



DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005 – 2015 PROGRESS REPORT 2011

BULGARIA

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
As this information is already provided in the Monitoring report for 2011, please refer to page 1, para 4

- Number of Roma living under the poverty line
- Total number of population living under the poverty line

The Republic of Bulgaria is among the countries in which the at-risk-of-poverty rate is above the EU average. According to data from the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for 2009 the at-risk-of-poverty rate in Bulgaria was 20.7% or about 1.565 million persons were poor. The main risk of poverty for the majority of households in Bulgaria is determined by their economic activity and participation in the labour market.

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?

As this information is already provided in the Monitoring report for 2011, please refer to page 1, para 3.

- 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.

WG for provision of resources for Roma integration under the Structural Funds of EU is under construction. The main objectives of the Working group shall be: in accordance with this Strategy to develop action plans covering the years till the end of the current programming period; based on the main policy objectives and priorities for the sectors of healthcare, education, social policy and housing to plan the indicative resources for the next programming period 2014 - 2020; to coordinate the measures financed under two or more programs/funds. The WG will be established by prime minister's order and will be chaired by the Minister without portfolio charged of EU funds management.

The representatives of the Roma NGO and the civil society have already nominated, the order will be issued shortly.

- 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)?

1. *Our country is already started the preparatory process for participation in European Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. Forthcoming is the construction of a WG which will be elaborate the new OP HRD. A representative of the Secretariat of the NCCEII is already nominated. NGOs as well are invited to apply for be represented in this WG.*

2. *The Secretariat of the NCCEII has proposed the topic of the Roma inclusion to be included in the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2020.*

Common remark: The National Roma Integration Strategies is consistence with National Reform Programme in the Europe 2020 framework. The National objectives are set in the National Reform Programme for implementation of Europe 2020 strategy

Monitoring report for 2011

With decision № 1 as of 5 January 2012, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria has approved the draft of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Integration of Roma (2012-2020). The Council of Ministers proposed to the National Assembly to review and adopt the draft National Strategy.

The 41st National Assembly has adopted the Strategy for the Integration of Roma (2012-2020) with decision as of 1 March 2012. The Strategy was promulgated in the State Gazette, publication №21 as of 13 March 2012.

Administrative capacity has been developed at local level in the structures of the district administrations through the delegation of certain functions to directorates, departments, units or experts, responsible for the implementation of the national policy on the integration of Roma.

According to data of the National Statistical Institute on the population count carried out in 2011, the Roma remain the third largest ethnic group in Bulgaria - 325343 people or 4.5% of the population has self-determined themselves as Roma.

The right of self-determination in Bulgaria has been guaranteed by the National Constitution, the internal legislation and the ratified by Bulgaria international documents. In relation to the referral to this right, part of the people, addressed to by the local population as “Roma” or “gypsies”, continues to self-determine itself as Bulgarian, Turkish, Romanian, etc in line with the ongoing tendency indentified previously.

PRIORITY “EDUCATION”¹

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.

For above listed bullets - As this information is already provided in the Monitoring report for 2011, please refer to page 2, Priority “Education”

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
- Number of Roma students receiving scholarship and other support in primary, secondary, and tertiary education

The educational integration of the Roma children is a starting point for the equal integration of the Roma in the Bulgarian society. In the last three school years, the number of registered in the national educational system students is in gradual decline. This process is additionally influenced by the negative demographical tendencies, poverty and other social factors. The relative share of the registered students is

¹ Data based on ethnicity is not collected

declining with around 3% annually. The number of the children enrolling in first-grade remains relatively stable – around 8% of the total number of the enrolled children on annual base. The relative number of drop-outs is around 1.5% of the total number of children at the end of the school year.

In 2011, the national program “School – a territory of the students” was realized. Within the module “A daylong organization of the teaching in the primary stage”, 88 projects were financed, accounting to BGN 800 000. As a result of the projects realization, the quality of the educational process was improved, favorable environment for the development of intercultural education was created and in addition, the interest of students, parents and school managements towards the education in temporary semi-boarding groups was increased.

Under the Operational Programme “Human resource development”:

1. The contracting under scheme BG051PO001-4.1.03 “Integration of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities in the educational system” was finalized, with the main objective of developing improved conditions for more successful social and work realization of children with ethnic origin, endangered by or in the position of social exclusion. Under the scheme contracts were concluded with municipalities, schools, kindergartens, universities and non-profit organizations for the financing of 45 project, accounting to BGN 7 219 127, 47 in total.

2. In 2011 two new schemes were announced and entered in a process of evaluation

2.1. Under the scheme BG051PO001-4.1.05 “Educational integration of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities” the financing of projects of municipalities, kindergartens, universities and non-profit organizations is envisaged. The total amount of the granted financial assistance is BGN 6 000 000.

2.2. Under the scheme BG051PO001-4.1.06 “Re-integration of students dropped out of the educational system” the total amount of the available granted assistance is BGN 7 000 000.

Under the program “Active youth 2007-2013” projects directed towards the Roma youth have been realized, accounting in total to EUR 30 952.

The Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICSEM) is elaborating, financing and supporting the implementation of projects, aimed at the provision of equal access to quality education and improvement of the outcomes from the education of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities.

Realized and finalized competitive procedure in 2011:

Competitive procedure (CP) 33.7-2010 is part of the measures under the specific strategic objective: “Quality integration of the Roma children in ethnically mixed groups in kindergartens and of students from Roma origin in the school classes with mixed ethnical composition within integrating (foster) schools, outside the Roma neighborhoods” and is directed towards the municipalities.

The realization of the projects started on 1 January 2011 and was finalized in 31 December 2011. 11 municipalities in total received funding. The concrete objective was achieved through the actual integration of Roma children and students and developing conditions for equal access to quality education, adaptation in kindergartens and primary schools for children, for whom the Bulgarian language is not native, decreasing the number of school-drop outs, positive change in the attitude towards the educational system in parents and children from ethnic minorities through various activities (parents school, lectures, round tables, discussions, seminars, trainings, etc.), provision of additional educational support for children from vulnerable ethnic minorities groups for providing them with equal start opportunities.

The realization of the competitive procedure 33.7-2010 is part of the implementation of Project BU – 135, developed for the support of the institutionalization of the process of bringing out of children from detached kindergartens and schools. CEICSEM has applied to the Roma Education Fund Budapest and has won a grant of EUR 311 000 over a 24 month period. For 2010 - EUR 200 000 and for 2011 – EUR 111 000 were provided respectively. The funds allocated to the project BU-135 and co-financed from the state budget, amounted to €50,000 in 2010 and €50,000 in 2011, financed competitive procedures 33.7-2010 and 33.8 in 2011.

Tender Procedure 33.8-2011 is to support the institutionalization of the process of removal of children and students from detached kindergartens and schools, co-financed by the Roma Education Fund - Budapest. 11 municipalities were funded (for the period 15 September 2011 to 30 June 2012). Through the projects implemented, actions led to decreasing the illiteracy, reducing the number of the school drop-outs from the educational system, creating prerequisites for successful socialization and learning of the Bulgarian language have been realized, a maximum enrollment of those subject to compulsory education (until 16 of age) is achieved.

CP 33.5-2009 included four programs and is implemented with funds from the state budget, operational between September 2010 - December 2011. The total amount of the provided financial assistance is BGN 960,254. It is directed to state and municipal kindergartens, schools, service units, regional inspectorates of education, state universities and municipalities.

Program 1: Ensuring equal access to quality education of children and students from ethnic minorities. 19 projects received financing. As a direct result of the projects implementation activities related to the adaptation of children in kindergartens and primary schools, for whom the Bulgarian language is not native, took place, in addition, daylong forms of training, including the semi-boarding groups were introduced, extracurricular activities in foster and middle schools were organized contributing to an improved educational environment.

Program 2: Preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities. 19 projects were funded

Program 3: Creation of prerequisites for successful socialization of children and young people from ethnic minorities. Financing received 20 projects. As a result of the projects implementation extracurricular activities aimed at the successful socialization of children and students from ethnic minorities were carried out, in addition, trainings of teachers in multicultural education were held. The total number of Roma children included under Program 1 and 3 of CP 33.5-2009 is 1 434.

Program 4: Support the process of making cultural diversity a source and a factor of mutual understanding and development of children and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. 20 projects were funded.

Under Programs 2 and 4, 40 projects were realized, resulting in the implementation of extracurricular activities aimed at preserving and developing of the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities, developing the knowledge on ethno-cultural diversity as a prerequisite for mutual understanding, respect and cooperation as well as for successful socialization of children and students from ethnic minorities. Events reflecting the cultural achievements of ethnic minorities and their contribution to national culture were organized. Qualification courses for the training of teachers on intercultural education practices were also carried out.

Under CP 33.9-2011 "Promoting intercultural perspective as an integral part of the educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the process of modernization of the Bulgarian educational system" were funded 53 projects. The total financing amounts to BGN 600,000, the funding is provided by the State budget. The realized projects have contributed for setting the cultural diversity of the ethnic minorities groups as a common value, presenting the cultural specificity of the different ethnic minorities, reflecting the cultural achievements of ethnic minorities and their contribution to the formation of the national and the European culture, increasing the level of intercultural competence of teachers for enabling them to work in a multicultural environment.

In 2011, projects funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as under the World Bank loan for social inclusion, are being implemented in 60 municipalities. As part of the activities 34 community centers will be established in 33 municipalities. In 31 municipalities, repairs and new construction of kindergartens and nurseries is stipulated. In six municipalities centers for early interventions for children with disabilities will be built, in five municipalities family centers for children and their parents will be created, in four municipalities day-care centers for children will be opened.

- 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?

For above listed 2 bullets - As this information is already provided in the Monitoring report for 2011, please refer to Priority "HEALTHCARE"

- 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.

As this information is already provided in the Monitoring report for 2011, please refer to page 7, para 1. Additionally information: The list with the names of the health mediators operating in the respective municipalities is updated annually.

The Chair of the NCCEII coordinating with the Minister of Health send to the Minister of Finance the approved list of health mediators, proposed by the National Health mediators Network.

- 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.

The emergency medical assistance is free of charge and is available to citizens not in a possession of health insurance. Children into the age of 18 are insured.

- 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

The Ministry of Health is actively working to fulfill the tasks and activities in the National Action Plan developed under the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015", through the implementation of specific activities within the framework of several strategic and programming documents, namely: the Health Care Strategy for Disadvantaged Persons, belonging to ethnic minorities,

Program "Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS", Program "Improvement of the Control over the Tuberculosis in Bulgaria" and others.

In 2011 the following activities were carried out:

- Holding discussions with adolescents, young people and their parents on ways to prevent unwanted and early pregnancy, on the risks related to early pregnancy for the mother and the baby, the risk of having children with congenital and hereditary diseases and on the measures for prevention;
- Holding discussions and conducting conversations with young mothers on the importance of immunizations and motivating them to regularly immunize, as according to the National Immunization Calendar;
- Holding discussions and disseminating information materials, organizing trainings of women raising young children;
- Conducting awareness programs on the importance of the regular vaccination of the population with the mandatory immunizations according to the stipulations of the National Immunization Calendar;
- Conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of preventive examinations among the Roma population;
- Organizing campaigns on the ways to prevent the most common infectious, oncological, cardiovascular and hereditary diseases;
- Increasing the number of medical programs on the radio and television with focus on topics as prevention and health insurance;
- Developing and broadcasting video and audio clips on health topics, directed towards the Roma population;
- Regularly carrying out lectures led by health professionals and mediators, on the harm of the most common risk factors - smoking, alcohol abuse, drug use, hypertension and for the benefits of healthy lifestyle;
- Introduction of interactive sessions on health and sex education in schools with predominantly Roma students, as part of the compulsory curriculum;
- Informing people belonging to the Roma community on their rights and obligations under the healthcare system and on their rights as patients;
- Carrying out targeted preventive activities among the Roma as a risk group in the national and regional prevention programs;
- Organization of information events in areas with predominantly Roma on specific health issues;
- Conducting targeted sociological researches in neighborhoods populated by Roma.

Collecting information on these issues is the bases for every meeting with Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin and was carried out by medical professionals from RZI as well as by the appointed health mediators. In 2011, 105 health mediators are working, appointed in 57 municipalities. 74 of the mediators are women and 31 are men. The health mediator is a state delegated function. In Bulgaria twice a year a training of Roma mediators under the European Programme for Roma mediators of the Council of Europe takes place. With 23 mobile cabinets, the "Public Health" Directorate has carried out activities, jointly with RZI, as stipulated in the Action Plan 2011-2015 to the Health Strategy for disadvantaged persons belonging to ethnic minorities 2005-2015.

Carrying out of obstetric-gynecological examinations in mobile cabinets, operating in settlements with compact Roma population: with 4 obstetric-gynecological mobile cabinets 2555 examinations of Roma women were carried out, 639 were diagnosed with a disease. The total expenditure amounted to BGN 63 000.

Carrying out immunizations with mobile units in settlements without appointed personal general practitioners: with five mobile cabinets for general practice a total of 847 immunizations of children with incomplete immunization status were carried out. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 30 000.

Carrying out prophylactic examinations with mobile pediatric cabinets in districts with a majority of Roma population and in remote locations: with four mobile pediatric cabinets a total number of 1933 Roma children were examined, of whom 253 were diagnosed with a disease. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 28 000.

Conducting early diagnosis and screening tests with mobile mammograms in order to prevent breast cancer: with two mammography mobile cabinets a total of 1039 examinations of Roma women were carried out, of whom 570 were diagnosed with abnormalities. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 22 000.

Conducting early diagnosis and screenings for hypertension, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease, diabetes and dyslipidemias with mobile radiological units, ultrasound and laboratories: with two mobile radiological cabinets a total of 1408 examinations of Roma took place, of which 25 are diagnosed with diseases. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 16,400. With three mobile ultrasound units a total of 1705 examinations of Roma were carried out, of whom 477 were diagnosed with a disease. The expenditures were to the amount of BGN 33,600. With three mobile clinical laboratories a total of 1671 examinations of Roma, of whom 207 were diagnosed with abnormalities. The amount of the total expenditure is BGN 12 300.

The early childbirths among marginalized Roma communities constitute a high risk factor for infant mortality. There is a negative trend of increasing the number of childbirths by women under the age of 20. In the age group 15 - 19 years in 2010, the births are 11% or 8,061 children were delivered, while the abortions are 2853. The data collected on the births given by girls under the age of 16 is alarming.

PRIORITY “HOUSING CONDITIONS”
HOUSING

- Please list the policies or programs that were designed and implemented to support housing for Roma (or the housing of marginalized people, including Roma) in 2011 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plans and the National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable),

On 15.06.2011 was launched grant scheme, namely BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 “Support for provision of contemporary social homes for accommodating vulnerable, minority and low-income groups of the population, as well as other deprived groups” under Priority axis 1 “Sustainable and integrated urban development”, Operation 1.2. “Housing” of Operational Programme Regional Development 2007-2013. (Short information is provided in The Monitoring Report – please see Priority “Housing”, para 3, 4,5)

Total amount of the scheme – 8 mln.euro, of which 6,8 mln.euro financing from the European Regional Development Fund and 1,2 mln.euro national co-financing

Grant awarded procedure – direct award procedure

Beneficiaries – 4 pilot municipalities selected by the Interinstitutional Group with the Council of Ministers

Deadline for receiving project proposals under the scheme – 01 march 2012

Design of the Scheme is based on integrated approach for joint initiative under OPRD (investment component) and OPHRD (“soft measures”). The amendment of ERDF art. 7.2. on housing is used by means of concept for integrated projects under OPHRD and OPRD for delivery of homes for vulnerable groups

OPRD housing intervention is complemented with OP HRD action in the fields of employment, education, social inclusion and desegregation measures – more effective and efficient help to marginalised groups which increases added value of project results

Purpose of the scheme

- *To provide modern social housing accommodation for vulnerable, disadvantaged and minority populations and other disadvantaged groups*
- *To ensure social inclusion, spatial integration and equal access to adequate housing for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups*

Eligible target groups:

- *Homeless people and/or dwelling in very bad living conditions*
- *Parents of children, including minors, large families, children with poor health and disabilities*
- *People at risk of poverty and social exclusion*

It is compulsory for the individuals of the target group to live /dwell in housing of poor condition and/or with bad or lacking technical infrastructure (water-main, sewerage, etc.), and are not in possession of real estate/property.

Eligible activities for funding under grant scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011/:

- *Construction of new housing intended for social homes in municipal property areas where representatives of the target group are to be accommodated*
- *Reconstruction and renovation of existing housing, municipal property intended for social homes*
- *Delivery of adequate equipment and furniture for the abovementioned buildings/premises related to provision of basic living conditions*
- *Improvement of access for people with disabilities to the abovementioned buildings/premises*
- *Public works measures for the adjacent area of the newly built/renovated social homes.*

Eligible specific beneficiaries under grant scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011/- 4 pilot municipalities: Burgas Municipality, Vidin Municipality, Devnya Municipality, Dupnitsa Municipality

Envisaged interventions within the framework of the selected pilot municipalities:

- Burgas Municipality – construction of a minimum of 50 homes for 150 representatives of vulnerable groups
- Vidin Municipality – reconstruction of 50 existing apartments in the 9 one-storey buildings and construction of 30 new apartments in 4 two-family buildings for a total of 280 representatives of vulnerable groups
- Devnya Municipality – renovation and reconstruction of existing 4-floor building with 33 apartments for 165 representatives of vulnerable groups
- Dupnitsa Municipality – construction of new 150 apartments in 15 single and multifamily buildings for a total of 460 representatives of vulnerable groups

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

The access to social housing is determined on the basis of social status not on the basis of ethnicity

- What are the outcomes of policy or 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 housing? Please, specify the activity, the funding source (ESF, ERDF, etc.), the operational program, the amount allocated, the goals to be reached, and the indicative number and share of Roma beneficiaries. Where ERDF is used, how is the 2010 amendment of the ERDF regulation utilized?

Please see the answer to bullet 1

- 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.

From the very beginning OPRD took into account the situation of the Roma population and infrastructure problems faced by Roma integration. Two priority axes, namely - Priority 1 “Sustainable and integrated urban development” and Priority Axis 4 “Local Development and Cooperation” within OPRD, resolve problems relating to the provision of appropriate and adequate infrastructure needs.

Through specific criteria for project selection, OPRD promotes infrastructural initiatives for addressing educational and social problems of the Roma minority, supports investment measures for preservation of the Roma cultural identity, creating conditions for the integration of disadvantaged groups by improving physical and living environment.

Up to now OPRD has funded infrastructural activities directly or indirectly targeted at Roma population for reconstruction and renovation of educational, social, cultural and urban infrastructure of the total amount of € 385,42 mln. A total of 11 grant schemes contributed for improving access to basic services and infrastructure for vulnerable target groups, including Roma.

A key criterion for selecting projects within the schemes is addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups, including Roma and their social inclusion.

As a result of approved projects and concluded contracts OPRD has achieved direct or indirect impact and addressed the problems of 125 214 Roma benefiting from the refurbishment of educational, social, cultural institutions and a renovated urban environment (parks, street networks, playgrounds, etc.). (Short information is provided in The Monitoring Report – please see Priority “Housing”, para 1, 2)

It has to be considered that approved projects within OPRD are not exclusively targeted at the Roma community, but all vulnerable groups identified in the target areas.

Basic tools (activities) within OPRD for improving the status of minorities and making a positive impact on social inclusion and equal access of the Roma are as follows:

Please provide information about the following fields in 2011:

- Number of Roma benefited by infrastructural development. How is desegregation, a priority issue in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, dealt with in infrastructure development?
- Number of Roma affected by urban social restoration programs

- Number of Roma affected by colony / settlement elimination / development programs

- Number of Roma affected by the regulation of property ownership regimes

- Number of Roma affected by evictions
- Number of Roma included in social housing programmes

Within the framework of the Operational Program “Regional Development” 2007-2013, activities supporting marginalized groups, including Roma, are financed, namely concerning repairs, reconstructions, rehabilitation of educational, social and cultural infrastructure, urban areas and housing policy. It could be reported that direct and indirect impact is attained as a result of the approved projects and awarded contracts under the Operational Program “Regional Development”. Thus, problems of some 125 214 Roma are addressed, who benefited from rehabilitated buildings of educational, social and cultural institutions as well as from the improved urban environment.

Main activities under the Operational Program “Regional Development” for the improvement of the status of minorities and which imply positive effects on the social inclusion and the equal access of Roma are: educational infrastructure – 5 schemes, social infrastructure – 3 schemes, cultural infrastructure – 1 scheme. All schemes amounted at BGN 740 mln, 16 759 Roma have benefited from them.

The main objective of the Scheme “Support for the provision of up-to-date social housing for the accommodation of disadvantaged, minority and socially deprived groups of the population and other groups in a disadvantaged position” is to contribute to the social integration of individuals in disadvantaged positions within the territories of the municipalities.

The scheme is being implemented with the financial support from the EU through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The total amount of funds under the scheme amounted to BGN 15,659,106, 46 or €8,006,374. 85% of the total funding is provided by the ERDF and the remaining 15% are provided as national co-financing from the state budget. The eligible activities for funding under the scheme are:

Burgas Municipality BGN 4 490 000,00, Vidin BGN 4 000 000.00, Devnya Municipality BGN 1 626 000,00 and the Municipality of Dupnitsa 4 909 000,00.

As a particularly vulnerable group, for Roma special measures in the field of housing are implemented. These measures are consistent with the contemporary international legal instruments concerning non-discrimination and special treatment of persons in significantly differing state.

PRIORITY “EMPLOYMENT”

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.

Answer for bullets 1 and 2

NSI data from the population census of 2011 reveals persistently significant differences in the economic activeness of the large ethnic groups in the country. 53.5% of all ethnic Bulgarians above aged above 15 are economically active, compared to 45.4% of the Bulgarian Turks and only 38.8% of the Roma people, in spite of the fact that in this ethnic group with the youngest population the share of students in the age group after 15 years is the smallest one, and so is the share of pensioners.

87.7% of the economically active persons among the Bulgarians are employed. Among the citizens of Turkish origin the employed are 74.3% of the economically active persons. Among the Roma population only 50.2% of the economically active persons are employed, that is 19.35% of all Roma aged 15 and more.

There are big social inequalities in the group of economically inactive persons. In the relatively smallest group of economically inactive persons – the one of ethnic Bulgarians – the pensioners constitute 68.1%, the students – 14.7%, housewives – 9.8% and 7.3% of this group were defined as “Others”.

Among the Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin economically inactive are more than half of the persons above 15 years of age. Pensioners constitute 46.4% of them, students 12.6%, housewives 23.1% and others – 17.9%.

Among the Roma population economically inactive are three fifths of the persons above 15 years - 61.2%. The group of pensioners (the only ones who generate own income) is the smallest one – just about 23.5% (14.4% of all Roma citizens at the age of 15 and more). The main reason lies in the age structure of the community, but also in the fact that many elderly Roma citizens who have been durably unemployed or have been employed in the informal sector have no pension insurance and do not meet the requirement for a definite number of years of service for pension. The share of students is extremely small – 7.3% of the economically inactive population, i.e. 4.4% of all Roma citizens above the age of 15. This low share of young people continuing their education after the age of 15 will determine the lower educational and qualification status of the Roma community in the long run, hence – the greater share of persons unemployed and dropping out of the labour market in the decades to come. Housewives constitute a huge share – 36.5% of the economically inactive Roma population, i.e. 22.4% of all Roma above 15 years of age.

- 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

1. Increasing the competitiveness of Roma in the labor market - 16,914 persons were included:

1.1 Improving the employability and qualification of unemployed Roma – the number of persons included is 6025, including those motivated for proactive attitude on the labor market and job seeking - 2642 persons in total, were as 2500 were planned initially;

- Included in activities for professional orientation - 2099 persons;

- Included in training courses for professional qualification - 1278 persons, whereas 1271 of them are under the Operational Programme "Human Resource Development" (OP "HRD");

1.2 Ensure employment of Roma - 10,889 persons, through their involvement in various programs, employment measures and in the primary labor market. Out of the total number of persons that started work, 5475 are included in the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment", 1622 persons were provided with employment under the OP "HRD", on the primary labor market 2869 persons were assisted in finding employment.

2. Promoting entrepreneurship, starting and managing own business – 15 persons are included - 11 in motivational training and 4 persons in training for starting and managing a business.

3. Fostering the social and civil dialogue on the support of employment opportunities of Roma -143 meetings with officials and informal leaders of the Roma community took place, aimed at gathering assistance in the process of implementation of the measures envisaged in the plan.

4. Capacity Building for promoting the employment of Roma

In the system "I" at present work 12 people of Roma origin, facilitating the process of servicing unemployed Roma. In 2011, at the "Labour Office" Directorate (LBD) operate 75 moderators to the labor market - Roma mediators working under the National Programme "Activating the inactive persons." As a direct result of the activities of the mediators, 8248 inactive persons were motivated to seek employment and registered as jobseekers with the LBD. 1384 persons have been employed, whereas 1298 persons were provided with jobs, and 86 were included in appropriate training for adults. By the end of 2011, there are 67 mediators, operating in 58 LBD. 49 of them are women and 12 have university education. In 2012 the recruitment of additional 30 Roma mediators is stipulated.

6 specialized job fairs targeting the Roma Community were organized and carried out - they were attended by 778 jobseekers and 47 employers, who have announced 325 job vacancies. The number of the persons, who have found employment is 309.

Under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" - started the implementation of two schemes targeted at vulnerable and disadvantaged groups on the labor market: the scheme "Take your life in your hands" is aimed at the identification, motivation and the provision of support to persons part of vulnerable groups. In addition, the involvement of unemployed persons in trainings and internships with an employer for a period of 3 months is stipulated. Implementation of the scheme is by the end of 2013, the allocated funding is to the amount of BGN 11 million.

Scheme "Improving the quality of services provided by the Employment Agency services for citizens and businesses with a focus on vulnerable groups in the labor market" - the selection and appointment of 350 labor mediators in the Labour Offices to work with representatives of disadvantaged groups on the labor market. 250 of them have already been appointed in August 2011. In addition, 12 specialized labor markets were carried out. The total expenditure under the scheme is BGN 9.5 million, the scheme is due to the end of 2013.

In 2011 the scheme "New Opportunities" was launched under the OP HRD, in which municipalities are the beneficiaries. In the process of implementation of the planned activities, namely re-training and employment, it is expected mainly members of this community to be attracted.

Activities (schemes) supported by Operational programme Regional Development 2007-2013	Financial resources contracted	Positive impact on Roma population according to the projects approved	Performance indicators according to the projects approved
<p>Activity 1. Educational infrastructure, including 5 schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational, social and cultural infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”, Component 1 Educational infrastructure</i> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-02/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective state educational infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”</i> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-09/2010 “Support for implementation of energy efficiency measures in municipal educational infrastructure in urban agglomerations”</i> ○ <i>BG161PO001/4.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational infrastructure contributing towards sustainable local development”</i> ○ <i>BG161PO001/4.1-03/2010 “Support for energy efficiency measures in the municipal educational infrastructure of 178 small municipalities”</i> 	€214,70 mln.	9 792 Roma to benefit from improved educational infrastructure	592 number of education facilities to be improved
<p>Activity 2. Social infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational, social and cultural infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”, Component 2 Social infrastructure</i> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-03/2008 “Support for the provision of an adequate and effective state social infrastructure,</i> 	€11,86 mln.	16 759 Roma to benefit from improved social infrastructure	68 number of social services offices to be reconstructed 35 number of labour offices to be reconstructed 5 number of social services facilities to be reconstructed

<p><i>contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-04/2008 “Support for the provision of an adequate and effective infrastructure of the labour offices, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”</i> 			
<p>Activity 3.Cultural infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational, social and cultural infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”, Component 1 cultural infrastructure</i> ○ <i>BG161PO001/1.1-05/2008 “Support for the provision of an adequate and effective state cultural infrastructure contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”</i> 	€26,06 mln.	6 262 Roma to benefit from improved cultural infrastructure	19 number of culture facilities to be improved
<p>Activity 4. Physical infrastructure, including <i>BG161PO001/1.4-02/2008 “Support for improving the urban environment</i> <i>BG161PO001/1.4-05/2009 “Support for integrated and sustainable development by improving the urban environment</i></p>	€124,8 mln.	92 401 Roma to benefit from the renovated urban environment	<p>2 529 514,37 sq. m. of parks, landscaped areas and playgrounds to be improved</p> <p>755 432,52 square meters of pedestrian and bicycle lanes, pavements to be created/renovated</p> <p>403 541,22 square meters of the street network to be reconstructed and rehabilitated</p>
<p>Activity 5 Social housing <i>Scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 “Support for provision of contemporary social homes for accommodating vulnerable, minority and low-income groups of the population, as well as other deprived groups”</i></p>	€8 mln.	891 representatives of vulnerable groups to benefit from the newly constructed/reconstructed social homes	<p>260 newly constructed social homes</p> <p>83 reconstructed existing homes</p>

Monitoring report for 2011

With decision № 1 as of 5 January 2012, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria has approved the draft of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Integration of Roma (2012-2020). The Council of Ministers proposed to the National Assembly to review and adopt the draft National Strategy.

The 41st National Assembly has adopted the Strategy for the Integration of Roma (2012-2020) with decision as of 1 March 2012. The Strategy was promulgated in the State Gazette, publication №21 as of 13 March 2012.

Administrative capacity has been developed at local level in the structures of the district administrations through the delegation of certain functions to directorates, departments, units or experts, responsible for the implementation of the national policy on the integration of Roma.

According to data of the National Statistical Institute on the population count carried out in 2011, the Roma remain the third largest ethnic group in Bulgaria - 325343 people or 4.5% of the population has self-determined themselves as Roma.

The right of self-determination in Bulgaria has been guaranteed by the National Constitution, the internal legislation and the ratified by Bulgaria international documents. In relation to the referral to this right, part of the people, addressed to by the local population as “Roma” or “gypsies”, continues to self-determine itself as Bulgarian, Turkish, Romanian, etc in line with the ongoing tendency identified previously.

PRIORITY “EDUCATION”

The educational integration of the Roma children is a starting point for the equal integration of the Roma in the Bulgarian society. In the last three school years, the number of registered in the national educational system students is in gradual decline. This process is additionally influenced by the negative demographical tendencies, poverty and other social factors. The relative share of the registered students is declining with around 3% annually. The number of the children enrolling in first-grade remains relatively stable – around 8% of the total number of the enrolled children on annual base. The relative number of drop-outs is around 1.5% of the total number of children at the end of the school year.

In 2011, the national program “School – a territory of the students” was realized. Within the module “A daylong organization of the teaching in the primary stage”, 88 projects were financed, accounting to BGN 800 000. As a result of the projects realization, the quality of the educational process was improved, favorable environment for the development of intercultural education was created and in addition, the interest of students, parents and school managements towards the education in temporary semi-boardings groups was increased.

Under the Operational Programme “Human resource development”:

1. The contracting under scheme BG051PO001-4.1.03 “Integration of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities in the educational system” was finalized, with the main objective of developing improved conditions for more successful social and work realization of children with ethnic origin, endangered by or in the position of social exclusion. Under the scheme contracts were concluded with municipalities, schools, kindergartens, universities and non-profit organizations for the financing of 45 projects, accounting to BGN 7 219 127,47 in total.

2. In 2011 two new schemes were announced and entered in a process of evaluation

2.1. Under the scheme BG051PO001-4.1.05 “Educational integration of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities” the financing of projects of municipalities, kindergartens, universities and non-profit organizations is envisaged. The total amount of the granted financial assistance is BGN 6 000 000.

2.2. Under the scheme BG051PO001-4.1.06 “Re-integration of students dropped out of the educational system” the total amount of the available granted assistance is BGN 7 000 000.

Under the program “Active youth 2007-2013” projects directed towards the Roma youth have been realized, accounting in total to EUR 30 952.

The Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICSEM) is elaborating, financing and supporting the implementation of projects, aimed at the provision of equal access to quality education and improvement of the outcomes from the education of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities.

Realized and finalized competitive procedure in 2011:

Competitive procedure (CP) 33.7-2010 is part of the measures under the specific strategic objective: "Quality integration of the Roma children in ethnically mixed groups in kindergartens and of students from Roma origin in the school classes with mixed ethnical composition within integrating (foster) schools, outside the Roma neighborhoods" and is directed towards the municipalities.

The realization of the projects started on 1 January 2011 and was finalized in 31 December 2011. 11 municipalities in total received funding. The concrete objective was achieved through the actual integration of Roma children and students and developing conditions for equal access to quality education, adaptation in kindergartens and primary schools for children, for whom the Bulgarian language is not native, decreasing the number of school-drop outs, positive change in the attitude towards the educational system in parents and children from ethnic minorities through various activities (parents school, lectures, round tables, discussions, seminars, trainings, etc.), provision of additional educational support for children from vulnerable ethnic minorities groups for providing them with equal start opportunities.

The realization of the competitive procedure 33.7-2010 is part of the implementation of Project BU – 135, developed for the support of the institutionalization of the process of bringing out of children from detached kindergartens and schools. CEICSEM has applied to the Roma Education Fund Budapest and has won a grant of EUR 311 000 over a 24 month period. For 2010 - EUR 200 000 and for 2011 – EUR 111 000 were provided respectively. The funds allocated to the project BU-135 and co-financed from the state budget, amounted to €50,000 in 2010 and €50,000 in 2011, financed competitive procedures 33.7-2010 and 33.8 in 2011.

Tender Procedure 33.8-2011 is to support the institutionalization of the process of removal of children and students from detached kindergartens and schools, co-financed by the Roma Education Fund - Budapest. 11 municipalities were funded (for the period 15 September 2011 to 30 June 2012). Through the projects implemented, actions led to decreasing the illiteracy, reducing the number of the school drop-outs from the educational system, creating prerequisites for successful socialization and learning of the Bulgarian language have been realized, a maximum enrollment of those subject to compulsory education (until 16 of age) is achieved.

CP 33.5-2009 included four programs and is implemented with funds from the state budget, operational between September 2010 - December 2011. The total amount of the provided financial assistance is BGN 960,254. It is directed to state and municipal kindergartens, schools, service units, regional inspectorates of education, state universities and municipalities.

Program 1: Ensuring equal access to quality education of children and students from ethnic minorities. 19 projects received financing. As a direct result of the projects implementation activities related to the adaptation of children in kindergartens and primary schools, for whom the Bulgarian language is not native, took place, in addition, daylong forms of training, including the semi-boardings groups were introduced, extracurricular activities in foster and middle schools were organized contributing to an improved educational environment.

Program 2: Preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities. 19 projects were funded

Program 3: Creation of prerequisites for successful socialization of children and young people from ethnic minorities. Financing received 20 projects. As a result of the projects implementation extracurricular activities aimed at the successful socialization of children and students from ethnic minorities were carried out, in addition, trainings of teachers in multicultural education were held. The total number of Roma children included under Program 1 and 3 of CP 33.5-2009 is 1 434.

Program 4: Support the process of making cultural diversity a source and a factor of mutual understanding and development of children and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. 20 projects were funded.

Under Programs 2 and 4, 40 projects were realized, resulting in the implementation of extracurricular activities aimed at preserving and developing of the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities, developing the knowledge on ethno-cultural diversity as a prerequisite for mutual understanding, respect and cooperation as well as for successful socialization of children and students from ethnic minorities. Events reflecting the cultural achievements of ethnic minorities and their contribution to national culture were organized. Qualification courses for the training of teachers on intercultural education practices were also carried out.

Under CP 33.9-2011 "Promoting intercultural perspective as an integral part of the educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the process of modernization of the Bulgarian educational system" were funded 53 projects. The total financing amounts to BGN 600,000, the funding is

provided by the State budget. The realized projects have contributed for setting the cultural diversity of the ethnic minorities groups as a common value, presenting the cultural specificity of the different ethnic minorities, reflecting the cultural achievements of ethnic minorities and their contribution to the formation of the national and the European culture, increasing the level of intercultural competence of teachers for enabling them to work in a multicultural environment.

In 2011, projects funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as under the World Bank loan for social inclusion, are being implemented in 60 municipalities. As part of the activities 34 community centers will be established in 33 municipalities. In 31 municipalities, repairs and new construction of kindergartens and nurseries is stipulated. In six municipalities centers for early interventions for children with disabilities will be built, in five municipalities family centers for children and their parents will be created, in four municipalities day-care centers for children will be opened.

PRIORITY "HEALTHCARE"

The Ministry of Health is actively working to fulfill the tasks and activities in the National Action Plan developed under the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015", through the implementation of specific activities within the framework of several strategic and programming documents, namely: the Health Care Strategy for Disadvantaged Persons, belonging to ethnic minorities, Program "Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS", Program "Improvement of the Control over the Tuberculosis in Bulgaria" and others.

In 2011 the following activities were carried out:

- Holding discussions with adolescents, young people and their parents on ways to prevent unwanted and early pregnancy, on the risks related to early pregnancy for the mother and the baby, the risk of having children with congenital and hereditary diseases and on the measures for prevention;
- Holding discussions and conducting conversations with young mothers on the importance of immunizations and motivating them to regularly immunize, as according to the National Immunization Calendar;
- Holding discussions and disseminating information materials, organizing trainings of women raising young children;
- Conducting awareness programs on the importance of the regular vaccination of the population with the mandatory immunizations according to the stipulations of the National Immunization Calendar;
- Conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of preventive examinations among the Roma population;
- Organizing campaigns on the ways to prevent the most common infectious, oncological, cardiovascular and hereditary diseases;
- Increasing the number of medical programs on the radio and television with focus on topics as prevention and health insurance;
- Developing and broadcasting video and audio clips on health topics, directed towards the Roma population;
- Regularly carrying out lectures led by health professionals and mediators, on the harm of the most common risk factors - smoking, alcohol abuse, drug use, hypertension and for the benefits of healthy lifestyle;
- Introduction of interactive sessions on health and sex education in schools with predominantly Roma students, as part of the compulsory curriculum;
- Informing people belonging to the Roma community on their rights and obligations under the healthcare system and on their rights as patients;
- Carrying out targeted preventive activities among the Roma as a risk group in the national and regional prevention programs;
- Organization of information events in areas with predominantly Roma on specific health issues;
- Conducting targeted sociological researches in neighborhoods populated by Roma.

Collecting information on these issues is the bases for every meeting with Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin and was carried out by medical professionals from RZI as well as by the appointed health mediators. In 2011, 105 health mediators are working, appointed in 57 municipalities. 74 of the mediators are women and 31 are men. The health mediator is a state delegated function. In Bulgaria twice a year a training of Roma mediators under the European Programme for Roma mediators of the Council of Europe takes place.

With 23 mobile cabinets, the "Public Health" Directorate has carried out activities, jointly with RZI, as stipulated in the Action Plan 2011-2015 to the Health Strategy for disadvantaged persons belonging to ethnic minorities 2005-2015.

Carrying out of obstetric-gynecological examinations in mobile cabinets, operating in settlements with compact Roma population: with 4 obstetric-gynecological mobile cabinets 2555 examinations of Roma women were carried out, 639 were diagnosed with a disease. The total expenditure amounted to BGN 63 000.

Carrying out immunizations with mobile units in settlements without appointed personal general practitioners: with five mobile cabinets for general practice a total of 847 immunizations of children with incomplete immunization status were carried out. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 30 000.

Carrying out prophylactic examinations with mobile pediatric cabinets in districts with a majority of Roma population and in remote locations: with four mobile pediatric cabinets a total number of 1933 Roma children were examined, of whom 253 were diagnosed with a disease. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 28 000.

Conducting early diagnosis and screening tests with mobile mammograms in order to prevent breast cancer: with two mammography mobile cabinets a total of 1039 examinations of Roma women were carried out, of whom 570 were diagnosed with abnormalities. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 22 000.

Conducting early diagnosis and screenings for hypertension, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease, diabetes and dyslipidemias with mobile radiological units, ultrasound and laboratories: with two mobile radiological cabinets a total of 1408 examinations of Roma took place, of which 25 are diagnosed with diseases. The total expenditures amounted to BGN 16,400. With three mobile ultrasound units a total of 1705 examinations of Roma were carried out, of whom 477 were diagnosed with a disease. The expenditures were to the amount of BGN 33,600. With three mobile clinical laboratories a total of 1671 examinations of Roma, of whom 207 were diagnosed with abnormalities. The amount of the total expenditure is BGN 12 300.

The early childbirths among marginalized Roma communities constitute a high risk factor for infant mortality. There is a negative trend of increasing the number of childbirths by women under the age of 20. In the age group 15 - 19 years in 2010, the births are 11% or 8,061 children were delivered, while the abortions are 2853. The data collected on the births given by girls under the age of 16 is alarming.

PRIORITY "HOUSING CONDITIONS"

Within the framework of the Operational Program "Regional Development" 2007-2013, activities supporting marginalized groups, including Roma, are financed, namely concerning repairs, reconstructions, rehabilitation of educational, social and cultural infrastructure, urban areas and housing policy. It could be reported that direct and indirect impact is attained as a result of the approved projects and awarded contracts under the Operational Program "Regional Development". Thus, problems of some 125 214 Roma are addressed, who benefited from rehabilitated buildings of educational, social and cultural institutions as well as from the improved urban environment.

Main activities under the Operational Program "Regional Development" for the improvement of the status of minorities and which imply positive effects on the social inclusion and the equal access of Roma are: educational infrastructure – 5 schemes, social infrastructure – 3 schemes, cultural infrastructure – 1 scheme. All schemes amounted at BGN 740 mln, 16 759 Roma have benefited from them.

The main objective of the Scheme "Support for the provision of up-to-date social housing for the accommodation of disadvantaged, minority and sociably deprived groups of the population and other groups in a disadvantaged position" is to contribute to the social integration of individuals in disadvantaged positions within the territories of the municipalities.

The scheme is being implemented with the financial support from the EU through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The total amount of funds under the scheme amounted to BGN 15,659,106, 46 or €8,006,374. 85% of the total funding is provided by the ERDF and the remaining 15% are provided as national co-financing from the state budget. The eligible activities for funding under the scheme are: Burgas Municipality BGN 4 490 000,00, Vidin BGN 4 000 000.00, Devnya Municipality BGN 1 626 000,00 and the Municipality of Dupnitsa 4 909 000,00.

As a particularly vulnerable group, for Roma special measures in the field of housing are implemented. These measures are consistent with the contemporary international legal instruments concerning non-discrimination and special treatment of persons in significantly differing state.

PRIORITY "EMPLOYMENT"

1. Increasing the competitiveness of Roma in the labor market - 16,914 persons were included:

1.1 Improving the employability and qualification of unemployed Roma – the number of persons included is 6025, including those motivated for proactive attitude on the labor market and job seeking - 2642 persons in total, were as 2500 were planned initially;

- Included in activities for professional orientation - 2099 persons;

- Included in training courses for professional qualification - 1278 persons, whereas 1271 of them are under the Operational Programme "Human Resource Development" (OP "HRD");

1.2 Ensure employment of Roma - 10,889 persons, through their involvement in various programs, employment measures and in the primary labor market. Out of the total number of persons that started work, 5475 are included in the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment", 1622 persons were provided with employment under the OP "HRD", on the primary labor market 2869 persons were assisted in finding employment.

2. Promoting entrepreneurship, starting and managing own business – 15 persons are included - 11 in motivational training and 4 persons in training for starting and managing a business.

3. Fostering the social and civil dialogue on the support of employment opportunities of Roma -143 meetings with officials and informal leaders of the Roma community took place, aimed at gathering assistance in the process of implementation of the measures envisaged in the plan.

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