 146/2003 Coll., 333/2009 Coll., MRD programme, and First-time flats – MRD programme)

Type of flat	Number of flats in 2003 - 2010
First-time flats	522
Rental flats for low income people	21,652
Total number of social housing units	22,174

## 6. THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

### • Description of the state of health of marginalised Roma and the causal conditions

According to the WHO health standards to not differ randomly, but are the result of systematic differences in a variety of factors that influence them. The WHO uses the Dahlgren and Whitehead model, which focuses on the causes of inequality in health, to monitor variations in health. The model's authors classify *living and working conditions* as one of the first categories of factors influencing health. The environment of socially marginalised Roma communities does not offer sufficient comfort and adequate sanitary conditions. The local housing stock is often in poor structural condition, subject to damp, mould and various pests that can carry infectious diseases. Shared sanitary facilities, the lack of bathrooms, poor access to water and overcrowding, where large families are housed in very small spaces, all contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.

In 2010, poor sanitary conditions were the cause of a high incidence of Type A hepatitis in certain Roma communities. Most affected were the Roma populations in the Ústí nad Labem district, in Hradec Králové, in Ostrava, Karvina and Vyškov. Higher incidence of Hepatitis A was also found in Roma populations in Teplice, Děčín, Náchod, Přerov and Prostějov. The situation was so serious that it required the intervention of the Chief Public Health Officer of the Czech Republic, in coordination with the Government Council for Roma Affairs, regional coordinators for Roma affairs and the staff of the regional hygiene stations. In an overall assessment of incidences of Hepatitis A, an estimated 30% of all cases reported in the country in 2009 were Roma and a sharp rise in this disease in the Roma population was recorded in the first half of 2010, where over 50% of all reported cases of Hepatitis A were Roma. These figures are alarming and suggest that the sanitary conditions of marginalised Roma families must be improved and an intensive education programme on methods of preventing this disease must be launched.

As far as working conditions are concerned, Roma from socially marginalised areas are dependent on the dysfunctional local labour market, which is characterised by the low numbers of legal job opportunities and easy access to illegal work, which is unstable, with uncertain income for work performed and offering no labour law protection for illegal workers, who often perform physically demanding unskilled manual work in fields such as construction under unprotected working conditions. This type of work may result in work-related accidents and diseases, and illegal workers are not entitled to payment of benefits in compensation for loss of wages when these events occur, unlike those working under standard conditions.

The second group of factors influencing the level of health is associated with *health-related behaviour*. In this area socio-cultural factors also play a role, and the perception of their own health as a value. The Roma tend to perceive the value of health as a passive and instrumental tool, which is manifested in their failure to accept the importance of prevention and a healthy lifestyle. An unhealthy lifestyle combined with poor eating habits and inactive leisure activities, the neglect of any preventive measures, failure to comply with medical instructions and smoking (56% of women and 65% of men are daily smokers<sup>16</sup>) are common features in marginalised Roma communities. Neglect of preventive measures in the case of children may result in an

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<sup>16</sup> Sastipen: The Roma population and health – Czech Republic – National report 2009.

intervention by child protection organisations in the family situation and end in the removal of children and their placement in institutional care.

The lives of socially marginalised Roma are unfortunately also influenced by problems caused by addictive substances such as alcohol, the use of soft and hard drugs, which can be wide-spread in some areas as a certain strategy of adaptation to a life of social exclusion. On the other hand, the use of addictive substances prevents users from escaping their social exclusion. Reports on the situation in the regions refer to the seriousness of the problem and the fact that substance abuse is affecting increasingly younger age categories of Roma. Attempts to solve this problem are unfortunately complicated by the easy availability of addictive substances in areas frequented by drug producers and dealers. In many cases cheap and readily available substances such as toluene are used, which are associated with serious health risks and have life-long consequences. Addiction treatment is difficult given the unwillingness of Roma to begin treatment and continue it to the end. The experience of experts suggests that Roma addicts refuse to begin treatment because of their low motivation levels or the lack of support from their extended family, or end it prematurely.

For the reasons explained above, it is extremely important that the regional coordinators for Roma affairs work closely together with the regional drug prevention coordinators. To this end, cooperation between both these areas of expertise was also incorporated in 2010 into the Action Plan for the implementation of a National Strategy of Anti-Drug Policies for the period from 2010 to 2012, where measure 16.7 focuses on intensifying coordination between the regional drug-prevention coordinator, the regional coordinator for Roma affairs and the regional education coordinator. Regional coordinators were also included in the educational accreditation system for anti-drug policies. A major problem is the lack of targeted research that would monitor the situation of Roma drug users at a national level. For this reason, measure 13.4 was included in the Action Plan – Map the use of drugs in hidden and marginalised populations, to which ethnic minorities also belong, including the Roma.

The third category of factors focuses on *psycho-social factors* such as negative events, feelings of exclusion, resignation, stress, lack of control over events in the life of the person concerned and performing demanding work for inadequate financial reward. These factors also come into play in the case of the Roma, who face high levels of stress as a result of their living situation, which is complicated by a variety of social problems such as unemployment, poverty, insecurity in housing, and debts. The everyday stress caused by the poor socio-economic conditions of Roma life negatively influences their state of health.

The fourth category of factors according to Dahlgren and Whitehead concerns the *past social situation* and the most important factors are the social conditions in childhood, childhood nutrition, and childhood health. The quality of life during childhood and the family's social relations also influence Roma children's chances and prospects of attaining the highest levels of education, of obtaining quality employment and an adequate income. Some studies show that parents' high socio-economic status reduces the risk of stroke and stomach cancer in their children when these achieve adulthood. Socio-economic deprivation of mothers is clearly associated with low birth weight, which affects the child's health later on in life. Given that the inter-generational transmission of poverty and social exclusion of the Roma has not been halted in the Czech Republic, we can conclude that, if this trend continues, the children of socially marginalised Roma families will not have any hope of improving their state of health. There is a

high probability that the health situation of socially marginalised Roma will continue to be worse in comparison with the majority population.

- **Access to healthcare for marginalised Roma**

Information has been provided by the DROM organisation, as the national provider of medical and social assistance. One barrier to accessing healthcare is the problem of registering with a doctor, whether GPs and paediatricians, or specialists and dentists. In 2010 some health insurance companies conducted a mass targeted recruitment campaign to attract clients, with dealers promising a range of benefits; in some regions vouchers worth 250-400 CZK were offered to clients who re-registered with the insurance company. Insurance agents deliberately appeal to residents of marginalised communities, offering to change their insurance provider, exploiting their inability to analyse the real and advertised benefits of these transfers and consciously manipulating them. The general aim of these practices is to acquire clients, but the type of client who will probably have little use for the insured services. Most of these insured clients had problems finding a doctor who had a contract with the insurance company, and cases where clients had to pay for their medical care themselves and then apply for reimbursement from the insurance company were not exceptional.

Those following this programme in remote socially marginalised Roma communities faced problems registering with doctors, particularly GPs for adults. In smaller communities, where there is no possibility of patients finding a doctor without travelling a number of kilometres, it is even more difficult to find a doctor. Another problem is that most doctors are over-burdened and will therefore not accept new patients.

- **Serious cases of discrimination related to the provision of health care**

One reason for refusal is not only that doctors have a full patient register, but also discriminatory practices followed by physicians. When confronted with this situation by the relevant insurance company, claims by doctors are often found to be untrue and they finally have to cooperate with the insurance company and find free capacity. However, insurance companies fail to carry out any other activities to support their obligation to ensure that their clients receive medical care. In these situations they do not offer to take any effective steps to resolve the issue, even though their clients are guaranteed medical care under the law.

Certain discriminatory practices have also been observed when applying for various types of benefits for Roma with health problems. Representatives of the competent authorities (health and social departments, etc.) deliberately withhold information that might relieve them of problems associated with their handicap. Unfortunately, Roma parents also encounter this dismissive attitude from state employees even when they need to deal with problems facing their minor children in poor health. It is their access not only to healthcare that is complicated, but also to social care, particularly when trying to acquire mobility aids, disability pensions and securing institutionalised care, particularly for older and disabled Roma (20% of applications), where this type of care is less available for them than for members of the majority population.

### ***Developments in cases of illegal sterilisation of Roma women in the Czech Republic***

No new cases of illegal sterilisation of Roma women were recorded in 2010, although it was clearly demonstrated that illegal sterilisations did take place, even after 1989, where there is evidence that the practice of sterilisation without informed consent continued after 1991, with three cases in 1997, 2001 and 2003, which are currently pending before the European Court of Human Rights and also with reference to a report issued by the European Roma Rights Centre, which documented 27 new cases of illegal sterilisation during the period from 1989 – 2007.

However cases of complaints from Roma women who had undergone involuntary sterilisation in the past were dealt with in 2010. This issue is being addressed by the *Vzájemné soužití* (Life Together) association. This association has assembled cases of illegal sterilisation and all the documentation and materials were sent to the Ombudsman's office, which issued an opinion on individual cases of involuntary sterilisation. The lengthy process of applications and negotiations with public institutions such as the Regional Authority for the Moravian-Silesian Region, the Ministry of Health and the teaching hospitals concerned has resulted in some of these women losing faith in obtaining justice and any compensation. 20 women were involved, with the healthcare authority dealing with a total of 6 complaints and finding that these women had received sufficient prior information about the procedure and had confirmed their consent with a signature. The teaching hospitals dealt with 3 complaints, the Ministry of Health with 1 complaint, the Regional Authority for the Moravian-Silesian Region dealt with 16 complaints, where 14 women were informed that their complaints would not be addressed. It was also found that some of the women who had undergone involuntary sterilisation had left for Great Britain.

- **Policies and programmes aimed at improving the health of Roma**

The World Health Organisation programme, "*Health 21 – health for all in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*" contains a health policy requirement to reduce social inequalities in health in order to prevent premature death and excess morbidity in socially disadvantaged groups of the population. The Czech Republic has also joined this programme, in part through its "Long-term programme for improving the health of the population of the Czech Republic – Health for all in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (hereinafter referred to as the "Programme"). One of the disadvantaged groups identified as a group at risk of inequality were the socially disadvantaged Roma.

The area of healthcare is also the focus of the Concept of Roma Integration for the period from 2010 – 2013. This supports the extension of the health and social assistant and raising awareness of patients' rights, training health workers in the nature of the state of health of Roma and of the socio-cultural factors that affect it.

In the area of health, the focus was again on the *Starting points for the strategy to combat social exclusion* approved by the government on 14 June 2010, where the government commissioner for human rights was entrusted with developing a proposal for short-term, medium-term and long-term measures, i.e. measures to improve the state of health of the Roma, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry for Regional Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior.

As far as specific programmes are concerned, the one traditionally used is the "Health and Social Assistance" programme, which has been underway since 2007. Its national provider is the

DROM organisation, a Roma centre. In 2010 8 health and social assistants were working in 10 communities and 4 regions in the Czech Republic. In 2010, the Health and Social Assistance programme received funding through a grant from the state budget for the provision of social services under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs budgetary chapter.

The area of health is also the focus of the *Action plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015*, where the Ministry of Health has imposed the following tasks: Task no. 1 “To implement a health and social assistant programme”.

Overview of locations covered by the Health and Social Assistant Programme in 2010.

Locations covered by the service			
Region	Region / district	Municipality	Number of HSA
Olomouc Region	Olomouc		1
	Jeseník		1
	Javornicko	Bernartice, Bílá Voda, Javorník, Kobylá nad Vidnavkou, Uhelná, Vápenná, Velká Kraš, Vidnava, Vlčice, Žulová	1
South Moravian Region	Brno		1
	Vyškov district	Ivanovice na Hané - Chvalkovice na Hané	
	okres Brno-venkov	Zastávka	1
	Břeclavsko	Břeclav, Lanžhot	
Moravian-Silesian Region	Bruntál		1
	Karvinsko	Karviná - Nové Město, Karviná - Hranice, Petrovice u Karviné, Karviná 2 - Doly, Karviná - Staré Město	1
South Bohemian Region	Prachaticko	Prachatice, Volary	1
<b>Total</b>	8		

It is evident from the information on the ground that it would be useful to increase health and social assistance in some of the existing locations, and also to ensure its availability in new locations in other regions of the Czech Republic where there are obvious differences between the state of health of the Roma and that of the majority population.

In 2010 the programme<sup>17</sup> was used by 519 people, of whom 70% were women. The assistants worked with these clients on a total of 950 long-term contracts through 6,890 interventions, of

<sup>17</sup> In both the text and the annexes we use statistics containing data for 8 workers and the 11 months the service was operational after a break caused by a lack of funds from February 2010.

which a substantial proportion were advisory (44%) and acting in the interest of the client (22%). From an overall evaluation of the programme, we can state that the health and social assistants were successful in their dealings with the Roma users, as evidenced by the fact that 73% contracts were completed and the targets set by the user, together with the health and social assistant, were met. In addition to these long-term contracts, the health and social assistants also carried out on-off interventions in another 961 cases.

In certain areas of the Czech Republic where the Social and Health Assistance programme was not available and the target group still needed to deal with health and social problems, the providers of field social work had recourse to professional training for their field social workers in the area of health and social assistance.

The Centrom o.s. civic association provided opportunities for retraining providers and from June 2009 to November 2010 implemented a project entitled “*Combining the expertise of field workers and health and social assistants*”. The project was funded from the ESF through the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment and from the state budget of the Czech Republic. Its objective was to hold an add-on qualification course to widen the qualifications of field workers working in Roma communities, providing expertise in health and social assistance.

The project’s target group were primarily Roma field workers and secondly medium-level healthcare personnel. The end-users of the project outputs were residents of socially marginalised Roma communities. During the period of the project, a total of 5 courses were held in five cities in the country. At the same time, the course received accreditation from the MLSA and information was also provided to the professional public, particularly medium-level healthcare personnel, representatives of whom participated in some activities and attended a conference on the issue of prevention and healthcare in marginalised areas. These conferences were held in a total of five towns in the Czech Republic.

## 7. THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA AS REGARDS SECURITY

- ***An evaluation of the ethnic climate and the attitudes of the majority population towards the Roma minority***

In November 2010 the Ministry of the Interior published a survey by the STEM agency entitled “*Mapping public attitudes in the Czech Republic to right-wing extremist, racist and xenophobic ideas and those who proliferate them with regard to the integration of minorities and foreigners*”. Part of this survey also dealt with the attitudes of the majority population toward the Roma and the results of the investigation were not at all favourable in relation to this target group; the strength of anti-Roma feeling in Czech society is alarming.

Approximately four out of every five Czechs (83%) perceive the Roma as a group of maladjusted people. The analysis shows that the anti-Roma position of the Czech population is mainly socially grounded and relates to the fact that the majority population associates the Roma with maladjustment, criminality and the misuse of social benefits. The survey shows that anti-Roma feelings are not necessarily related to racism, but rather to nationalism and hostility to foreigners. It appears that Czechs perceive the Roma more as foreigners than as co-citizens.

The Roma are most often seen as a maladjusted group by people who have personal experience of them (90% of respondents). According to the vast majority of Czechs, the Roma



are a source of criminality (90%) and destroy and pollute their environment (88%). Most of the Czech population also associate the Roma with noise (82%), with violent behaviour (77%) and as a source of disease (51%). Only a fifth of the population is convinced that the Roma may be victims of discrimination (21%). Most of those participating in the survey explain the lack of success in dealing with the Roma by saying that the police and authorities are afraid to intervene (31%). Only potential voters with radical attitudes claimed that the most common problem was people's fear of revenge and retribution (29%). This is probably the reason why they themselves do not give greater support to radical parties, apart from voting for them – they themselves are afraid of revenge and retribution.

According to Czechs, the reason most frequently given for the failure to deal effectively with the problematic behaviour of some Roma is the state social system, which supports this type of behaviour (34%). The second most common cause named also relates to the system – one-fifth of those questioned (21%) see the cause as being the fact that there is no serious punishment for problem groups. Almost one-fifth of respondents stated revenge and retribution (19%). A large proportion of people also indicated that it was fear of the police and the state authorities (18%).

The research revealed that about 8% of the Czech population consists of people who can, to varying degrees, be considered to be potentially at risk from right-wing extremism. The main risk is from “Event participants”, which represent 5.8% of the population. This group includes people who support right-wing extremism and who are at the same time willing show their support for parties offering radical solutions by becoming members or by participating in demonstrations, marches or various events designed to restore order. There are also 2.5% in the Czech Republic who share ultra right-wing ideas but who are only prepared to support parties that offer robust solutions by voting for them (only potential voters). People included in both these right-wing extremist risk groups declare a far higher number of long-term restrictions and harassment by the problem population (64% of them stated that this group is embodied by the Roma). Personal experience of the problem group has a very significant impact on a willingness to support the ultra-right. The expansion of right-wing extremism is related to economic uncertainty. In the (event participant) group, we can most often find unemployed people and those who are dissatisfied with their income, property and standard of living. Social inequality also has an influence – these people often have only basic education or are skilled workers dissatisfied with their income and individuals who consider society to be unfair.

The research found that similar numbers of people in all age categories agree with the ideas of right-wing extremism. On the other hand, it is people between the ages of 15-19 years who are most often open to various forms of active support for parties with radical attitudes, which also reflects the age level of participants in demonstrations, marches, members of radical parties and movements, etc.. Young people are prepared to support radical parties and movements even though they generally do not follow their ideology. Reasons for their participation may be a general will to revolt, peer pressure, etc. The authors of the survey also suggest that because of this, higher education obtained in a democratic system is, in the view of many authors, the best guarantee of immunity against authoritarian tendencies. The susceptibility of less-educated people to extremism may also relate to their greater need for a fixed frame of reference (they lack the necessary cognitive tools to deal with the ever-changing demands of a modern society and the tolerance and experience they need to grasp complex social and political phenomena).

The Roma are also the group for which most Czechs have predominantly negative feelings and most people express a reluctance to live with them permanently in the same country.

The greatest risk of demonstrations and attacks is in the Moravia-Silesian, Ústí and Plzeň regions. Very strong, but non-active ultra right-wing views can be found in the South Bohemian region, as well. The results of this research have been interpreted in a misleading way by the Workers Party for Social Justice, which claims that this survey confirms the correctness of the policies of this marginal right-wing political party.

A survey by the Department of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the CR, v.v.i. with the title “The relationship between Czechs and national groups living in the CR”<sup>18</sup> also had similar results. This survey investigated 15 national minorities living on the territory of the Czech Republic. The survey found that 74% of respondents feel strong antipathy against the Roma, who finished in last,(fifteenth) place on the table showing the popularity of minorities.

- **The incidence of racially motivated crimes against members of the Roma minority**

For right-wing extremism, 2010 was characterised by a reduction in the number of public meetings; however, despite this trend, a number of public events were held near socially marginalised Roma communities, which threatened the safety of their inhabitants. In 2010 a total of 60 meetings took place and there were also provocative events by the Workers Party for Social Justice, such as a tour of the Chánov housing estate in Most or patrols through Smíchov in Prague. These events were typically conflict-free in 2010, apart from individual clashes between some of the participants and the police.

The far-right political parties that have long adopted an anti-Roma position and are concerned with the issue of the Roma include the Workers Party. At the beginning of 2010 events concerning this group were associated with discussions by the Supreme Administrative Court on the dissolution of the party. The case was heard from the 11 to the 14 January 2010. On 17 February 2010, the political party was dissolved on a decision by the Supreme Administrative Court. On 15 March 2010, its representatives filed an appeal against the verdict of the Supreme Administrative Court to the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic. On 27 May 2010 the 1<sup>st</sup> senate of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic rejected the appeal by the Workers Party, which requested that the verdict of the Supreme Administrative Court of 17 February 2010, ref.no. Pst 1/2009 – 348, be overturned as manifestly unfounded.

Of a total of 313,387 crimes recorded on the territory of the Czech Republic, 252 crimes were recorded as having an extremist subtext, i.e. 0.08% of total recorded crime, which represented a slight decrease compared to 2009. The North Moravian, South Moravian, North Bohemian regions and the capital city of Prague are those most affected by this type of crime. The fact remains that the perpetrators are members of the majority population who vent their xenophobic attitudes towards the Roma, even though they are not directly linked to right-wing extremist groups. Although no statistical data on the ethnicity of victims of crimes with racial overtones are available, experience shows that the Roma are frequently victimised in this way.

- **Government policies aimed at combating extremism**

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<sup>18</sup> Academy of Sciences of the CR, v.v.i: The relationship between Czechs and national groups living in the CR, Prague 2011.

The fight against extremism is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, and is based on the Strategy to combat extremism. In addition to the MoI, the Czech Police and departments such as the MEYS, the Office of the Government of the CR, the MoJ, MoD and MoF are also involved in implementing tasks under this Strategy. The implementation of the Strategy is evaluated on an annual basis and a Report on the issue of extremism in the CR is submitted to the government together with an assessment of the tasks that were performed during the reference year as part of the implementation of the Strategy.

The Czech government has been supporting the Campaign against racism since 1998. The overall goal of the campaign is to contribute to suppressing the latent racism and xenophobia of the majority population and to publicise the government's opposition to prejudice, racially motivated violence and intolerance. In 2010 the government spent 3,014 thousand CZK and 2,965 thousand CZK (for details see below) on support for projects. In 2010 the Campaign against racism covered the following activities:

1. Gypsy Spirit Awards 2010, a project implemented by the Section for Human Rights in the Office of the Government of the CR;
2. Projects aimed at informing the public about the Roma Holocaust;
3. Projects aimed at working with teachers and pupils in the Moravian-Silesian and Ústí regions.

- **Crime and other forms of risky behaviour threatening the safety of the marginalised Roma**

Crime and risky forms of behaviour are often latent in marginalised communities, which makes them all the more difficult to deal with effectively. The emergence and spread of crime and other forms of risky behaviour are associated with living in social exclusion, and with poverty in segregated communities where high levels of unemployment and indebtedness forces people to search for other alternative sources of income, or ways of escaping from oppressive living conditions.

Another factor that increases the risk of the emergence and spread of risky forms of behaviour in marginalised Roma communities is easy access to people who exploit the critical living situation and the lack of availability of legal sources of income for the marginalised inhabitants for their own benefit and profit, exploiting their lack of awareness and legal knowledge and offer them alternative sources of income, which often results in deepening the social fall of these marginalised people and in behaviour that is in conflict with the law. An environment where crime and other risky forms of behaviour have become the norm is dangerous in terms of the educational and social inclusion of children and youth from the marginalised Roma communities, and can take over and model their behaviour in later life. The problem of the declining age of those engaging in risky forms of behaviour among residents of socially marginalised Roma communities is alarming and requires maximum attention in terms of crime prevention.

The incidence of crime and risky forms of behaviour on the territory of the marginalised Roma communities, which is spreading into the surrounding areas of the towns and municipalities, is again a breeding ground for a breakdown in relations between the majority population in the municipalities and the residents of these communities, which threatens to develop into extremism.

Reports on the situation of the Roma minority in the regions make mention of criminality and the emergence of risky forms of behaviour in connection with the life of socially marginalised people, but there is no precise information on the development of crime. Therefore the information contained in the reports is based on qualified estimates from district police stations, crime prevention working groups, liaison officers for minorities, Roma advisers and NGOs.

As far as the types of crimes committed by residents of socially marginalised Roma communities are concerned, reports on the situation of the Roma minority in the regions refer to the occurrence of property crimes (breaking and entering, pickpocketing), of acts of usury, which, being a strictly internal and hidden practice within the marginalised Roma community are difficult to deal with, which is the reason very few cases of usury are brought to the courts. Offences in the area of public order and peaceful co-existence have also been recorded.

- **Programmes aimed at preventing crime and the emergence of risky forms of behaviour**

The fundamental conceptual document covering the state prevention policies is the *Crime Prevention Strategy for the period from 2008 - 2011*.

The Strategy's priorities include the following:

- Victims of racially, ethnically or religiously motivated crimes
- High-risk individuals in the position of potential offenders or victims (socially marginalised individuals and groups; foreigners; members of national and ethnic minorities; residents of geographically marginalised communities)
- Criminal acts and delinquent conduct related to the radicalisation of spectator violence; racially, ethnically or religiously motivated crimes; criminal behaviour in socially marginalised communities).

Under the Strategy, the system of crime prevention has been divided into three levels: national, regional and city. At the level of the regions and the cities a Crime Prevention Strategy for the period from 2009 to 2011 was developed in 2008. The priorities of the regional and city strategy include the prevention of racism and xenophobia, the inclusion of geographically and socially marginalised people and the fight against extremism. The Strategy priorities are met on an annual basis through a Crime Prevention Programme, consisting of separate, specific crime prevention projects. These projects aim to counteract the deep-rooted discriminatory and xenophobic stereotypes, to eliminate or reduce social marginalisation and to promote co-existence between the majority and ethnic and national minorities, thereby reducing the vicarious motives from certain extremist attitudes and pronouncements. During 2010 a total of 14 preventative projects were supported, receiving 1,659,000 CZK in subsidies.

Another strategic document, which specifically deals with security in relation to minorities, is the *Strategy for the work of the Czech police in relation to minorities for the period from 2008 – 2012*. In 2010 an *Action Plan to implement the Strategy for the work of the Czech police for the period from 2010 – 2011* was drafted and approved by the Ministry of Interior. In accordance with the Strategy, the Action Plan defines the following key areas:

- The institutionalisation of a liaison officer for minorities
- The support mechanism of an assistant for dealings with the police and other agencies,

- Training of police officers dealing with minority issues during the course of their work.

The position of a *liaison officer for minorities* was established in the Czech police force in 2005 for all regional police departments. Since this time they have operated in their working groups under the orders of the directors of the regional departments. In 2010 the position of liaison officer was institutionalised through the adoption of binding instructions from the President of the police force, defining the position of the liaison officer, his/her duties and the creation of a working group for minorities at each regional police headquarters. The liaison officer is an employee who specialises in the issue of police work in relation to minorities, playing the role of a mediator between the police and minority communities, offering assistance to members of minorities to address specific problems falling under the statutory authority of the Czech police. They also work as consultants to resolve any issues that affect minorities from the perspective of the police. The liaison officers also carry out continuous monitoring of the structure of minority communities in the area and contribute to preventing and combating crime.

Another area of the Action Plan was the support mechanism of an *assistant for dealings with the police and other agencies*, which is one of the programmes that has long been in use with respect to Roma from socially marginalised Roma communities. The assistance is provided to socially marginalised persons who have been victims/witnesses and, in some cases, also the perpetrators of criminal acts or unlawful behaviour in socially marginalised communities, with the aim of bringing the rights and principles of a civil society into an environment of social exclusion. Assistants live permanently in the community, monitor the situation of the local population, take note of problems, communicate with people and offer advice and assistance. They try to establish a basis of trust and contacts between the residents of socially marginalised communities and the Czech police, official authorities and other institutions. The long-term operation of this mechanism significantly helps to stabilise the security situation in a given region. In 2010 assistants were working in Plzen, Olomouc, Přerov, Karviná, Brno, Cheb and Ostrava.

In 2010 the Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice continued to implement the successful *Mentor* project. The project consists of individual services provided by a trained “mentor” to a convicted person, who belongs to the Roma ethnic group and who has been given an alternative sentence of community work or supervision in the case of a conditional sentence (*or parole*). The trained mentor uses personal individual contact to motivate the client to take responsibility and to find resources to deal with the situation that has arisen. The mentor reinforces the client’s work habits, develops his/her social skills, as well as communication skills for conflict resolution and seeks to improve relationships between the client and his/her environment. In 2010 a total of 50 Roma mentors were employed, working with 16 centres of the Probation and Mediation Service of the CR (hereinafter referred to as PMS) in the South Bohemian, Hradec Králové, Pardubice, Central Bohemia and Ústí region. 10 new mentors were trained and began to work with the PMS centres in Děčín and Rumburk. To 31 December 2010, mentors had worked with 242 clients and sixty percent of these interventions were successful.

- **Roma migration within the CR**

Over the past 3 years there has been an increase in the migration of Roma families between regions and, most likely, also within individual regions.

The reason is not only the loss of housing by families, but in particular the inability of young families with children to find rental accommodation in towns or municipalities. Roma families with children are unable to obtain housing in flats owned by municipalities (due to the privatisation of the housing stock, limited opportunities, lack of construction of so-called social housing), nor can they rent from private persons through real estate agencies. Barriers include not only the lack of financial resources, for example for a deposit, but also the fear of, or refusal to enter into a rental contract with Roma.

When they lose accommodation or are unable to obtain it, they tend to stay with relatives or in commercial hostels, or they are rented rooms in privately owned flats at relatively high prices. Some families with children move between various hostels over the course of the year.

- **Roma migration abroad**

One of the trends that affects the situation of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic is the departure of Roma abroad, which has impacted Czech foreign policy. The most closely followed is the departure of Roma to Canada because of the renewal and potential cancellation of the visa requirement for Czech citizens travelling to Canada (the visa requirement was renewed for citizens of the CR on 14 July 2009<sup>19</sup>).

According to statistics from the *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (hereinafter referred to as the IRB) 58 asylum applications were submitted in 2010 by Czech citizens, of which 24 were approved. During the year a total of 274 applications were refused and 671 applications were withdrawn. Compared to 2009 there was a significant decline both in the number of applications filed, but also in the number of asylum cases granted, with 90 people receiving approval in 2009 (in 2008 84 applications were approved).

A commonly reported reason for submitting an application for political asylum is racially motivated attacks by skinheads and the reluctance of the police to protect Roma against these attacks. The reports on the situation of the Roma minority in the regions show that the reason Roma leave for Canada and submit applications for political asylum is an attempt to deal with the dismal socio-economic situation, which can be temporarily addressed through the existing Canadian asylum system. The fundamental problem faced by a number of Roma applicants is insoluble indebtedness and pressure by creditors, as well as the unavailability of jobs and other sources of income and the housing insecurity or the loss of housing or the inability to obtain housing. The overall poor ethnic climate in Czech society in relation to the Roma, the rise of extremism and the resulting security risks also contribute to departures abroad. The Roma also see migration as an opportunity to improve the situation for their children, whose chances of social advancement over the long term are low in the CR. This reason for departure is reinforced by the fact that discrimination against Roma children in education still continues. Another reason for departing from the CR is to maintain family ties and migration to be with relatives.

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<sup>19</sup> The visa requirement applies to holders of all passports, including diplomatic and service passports. The reason given was the high numbers of applicants for political asylum, of which most were made up of Czech Roma. The renewal of the visa requirement is inconsistent with the principle of visa reciprocity, which applies between Canada and the countries of the EU Schengen system, of which the CR is a member. The introduction of visas for Czech citizens travelling to Canada is the first case where any of the third countries for which the EU does not apply visa obligations has decided to introduce visas for an EU Member State. This step by the Canadians has created inequalities within the EU.

In 2010 departures to Great Britain were more common than to Canada. Relatives of Roma families who emigrated in previous waves of migration travelled to be with their relatives and to take up temporary jobs and these, after a time, returned home. The group of migrating Roma also included families who had rid themselves of all their property before leaving and, on their return to the Czech Republic, which was mainly caused by a failure to succeed in the new country, these families had to begin again. A new phenomenon has been seen in certain communities where Roma who had spent some time in Canada, where they had learnt English, are now migrating to Great Britain. Even migration to Great Britain is affected by family ties with successful emigrants, where newly arriving families can rely on support from relatives and an easier orientation in the system. Other countries referred to in connection with Roma emigration include France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden.

- **The situation of Roma returnees and the challenges facing them on their return**

Reasons given for returning to the Czech Republic include the inability to find sources of income and, in general, to adapt to the new environment; problems with family relatives in the CR which forced them to return, and health problems or the failure to separate from family ties were also mentioned.

No major problems associated with the return of Roma families to the CR were recorded in the regions last year. The problem of finding accommodation on their return still exists for some families. There were no major problems recorded in the submission of applications for social benefits and providing evidence of income earned during the family's stay abroad. However, ensuring mandatory school attendance for children does remain a major problem, as there are problems registering children in their original schools or ensuring attendance at another school. In the case of children who in a number of cases did not attend school abroad, or where the language barrier proved a significant handicap, they find it difficult to cope with the demands placed on them during lessons, it is difficult to catch up with the curriculum after a number of months away and this can result in their repeating the year or in the children being placed in a special primary school. Poor success at school affects their future educational and career opportunities, particularly in the case of children who are about to make the transition from primary to secondary school.

Another problem is the debt associated with health insurance for the period when the family was abroad. In most cases, families who left because of their debts return to a situation where they will soon be caught up by their creditors who will want to recover their claims, which will also have increased as the debts have been left unpaid. In certain families, this increasing indebtedness will lead them to emigrate from the Czech Republic once again.

<b>8. DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION OF ROMA CULTURE AND LANGUAGE</b>
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- **Support for Roma Culture and Language on the National and Local Levels**

The Ministry of Culture has provided sustained support for the activities of organisations and civic associations that are partially financed through state support and focused on the presentation and development of Roma culture, whether in the awareness, cultural, or cultural-educational

spheres. Through its subsidy programmes, it supports periodical as well as non-periodical publications, and the adoption and dissemination of information about Roma culture, traditions, and history in public media.

In 2010, the Ministry of Culture supported Roma awareness, cultural, and cultural-educational activities through its subsidy policy, granting CZK 20,449,435 in the following subsidy programmes:

- Support for the cultural activities of the members of national minority groups living in the Czech Republic;
- Support for the integration of Roma community members;
- Dissemination and adoption of information in the languages of national minorities;
- Cultural activities;
- Support for the development of the religious and cultural-religious activities of civic associations;
- Education in the languages of national minorities.

Through those means, support was provided to events such as Khamoro 2010, the 12th Annual World Roma Festival, submitted by the Word 21 Civic Association (Občanské sdružení Slovo 21), a project implemented by the Ostrava Studio of Czech Television, publications such as the magazines *Romano Vod'i*, *Kereka*, *Romano džaniben* and the newspaper *Romano hangos*, as well as broadcasting in the Roma language on the Radiožurnál [public] radio station.

The Section for the Protection of Chattel Cultural Assets, Museums, and Galleries of the Ministry of Culture supported a retrospective exhibition of the painter Bohumila Doležalová "Canvases for Large Black Eyes", a travelling version of the exhibition "Genocide of the Roma During the Second World War", and the project "Brno Museum Night 2010", in which the Roma Cultural Museum in Brno took part. Support was also provided to *cultural-religious activities of the civic associations* *Romodrom* and *Letní tábor Rataje nad Sázavou* – a camp for children from a low-threshold facility. Every year, attention is also paid to multiethnic events in professional art, aiming to support cultural dialogue and mutual knowledge of different cultures. These include, in particular, ethnic music festivals where Roma music is regularly represented.

### ***Support for Cultural Activities on the Regional Level***

There were also numerous regional activities aimed at promoting and developing Roma culture, taking advantage of subsidy support from regions and municipalities. Non-governmental non-profit organisations played no small role in disseminating awareness of Roma culture and language to the Roma and the majority society.

### **• Educational Activities and Other Institutions Supporting Roma Culture**

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports supports research into the Roma language, focused not only on ascertaining the level of knowledge of the language among the Roma, but also the possibilities for the use of Roma in school instruction. In 2010, the Institute for Southern and Central Asia of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University conducted the research project



“*Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of the Linguistic Situation of the Roma in the Czech Republic.*” That project built on earlier research studies, “*The Possibilities for Working with the Roma Language in Czech Primary Schools*” (2009) and “*Socio-linguistic Research into the Situation of the Roma Language in the Czech Republic* (2008). The follow-up research provided an insight into the linguistic situation of the Roma in the Czech Republic, through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data obtained from 322 respondents<sup>20</sup> and expanded on the earlier research by adding information about the linguistic situation of the Valachian Romas. The added value of the study lies in the supplementation of data obtained from Romas through questionnaires and interviews with information obtained through discussions with teachers in Roma primary schools, aimed at finding out how well prepared they feel for working with bilingual children, whether their work requires familiarity with the children’s linguistic environment, and what problems they encounter in teaching this target group.

In the spring of 2010, the media reported the MEYS plan to introduce the Roma language as a non-compulsory course in primary schools. This was not well received by Czech public opinion, which became evident, for example, on Facebook, where a number of people criticized the step. The media, however, failed to present the opinion of the Roma, which is why researchers focused on their attitudes.

The Brno Museum of Roma Culture plays a significant role in spreading information about the history and culture of the Roma. In 2010, the Museum held a number of exhibitions, lectures and discussions on its own premises and also offered its collections to mainstream cultural institutions, spreading awareness of Roma culture throughout the majority population. Significant progress was made in 2010 in the adaptation of the memorial site in Lety u Písku, where the second stage of the renovation was completed: the access forest roads to the memorial site were upgraded and work connected to the drainage of the area around the natural amphitheatre was completed. The hand-over of the project and the opening ceremony for the site was held on 18 June 2010. In addition to renovations, several promotional materials were created (brochures, DVD) and the travelling exhibition “*Lety-Life behind the Fence*” was organised. In addition, educational activities were launched, with educational materials being created and a seminar for teachers accredited. The museum is an organisation partially subsidised by the Ministry of Culture and in 2010 its activities were supported with the amount of CZK 9,561,000.

## 9. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA ON THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

### 9.1 Practical recommendations for the educational sphere (responsibility of the MEYS)

- Meet the requirements arising from the European Court of Human Rights judgement in the case of **D. H. et al v. Czech Republic** and to ensure the priority inclusion of socially disadvantaged

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<sup>20</sup> Interviews were conducted with 322 Roma from more than 50 Czech and Moravian municipalities, with 10 locales having more significant representation. The representation of Wallachian Roma was approximately 12% (39 respondents). That could be seen, on the one hand, as insufficient, but the hierarchical structure of Wallachian communities must be taken onto account - due to that structure, it was impossible to record interviews with multiple respondents from a single locale (one respondent with great authority responded for all), this is very significant data not previously gathered about the Wallachian Roma in 11 Czech and Moravian towns.

Roma children in regular schools of the main educational stream, preventing their side-streaming, on the basis of their social disadvantage, into schools and classes designed for pupils with medical handicaps from the very start of their school attendance.

- Draw up and implement in practice the strategic documents approved by the government, in particular the National Plan for Inclusive Education and the Action Plan for the Concept of Early Care for Children from Socially and Culturally Disadvantaging Environments; to ensure the continuity of activities carried out in connection with those strategies, the appropriate personnel capacity in the field and the expertise of the team, and to strengthen the commitments arising from those strategies for the responsible institutions, such that they could not avoid fulfilling their tasks (setting a S.M.A.R.T definition of goals, setting up a system for the continuous evaluation of activities, and thoroughly carrying out the assessment).
- To change the method of financing of regional education, ensuring that a higher standard amount of money is granted for the education of pupils with social disadvantages, as is the case in the categories of pupils with medical handicaps and medical disadvantages.
- To ensure the reintegration of socially disadvantaged Roma students who are currently being educated in classes designated for the education of students with medical handicaps, in line with a curriculum for students with light handicaps, into the regular schools of the main educational stream. To this end, develop effective mechanisms for the continuous evaluation of their success in school and provide maximal support for returning these children to regular primary schools.
- Evaluate, in an independent analysis, the need for and efficiency of primary schools oriented on practical education teaching according to curricula for children with light mental handicaps, by region, with a view to the potential for their socially disadvantaged students to be educated in regular schools – those schools that are found to be redundant would then be transferred into the category of regular schools; support the development of pro-inclusive conditions at those schools, such that students with special learning needs could be educated there.
- Through the Czech School Inspectorate, monitor intensively and on an ongoing basis the situation of Roma children, pupils, and students on all levels of the educational system, identifying mistakes made by schools and school advisory facilities in relation to that target group; ensure through remedial measures the protection of their right to education without discrimination. In order to remedy those errors, ensure anti-discrimination training and methodological support for school and school advisory workplace employees.
- Prevent, in cooperation with school founders, the establishment of new desegregated schools with a high share of Roma students, and support, through systemic programmes and projects, the desegregation of existing segregated schools located in the vicinity of socially excluded Roma locales.
- Through methodological instruction and education, provide ongoing support such that the testing of Roma children, pupils and students from a socially and culturally disadvantaged environment, as carried out by school advisory facilities, would be based on a good knowledge of their natural environment among the advisory workers.
- Enhance the qualifications of employees in schools and school advisory facilities through education and methodological support, such that they would be able to obtain, professionally and responsibly, the informed consent of a child's, pupil's, or student's statutory representatives, concerning the placement of the child in a school, class, or study group set up for pupils with medical handicaps, or into an educational programme adapted for pupils with medical handicaps; focus the work of the Czech School Inspectorate on this activity.

- Support the link between social and educational intervention in relation to socially disadvantaged Roma children, pupils, and students and support, on an ongoing basis, through subsidy programmes, the implementation of educational and social programmes for Roma children, such that the Roma population achieves academic results comparable to those of children from other groups.
- Develop a methodological manual for employees in education that will include the criteria on the basis of which they will be able to clearly identify a child, pupil, or student suffering from a social disadvantage.
- Develop the standard activities of a teaching assistant for children, pupils, and students suffering from social disadvantage, and set up a system for their methodological support and evaluation; launch a debate on how to make the financing of this equalising measure more efficient.
- Take measures to prevent the establishment of preparatory classes for children with social disadvantage at primary schools that educate solely according to the appendix to the RVP ZV (curriculum) for children with light mental handicaps, and at the same time support mainstream educational primary schools in setting up this type of class.

## **9.2 Practical recommendations for the sphere of housing (responsibility of the MRD)**

- To anchor in legislation the issue of social housing; to elaborate the substantive plan of an Act on Social Housing that would systematically and specifically regulate the position of the government and the obligations of municipalities in terms of housing policy concerning persons threatened by social exclusion, define a target group, define a minimum housing standard, develop a legal framework for building social housing facilities, harmonise existing special housing policy programmes (special-purpose flats, so-called "integration flats"), and ensure links in the related legislation (the Act on Municipalities, the Civil Code, the Act on Assistance in Material Need, and Act on the Subsistence and Living Minimums).
- Support the development of innovative concepts for social forms of housing, and create space for exchanging experiences and collecting and disseminating transferrable examples of good practices on the regional, national, and international levels.
- To link, in the upcoming programming period, the use of European Union structural funds and the development and fulfilment of integrated urban development plans focusing on remedying the spatial segregation of the Roma and on ensuring equal access to housing.
- Through research studies, ensure the collection of relevant information about the housing situation of the Roma.
- Support projects aimed at integrating socially excluded Roma in the resolution of their difficult housing situation, as a part of increasing their participation in the resolution of matters concerning them in the sphere of housing, and as a part of the development of their competences required in the housing sphere.

## **9.3 Practical recommendations for the employment sphere (responsibility of the MLSA):**

- Provide ongoing support for the monitoring and evaluation of active employment policy programmes, and monitor the extent to which they respond to the specific needs of Roma applicants on the labour market.
- With the aim of increasing the employment of the Roma, support partnership and cooperation between Labour Offices, local governments, and non-governmental non-profit organisations, to ensure the coordination of active employment policy, public service, and activities aimed at the social inclusion and at increasing the participation of the Roma on the labour market on the local level.
- Reform public employment services, such as to increase the individualisation of support for disadvantaged Roma and their participation in retraining programmes and professional training programmes; ensure the professional education of public employment service employees, such that they would be able to respond to the specific needs of job applicants from socially and culturally disadvantaging environments.
- Support social enterprise in relation to disadvantaged Roma applicants with low-level employability and the pilot testing of innovative projects focused on increasing the participation of Roma on the labour market; identify in the subsidy support provided from European structural funds in the 2007-2013 programming period, examples of successful projects implemented for the benefit of disadvantaged Roma on the labour market, and create the space for exchanging experience and these examples of good practice on the regional, national, and international levels.
- Monitor the occurrence of discrimination and disseminate the principles concerning the equal treatment of Roma job applicants on the labour market, influence the attitudes of employers, and stimulate their interest in employing Roma employees and treating them equally.
- Support the implementation of programmes for the prevention of the future unemployment of juvenile Roma job applicants, focused in particular on the professional education of juvenile job applicants, career counselling, and work training with the possibility of obtaining a certificate of having undergone the training.

#### **9.4 Practical recommendations for the medical sphere (responsibility of the MH):**

- Support awareness and increase the participation of the Roma population in ensuring their own health – increasing the provision of information about healthy lifestyles and about the general functioning of healthcare, including prevention, focusing primarily on young individuals; planned parenting.
- Support the implementation of prevention programmes aimed at socially excluded Roma, focusing on the prevention of substance abuse and pathological gambling.
- Support the education of healthcare professionals in undergraduate as well as post-graduate studies, about the specific culturally and socially conditioned factors having an impact on the state of health of minorities.
- Support, on an ongoing basis, longitudinal epidemiological examinations of the state of health of socially excluded groups, focusing on the identification of factors having an impact on the state of health and inequalities in access to healthcare. On the basis of the results of those surveys, systematically remedy inequalities in access to healthcare.