

GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA



NATIONAL AGENCY FOR ROMA

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015

2011 PROGRESS REPORT

1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

The last national census carried out across Romania between October 21 and October 31, 2011. The 2011 Census of the Population and Housing included the possibility to declare double citizenship, affiliation to a certain ethnicity of religion, as well as questions about disabled people.

The National Agency for Roma, as a governmental institution focused on Roma issues, was involved in organizing and conducting activities within the 2011 Census on Population and Housing. The president of the institution also the national coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion participated as an active member at Central Commission for Census meetings, while NAR employees of the regional offices were participating at the activities of the local public authorities. Following the initiatives of NAR president, the representatives of Roma minority (familiar with Romani language) have been co-opted within the census teams. They facilitated both access to the local communities where live a significant number of Roma, and communication with their members, ensuring on data consistency.

Moreover, the main Roma families and their religious affiliation were introduced on the registration form.

According to the National Institute of Statistics provisory data presented on February 2nd, 2012, Romania has a stable population of 19.042 million people, as follows: 88.6% of the registered population declared themselves ethnic Romanians, 6.5% - Hungarian, and 3.2% (619,007) - Roma people. Comprehensive information will be available at the end of the first semester of 2013 year.

Representatives of civil society claim that the real number of this ethnic group might be more than 2.5 million persons. Moreover, according to the Communication "An EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", the European Commission, based on the data from the Council of Europe, estimated an average number of Roma from Romania of 1,850,000 people, representing a percentage of 8.32 % out of the total population of Romania.

It is a very important issue to have a real number of Roma inhabitants. This is expected to be solved by the final results of 2011 National Census: an official number of Roma people will be an extra argument for strengthening the Romanian state's commitment towards implementing the National Strategy for Roma.

Poverty rate and the number of poor or those under poverty line are part of social inclusion indicators set up in Romania by the Government Decision 488/2005. This regulatory document establishes the structure of indicators system, which consists of primary, secondary and tertiary indicators, and their definition, also the level of aggregation and the institution responsible for their operation.

Annually, the Ministry of Labour, Family, and Social Protection publishes a national report on social inclusion which includes data on poverty rates by ethnicity. The report is prepared annually in June / July, with data for the previous year; therefore, currently available data are for 2010 year.

2. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ROMA INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

2.1. NATIONAL ROMA INCLUSION STRATEGY

2.1.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Government of Romania adopted on 14th December 2011, by GD 1221/2011, the “Strategy for the inclusion of the Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2012 – 2020”.

The Strategy is drafted on the Communication of the European Commission from April 2011, and EPSCO Council conclusions, that are endorsed also by the European Council. The Strategy is the first document developed by our country in accordance with the requirements of EU Framework Strategy for Roma.

NAR started the effective work on the elaboration of the Strategy since 2010, when both its experts within the County Offices for Roma, Regional Offices for Roma and Local Experts as well, started to collect information necessary to elaborate the drafts of the National Action Plans of the Strategy. The short and long terms Action Plans are drafted on the basis of sectorial plans, specifying the sources of funding necessary to fulfill each objective. At the end of each period of implementation of estimated provisions, they will be done Strategy’s impact studies on short, medium and long term.

Thus, in the autumn of 2010 it was already done a proposal/ version of the National Action Plans, on which NAR began the consulting process. Following to this process, the ministries involved in the process set-up their provisions, taking into consideration the NGOs proposals. Committed to the transparency principle, NAR maintained the consultation with the civil society even after that, during the process.

Further, the NAR experts drafted also the corp of the Strategy that became the text on which the Inter-ministerial Working Group started his task.

The main differences in relation to the old Strategy are responsibility and financing: the activities scheduled in the document will be committed and supported by the ministries responsible, concurrently with the use of European financial instruments and, where appropriate, by attracting other funds from other donors or government loan agreements.

Another difference it is the mechanism for monitoring and assessing the strategy. One important component of the monitoring mechanism is measuring the degree of the Roma minority’s social inclusion and the degree of structural funds absorption.

2.1.2. THE MONITORING MECHANISM

The monitoring mechanism is based on the civil society’s support and actual involvement. It is expected that this will widen the partnership circle by enhancing the role and direct participation of NGOs and other organizations at national level, skilled in implementing and monitoring programs for Roma ethnics, of local Roma NGOs and initiative groups representing Roma communities at local level.

The specificity of the new Strategy lies in carry on affirmative provisions regarding non-discrimination and quality education in education field; prevention provisions in health, and vocational trainings and counseling services in employment.

Romanian Strategy foresees a Central Department for Monitoring and Assessment, which is intended to coordinate the implementation of monitoring and assessment activities of the Strategy and shall serve as the single contact reference for implementing the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies.

2.1.3. THE INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE

The institutions responsible for the implementation of the strategy are:

a) At central level

a1) the coordination of the implementation and the monitoring of the enactment of the Strategy – to be carried out by the Central Compartment for Monitoring and Assessment

a2) the implementation of the Strategy, depending on the relevant area of competence for each action plan, is to be carried out by:

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports

Ministry of Administration and Interior (including the County Offices for Roma)

Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment

Ministry of Environment and Forests

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

General Secretariat of the Government

National Council for Combating Discrimination

Department for Inter-ethnic Relations

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

b) At regional/county/local level

Decentralized public services within responsible institutions;

County Offices for Roma within prefectures;

Local public authorities and their associate structures.

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the Government Strategy leading to a high level of social inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity, the active involvement of Roma ethnics in these actions is essential. To this end, starting from 2012, the NAR shall take action for establishing a mechanism for consultation and permanent involvement of the civil society in implementing and monitoring the Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity.

2.1.4. ORGANIZATIONAL MEASURES

a) at central level, the competent ministries and other responsible institutions and authorities shall be represented in the Inter-ministerial Working Group, established under Prime Minister's Decision No. 36/24.03.2011, published in OG No. 210/25.03.2011. The Working Group is coordinated by the Vice Prime Minister and headed by the president of the NAR in collaboration with two state secretaries from the MLSP and MAI. The working group shall operate according to its rules of organizing and functioning, shall hold monthly meetings; each semester, the president of the Inter-ministerial Working Group shall present, during the Government meeting, a note on the activity and results of the implementation of the Government Strategy.

At ministerial level, the Ministerial Commissions for Roma (MCR) shall be established or, where appropriate, reactivated, within 30 days from the adoption of the Government Strategy, by orders of the competent ministers. The MCR shall include as well representatives from the NAR, as a specialized institution, and, where appropriate, representatives from non-governmental Roma organizations with relevant expertise. At the level of institutions subordinated to competent ministries, except for the Ministry of Administration and Interior, technical working groups (TWGs) shall be established. The composition of MCRs and TWG, as well as their powers, shall be provided in the Rules of Organization and Functioning (ROF).

The powers of MCRs and TWG include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Monitoring the enactment of measures under their specific activity sector and submitting, on semi-annual basis, progress reports in order to assess the impact of actions for the inclusion of Roma minority and, where appropriate, depending on internal and international developments, to review and adapt the Government Strategy.

b) At regional, county and local level

The Regional Offices (RO) of the National Agency for Roma are established under Government Decision No 1703/2004 on the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Roma, as subsequently amended and supplemented, and Government Decision No 430/2001 approving the Government of Romania's Strategy for improving the situation of Roma ethnics, as subsequently amended and supplemented. The Regional Offices of the National Agency for Roma are structures organized at the development regions level.

In order to implement and monitor the Government Strategy, Regional Offices have the following tasks:

- Proposing or, where appropriate, extending strategic partnerships with competent public and private organizations at regional level.
- Supporting and monitoring social actors' efforts at regional level to implement the initiatives and reference programs for Roma minority.
- Informing, collaborating and supporting the activity of County Offices for Roma, within Prefectures, appointed to the eight development regions.

The County Offices for Roma are functional structures organized at county level within prefectures.

Their composition includes 3-4 experts employed in accordance with the Labour Code and Law No 188/1999 on the status of civil servants, among which one has to be a Roma ethnic.

The County Offices for Roma operate in subordination to the Prefect and in technical coordination with the National Agency for Roma. The nominal composition of the County Offices for Roma is established under a Prefect's order. The activity of COR commissions is to be carried out in close connection with the activity of the County Commission for social inclusion and the County Council in order to enhance this institution's involvement in the

implementation of the Strategy and to ensure the financial support necessary to co-fund projects intended for Roma inclusion.

The main activities of CORs include, but are not limited to:

- Providing the technical secretariat of the Joint Working Group (JWG) set up at county level, composed of representatives from decentralized structures of ministries, members of Roma non-governmental organizations and delegates from communities of ethnic Roma citizens, including county/local counselors. The JWG is established by order of the Prefect.
- Elaborating the county's measure plan for Roma inclusion by way of harmonizing the main needs of the communities with Roma inhabitants (identified through the Community facilitation process or by the local public authorities) with the measures provided for in the Government Strategy. The Joint Working Group shall adopt the county's measure plan for Roma inclusion elaborated by the CORs, based on the Government Strategy. Each institution represented in the JWG shall be responsible for implementing the measures corresponding to its area of activity, included in the county's measure plan.
- Introducing the measures of the National Strategy for the inclusion of the Roma minority in each county's development plan, or, where appropriate, in the integrated plans for urban development, regional development plans.
- Monitoring the implementation of measures in the areas of activity of the decentralized services of competent ministries and those of their social partners in order to meet the objectives and tasks of the Government Strategy.
- Supporting the implementation of the measures set in county plans by providing consultancy to the representatives of decentralized services and facilitating their access within Roma minority communities.
- Drawing up semi-annual progress reports regarding the implementation of the county's measure plan for the inclusion of the Roma minority and submitting them to both the Central Department for Monitoring and Assessment and the NAR.

Local experts for Roma shall activate at city hall level. They are subordinated, on a technical level, to the county offices for Roma and, on an administrative level, to the Mayor. Local experts represent the main interface between public authorities and Roma communities. At commune level, the position of expert on Roma issues is exercised by an expert from the Roma minority. The task of the expert for Roma issues is to use the opportunities at local level, for the benefit of the local community, including the Roma minority.

The main activities of local experts for Roma include, but are not limited to:

- Organizing, at local level, local initiative groups (LIGs) and local working groups (LWGs).
- The local initiative group is made up of representatives of communities of Roma ethnics where they are active. LIG's role is to determine, based on the Community facilitation process organized by the local expert, the main needs, and to establish the priorities according to the directions for action in the Government Strategy. LIG's composition and the priorities established shall be discussed within local working groups (LWGs).
- The local working group (LWG) is made up of: the local expert, representatives of local public

institutions, members of the Local Council (including elected Roma counselors), members of nongovernmental organizations (including Roma organizations) and a delegate of the local Roma community from the LIG. The LWG shall be established under Local Council Decision (LCD).

- Elaborating, based on the Government Strategy, the local action plan for Roma inclusion, set on the basis of the process of identification and selection of the main needs of local communities with a significant Roma proportion and submitting it to the LWG for approval.

The action plan adopted by the Local Working Group (LWG) shall be endorsed (totally or partially) by the Local Council through LCD.

Each member of the local working group shall be responsible for implementing the measures corresponding to his/her area of activity, as included in the local action plan.

- Introducing the local action plan for Roma inclusion in the locality's development strategy.
- Transmitting the local action plan to the County Offices for Roma with a view to their inclusion in the county's measure plan and in the county's development strategy.
- Monitoring the implementation of measures set in the local action plan and making proposals for their improvement.
- Drawing up semi-annual progress reports on the implementation of the local action plan and submitting them to the CORs and NAR.

2.2. PROPOSALS FOR THE 2014-2020 PROGRAMMING

Related to the use of EU funds in the 2014-2020, there are ongoing negotiations at European level regarding the new regulations for 2014 – 2020 programming period. In this context, regular workshops on new legislative package are organized, on purpose to set measures for the Funds for the EU Cohesion Policy.

These legislative proposals include a number of new elements compared to those in the current programming period. They are crucial elements also for reducing poverty and social exclusion.

The draft of the General Regulation takes into account:

- The approach of "integrated programming" which presume the presence of both a Common Strategic Framework at EU level and a National Partnership Agreement;
- The possibility of preparing and implementing the "multi-fund programs", by combining the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund;
- The discharge of stipulation before to provide the Partnership Agreements and operational programs (ex-ante conditionality);
- to focus on results and insertion of a new monitoring mechanism between Member State and European Commission, respectively the "Joint Action Plan". Through this, the payments are correlated with the degree of the achievement of the strategic targets.

For each Partnership Agreement or Operational Program, the Member State will include among its partners following categories:

- (a) competent authorities at regional, local or urban level, and other public authorities
- (b) economic and social partners
- (c) civil society organizations, NGOs and organizations responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination.

The partners will be involved in preparing the Partnership Agreement and the progress reports, as well as in preparing, implementing, monitoring and assessing the Operational Program.

Regarding the draft of the Rules for ESF:

- The main emphasis will be put on simplifying the rules for final beneficiaries, through simplified costs;

- Thematic concentration is differentiated depending the level of development of the member state/region:
 1. for developed member states/regions, 80% of the operational budget is concentrate on four priority areas of investment;
 2. for transitional member states/regions, 70% of the operational budget is concentrate on four priority areas of investment;
 3. for the least developed member states/regions, 60% of the operational budget is concentrate on four priority areas of investment.

As such, the future programming will put a special emphasis on results, on simplifying the processes, and on a better coordination and harmonization of the funds.

Meanwhile, the performance of each of the operational program will be an essential element for the period of 2014-2020, through establishing firm terms of evaluating the degree of fulfillment of the operational program's objectives, i.e. for the years: 2016, 2018 and 2022.

It is important to mention that combating the social exclusion and the poverty each member state will allocate a minimum of 20% from its own ESF allocation.

The new draft of ESF rules is encouraging the proper participation and the full access of NGOs to the actions based on ESF, especially in areas like social inclusion, equality of chances and equal opportunities. This goal will represent a modality to develop the capacity of NGOs.

Into the future programing period, the solidarity represents one of EU's basic principle, and the level of development and socio-economic convergence will represent the fundamental criteria in resources allocation, concerning the Cohesion Policy at the European, national and regional level.

As an instrument of the Cohesion policy, ESF continues to have an important role, taking into account the social issues generated by the economic and financial crisis, which necessitate continuous intervention into the area of human capital and the increasing of its competitiveness.

Meanwhile, we believe that it is necessary, for the future period of programing, the concentration of financial resources of the EU on the priorities established at the regional and local level; these priorities were established on the basis of an analysis of the needs existing to the above-mentioned levels. It is essential that the member states and the regions to have the possibility to choose the priorities and the areas of intervention into the light of specific territorial conditions and socio-economic challenges.

As such, the allocations for the period 2014-2020 will be focused on areas as employment, social inclusion, fighting the poverty, life-long education, and research and innovation, in order to develop an economy based on knowledge. The investments on research and innovation will create new opportunities regarding the working places, and will ensure a sustainable development and the competitiveness on a long term.

3. EDUCATION

Key barriers identified as limiting educational opportunities and access to quality education for Roma:

1. State institutions are to blame Roma parents, as “they not send their children to school”, but the institutions „ forget” that they are required to capture all children in educational system. It would be useful a legislative initiative aimed to the accountability of all institutional segments, in order to immediately resolve the cases of school absenteeism, in order to school dropout does not occur.
2. The lack of school mediators within the school with Roma population. The schools don't have a budget for school mediator position although the salary would be the minimum wage. School inspectorates plead insufficient positions provided by the Ministry of Education.
3. The lack of school inspectors working full time for Roma issues, as they currently work part time (half time) for Roma and minorities issues.
4. Insufficient adaptation of the school activities', principals' and teachers' assessment scales in order to score the utmost (70%) the academic student's real progress (moving the focus from the current priority- the claimed valued "the Olympic student", representing only 2% of students, on “the Ordinary student”, representing 98 % of the students, tomorrow's citizens of the society
5. Lack of a powerful financial mechanism to support the preschool, school and high school students' families, so kindergarten, school and high school attendance of children and students not to become an obstacle
6. Lack of co-opting as many Roma mothers as auxiliary didactic personal (school mediators, health mediators etc.) and primary didactic personal (kindergarten teacher, school teacher, principal, school inspector)
7. Lack of co-opting as many Roma experts within the ESF Roma projects' managerial teams
8. Lack of a “school passport” for the students and children who accompany their parents to work within the country or abroad. The school passport should comprise the classes attended / graduated, marks obtained so the student to adapt easily from a school system to another

In 2011, in the view of the Decade on Roma Inclusion and the National Strategy for Roma, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports continued or initiated, in Romania, a number of measures and strategic programs, aiming at increasing the access to quality education of Roma children:

- Providing annually special places in high-schools and arts and trades schools for Roma children. Annually around 3400 places were allocated for Roma children
- Providing annually special places in universities for Roma children that graduated high-school. If in the academic year 1998 -1999, 149 special places for Roma were offered in 8 universities, in school year 2010-2011 555 places were provided , and 611 places for the school year 2010-2011
- Continuation of initial intensive summer courses in language and methodology of teaching Roma, prospective teachers of Roma language and history (the program was developed in 2009 with UNICEF funding). Between 1999-2010, 1150 teachers were trained. In 2011, 56 persons were trained as Romany language teachers.
- Maintaining the Romany language at university, the University of Bucharest (by 20 to 25 students admitted annually).

- Preservation of language, history and culture of Roma in the educational approach (in I-XII grades one hour per week. The history and traditions of Roma were teaching in sixth and seventh class). Of the 260,000 Roma students with assumed identity (preschool and school children cl. I-XII), in 2011 approx. 26,000 annually (11-12%) have studying hours in the Roma language and history or entirely in Romany language.
- Support, where required, the tuition in Romani language, as mother tongue, grades I-IV (almost 900 student have chosen this type of education)
- Support, where required, the tuition in Romani language, as mother tongue in kindergarten. There are 22 kindergartens with tuition in Romany language having a bilingual approach (Romanian-Romani, Romani- Hungarian)
- Currently there are 440 teachers providing teaching Roma, history and traditions of Roma or Romany language;
- Maintaining the Roma inspector position within the County School Inspectorate (42 positions);
- Maintaining the network of methodologists of language, history, traditions and education of Roma (in each county, between 2-6 Methodists, of which at least one for language, history and traditions of Roma).
- Continue training of Roma school mediators. In the last eight years 863 Roma school mediators were trained, 56 of them been trained in the summer of 2011.
- Continue funding for school competitions (the national Olympic Romani language school, Eleventh Edition ,January-March 2010, 104 participants), National School Competition "diversity" (September 2010 - December 2010: 290 people entered in the final stage);
- Continue publishing educational materials and textbooks auxiliary language, history and traditions of Roma, etc. for intercultural education and diversity.
- Organizing and financing further education courses of recovery such as "Second Chance"

The most important mainstream and targeted EU funded schemes launched in last year aiming at increasing Roma inclusion in education were:

- Strategic ESF program „All in kindergarten! “
 - The program was implemented by Ministry of Education in partnership with Ruhama Foundation (Oradea city)
 - Organizing summer kindergartens and implementing the strategic ESF program „ All in kindergarten! All in grade I”
 - 8400 children have attended the program
 - The program was implemented by Ministry of Education in partnership with Ruhama Foundation (Oradea city)
 - The objective of the program aim to prevent and to combat early school dropout among children of age 5-8 years from 420 disadvantage communities mainly inhabited by Roma, from rural and small urban localities.
 - The value of the project is 5 mil euros.
- Also, at the initiative of National Agency for Roma’ President was adopted in 2010 a Governmental Decision regarding the approval of school figures for university education, school year 2010-2011. According the provision of this governmental decision there were allocated 30 Ph.D. scholarships and 10 Master's scholarships designated to Roma’ higher

education graduates. The fellows also benefit from material support and from trainings within European institutions. In the first place, all the above was possible by implementing a strategic structural project “Building and implementing an innovative interdisciplinary doctoral program related to Roma issues”, financed through ESF – OPHRD 2007-2013. The value of the program is 5 mil Euros.

During the year 2011, National Agency for Roma implemented 2 ESF strategic projects:

- I. “Education of Roma children- the way to a stable employment”
 - Implemented by: National Agency for Roma in partnership with Roma Education Fund, Hungary, Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, The Resource Center for Roma Communities, Pakiv Association.
 - The overall objective is to increase the level of education of Roma children in rural and urban area, the human capital development in order to include them in a modern and flexible labour market, by ensuring access to education and reducing early school leaving.
 1. Ensure equal access to education for 1,200 Roma pupils in gymnasium with a high rate of leaving school early risk, by providing financial support, additional training and motivate them to remain in educational system;
 2. Increase the opportunity to attend high school for a total of 600 Roma pupils in the last year of gymnasium by developing mentoring services, personal development and counseling in accordance with their specific needs
 3. Stimulation of maintaining a number of 750 Roma pupils in first year of high school by facilitating their adaptation to the high school expectations, both in financial terms and in relationship with the school in order to ensure equal opportunities labor market;
 4. Increased competitiveness and providing enhanced opportunities for future participation in the labor market for a number of 450 Roma high school pupils;
 5. Support in order to continue the education for 2,400 Roma people, who have early left school, by facilitating their access to programs of "The second chance" in order to obtain basic skills and knowledge necessary to integrate on the labor market.

- II. “School – a chance for everyone”
 - Implemented by: Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, Centre for Education and Professional Development – Step by Step, Community Development Agency “Together”, International Association “Step by Step”
 - The specific objectives are:
 1. Improving the participation of Roma children, poor and disabled children at primary and secondary level of education;
 2. Diminishing the school dropout;
 3. Creating a collaboration and networking mechanisms among the actors involved in educational issues;
 4. Increasing the quality of education services.

Both programs value 5 mil Euros.

Along these two NAR projects, there are around 20 others ESF projects in the field of education, which are related to Roma people. They are implemented by different institutions, NGOs or local authorities.

Information related to:

- Number of Roma children who attend preschool education and primary, secondary and tertiary education; number of Roma children who don't attend school:

For the school year 2010-2011, 240.000 Roma students have attended the preschool education and grades I-XII education.

Around 80.000 Roma children don't attend school.

- Number of Roma teachers from primary, secondary and tertiary education:

460 teachers are hired within the education system (preschool teachers, elementary school teachers, high school teachers). Also, there are 420-460 school mediators and 42 county school inspectors

- Number of Roma children who have been moved from segregated schools to mainstreaming schools:

The Ministry of education has not such information, the ministry actions are related mainly in the field of prevention the school segregation phenomenon.

- Number of Roma children who attend preparatory classes prior to elementary school In Romania the preparatory classes function starting next school year 2012-2013

- The access to counseling services for Roma parents:

All the school programs and the ESF programs provide such counseling services

- Instruments for integration within the elementary and secondary education (teacher's assistant, personal educational plans, tutoring, other integration measures):

In Romania, there are not teacher's assistants within the mass education.

- Roma students school dropout rate within the primary, secondary and tertiary education:

10% of Roma children, compared with the whole sample, attend the kindergarten. Of the 15-16% Roma children who attend I-IV grades only 9-11% were completed the VIII grade and only 2% were completed the high school.

- Number of Roma within primary and secondary education implicated in adults education:

Annually, around 5000-7000 teens, youngsters and adults, of whom 60% are Roma, attend the Second Chance Program.

- Number of children who receive scholarship or other material support:

Within high school, there is the program „ Money for High school”. Is given 180 lei/month during the school year for students (including Roma) having an income per family member less or equal with 150lei/month.

So, of 121.145 students benefiting from this program there are, also the 2% of Roma high school students.

Also, there are other scholarships granted from the local budgets.

4. EMPLOYMENT

On 31 December 2011, the national unemployment rate was of 5.12%. The National Employment Agency (NEA) does not have a distinct record of the unemployment rate among the Roma minority.

Romania promotes the employment among the Roma people through an integrated approach, of an active social inclusion type. Measures for employment have in view both for the labour mediation in order to facilitate the direct access to a job (job fairs for Roma), as well as for the measures related to information and career counseling, professional training and social promotion to deal with problems faced by certain Roma families / communities are facing from the perspective of poverty and social exclusion.

A part of the Roma people has difficulties in accessing active measures made available to them by the county agencies for employment, for various reasons, such as:

- Poor level of education and, in some cases, lack of identity, does not allow them to follow the training courses;
- Lack of income does not allow them to travel by public transport to places where the vocational courses and training are carried out;
- Preference for devoting to seasonal agricultural work or other occupations for which they are paid on the black market;
- Many of them are beneficiaries of the guaranteed minimum income;
- Filling out the forms for being taken in evidence, as people looking for a job, is difficult for many of them.

The Human Resources Development Operational Program - Priority Axis 6 - Promoting social inclusion", within the Area of Intervention 6.1 - "Developing social economy "and within the Area of Intervention 6.2. - "Improving access and participation of vulnerable groups in the labour market", are funded projects aiming at promoting the social economy as a factor for the social integration of people facing difficulties in employment (Roma, disabled persons, over 18 leaving the state child protection system, convicted persons, etc.) (see Annex).

For professional reintegration of Roma, within the Employment Program for 2011 was included The Program 145, especially for communities with a large number of Roma, in which was estimated to occupy a total of 2.250 people, approximately 39% of the total number of Roma people proposed to be occupied in 2011. In this special program, the emphasis is on customized actions, especially on labour mediation and counseling. As a result of the Program 145, up to 31.12.2011, 2,444 persons have been employed.

In 2011, up to December 31, the number of Roma people benefiting from information, guidance and counseling was of 29,702 people out of 661,847 people counseled.

In 2011 the Romanian government continued the socio-economic actions for the inclusion of the Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority established by the National Strategy for Improving the Roma Situation for the period 2001 to 2010 by implementing integrated policies in fields like education, employment, health, housing, culture and social infrastructure, that have been transposed into the national legislation. The results of these policies/programs are reflected in the present document.

European Social Fund through HRD SOP has defined as vulnerable Roma people target group -. Priority Axis 6 "Promoting social inclusion" contributes significantly to the implementation of programs/projects meant to promote access to labour market for Roma people and participation in education, training, social inclusion measures, etc.

As regards the launch in the last year of funding schemes that had as target Roma people that was made in the call for proposals no.112 of the DMI 6.1 "Developing social economy". Applications were submitted in January 2011 and are still in the evaluation process. The amount allocated for this call for proposals is of 134 million EUR. The eligible target group includes people from vulnerable groups, including Roma people.

Proposed operational objectives aim at:

- Developing social economy structures - development and promotion of activities and services that generate profits/income to help the socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion to integrate or reintegrate into the labor market, social economic structures and/or in the formal economy ;
- Promoting the social economy as a flexible and sustainable economic tool used for the development and job creation at the regional and local level;
- Capacity building, skills, knowledge and self-esteem for vulnerable groups by creating public/private partnerships in the field of social economy;
- Strengthening the social economy structures and encouraging cooperation between the organizations.

The detailed situation of ESF projects funded by HRD, under implementation/completed, addressing target group category "Roma people" is attached and can be found in the Annex.

However, at the level of HRD SOP, within the Area of Intervention 2.2, 12 projects have been identified, they address totally/partially to Roma people whose expected value cannot be identified, because within this DMI was not possible to register the Roma people as a distinct target group category. However, at present, in the informatics management system (IMS HRD SOP), there are 9.683 Roma people registered in these projects.

The main general initiatives that had been successfully implemented for the Roma:

a. In order to improve labor market functioning, due to the changes of the Law no. 53/2003 - Labour Code – it was necessary to draw up the legislation on the general book of employees in electronic format, as well as the functioning and authorization of the temporary employment agent. For this purpose, the government approved the Government Decision no. 500/2011 on general evidence book for employees, which lead to the creation of the complete database that should reflect accurately the work of the employees, the desired impact being the reduction of the undeclared work and integration of a large number of employees in the formal economy.

b. In order to combat the undeclared work, the Law no. 52/2011 on the exercise of activities carried out occasionally by the daily-workers, as well as the law enforcement norms. In this way the employment procedures have been simplified for the daily-workers, for these people to be able to provide a subsistence income and to avoid the tax evasion.

c. To enhance the professional skills of the labour force has been adopted the Law no. 106/2011, to amend and supplement the Law no. 279/2005 on apprenticeship at the workplace. The new regulation introduced the requirement for the employer to bear the costs for the assessment made by a specialized center for evaluation and certification of professional skills acquired in other ways than formal.

d. National Strategy for equality between women and men for the period 2010 - 2012 and the General Action Plan for the implementation of the strategy were approved by the Government Decision no. 237/2010, the overall objective aiming the improvement of the framework for the implementation of the gender equality policies in all policies and programs at the national level.

e In the projects under implementation/completed, financed by the European Social Fund through HRD SOP, the Roma people were recorded in the SIM HRD SOP, which although they were not considered in this light (being Roma people) have benefited from the measures which are specific for this area of intervention, where the project / projects are implemented.

Thereby, for:

- MDI 2.2 - Preventing and correcting early leaving school, 4.717 people were registered.
- MDI 5.1 - Developing and implementing active employment measures, 3598 people were registered.
- MDI 5.2 - Promoting long term sustainability for the rural areas in terms of human resource development and employment, 2311 people were registered
- MDI 6.3 - Promoting equal opportunities in employment, 5018 people were registered.

We mention that in these conditions, the target group category "Roma people" cannot be correlated with the size of funding.

Through Program 145, mentioned above, especially for the communities with large numbers of Roma, until the 31.12.2011, 2.444 people belonging to this category have been employed.

A crucial aspect in the success of public and governmental interventions to promote the employment of the Roma people is combating the discriminatory attitudes. In 2011 Romania implemented campaigns/programs to reduce the phenomenon of discrimination among citizens, communities, employers, such as:

- The "Fem.RRom - to improve the access of the Roma women on the labour market and to support the social economy: promotion and development of the integrated services by creating cooperatives for women, access to formal education and development of specialized and personalized employment services"
- The "Partnership for development of mechanisms for implementation of equal opportunities for the Roma women on the labour market"

Also, the absorption of the European funds at the level of the programs with primary or secondary target group defined as Roma people, results to be higher than the overall rate of absorption. Preliminary estimates indicate an absorption rate three times higher than the overall average.

As regards the financing of the active measures for Roma people, we mention note that the NEA doesn't have a budget allocation only for Roma, but for all beneficiaries, thus ensuring non-discriminatory access of all stakeholders to the measures taken by NEA.

Up to 31.12.2011, the Roma people who accessed to active measures were of 50,149, of which 5,492 people were employed.

For the employment of the registered people, the NEA, taking into account the social and professional characteristics of the registered people, applied customized stimulus packages to integrate or reintegrate as rapidly as possible on the labour market.

For 2011, the NEA has foreseen the participation at free training courses for 1057 Roma people, out of which 334 are Roma women. By the end of December 2011, the number of unemployed Roma enrolled in the training courses was of 898 people, out of 46,687 people.

Analyzing the labour market requirements and in order to provide support to disadvantaged categories to find a job, it was considered useful to nationally organize job fairs for Roma people living in towns with population that mainly belongs to this category.

Job Fair for Roma people was held in 3 locations in 3 counties - Bucharest, Dambovită and Maramureș, having the following results:

- total no. of businesses participants: 51 companies;
- total no. of jobs offered: 799 jobs;
- total no. of participants: 790, of which 148 were Roma people;
- people selected for enrollment: 325, out of which 95 were Roma people;
- total people employed: 64, out of 64 Roma people.

The results are far from those expected, due to the fact that part of the Roma people has difficulties in accessing the active measures made available for them by the county agencies for employment, mainly for the reasons indicated in point no. 2.

To improve the skills among the unemployed Roma, the NEA, taking into account the social and professional background of the registered people and current requirements of the labour market, organized vocational training that, in 2011, was attended by 898 people Roma minority.

Also in 2011, the National Employment Agency gave information services, guidance and professional counseling to 29,702 Roma people.

Examples of measures to improve employment rates among the long-term unemployed Roma people: job fair for Roma people and guidance and professional counseling services, as mentioned above.

5. HOUSING

Specific objective is the ensuring, by the central and local institutions, as well as the social partners, of decent housing conditions in economically and socially disadvantaged communities, as well as ensuring the access to public services and the small infrastructure.

In order to achieve the housing objective, MRDT identified the following priorities:

1. the pilot program “Social housing units for Roma communities” carried out via the National Housing Agency, according to Government Decision No 1237 of 2008, by which the building of 301 housing units is intended;

2. the program for the rehabilitation of cultural establishments in municipalities where there are no institutions of this type in the rural and urban environment; carrying out a pilot program for a Community Social Centre for inclusion and continuing education as a means of increasing trust in mixed communities;

According to Governmental Decision No. 1237 of 2008, the central administration, in close cooperation with local administration started a pilot-program of social housing for Roma in Romania; in 2010 there were allocated from the State Budget about 4.5 million lei (= about 1.1 million Euros) for this pilot-program. The goal is to build 301 houses in 11 localities (of 11 counties, selected from all the 8 development regions of Romania); the houses contain 2 and 3 rooms.

Nr. crt.	County	Locality	Number of locative units
1	Arad	Pecica	49
2	Bihor	Tăuteu	14
3	Bihor	Oșorhei	14
4	Bistrița-Năsăud	Comuna Budacu de Jos, sat Budacu de Jos	14
5	Bistrița-Năsăud	Comuna Budacu de Jos, s. Jelna	7
6	Brașov	Hălchiu	21
7	Constanța	Mircea Vodă	49
8	Iași	Dolhești	49
9	Mehedinți	Baia de Aramă	28
10	Olt	Corabia	28
11	Sibiu	Nochrich	28
		TOTAL	301

In the housing field, the social housing programs provide:

- Building of social housing for vulnerable groups;
- Financial support for local projects and programs aimed at ensuring normal living conditions in urban and rural areas for vulnerable groups (including Roma-populated areas);
- Full or partial support for the rehabilitation of houses or building projects for homes in the disadvantaged communities (including Roma communities);

Through the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, the Government of Romania implements the Program for Building Social and Necessity Housing, and the funds from the state budget for this purpose are approved by the law on the state budget for that year.

5.1. DIRECTIONS FOR ACTION IN THE FIELDS OF HOUSING AND SMALL INFRASTRUCTURE:

A. Developing the community infrastructure favoring the inclusion of citizens belonging to Roma minority and the access to continuing training.

1. Setting up social centers, especially in rural areas, aiming at providing integrated social services, focused on training and employment in the areas / communities inhabited mainly by citizens belonging to Roma minority;

B. Improving housing quality and ensuring the observance of citizens' rights for citizens belonging to Roma minority

2. Elaborating and implementing programs for building housing units in areas inhabited mainly by population belonging to Roma minority. The objective of the construction activity is to build condominiums at European standards regarding the housing quality and, secondly, to involve the population in the respective area as labour force who will train in this field of activity;

3. The rehabilitation of buildings owned by local communities, by using the skilled and unskilled labour force of the future beneficiaries, in order to ensure housing for a definite period of time, until the persons in difficulty, including the citizens belonging to Roma minority, will enter the labour market and will have sufficient income for renting or buying their own houses;

4. Developing national funding programs or co-funding from ESF and external grants, in order to ensure the minimum housing conditions in the economically and socially disadvantaged communities (connection to electricity, drinking water, sewage, gas, sanitation systems). For this goal, using the European Fund for Regional Development (FEDER) and European Fund for Agriculture and Rural Development (FEADR), fund created in order to ensure a durable rural development. Ensuring the coordination of utilizing the resources of European Social Fund, European Fund for Regional Development, and European Fund for Rural Development.

5. Improving the legislative framework in the field of housing, in order to ensure the full observance of liberties and rights in the fields of safety and housing.

5.2. ROMANIAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Romanian Social Development Fund, whose mission is to support the sustainable development of poor communities and other vulnerable groups in Romania, implements the Priority Intervention Program (PIP), which is placed within the broader context of the Social Inclusion Decade. PIP is one of the 4 components of the Social Inclusion Project, being a Governmental project financed by a loan from the World Bank. PIP aims to boost social inclusion and to reduce poverty by improving living conditions for at least 116 Roma communities.

The project values 17.7 million Euro (including the Romanian Government contribution), plus the contribution of financed local communities - approx. 1 million Euro.

Current stage of implementation:

- 133 Roma communities received grants of up to 150,000 Euro for integrated projects, designed to contribute to social inclusion, to develop and improve the community infrastructure (roads, sewage, water system, housing conditions, environment etc. and to increase the access to social services (education, health, counseling, employment mediation etc.)

- 85 of integrated projects out of the granted ones have been finalized
- **3 communities got support to access other funds (EU, national programs)**

6. HEALTH

Several studies conducted in the last decade have evaluated the health of the Roma population and its dynamics.

One of these studies was conducted in 2011 under POS DRU project by Roma Centre for Health Policies - SASTIPEN with National Public Health Institute, in order to assess the impact of health mediation program (Cosmin Briciu, Vlad Grigoras, 2011). The study was conducted during April-June 2011, with two main objectives: a. measuring the real impact of the activity carried out by health mediators on improving the access of Roma to the health services, and b. evaluation of the decentralization process and its effects. To achieve these objectives, a study was conducted on 1499 dwells belonging to Roma population (787 dwells from 38 communities having one health mediator and 712 dwells from 37 communities with similar conditions but without health mediators).

The study showed that despite the well-known stereotypes, most of the Roma in both types of communities (with or without mediators) had a birth certificate and identity card (see Table 1). Most likely, these high percentages are not only due to the health mediator activity, but rather because of national / regional focus on this objective or representatives of municipalities.

However, there are significant differences between the two types of Roma communities when it comes to health insurance status - 85% of Roma belonging to Roma communities with mediators said that they have health insurance, while only 75% from the persons belonging to communities without health mediators have declared the same thing.

Table 1 % of Roma citizens with minim access to health care services by the type o the community

Rroma population	Communities with health mediators	Comunities without health mediators	Difference
With birth certificate	99,3	99,5	0,2
With identity cards (for people older than 15 years)	97,9	97,2	0,7
With health insurance	85	75	10**
0-17	94	85	9*
18-54	77	64	13**
55+	93	86	7*
Registered at a family doctor	96	92	4**
0-17	98	97	1
18-54	95	88	7**
55+	98	92	*

** Statistically significant

Another study conducted by the Roma Center for Health Policy - SASTIPEN in 2010 (Bogdan Paunescu, 2010) assessed the health status of Roma. The Roma Inclusion Barometer (Soros Foundation Romania, 2007) showed that 55% of Roma people interviewed said they were happy with their health, a research study conducted in 2009 by the Romani Criss NGO showed that 8 of 10 persons of Roma surveyed perceived their health positively. The study conducted by SASTIPEN in 2010 found that only 4 of 10 (39%) Roma respondents perceive their health positively. While approximately 30% perceived their health negatively (bad or very bad). Due to the methodological differences is difficult to conclude that the health of the Roma population has deteriorated in such a short period of time.

The same study described the most common diseases reported by the Roma respondent persons. Half (48%) of respondents have said no illnesses. The most commonly reported diseases were: cardiovascular disease (14%), respiratory system diseases (8.7%) and diseases of bones and joints (7.2%). About 6% declared some autoimmune diseases, rheumatic diseases and digestive or urinary tract diseases.

The vast majority of respondents have no visit to the doctor for preventive measures: 89% were not vaccinated against flu, 76% were not hospitalized for a general preventive health control (unless they had some symptoms), while 60% have not visited their family doctor for an annual check.

Most of the respondents (86%) believe that the lack of money is their main problem and a barrier, and the fact that they have not job is the second main problem (72%), in their opinion.

6.1. LIST OF HEALTH POLICIES

The main activities of the Ministry of Health in 2011, focusing on Roma health have been implemented by health mediators, decentralized activities by GD. 162/2008 and 562/2009 regarding decentralization strategy for health.

Additional activities such as health promotion, immunization, surveillance and control of communicable diseases, maternal and child health, addressing both general population and vulnerable groups are part of national health programs approved by Government Decision no. 1388/2010 and its implementing rules set by the Ministry of Health and the president of CNAS, no. 1591/1110/2010.

Specific activities of the health system and related results have been included in Government National Strategy for Roma Inclusion for 2012-2020 period approved by GD no. 1221/2011.

Results: through the partnership between the National Institute of Public Health and SASTIPEN NGO was conducted an wide research on the impact of the health mediators and the occupational standard for health mediators has been updated. A new curriculum for basic education of health mediators was developed and it is a subject of a validation process certified by the National Council of Adult Training. A total of approximately 100 Roma women will be newly employed in the system by the local authorities.

There are now approximately 250 health mediator employees at nationwide. The study carried out by SASTIPEN in partnership with the National Institute for Public Health, in order to assess the impact of health mediation program showed through qualitative research that most often the contract of employment for health mediators is renewed annually. (Cosmin Briciu, Vlad Grigoras, 2011)

As you know, by GEO nr.162/2008, duties and competencies of Ministry of Health regarding to the community health activities were transferred to the local public administration authorities.

According to the law, this activity includes programs, activities and medical services provided in an integrated system with social services and is addressing to all categories of the population of a community, especially the disadvantaged, including Roma citizens.

In Chapter 1 of Annex 1 to GD nr.56/2009 for approving the Methodological Norms of application of the ordinance mentioned, are those detailed tasks of each institution in this field namely: local public administration, Ministry of Health, local public health departments and also attributions and responsibilities of the health mediators and community nurses.

Services and community health activities are provided by the nurse and community health mediator with the quality of personnel employed by individual employment contract, enjoying rights and exercising the obligations conferred by this quality.

The individual employment contract of professional categories mentioned above is made with the local public administration whose jurisdiction they operate and the expenditure for staff persons employed funds is provided by transfers from the state budget to local budgets, through the Ministry of Health budget, other expenses as goods and services are financed by the local budgets.

Regarding the health mediators basic salary and other salary rights are established according the law as for education instructor.

Also, to ensure a minimum quality of community health care, by GD nr.459/2010 the following norms were approved for health staff engaged in these activities: a) a community nurse to 500 people assisted, b) a Roma health mediator to 700 people counseled.

In these conditions, initial professional training and the employment of mediators can be made only taking into account the regulations.

Funds approved in the budget of the Ministry of Health in 2012 for community health care assistance are 26.073 RON, up by 23.7% since 2011, according to government policies and strategies in this area.

Taking into account that the Ministry of Health provides, according to the law, by local public health departments, in addition to personnel costs, technical and methodological guidance of community health care activities for their good performance in 2012, was sent a circular letter with the recommendation to be notified to the local public authorities, letter in which were reiterated their duties and responsibilities in this area.

6.2. ROMED PROGRAMME

In 2011, National Agency for Roma participated in Moldova, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, at the exchange of experience on increasing the role of central and local authorities in implementing national strategies on Roma integration / action plans, also on strengthening their capacity in developing the national action plan in Moldova.

In Romania, the Council of Europe cooperates with NAR in implementing ROMED Program. National Agency for Roma welcomes the program initiated by the Council of Europe in Romania, as part of the Declaration adopted in Strasbourg on 20 October 2010. As a result, NAR is partner with financial contribution since 2011.

In 2012, National Agency for Roma, as National Focal Point

- supports the mediators in implementation process of practical activities
- supports the Council of Europe in ROMED monitoring process
- provides inputs to the pool of trainers on the online platform, in order to facilitate the organization of the second training session
- provides feedbacks on the national activities during the stock-taking conference