



DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005 – 2015 PROGRESS REPORT 2011

ALBANIA

1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

Please indicate whether in 2011 the government acquired new data concerning:

- *Estimated total number of the Roma population in the country*
- *Number of Roma living under the poverty line*
- *Total number of population living under the poverty line*

Roma minority is subject to long-standing social exclusion leading to high unemployment and illiteracy rates up to four times higher than majority. Despite Albania's growing economy in the early 1990s, high unemployment, poverty and wide regional disparities remain daunting challenges. Further, the recent financial crisis has increased the trade deficit and reduced income from remittances. Based on the 2005 Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), 18.5% of Albanians lived below the poverty line of approximately 50 USD (4,900 Albanian Lek) per capita per month.¹ Although this fell to 12.4% in 2008². The situation is even worse for the Roma: the average income per capita for the Roma community is around 3.3 times less³ than for the non-Roma population, and as much as 80% of the Roma community live below this poverty line. The average income per month of a Romani household according to the survey was 68 EUR, compared to the 174.5 EUR for non-Roma living nearby Roma. The monthly income of 51 percent of Roma does not exceed 50 EUR, whereas half of the non-Romani population earn incomes over 150 EUR per month.⁴ The incomes of Roma families usually come from employment in low-skilled jobs, often in the non-formal sector. The most common occupations include collecting scrap metal, street cleaning and seasonal work in the agricultural sector, or sale of second hand clothes. These jobs provide very low incomes to Roma families. The unemployment rate for Roma individuals who completed elementary education is 39%, a secondary education level is 15 % and the percentage of those who have completed higher education is just over 8 percent.

The level of illiteracy among the Roma and Egyptians, although it has an improvement compared to the 90's, continues to be high (40.3 percent) reaching 80 to 100 percent in some settlements or pockets of poverty. What is more concerning is the high illiteracy level in the 8-18 year old age group.

¹ Albania Urban Growth, Migration and Poverty Reduction” World Bank, Poverty Reduction and Management Unit, December 2007

² http://www.undp.org.al/index.php?page=MDG/mdg_albania

³ At Risk, Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe, UNDP, 2006, p. 8

⁴ At Risk Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe, UNDP, 2006, p. 9

Meanwhile during interviews and group discussions many parents pointed out that “although their children attend school, they cannot write and/or read”, which indicates that the school does not play its role properly.

However, during the next 2-3 years, about 350-400 Roma in a year will reach the age to enter the school system. Children’s education is related to their economic, social and cultural future and is the main link to taking this community out of poverty. Many parents are aware, today, of the role of the education. From an economic point of view, it also brings benefits to the public sector because the cost of the children’s education today will be notably lower than the cost of the "economic assistance" tomorrow. The education of children requires a close cooperation – where each one performs its duties - between the public sector, local and international NGOs and the community.

2. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ROMA INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

- *(For EU enlargement countries): Is your government planning to prepare a National Roma Integration Strategy as called for in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020?*
- *Is there a structure on local (municipality) level responsible for the implementation of the Decade National Action Plan / National Roma Integration Strategy?*
- *Please, describe any planning for the use of EU funds in the 2014-2020 to address Roma inclusion/integration. Please, describe how experts and Roma NGOs are involved in the planning of the use of EU funds in the 2014-2020.*
- *What are the main institutional and procedural supports envisioned to ensure that EU funds will be used effectively for Roma inclusion (e.g. equal opportunities unit, simplification of funding procedures, technical assistance for beneficiaries)?*

Government of Albania in enhancing social inclusion of vulnerable communities, together with International organization and Roma civil society has implemented various projects in support of Roma on 2011. A model of participatory planning has been introduced in the local government units where vulnerable Roma community reside (Tirana, Durrës, Fier, and Elbasan⁵).

The approach relies on mobilization of local communities into community-based organizations (CBOs) which function as open community forums, where local needs are prioritized and implemented in partnership with respective local authorities. The identified and agreed infrastructure projects include both hard and social infrastructure including road rehabilitation, bridge reconstruction, sewage systematization and the construction of community centres with kindergarten and health facilities. Besides the newly established CBOs, the programme is working closely with the existing Roma and Egyptian NGOs, whose capacities in implementing development projects need to be strengthened. To this end, the programme is drafting relevant trainings, following which small grants for implementation of small-scale development projects will be provided to Roma and Egyptian NGOs. During year 2010 only one roma people from Elbasani region represented in the local government units in which was introduced the model of participatory planning. During year 2011 this

⁵ In Albania there are 375 local government units : 65 municipalities and 310 communes.

number (7) shows a significant progress of the representatives from the Roma community in the local government units.

Facilitating access to rights and services was major objective during 2011, focusing on civil registration, usafety and community policing, health mediation, child protection and pre-school education, as well as on employability. Various public institutions, professional organizations, employers associations and micro-credit institutions are implementing the different activities under this objective. The UNDP programme in close consultation with MoLSAEO and the National Employment Service is elaborating labour market analysis to identify concrete recommendations in applying certain incentives for accommodating vulnerable Roma individuals in the labour market. The assessment is expected to provide a map of opportunities for vocational courses, micro-credits, on the job training as well as internships schemes, benefitting Roma group including artisans, unskilled individuals living in rural and remote areas, unskilled individuals living in urban or semi-urban areas and recent university graduates. Meanwhile, several individuals are being assisted in applying for jobs through employment offices.

Community awareness campaigns on the importance of birth registration and on how to register have been conducted in Roma Settlements. Round table on civil registration has been organized identifying a series of recommendations for measures to be taken by institutions directly/indirectly concerned with civil registration of Roma community members.

Community policing is a component which is adjusted as per the needs of marginalized communities, involving trainings to police and community mediators as well as implementation of joint awareness raising activities. Health, child protection, early childhood development and school access, often have been combined together with assistance provided to both communities and respective authorities creating a set of multidisciplinary practices for better integrating vulnerable children from an early age.

In order to continue the work and efforts already done by the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAOE), a new project was established to create an effective monitoring and evaluation way of the progress at a national level of the National Action Plan as well as to coordinate the line ministries and institutions/government offices for the Roma with the support of UNDP Albania. This project aims at drafting a monitoring and reporting system for the indicators of the National Plan which will introduce a new way of reporting a progress report for this Action Plan in the future. The process of establishing this new mechanism includes phases such as drafting the manual of indicators (which includes also the plan for monitoring their performance and the informatization of data collection at a central and regional level).

This manual introduces a new way of drafting progress reports for the indicators of “Roma Inclusion Decade”. The manual will also facilitate the work of the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) as well as of the line ministries, responsible for collecting information for this national plan and finally putting it together in a final report of the progress achieved as regards priority measures foreseen in the action plan of the “Roma Inclusion Decade” 2010-2015.

With the support of UNDP/Albania, MoLSAEO coordinated the process of creating this new monitoring and reporting system of indicators included in the Roma Decade Plan. During the period March-June 2011, in each of the line ministries were held consultative meetings with the respective points of contacts and representatives of other departments that cover Roma issues in the Line

Ministries. They contributed to reviewing the indicators, clarifying the source of data for each indicator and made available to us part of the data that they had for 2010 and what was foreseen for the years 2011-2015. After the first phase of this important project, MOLSAOE in collaboration with the team that works in this direction took the second step of the process: designing the database of the strategy of indicators and the computerization at a central and regional level.

The methodology used for designing the monitoring and reporting plan for the “DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION”

First Phase: Several meetings are held with the points of contact at the line ministries for the implementation of the National Strategy for Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority and the National Decade Plan for the Roma Inclusion.

These meetings were organized by the MoLSAEO in collaboration by UNDP aiming at providing recommendations and suggestions to standardize the process of data collection as well as reporting at a central and local level about the indicators of the action plan of decade for the inclusion of Roma, 2010-2015.

Sedond Phase: Organizing consultative meetings with the point of contacts and representatives of other departments that cover Roma issues in each of the Line Ministries. During this phase, the participants from all line ministries contributed to reviewing the indicators as well as made available to us part of the data that they already had for 2010 and what was foreseen (aimed) for the years 2011-2015.

Third Phase: Drafting of the manual and the reviewing of all indicators of the action plan based on the suggestions and data gathered during the consultative meetings. This phase went side to side with the drafting of data collection forms that will facilitate the work of the people responsible for this at all the line ministries at a regional level (this is for some indicators and representatives of the line ministries). The councils in the districts must collect accurate data, organize the files for each indicator, and insert the information in the electronic system.

Fourth Phase: The computerization of the data collection system and their reporting at a central level. Presenting a general view of the electronic platform (Web- based system), which will help in the computerization of information collected by the responsible offices at a regional level, their consultation at a central level and the generation of various progress reports for indicators as well as their performance against the aims (objectives).

Fifth Phase: The nomination of the people responsible, representatives of the line ministries at a national level (Regional) whom will collect data and will update the electronic system.

Sixth Phase: Organizing a series of trainings with the people nominated by all institutions at a local level that deal with the roma issue in all 12 districts aiming at raising their capacities on 125 governmental officials throughout Albania are trained on how to use web-based system. Ongoing capacity building and technical assistance program is foreseen to be occurred during year 2012 in order to strengthen capacities of e-system users on data entering, improving quality of data, as well as ensuring sustainability of using this e-system through improving legal framework through designing and approving of a Council of Ministers’ s Decision related this issue.

The information system is be a centralized web application, located at MoLSAEO , that is working over the internet or the government network (GovNet) where available. This approach ensures that:

- Data entered are immediately available to all interested parties, without need for costly and time-consuming data transfer from the local units to MoLSAEO
- Indicators and reports are produced without delays, and available immediately to interested parties.
- Changes and improvement are implemented in the central server and are immediately available to all parties, without need for costly and time consuming software installations in personal computers of the users.
- Reduction of needs for IT staff to administer the system. The system administrator is located at MoLSAEO. There is no need for system administrators in the local offices.

Data will be entered by different institutions in regional and central level and the system is enabling to provide the following functions:

- Data collection: an interface is available for entering data for each data collection unit type. Data collection units are: schools, health centers, local units etc. Maximum effort shall be made to check the entered data for quality through validations, use of reference tables and standard identifiers.
- Reporting system: an interface is available for accessing pre- calculated reports and indicators. The user interface offers the capability to modify existing reports and even create new reports from scratch. A report dissemination mechanism is supported, that will allow users to register their interest in specific reports , and have them delivered to their mailbox or RSS reader.
- User management: an interface is available to add, modify, activate, de-activate the users of the system, according to pre - defined security policies.
- Access control: an interface is available to control access to different parts of the users.
- Reference data: an interface is available to manage reference data. Examples are the organizational units, geographic locations etc

While MoLSAEO is working to strengthening the capacities of focal points for Roma in line ministries during the programme, simultaneously is working to facilitate meetings of 10 technical working groups on Roma in all regions where roma community is present, which regularly report on the progress of Roma Decade NAP at local level.

Local government officials have mobilized communities with communication and awareness raising activities, which involve vulnerable groups and the mainstream population. Particular attention has been paid to media, with ongoing communication with the networks of journalists to increase the level of positive reporting on vulnerable communities. The close contact has been with media often through the UN press club composed of 12 professional journalists, who have been introduced to the programme activities and invited on field visits in community neighbourhoods. The flow of information provided to journalist has often encouraged them to write several articles in daily papers where Roma have been portrayed positively.

3. EDUCATION

- *Please identify the key barriers that limit educational chances and access to quality education for Roma,*
- *Please list the policies and programs that were designed and implemented to support Roma education in 2011 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plan/National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable).*
- *What were the outcomes of the policies and programs that your government implemented in 2011?*
- *Please identify the most important mainstream and targeted EU funded schemes launched in last year that will contribute to Roma inclusion in education. Please, specify the activity, the funding source (ESF, ERDF, etc.), the operational programme, the amount allocated, the goals to be reached, and the indicative number and share of Roma beneficiaries.*
- *Please list other initiatives (policy, program, activity) that were not designed and implemented to directly support Roma and other marginalized people but affect the aforementioned target groups.*

Please provide information about list achievements in the following fields in 2011:

- *Number of Roma children attending pre-school, elementary, secondary, and tertiary education; number of Roma children not in school*
- *Number of Roma teaching assistants in pre-school, elementary, secondary, and tertiary education*
- *Number of Roma children moving from segregated “Roma” pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, to mainstream schools*
- *Number and proportion of Roma children in special schools/classes*
- *Number of Roma children attending preparatory class before elementary, secondary, and tertiary education*
- *Access to counseling services for Roma families with children.*
- *Inclusion tools in elementary and secondary education (teacher assistants, individualized education plans, tutoring, other inclusion measures),*
- *Dropout rates of Roma in primary, secondary, and tertiary education*
- *Number of Roma in primary and secondary Adult education education*
- *Number of Roma students receiving scholarship and other support in primary, secondary, and tertiary education*

Regarding the improvement of the *educational situation of Roma community*, there were adopted the following legal acts:

- Decision of Council of Ministers No 672 of 14.9.2011 “On the admission quotas in public HEIs, second cycle of studies - Master of Arts”. As stipulated in the DCM, 20 Roma were enrolled in the second cycle of studies for the academic year 2010-2011.
- Decision of Council of Ministers No 652 of 14.9.2011 “On the admission quotas in public institutions of higher education, second cycle of studies – Master of Science for the academic year 2010-2011”. As stipulated in the DCM, 20 Roma were enrolled in the second cycle of studies.
- Decision of Council of Ministers No 423 of 8.6.2011 “On the admission quotas in public institutions of higher education and tuition fees for first cycle studies, part-time and distance education in the academic year 2010-2011”. As stipulated by the DCM, 20 Roma were enrolled in Albanian public colleges and universities.
- Decision of Council of Ministers No 423 of 8.6.2011 “On admission quotas in public institutions of higher education, in the first cycle of full-time studies, as well as tuition fees for 2011-2012 academic year”. The Decision provides 20 study places for Roma, to be distributed by Ministry of Education and Science, after taking in consideration the opinion of the National Association of Roma Community.

Some of the results achieved on the education of Roma children are:

- Complete statistical data were collected and provided on the educational situation of Roma children, their numbers in kindergartens and in basic education, etc. Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), through statistics received from RED/EOs in September (for enrolment) and in February (for the results of the first semester) and July (the end of school year), analyzes the status quo and takes concrete measures to improve the attendance and progress of Roma children in school;
- For the academic year 2011-2012, experts were appointed at the institutional level to digitalize the information on Roma;
- In the academic year 2010-2011, 516 Roma children attended preschool education. 2,888 pupils followed the primary education. 1,228 of them were girls;
- The RED/EOs, where Roma community is concentrated, trained 630 teachers on advising Roma parents and conducted 257 awareness activities with the participation of over 1,300 Roma parents;
- The Second Chance program was attended by 417 Roma children, equal to 66.6% of the total number of children attending this program;
- 210 teachers were trained to teach in an intercultural environment, working in classrooms where Roma children are integrated;
- In cooperation with the local governments and various associations, free transportation service was provided to all Roma students that live far from their schools;
- Kindergartens and public schools were provided for the inclusion of Roma children within and outside the educational process, without any distinction from non Roma children. For this period, 206 intercultural activities were organised with the participation of over 4,100 students, including Roma students, in 91 schools across the country;
- Regional Education Directorates/EOs, in schools and classes attended by Roma children, appointed experienced teachers known for their professionalism, dedication and ethics and communication skills. 939 teachers are working with Roma children in total, of which 798 in higher education and 137 in secondary education level;

- Educational institutions, in cooperation with the Roma community, enabled the participation of representatives of Roma parents in decision-making school structures and collegial bodies. Currently, 94 Roma parents are members of 67 school boards;
- During 2011 the Institute of Educational Development conducted a review of the content of school curricula for secondary education, regarding offensive content. At the conclusion of the study a summary was prepared providing recommendations that can serve to improve and enrich parts of the program;
- Guidelines were developed for teachers of compulsory education (9 years) with the support of UNICEF and the Roma Education Fund. Trainings of teachers were organised on issues such as: Roma history and culture, the methodologies used for inclusion of Rom children and students in class, etc.
- In collaboration with UNICEF during the period February - December 2011, MoES worked to identify Roma children outside the education system, aiming to enrol them into the system by September 2012;
- Minister of Education and Science has issued a circular on 2011 ()“ On part-time secondary programs”. Through this instruction Roma children receive the professional high school diploma by attending the school on pat time basis .

In order to promote the access to preschool education as a prerequisite for Roma children school attendance in the future, MOES has supported together with civil society inclusive preschool education for Roma children such as in Elbasan, Tirana, Saver, Baltez, Durres etc ,

Measures also have been taken for the Roma community in the area of culture. The creation of a special sector at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports for the issue of minorities in Albania and especially the Roma, gives a new impetus to the care and attention that Albanian state has on the ethno-cultural minorities who live and perform in the Albanian territory. Out any kind of discrimination or racial difference and the constant struggle against any kind of bias for these minorities, particularly the Roma community, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports has implemented and programmed support and assistance. Generally it is pursuing a strategy of cooperation with other institutions and organizations which have made possible a very large coordination in achieving financial objectives in the field and in the help or assistance needed. Specifically a fruitful cooperation and productive coordination was provided by other state institutions such as the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities or the State Committee on Minorities, which are jointly planned and carried out activities with great value.

Concrete efforts to eliminate discrimination and racial differences to a ever growing integration of the Roma community members provided by the Ministry of Tourism is primarily the reflection through artistic works which reflect the life and activity of these communities. Our artistic institutions such as Opera and Ballet Theatre, State Ensemble of Songs and Dances, Art Gallery and many other artistic institutions, local and central, have in their repertoire of dance, song has full of artistic genres that reflect the theme of the Roma community in particular and the degree of emancipation and integration into society of a common environmental surroundings without prejudice, equal among equals. Many Albanian artists in various genres of art works included in their coverage of topics and activities the life of Roma as a community that coexists and integrates continuously, protects values stored and gradually developed as worthy and equal to any other member of the society. Also in addition, it is worth mentioning that in artistic collectives, cultural centers or different organisms that cultivate art

and culture we can find employed many Roma who enjoy all the deserved respect and appreciation against any prejudice.

The "Department of Culture of the Diaspora and Minorities", created more than a year ago, at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, has developed several activities as an initiative to bring to greater efforts for the integration and identity of these communities. The most important activities conducted during the period January 2011 onwards were:

- ✓ Week of Roma Culture in the framework of the International Roma Day, the organization of multi-cultural artistic activities among which were opened:
 - Fair publications and brochures that were exposed in different MoTCYS halls;
 - Exhibits to the activity and the integration of Roma Women in associations and organizations hand handicrafts, embroidery, knitting, clothing, etc.;
 - Ethnographic exhibition with elements of Roma living objects, ornaments, ornaments and tools used by the Roma in years;
 - Documentation of Roma typical clothing that is manifested in the festive days and their ceremonies;
 - Ensembles, dancers, singers and instrumentalists who demonstrated their art full of flavor and color typical and easily distinguishable Roma.
- ✓ Great festive concert on occasion of the 8 April, International Roma Day, Tirana. This activity coupled with the opening exhibition and cultural activities along several days marking the beginning of "Roma Cultural Week of Albania";
- ✓ Tolerance and Peace Day of the Roma Minority in Albania which followed a series of cultural activities of the Roma community in Durres;
- ✓ Cartoons Album with "smile" of the author Benon Shehu, Durres. For the first time published various friendly cartoons from everyday life of these communities;
- ✓ Days of Culture of Minorities in Albania, Saranda . This activity lasted for several days with the appearance of bands that performed together proving that communities known as ethno-cultural minorities in Albania are a strong support for the development and the continuity from generation to generation to their traditional values which they belong to;
- ✓ The novel "Eye of the Green Night", Mina Qirici author. This novel describes the life and living environments, characters and events from the Roma community. This book is an event entirely dedicated to this community and is the first described from beginning to end the life of this community to integrate into our time;
- ✓ Opening of photo exhibition "Come with me" as a result of the successful completion of the project against trafficking camera from a group of Albanian youth. Characteristic for this event were not only picture that reflected the actual life of the Roma in their everyday lives and their efforts to integrate but they were fixed, filmed, processed and displayed by the members of this community to the National Museum in Tirana;
- ✓ Days of the Balkan cultural heritage based on Permet. An annual event in which cultural values are demonstrated for Permeti and the neighboring areas outside the borders of Albania. Confronting the Roma community in the Balkans and Albania;
- ✓ Celebration of the International Day of Roma, (May 2011). A festive ceremony in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports;
- ✓ Seminar on respecting the rights of the Roma Minority in Albania in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. (June 2011)

Some of the measures to improve more and more increase of Standards will be required:

- Save even more cultural and artistic identity of the Roma community;
- Introducing the most important organizations that have consolidated sound activity and stable continuous culture;
- Stay close to them, updating and collection of ideas required for their integration;
- Support them with professional assistance when it comes to artistic activities and use of all financial opportunities to support projects worth approaching from the community.

4. EMPLOYMENT

- *Please provide the average unemployment rate on national level, and unemployment rate of the Roma population.*
- *Please evaluate the position of Roma in the labor market - access to regular jobs, and barriers preventing the Roma employees from successful integration in the labor market.*
- *Please list the policies or programs that were designed and implemented to support Roma employment in 2011 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plans or the National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable).*
- *What are the outcomes of the policies and programs that your government implemented in 2011?*
- *Please identify the most important mainstream and targeted EU funded schemes launched in last year that will contribute to Roma inclusion in the area of employment? Please, specify the activity, the funding source (ESF, ERDF, etc.), the operational programme, the amount allocated, the goals to be reached, and the indicative number and share of Roma beneficiaries.*
- *Please list other initiatives (policy, program, activity) that were not designed and implemented to directly support Roma and other marginalized people but affect the aforementioned target groups.*

Please provide information about the following fields in 2011:

- *Successful measures tackling discrimination of Roma in the labor market*
- *Use of active labor market measures for improving the situation of Roma in the labor market and evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs (participation in re-qualification courses, public work programs, etc),*
- *Improved labor market skills of long-term unemployed Roma*
- *Improved employment rates of long-term unemployed Roma*

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has taken concrete initiatives to develop policies for encouraging and facilitating the Roma community, in order to promote their employment and training, training and their integration into the labor market. This policy has always been a priority in the implementation of the objectives of the National Strategy "Improving the Living Conditions of Roma."

During the period January - November 2011 "the situation is as below:

- ✓ *The number of unemployed Roma job seekers, registered at the respective offices of employment, who have benefited from various services offered by employment services staff from these offices nationwide, is 7.416 persons, of whom 3788 are women. The proffitters were mainly in Tirana (2824), but also in other cities, such as Elbasan (755), Durrës (822), Korça (929), and Lezha (581) etc.. Regarding classification by level of education most of them have basic education (9-years), 3614, after them there are the persons which have primary education 3336 and fewer persons with secondary or higher education. Divided by age group*

predominate (about 46% of total) those over 40 and 50 years, which is characterized by the long time of their stay in the lists of unemployed persons, their "passivity", that characterizes jobseekers mainly from economic aid schemes who refuse employment or training, but income support.. This justifies passivity and lack of transparency of their employment in an irregular manner in the informal labor market.

✓

✓ For 2011, 1,170 unemployed persons were included in the three promotion programs 472 of them were from vulnerable groups including Roma community.

✓ *In the field of employment*, currently the Employment Offices apply these programs to promote employment:

– Pursuant to *Decision no. 48, dated 16.01.2008 "program encouraging the employment of unemployed people in difficulty"*. Under this program the employer who employs for a one-year contract term an unemployed in trouble, can benefit (i) a grant for a year at 100 percent of mandatory social insurance contributions of employers, (ii) funding for four months at 100 percent of minimum wage in the country. Unemployed in trouble under this program are considered long-term unemployed, persons receiving financial assistance, persons receiving unemployment, persons entering for the first time in the labor market, aged 18-25 years, persons over 45 years, who have no education higher than secondary education or its equivalent, persons with disabilities and persons from the Roma community.

– *The implementation of DCM no. 47, dated 16.01.2008 "On the employment of unemployed job seekers through job training."* Under this program the employer who organizes general training, aimed at the formation, through the work of unemployed persons may obtain financing from the respective employment office, at:

a) 70 percent of the costs of training, to small and medium enterprises,

b) 50 percent of training costs for large enterprises.

The duration of the training program should not exceed 6 months for all occupations. The employer, at the end of the period of formation, employs no less than 50 percent of the trainees, teaching profession contract, for a 6-month period. Trainees, unemployed, receive a free participation in the course, 50 percent of the minimum wage in the country, for the entire duration of training. Also from these funds, the respective employment office makes the payment of insurance contributions for accidents at work, at the rate of 0.5 percent of the minimum wage.

– *In compliance with Decision no. 873, dated 27.12.2006 "For the amount of funding, criteria and procedures for implementation of the apprenticeship programs for unemployed, who have completed higher education, inside or outside the country"*, is intended to help these young people to create professional experience and enhance their skills to find a steady job. Public employers are obliged to take in these jobseekers to private employers. Those involved in this program receive a monthly funding from the respective employment office, at 100 percent of base level of unemployment

In employment promotion programs during 2010 were included 1757 unemployed persons, of whom 26% were from the Roma community. For 2011, a total of 1170 unemployed persons were included in employment promotion programs , of whom 472 were from separate groups, part of the Roma community.

Regarding vocational training were achieved the following results:

- During year 2011, 86 unemployed roma have been attending free professional courses mainly in Elbasani, Tirana and Shkodra and received the diploma assistance in job searching was also provided to the trainees once completed the training. (17 of the trainees in the three regions have been self-employed) while the staff of the training centres and employment offices was trained and assisted to improve their services to communities in need;
- "Save the Children" focuses on integration of Roma and Egyptian youth through including them in vocational training into the labour market. Beneficiaries of the project are around 100 young Roma in Tirana, Korça and Gjirokastra. In this framework, in October 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Save the Children, coordinating further activities of the project .
- In *Order, No.782 dated 04.04.2006 "On tariffs of vocational training system"*, as amended, provides that registration fees for unemployed registered in employment offices and want to pursue occupational and vocational training, provided by the Regional Public Vocational Training (DRFPP) are free for special groups, including Roma unemployed;
- Pursuant to this Order have received free vocational training. In 2010, and are certified 62 *people* from the Roma community in the country, hydraulics professions, tailoring hairdressing - aesthetics, kitchen, wiring, solar panels, autoservis, etc., which are offered by these centers. For 9 months of 2011 have been certified at 86 *public centers* unemployed Roma, in the aforementioned professions, mainly in Elbasan, Tirana and Shkodra;
- Also, a good job in this regard has made UNDP project "Strengthening Communities in Need", which supports the Roma living in Tirana, Elbasan and Fier, through the implementation of small infrastructure projects, civil registration, courses, training of community mediators, preparation of National Decade of Roma Inclusion, and by promoting social inclusion. The project has supported 85 individuals Romans (24 of them from Elbasan) to attend professional courses in tailoring, hairdressing, plumbing and is equipped with the tools necessary to practice the skills gained by increasing their opportunities for employment. Ongoing project is assisting individuals trained in a job search (17 of the trainees in the three counties are self-employed), while staff training centers and employment offices have been trained and assisted to improve their services to communities in need;
- Recently an agreement has been signed between the Swiss Confederation and Minister of Education and Science and Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on "Alternative Education and Vocational Training (phase six) May 2009-June 2012, which focuses on vulnerable groups including Roma;
- Also, "Save the Children", working in Bangladesh since 2008 with the "inclusive education, focusing on Roma / Gypsy children" has the goal to provide children from different ethnic groups the possibility to interact and socialize, learn for one - another, thus improving interethnic relations among children in public education and the wider

community and ensure that all children, including Roma to get quality education and complete basic education. One of the objectives of the project is to provide opportunities for vocational training of young Roma, so that they integrate into the labor market. Beneficiaries of the project will be around 100 young Roma in Tirana, Korca and Gjirokastra. In this framework was signed in October of this year a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and "Save the Children", which will specifically assist in the implementation of vocational training component of the above project.

In the field of *social protection*, on the progress made we can report that according to the amendments made to Law No 9355 of 10.3.2005 “On Social Assistance and Services” as amended by Law No 10399 of 17.3.2011 “On some amendments and addenda to the Law No 9355 of 10.3.2005 “On Social Assistance and Services”, families belonging to the Roma minority as families in need, are excluded from the income calculation in case they receive economic aid.

According to Instruction Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities ‘specific and disaggregated data on Roma , disability payments etc are being gathered.

HOUSING

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport is involved in the National Plan for the Roma inclusion Decade and the National Strategy for improving the living conditions of Roma community, within the priority “Housing and Infrastructure”. In compliance with the activities envisaged in the Action Plan, during 2006 the Ministry endeavored an in – situ evaluation of the living conditions in some areas and estimated the approximate cost for intervention. In this endeavor, the Ministry engaged its structures: the National Housing Agency and the General Directorate for Water and Sanitation, which, in collaboration with the representatives of local government and Roma communities, identified the needs for improving the living conditions, such as housing repair or new construction, water, sanitation, internal streets for the neighborhood and calculated the approximate costs. The survey took place in the cities/towns/villages of Berat, Bilisht, Gjirokastër, Pogradec, Tiranë, Elbasan, Fier, Fushë - Krujë, Delvine, commune of Levan (Fier), Baltes (Fier) and Kullari (Korçë), indicated in the strategy as centers of concentration of the Roma community.

The major findings from the survey were that approximately 440 families needed rehabilitation of their houses/shacks, 450 families were in need of housing, due to the insecure and/or unhygienic, while some communities in Gjirokastër, Korçë, Delvinë, etc., needed investment in infrastructure and protection from flooding of the river Manasder (Elbasan).

Based on this information, in 2008, the Ministry planned for the first time 214,285 EUR or piloting them in rehabilitation projects targeted for Roma community. The funds were used in the form of competition grant for local governments (LG). From 11 LG that were invited in the competition 8 of them expressed the interest to participate with.

According to the terms of reference, the funds could be used for one or combination of purposes:

- construction of new houses;
- rehabilitation of houses/shacks at risk;
- adaptation of premises occupied by the communities;
- Intervention in houses lacking basic services such as toilets, water, sinks, etc..;
- connection of the neighborhood with basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads)
- Etc..

Five projects that won the competition were presented by local government as below:

- Municipality of Korça proposed the construction of 44 apartments with a cost of All 614,285 EUR, out of which, 160,174 EUR was contribution from the own budget and the rest from the state budget. The houses were planned in two stores in an area equipped with an urban plan. Out of 44, 33 units were dedicated to families that had to be removed from the Old Bazar a historical place and touristic attraction for the city;
- Municipality of Tirana proposed the financing of the project “water service” in the area inhabited by Roma community. The cost of the project was All 43,571 EUR, out of which 40% were financed by the own revenues of municipality and All 25,714 EUR was the request for financing from the state budget. The direct beneficiaries of the project were 50 Roma families;
- Municipality of Kuçova asked for several projects, but it was financed only for improving the infrastructure, with an amount of 5,728 EUR. The direct beneficiaries of the project were some 18 Roma families;

- *District of Korça* proposed several projects, but only two were approved:
 - *Municipality of Bilisht*, for the construction of 6 houses;
 - *Commune of Pojan*, reconstruction of the roof of some dilapidated Roma houses.

In 2009, National Housing Agency (NHA), in collaboration with the municipality of Korça invested in the construction of a 8 floor building with 30 apartments, which was targeted totally for Roma families, with a value of investment only for the building, of approximately 543,875 EUR

Taking into consideration the frequent mobility of Roma community members and lack of infrastructure in the areas in which they live, the government should provide certain locations in which these community members might have access to clean water. The government might also provide portable toilettes in the Roma communities. Another action might be to finance transportable housing for this community.

Civil registration

With regards to the civil registration the legal framework in place provides for all the steps that should be followed by the citizens of the Republic of Albanian so as to register in the civil registry when a child is born and other situations when different problems are encountered in respect of registration. In this regard please refer to Annex no. 1 for details.

During 2006 – 2007, the General Directorate of Civil Status (GDCS) found out that since 1991, a considerable number of unregistered children was accumulated throughout the years. These figures were up to several thousands of children. To cope with this serious situation, in cooperation with some Non-profit organizations, the main factors which contributed to the creation of this problem were analyzed.

From the analysis, two main factors for the causation of this phenomena emerged. These factors were:

- Some legal restrictions and misinterpretation of the law by the civil service employee; and
- Lack of knowledge by the concerned parties of the legislation in force regarding registration of the newborns.

The main reason of legislative nature was related to the previous law “On civil status” which had some timing restrictions that generated a considerable unregistered number of children. Other reasons, of a more practical nature, that generated legal restrictions for the registration process as well, were:

- Absence of the “birth assistance” form, it is referred for those cases when the health institutions do not provide mothers with this document;
- Some cases when the “birth assistance” document has been filled with false/wrong information about the mother;
- Lack of the documentation for the births occurred outside the country, as a result of absence of the mother documents residing in the foreign country;
- Abandoned children;
- Children born by unregistered mothers.

Faced with this phenomenon certain measures were taken regarding the unregistered cases.

Considering this serious situation and taking into account also suggestions made by several non profit organizations, some amendments to Law No. 8950, dated on 10. 10. 2002, “On civil status” were introduced.

Regarding changes to restrictive measures can be mentioned:

- Removing of the registration deadline of 45 days. Before the changes, in cases of this deadline expiration the interested person should follow the court procedures for “Verification of the child birth fact”;
- Removing of the penalty from 14 EUR, which the interested person should have paid after the court decision, in order to make the child registration.

Promoting measures are:

- In the cases when the interested people declare the child birth in the presence of the civil status employee within a deadline of 60 days (for the birth occurred inside the country) and 90 days (for the birth outside the country), a grant of 35,7 EUR is given to the mother.

These new measures brought concrete results. About 6000 – 7000 children have been registered. These results were achieved only for a period of two months.

Other figures for the cases resolved from this category are as follows:

- During 2009 about 400 cases have been resolved;
- During 2010 about 400 cases have been resolved;
- For 2011 about 150 cases are under process;

As it has been evidenced, with approval of the new by-laws, the number of the unregistered persons is decreasing, remaining only the cases which have to be resolved by judicial process. These data were assembled in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, namely TLAS, ARSIS, etc.

After these amendments, another legal analysis was initiated for the compilation of a new law “on civil status”, reflecting all the new developments. The aim of these new changes was:

1. Stopping of the creation of new unregistered cases;
2. identification of the unregistered cases and their solution according to every case, classified in two categories:
 - cases to be resolved by the administrative point of view; and;
 - cases to be resolved only through the judicial process/verification through the DNA.

Working meetings with experts from relevant institutions involved have been organized, assigning concrete tasks, such as: amend the form of the “birth assistance” document; sign an agreement with non-profit organization TLAS, for those cases occurred outside of the country etc.

With regard to the main handicaps identified in the round table of civil registration held in 2011 there were adopted three main administrative decisions which will facilitate further the registration of children, namely:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted a memorandum of cooperation with the specialized NGO providing specialized legal assistance to facilitate the procedures for registering births occurred abroad. Registration of children born out of the country and encounter difficulties of registration when in Albania would be supported by the consular services of Albania.
- A new format of the certificate of delivery in the maternity homes has been adopted by the Ministry of Health. The new format includes mother’s maiden name and her identity number (which can be found on the identity card and the certificate of birth).

- The Ministry of Interior adopted a new formal template for use by the Police Directorate to facilitate registration of children abandoned by their mothers.

Another concrete step has been the capacity building of the census offices (100 census officers) in order to facilitate the registration of not registered children using administrative procedures .

All the above three acts will positively impact the future work in the area of civil registration with the objective of solving many current difficult cases and prevent new child-births from going unregistered.

Following these developments certain tasks need to be observed carefully. The civil service employees should:

- Require all the necessary documents for the birth registration and should interpret it in a proper way;
- Make proper clarification to the interested people for completion of the represented documentation in case of inadequacies;
- Verify and give a solution for all the cases which can be resolved, from the administrative point of view.
- Ministry of Health approve the model of the new “Birth assistance“ form.

After the verification of the numerous cases of this category, some of the encountered difficulties are as follows:

- Lack of concern of the interested people for giving solution to the unregistered children problem;
- Passing of a long period of time, which often makes it impossible to provide a solution of cases in an administrative way.

6. HEALTH

- Please describe the health situation of the Roma population and identification of major obstacles that the Roma are facing in access to quality health care services.
- *Please list the policies and programs that were designed and implemented to support the improvement of health care services for the Roma population in 2011 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plan/National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable)*
- *What are the outcomes of the initiatives (policy, program, activity) that your government implemented in 2011?*
- *Please specify if there are health mediators employed. If so, please specify what type of contract the health mediators have, how often do they have to renew it. Are there any trainings for health care providers in addressing the needs of Roma.*
- *Please identify the most important mainstream and targeted EU funded schemes launched in last year that will contribute to Roma inclusion in the area of health? Please, specify the activity, the funding source (ESF, ERDF, etc.), the operational programme, the amount allocated, the goals to be reached, and the indicative number and share of Roma beneficiaries.*
- *Please list other initiatives (policy, program, activity) that were not designed and implemented to directly support Roma and other marginalized people but affect the aforementioned target groups.*

Please provide information about the following fields in 2011:

- *Number of Roma who can benefit from the insurance system.*
- *Number of fully immunized Roma children*
- *Rate of infant and maternal mortality among the Roma population*
- *Number of Roma women receiving pre and post natal health care; number who should receive such care but do not*
- *Roma life expectancy*

Albanian public institutions monitor constantly the situation of the Roma community particularly the *health and epidemiological situation and hygiene & sanitation conditions* in the areas where this community lives.

Regional Public Health Directorates were instructed to identify and discuss Roma community problems with all the health personnel. Info materials on access to public health system were developed as well as maps of public health services available in Tirana region, lists of public health services in each region, leaflets indicating documents and eligibility conditions for inclusion in the health insurance scheme, and benefits from health insurance.

Vaccination of Roma children remains a priority. Mandatory vaccination scheme is strictly implemented in areas with identified Roma population. Nevertheless, the Institute of Public Health organised vaccination campaigns for travelling Roma families and in areas where Roma members are not registered.

The hygiene & epidemiology services have coordinated their efforts to ensure constant monitoring of water quality in Roma settlements. During 2011 and 2012 no problems with drinking water were encountered in these areas. Although hygiene & epidemiology inspectors and local authorities coordinate their efforts to ensure hygiene and sanitation conditions in Roma settlements, still there's room for improvement.

The Community Health and Welfare Centre supported by UNICEF and MOH under the Project "Home visits to promote development and health of Roma children in the regions of Tirana and Durrësi" developed a guide for home visits and a check-list to be filled for each child examined. These visits will provide psychological & social support and health care to Roma children and mothers. Home visits will be conducted by field working groups consisting of psychologists, social workers, health specialists (including health care specialists working in the Institute of Public Health or other institutions). Actually, these visits have already started in the suburbs of Tirana and Durrësi.

We will continue to address the health situation of this community throughout 2012 also by implementing the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Roma and the Decade for Roma Inclusion.

During the reporting period :

791 is the number of Roma participants in the education programs related to reproduction health. These are representatives of Roma communities that lives in the area of Berat, Vlore, Lezhe, and Fier. 751 EUR is the amount of funds allocated during year 2011 for the education programs related to reproduction health particularly in the areas of Fier and Berat⁶.

12 is the number of specific education programs realized for protection against HIV/AIDS in the Roma community particularly in the areas of Vlore, Berat, Fier and Lezhe.;

310 is the number of participants that took part in the specific education programs realized for protection against HIV/AIDS in the Roma community particularly in the areas of Vlore, Berat, Fier and Lezhe.⁷

5 awareness raising campaign are organized with participation of roma community related necessary documentations and procedures to benefit health services.

100% of the Roma children are registered in the vaccination scheme.

290 hygeno-sanitare and epythemidiologic's checks are conducted in the areas where live Roma communities.;

⁶ Data is not available for other areas where live Roma community

⁷ Data is not available for other areas where live Roma community

15 awareness and educational programs are developed related to personal hygiene in the areas where live Roma community;

150 Roma people participated in the awareness and educational programs conducted related to personal hygiene.

1. In the field of **Social Protection**, on the progress made can be reported these developments.

With the changes made to Law 9355, dated 10.03.2005 "On Social Assistance and Services" as amended by Law No. 10399, dated 17.03.2011, families belonging to the Roma minority as a family in need, be excluded from the calculation of income for the benefit economic aid.

According to Instruction no. 1945, dated 04.10.2010 approved by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, "Implementing the Decision no. 617, dated 07.09.2006 "On the definition of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of assistance programs, the payments for people with disabilities and social services", already collected administrative statistics for the Roma minority as the beneficiary of financial assistance, payment of disability and number of beneficiaries of social services in public institutions and private social care.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination has also taken certain measures and organized certain activities regarding Roma community.

In the framework of the International Day against Racial Discrimination, on 21st March 2011, the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination has conducted a meeting with representatives from the community. The aim of this meeting was the initiation of the cooperation with these organizations as well as awareness rising to contact our institution in cases when they pretend violations of the law "For the protection from discrimination".

Also the activities have been organized from the Office of the Commissioner in cooperation with OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) with the subject: "Discrimination: Perception and actual challenges". The main aim of this activity was awareness rising for students protection from discrimination, teachers and the society in general. During the selection phase, it was paid attention that the project to include also schools, where a considerable part of the students belong to the Roma community. From the works that were presented it was noticed that the perception of the students for the act of discrimination is usually related with the ethnic community belonging.

Acronyms

EU – European Union	MoTCYS – Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
NGO- Non-Governmental Organizations	DRFPP - Regional Public Vocational Training
MoLSAEO – Ministry of Labour Social Affair and Equal Opportunities	OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
CBO – Community Based Organization	MoH – Ministry of Health
NAP – National Action Plan	
DCM - Decision of Council of Ministers	
MoES - Ministry of Education and Science	
RED - Regional Education Directorates	