



DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005 – 2015 PROGRESS REPORT 2011

SERBIA

BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

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

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

According to the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter *Strategy*), the estimated number of citizens of Roma nationality is somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000. Data of the 2002 Census suggests that there were 108,129 citizens of Roma nationality living in Serbia while data of the 2011 Census is yet to be published in September 2012. The preliminary Census results do suggest around 780 Roma settlements, 170 of which are in Belgrade.

For the purpose of providing a full understanding of the situation of the Roma population and obtaining quality information by census, the competent institutions and the civil sector have implemented a number of activities as part of the preparations for the 2011 Census:

- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia in co-operation with the National Council of the Roma National Minority and the Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina hired around 150 co-ordinators in 120 units of local self-government of Serbia which had Roma settlements according to research "Roma Settlements, Housing Conditions and Possibilities for Roma Inclusion in Serbia".¹ The co-ordinators identified the enumeration areas containing Roma settlements which resulted in the Statistical Office hiring around 550 additional enumerators. The Statistical Office organised trainings for the co-ordinators and provided additional enumerators and funding for their fees;
- Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-government (hereinafter *Ministry for Human and Minority Rights*) supported a campaign promoting the importance of census which was organised by the National Council of the Roma National Minority and the Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina for 1,500,000.00 dinars (cca € 15,000). The activity was conducted in co-operation with OSCE Mission to Serbia and with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (hereinafter *SIDA*). Promotional posters were printed which 54 of the hired individuals were distributing during the public discussions organised in the Roma settlements;

¹ Roma Settlements, Housing Conditions and Possibilities for Roma Inclusion in Serbia, Ethnicity Research Centre, Belgrade, 2002.

- Fund for an Open Society supported a field and media campaign of a network of Roma civil societies such as the League for the Roma Decade and Roma Women, while the Open Society Institute hired a network of volunteers who made the field campaign.

In 2011, there is no new data about the Roma living under the poverty line. One of the Conclusions of the *First National Report on the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*² is that with respect to research of poverty of the extremely vulnerable groups, the possibility of continuous monitoring of the most important social inclusion indicators through the current and future regular surveys must be reviewed. One-time in-depth surveys of social inclusion for certain vulnerable groups may be undertaken as needed (for instance, 2003 Survey on Roma living in Roma Settlements and 2007 Survey on Internally Displaced Persons). Household Budget Survey data for 2010 showed that 9.2% of citizens of the Republic of Serbia were living below the absolute poverty line that year, while the relative poverty line showed that 14.5% of citizens were living under poor conditions in Serbia. In the Republic of Serbia, the most likely citizens to subcome to poverty are those living outside the cities, large family households (especially those with several children, unemployed and inactive members), households with the heads of which have lower education.

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ROMA INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

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

Ministry for Human and Minority Rights prepared a draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma for the period from 2012 to 2014. Among the reference documents used for the drafting of the Action Plan were the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and Guidelines for drafting of the Strategy or integrated set of measures for Roma inclusion. The Action Plan was prepared by working groups and for each of the 13 areas covered by the Strategy: education, housing, employment, social protection, culture, informing, anti-discrimination, political participation, status of Roma women, IDPs and returnees based on the readmission agreement. Each working group was managed by a representative of a ministry competent for the specific area, i.e. Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia. Members of the working groups were representatives selected by the National Council of the Roma National Minority, a network of Roma associations such as the League for the Roma Decade and the Roma Women Network, other associations which focus on the improvement of the status of Roma people, as well as international organisations and major bilateral donors. Draft version of the Action Plan was presented on 8th Session of the Council for Improvement of Status of Roma and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Implementation, convened by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, as well as on a consultative meeting with participants being representatives of cities. The Draft contained objectives derived from the Strategy Guidelines, measures and activities essential for their realisation, the names of those responsible for the measures/activities, partners in realisation, monitoring, available budget means and donations.

² *First National Report on the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction : The Status of Social Exclusion and Poverty Trends in the Period 2008 – 2010 and Future Priorities*, Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2010

As for different levels of implementation, it is Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina that is responsible for the implementation of the Strategy in the Autonomous Province (AP) of Vojvodina and 46 co-ordinators for Roma issues who are responsible for the implementation of the Strategy in units of local self-government. Their task is to assist with the drafting and execution of local plans for improvement of the position of the Roma people with the participation of representatives of the Roma community.

Funds for the implementation of the Strategy have been allocated from the budget of the Republic of Serbia since 2009, in the total annual amount of average 4 milion € whereas the competent ministries have been receiving substantial support for the implementation of the planned measures through donations, particularly EU funding.

IPA Budget for 2010 had €3.5 million allocated for the finding of a permanent solution of the housing problem concerning Roma families who have been displaced from the Belville informal settlement.

As part of the "Social Development" Project, the implementation of which was planned according to IPA Budget for 2012, a component was planned for the support of the implementation of the Strategy in areas of education (giving scholarships to secondary school pupils with mentorship), housing (mapping of Roma settlements on all of territory of Serbia, developing models for the improvement of housing conditions), employment, development of the information system in sectors for social protection on local self-government units level, health and education, support to the strengthening of the capacity of the Roma civil society and subsequent birth registrations. In the drafting process, representatives of the network of Roma associations (the League for the Roma Decade and the Roma Women Network) were consulted, as were particularly the representatives of certain associations with experience in the implementation of programs for the improvement of housing conditions. Estimated value of such support is €15 million.

One of the inter-sector groups within the Aid co-ordination mechanism of the Government of the Republic of Serbia should deal with Roma inclusion. Moreover, the OSCE Mission to Serbia is providing technical assistance to the Roma association networks and, *inter alia*, for the preparation of draft projects for EU funding. This type of support is being provided by the "484 Association" through the implementation of the Project Generation Facility of the Open Society Institute.

2. EDUCATION

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

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

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

In 2009, the Ministry of Education adopted a Law on the Foundations of the Education System which creates opportunities for inclusive education, including the hiring of pedagogical assistants and the elimination of categorisation. The implementation of this Law, as well as the Strategy and the Action Plan in the area of education, are supported by several major projects financed from EU funds and World Bank loans. Ministry of Education and Science regularly hosts donor co-ordination meetings for representatives of stated projects and international organisations which implement certain other projects in support of inclusive education.

With the development of inclusive education all obstacles thus far faced by the Roma will be eliminated. Nevertheless, a continuous support is necessary for the commenced processes to sustain, especially on a local level.

In 2011, the following activities were implemented:

- On the basis of the Law on the Bases of the Education System and as a result of a mutual co-operation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, a draft Rulebook on Specific Criteria for Recognising Forms of Discrimination by Employers, Students or Third Persons in an Institution was made;

- 380 pupils of Roma nationality enrolled to secondary schools and 185 students of Roma nationality enrolled to universities and colleges due to the implementation of affirmative action measures in 2011/2012;
- Ministry of Education and Science awarded 590 secondary school and 240 university scholarships, and granted 2 student loans, while the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights provided a one-time financial aid in total amount of 3,000,000 dinars (cca €30,000) to 185 first-year university students of Roma nationality;
- AP Vojvodina continued with the implementation of the mentorship and scholarship program which is financed by the Government of AP Vojvodina and the Roma Education Fund. The first project cycle (2007-2011) provided scholarships for a total of 435 pupils. During the first cycle (2007-2011), the project was implemented in 79 schools in total on the territory of AP Vojvodina. 98 mentors who were either teachers or expert associates from schools the pupils were attending were hired. Total value of the first project cycle was over €1 million. The second cycle is currently running (2011- 2013) and incorporates 401 pupils. Roma secondary school pupils who in previous school year obtained an overall mark of at least 3.0 were awarded scholarships- a monthly monetary sum of 4,800 dinars (€45 at present), in addition to having received support from their mentors. The number of pupils and students of Roma nationality in AP Vojvodina is constantly rising on all levels of education. There has been a notable continuity in the increasing numbers of enrolled pupils, year after year. In the school year 2011/2012, the total number of Roma pupils in secondary schools increased by more than two times (113%) the amount prior to project implementation. Similarly, the number of university students has increased nearly three times. Additionally, there has been a growing success of more and more school pupils obtaining overall marks of 5- from 2.5% in the first project year to 6.1% in the fourth project year;
- 170 pedagogical assistants were hired in elementary schools and preschools in Serbia. The training program received accreditation in January 2012 by the Centre for Lifelong Learning (TEMPUS program) at the University of Kragujevac. The training program consisting of modules will be run by accredited trainers from the Faculty of Education in Jagodina and partnering associations which previously held trainings for assistants and employees of the educational system. During the following two years, the Ministry of Education and Science plans to hire 200 new assistants with the financial help from the European funds and inter-sectoral collaboration. School administrations, local self-governments and associations will participate in the process of setting priorities and assigning the number of assistants to a specific region depending on the number of the Roma population and their socio-economic position, the position of municipalities on the territory of which they live, including the needs of children and their families;
- Introducing the Roma language with elements of national culture as a separate subject in schools continues. There are currently 723 pupils of 27 different elementary schools in 14 local self-governments in AP Vojvodina taking this subject. From September 2012, a new program of the Roma language that was created by the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade is to be initiated. The following year, trainings will be organised for future teachers of the Roma language who will be able to teach on the entire territory of Serbia depending on the expressed needs of elementary schools;

- Education of educators in Roma and Serbian language continues at the "Mihajlo Palov" College in Vršac;
- Establishment of local inter-sectoral support systems has begun. This will be achieved by strengthening and supporting the Inter-departmental Committees which evaluate and propose specific forms of support in areas of health, social protection and education. In order to institutionalise the local support networks for the inclusive education of children from vulnerable social groups, relevant institutions are using examples of best practice by experts working in educational institutions or the civil sector. 94% of units of local self-government in Serbia is implementing at least one project dealing with inclusive education;
- Unit for the Prevention of Violence was formed within the Ministry of Education and Science with an aim for better planning, co-ordination and efficiency in the protection of children against violence as part of the educational system, as well as more quality implementation of "School without Violence" Program which has been successfully run over the last 6 years by the UNICEF Office in Belgrade. The Unit tasks are to enable faster implementation and better understanding of the policies and regulations concerning the prevention of violence, share knowledge and gained experience of schools already in the program with other schools and turn that knowledge and experience into new bylaws and regulations. Additionally, an emergency line has been opened for reports on cases of violence;
- Established monitoring of Action Plan implementation on national and local levels. Monitoring of effects of the education policy is currently being established through the following activities: defining indicators (of efficiency, effectiveness and impact), creating a system that will gather data concerning the indicators, gathering and saving data, analysing and using data for reporting. Ministry of Education and Science sent all schools a National Questionnaire about Children from Vulnerable Social Groups which should show results of inclusive education.

The coverage of majority population children by preparatory pre-school programme was 88% and 96% in 2010/2011, depending on the source of reference and the time the data was collected. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia collects data at the start of each school year and until 30 September whereas the Ministry of Education and Science receives data in May of the following calendar year, i.e. at the end of the school year. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and the Multi Cluster Indicator Survey (hereinafter *MICS*), a researched conducted by the UNICEF, the coverage of Roma children by preparatory pre-school programme is 78%. Among Roma, there appears to be a slightly lower coverage of girls than of boys (72% : 84%), then of rural areas compared to the coverage of urban areas (66% : 84%), as well as the education of the parents and the economic situation of the household.

With regard to elementary education coverage of Roma children, there was 9.87% increase of enrollment to first year of school. The *MICS* data indicate a significant improvement of the situation among the Roma population in comparison to the elementary school attendance rate over the last 5 years. Namely, the attendance rate has gone up from 74% to 88%.

Number of pupils who dropped out of school is around 7.04% compared to the number of children enrolled to first year of school. Children leaving formal education most commonly come from marginalised groups. They either continue their education by attending adult education schools or never return to education at all.

There was also a percentage increase of young Roma people enrolling to secondary schools. According to PISA and *MICS* data, the percentage for school year 2004/2005 was 8.3% while the percentage for school year 2011/2012 was now between 15–20%.

However, the decline of number of Roma children enrolling to special schools was from 8% to 6% (MDG, 2009). Ever since the adoption of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in

2009 and the introduction of inclusive education, all children are being enrolled to formal elementary schools. Ministry of Education and Science has sent all special schools a recommendation to make an achievement/performance plan of Roma children so to enable the children to enroll to formal secondary schools.

There is no correct and precise data on children dropping out of mandatory schools. The Draft Education Strategy (to be implemented by 2020) states that taking into consideration the national average, the situation seems to have improved over the last five years. The drop-out rate of children about to move to year five (fifth grade) has dropped below the 1% margin (from 1.14% to 0.87%, MDG, 2009). Nevertheless, this average clouds the trend of children drop-outs who come from vulnerable groups, primarily those living in rural areas and Roma children. There also appears to be a difference in the percentage of boys and girls moving to the next (fifth) year (there is 1.2% less of girls than of boys). In the year 2005, around 95% of city children were moving to year five and 92% of children from rural areas (MDG, 2006). It was estimated that in the year 2008, the drop-out rate of children from rural areas was 14.2% and of Roma children 50% (MDG, 2009). Rate of elementary school completion is 95.2% (SORS, 2009). However, the cohort study is not followed since the methodology used for calculating this data does not in fact give the percentage of completion in relation to the number of enrolments of an entire school generation. Instead, the methodology provides us with a number of children finishing last year of school (the eighth grade). As reported by MICS in 2010, the latest data on Roma children from segregated settlements show 78% of enrolment to elementary schools and 34% of completion.

What is currently underway is the creation of a functional system of elementary education for adults. In 2011/2012, 37 schools were taking part with 43 more to join in 2012/2013 and another 75 colleges (secondary vocational schools). This way, 4,000 adults will be given another chance at continuing their education. Since 2009/2010 when 370 of Roma nationals were taking part in adult education, there has been an increase of those numbers by 8-10%, school year after school year.

3. EMPLOYMENT

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

Please provide information about the following fields in 2011:

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

Data of the 2011 Labour Force Survey suggest growingly negative indicators of the labour market in the Republic of Serbia. The employment rate is on a continuous decline. On the other hand, the rate of unemployment continues to rise.

Indicators of the labour market in the Republic of Serbia 2009-2011

Age category 15-64	April 2009	October 2009	April 2010	October 2010	April 2011	November 2011
Employment Rate	50.8%	50.0%	47.2%	47.1%	45.5%	45.3%
<i>Men</i>	58.7%	57.4%	54.3%	54.4%	52.2%	52.5%
<i>Women</i>	43.3%	42.7%	40.2%	39.9%	38.8%	37.9%
Unemployment Rate	16.4%	17.4%	20.1%	20.0%	22.9%	24.4%

<i>Men</i>	15.0%	16.1%	19.4%	19.0%	22.7%	23.5%
<i>Women</i>	18.1%	19.1%	20.9%	21.2%	23.1%	25.6%

Source: LBS, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

There are no available data on unemployment rate among the Roma population. The only available data is that of unemployed Roma citizens who are registered with the National Employment Service.

Due to an advanced data base of unemployed persons of Roma nationality that was created in the National Employment Service, the problem of monitoring the implementation of programs and measures established for the Roma people has been overcome. This is also due to the fact that since 2010, all data on persons of Roma nationality who are unemployed or included in the active employment policy measure has been arranged and sorted by gender.

Number of unemployed persons of Roma nationality registered with the National Employment Service

Until and including 31 December	2009	2010	2011
	13,416 persons (6,571 women)	15,867 persons (7,637 women).	19,398 persons (9,180 women)

The number of registered unemployed Roma persons is subject to change and fluctuations bearing in mind that some of them find jobs or get deleted from the records if inactive in their search for employment (not checking in with the National Employment Service or disregarding the rules). Increase of Roma persons registered with the National Employment Service indicates a positive change in their attitude towards work and employment. Therefore, it is clear that promoting employment and campaigns for raising awareness on the importance of work and employment and their benefits over social aid have had a positive impact.

For four years in a row, the Roma people have been categorising themselves in the National Employment Action Plan (which is drafted annually) as persons more difficult to be employed. As such they are given priority over others to participate in all programmes and measures of active employment policy which are run by the National Employment Service. There are also plans to create special programmes and measures for them which ought to encourage employment and advance employability.

In fact, there is a continuing plan to set up special programmes and measures for promoting employment of Roma people. In light of promoting employment, the National Employment Action Plan for 2011 sets to employ persons who find employment more difficult to obtain. It also provides for the promotion of employment of Roma through motivation to actively search for jobs and participate more in the active employment policy measures. Moreover, more Roma people are planned to obtain additional education and training, especially by including them in the program of functional elementary education. Encouraging the idea of entrepreneurship among the Roma took place in educational seminars and trainings on entrepreneurship and awarding them self-employment subsidies. Similarly, entrepreneurs were encouraged to employ the Roma people by being given subsidies for opening new job posts and hiring the Roma. In addition, there are plans to provide support to Roma NGOs and associations in their drafting of project proposals for public works that would essentially and largely employ Roma persons.

For the purpose of further promotion and employment of more Roma persons, there have been special public calls for three years in a row (2010, 2011 and 2012) specifically addressing the

unemployed persons of Roma nationality: (1) public call to unemployed Roma persons for the awarding of self-employment subsidies and (2) public call to employers for the awarding of subsidies for the opening of new work places and employment of Roma persons.

The National Employment Action Plan for 2012 has several activities for the promotion of employment of persons falling under the abovementioned category of *more difficult to obtain employment* and bigger inclusion of vulnerable groups (point 1.5 of the Action Plan). For instance, it sets to promote the significance of employment of Roma people, motivate unemployed Roma people to engage and actively search for jobs and participate in programmes for additional education and training, encourage entrepreneurship and employers to hire Roma persons by way of providing them with subsidies for the opening of new work places. Finally, the Action Plan is to create and implement special measures for Roma women and assist Roma associations and other with submitting project proposals for public works that aim to predominantly hire Roma people.

The National Employment Service writes regular reports on the results of implemented activities and the progress achieved in the employment of Roma people. The reports are sent to the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development for careful assessment and analysis.

MEASURES UNDERTAKEN TO INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA PEOPLE:

Owing to the advancement of the data base, there were 23,949 reported cases of some active employment policy measures being used by a person of Roma nationality in 2010. The following year, there were 22,479 of such cases. It ought to be noted that one person may use several different active measures (e.g. training for job searching, traineeship programme and such). It should also be stressed that the funding does not only come from the budget of the Republic of Serbia but also from donations (e.g. YEM Project *Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migrations*, implemented by four UN Agencies: IOM, ILO, UNICEF and UNDP).

The information system of the National Employment Service contains information that there were 2,760 Roma persons (1,022 were women) registered with the National Employment Service who were directed to employers for employment in the year 2011. The number of those who were employed was 1,935, of which 715 were women.

Implementation of measures prescribed by the National Employment Action Plan for 2011

Name of measure	Total number of persons	Women
Evaluation of employability and individual employment plan	14,722	6,486
Directing persons to employers	2,760	1,022
Training for active job search and job search club	340	183
Employment fairs	716	231
Motivational trainings for unemployed Roma persons	1,545	663
Inclusion in additional education and training	88	36
Functional elementary education	441	244
Informing and advising on the development of entrepreneurship	440	145

Entrepreneurship training	247	78
Subsidies for employers for opening new work places and hiring Roma persons	7	3
Subsidies for self-employment	40	14
Subsidy contributions for mandatory social insurance (Article 45)	32	12
Public works	287	63

Source: National Employment Service Report on the Implementation of the National Employment Action Plan for 2011

With most programmes and measures of active employment policy intended for support the employment of Roma people there appears to be a larger coverage of Roma persons and greater inclusion on their part than it was the case in 2010.

In 2011, there were 441 Roma persons, of which 145 were women, included in the Functional Elementary Education Project. The Project was designed for persons without qualifications and is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science through Project “Functional Elementary Education for Adults - Second Chance” (IPA 08).

It is important to stress that all activities concerning the promotion of employment of Roma people that are run by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the National Employment Service are entirely transparent. All public calls and special public calls intended for the employment of Roma persons, in addition to being published by means of public informing, are available on the official website of the National Employment Service and are always covered by the media. Upon invitation from Roma associations, representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (Employment Department) and the National Employment Service have been taking part in round tables and workshops in order to promote measures of active employment policy intended for Roma people, as well as inform about the programmes and measures available to Roma population. In 2011, the YUROM Centre was assisted with the organisation of workshops for the drafting of action plans for the employment of Roma people. The workshops had 50 representatives of the local authorities and the civil sector of the Piroć and Toplica Counties.

SUPPORT TO PROGRAMMES FINANCED BY DONORS

Within the joint YEM Programme which is being implemented in five regions (South Bačka, Belgrade, Pčinja, Nišava and Pomoravlje) and covers 52 municipalities, one of the target groups were also Roma people (young people of 15 to 30 years of age at risk with a low level of education). With the help from the Project, a Fund for the Employment of the Young was opened. From the 2,716 beneficiaries of the Fund (the young at risk), 396 are of Roma nationality (14.6%). In certain cases, the Fund beneficiaries of Roma nationality belong to a category of young persons at multiple risks (Roma persons with disabilities or Roma women who are single parents...).

Measure	Number of included Roma persons
Employment and training preparations	325
Self-employment	16

Measures for people with disabilities	4
Employment subsidies	51
TOTAL	396

Currently undergoing are preparations for a new IPA 2011 Project *Preparation of Labour Market Institutions for European Employment Policy*. As a special activity, the Project will provide support to local self-governments with high unemployment of Roma people by identifying the needs on local labour markets and drafting local employment action plans. Series of other activities are planned for IPA 2012 program cycle. These activities will be directed at strengthening the efficiency of the employment policy in relation to vulnerable groups, including the Roma people.

Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina signed an agreement with the European Commission on the implementation of a two-year Project "Improvement of Employment in AP Vojvodina". Therefore, the Office will have an obligation for the next two years to work on improving the employability of Roma people on the territory of AP Vojvodina in 20 municipalities, following three activities:

1. Starting 20 companies and awarding at least 30 subsidies in the pecuniary amount of 200,000 dinars (cca €2.000) per subsidy;
2. Vocational trainings for at least 150 people with certificates upon completion allowing them to register with the employment bureau;
3. Employing people of Roma nationality with well-known employers.

The competition was open for applications by persons of Roma nationality who were registered with the National Employment Service and attended trainings organised by the Roma Inclusion Office. Trainings' main objective was to teach how business plans are made and how business ideas remain sustainable. The goal was also to clarify to the participants the way the future business/company will operate. Before the subsidies competition announcement was published, the Roma Inclusion Office had organised public discussions in the 20 municipalities included in the Project. The public discussions received wide public support. People were interested in subsidies and vocational trainings. 50 people applied for the subsidies competition submitting their ideas of how to establish a company. Another 155 people is currently showing interest in vocational training they chose from a list of vocations specified in the Project documentation. During the first year of the Project, 10 companies were established and 15 subsidies awarded. The plan for the following year is to have another 10 companies established and at least 15 subsidies awarded. 150 people from 20 municipalities are expected to attend the vocational and employment training planned for March 2012.

4. 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),
- 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,
- 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 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 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

On the basis of preliminary results of the Census, Serbia has nearly 780 Roma settlements. 170 of these settlements are located in Belgrade.

In 2011, the following Action Plan measures were implemented: overall and sustainable reconstruction and improvement of the living conditions in Roma settlements, making of a national housing policy, improvement of the housing legal framework (laws and bylaws) and introduction of affirmative action to housing and related laws and strategic documents, displacing settlements impossible to legalise.

Two plans have been made which provide detailed solutions for Roma settlements in Opovo and Apatin. The making of these plans was financed by the Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning.

National Strategy for Social Housing and supporting Action Plan have also been adopted.

Since 2008, the Ministry for Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning has been providing financial and technical assistance to eight municipalities in development of urban planning documents for ten Roma settlements. The Ministry allocated and transferred to the municipalities about 230.000 Euro for this purpose. It is envisaged that the process of the legalisation will cover around 1.800 individual houses and 12.500 Roma. To this end, four of the eight municipalities completed the legalization of respective Roma settlements, which provides a good model for further improvement of housing conditions.

Moreover, in addition to the legalisation efforts, eight municipalities in the Republic of Serbia have developed local housing strategies providing for measures and actions for resolution of housing problems of vulnerable population. Local housing agencies were established in these eight municipalities with a mandate to develop and implement local housing policies, as well as to develop and manage the municipal housing funds. The measures related to resolution of housing problems of certain vulnerable groups (Roma, refugees and internally displaced persons) have also been defined in local action plans for improvement of the situation of these groups. In addition, some local governments also subsidize electricity and housing costs to the poorest categories of population.

In 2009, The Law on Social Housing was adopted and has introduced the Roma community as one of the priority beneficiary of the state social housing policy.

In 2010, the conference “Access to Social and Affordable Housing – Exchange of Experiences on Housing Policies in Serbia and other Countries in Europe” was held in Belgrade. The draft Social Housing Strategy was discussed and attention was paid to the models of social housing, eligibility criteria for social housing and analysis of housing of the poor in Serbia, with great attention to the Roma community. As a successful follow up, recently adopted the National Strategy for Social Housing included the main recommendations regarding the Roma community.

By the end of 2012, the Ministry for Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning will provide to municipalities around 60.000 Euro as a support to the further process of legalisation of informal Roma settlements. In addition, the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-government and the Ministry for Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning will seek additional funding for legalisation of informal Roma settlements from donor's funds.

The Block 72 informal settlement in Belgrade has been relocated. The basis for the first relocation of this settlement were the General Rules and Guidelines on eviction and relocation based on development which were drafted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. The Human and Minority Rights Minister founded a Special Work Group for the harmonisation between the work and activities of state institutions and the City of Belgrade relating to the relocation of Roma families from the informal settlement. Members of the Work Group were representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Republic Housing Agency, Commissariat for Refugees, City of Belgrade, Association “Praxis“ and National Council of the Roma National Minority. The Human and Minority Rights Administration was in charge of co-ordinating the consultations between the Work Group and people living in the settlement. Visits to the offered alternative accommodation were organised. Relocation originally planned for December 2011 was postponed to 1 March 2012. In fact, the relocation had to be postponed several times due to poor weather conditions. Finding an adequate solution to the situation was another reason why relocations were not finalised until 7, 16 and 23 March 2012. The financial support from SIDA and the co-operation between the Serbian Human and Minority Rights Administration and OSCE Mission to Serbia have provided heating for everyone living in the settlement. The settlement had the total of 34 families with a different legal

status depending on their identity documents and, consequently, different rights to alternative accommodation during relocation. It is important to point out that all the families in the settlement, except for the families which were determined to have obtained the right to return to Kosovo and Metohija, were offered the program of social inclusion which, apart from assisting in relocation and providing temporary accommodation (until the final housing), includes provision of legal assistance in obtaining identity documents, inclusion in the health care system, mandatory enrolment of children in preschool institutions and schools (organised transport for children to schools) and provision of employment for one adult family member. Families with one adult member who had registered residence in the City of Belgrade obtained the right to housing in Belgrade in the settlements with mobile housing units. Families of internally displaced persons were offered accommodation in the collective center in Gamzigradska Banja. One family obtained a house which was purchased for it and granted for free use in the period of 5 years. Families which obtained the right to return to Kosovo and Metohija were, in view of their specific situation, offered temporary accommodation in the collective center in Smederevo. The families were provided with effective legal protection in accordance with applicable regulations – the right of appeal in the second instance administrative procedure and the right to judicial protection in administrative proceedings.

At the level of AP Vojvodina, the Roma Inclusion Office has, together with the Provincial Secretariat for Architecture, Urban Planning and Construction, municipality of Opovo and Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation in Novi Sad, implemented the project “Improvement of Living Conditions in the ‘Third Roma New Settlement’” in Opovo. Funds for the implementation of the project in the amount of RSD 4,650,000.00 (cca €45,000) were provided from the budget of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The project also organised training in construction and craft activities for seven inhabitants of the settlement (for a mason, a carpenter and a potter) whereas necessary tools were also provided. In accordance with a proposal and agreement of the inhabitants of the settlement, further stages of the project included construction of two family houses which were allocated to two most vulnerable families with more members, who moved in by the end of 2009. With the assistance of the Roma Inclusion Office, this method ensured active participation of the local Roma community in solving their own problems. The construction site and infrastructure for newly constructed houses were provided by the municipality of Opovo, free of charge.

A four-year project related to the dislocation of an unhygienic Roma settlement at the outskirts of Sivac, a town in the municipality of Kula, was implemented in 2008 with the purchase of houses in Sivac. The total of 13 houses was provided for about 100 people, i.e. for all the inhabitants of the unhygienic settlement. The project was at its initial stage funded by the Dutch organisation SPOLU, together with the Center for Social Work in Kula, by purchasing two houses. The purchased houses for the Roma are not concentrated in one part of the town. Selection of different locations in the town enabled integration of relocated Roma in the existing population. The Roma Inclusion Office had a key role in sensitizing the local population to accept the relocated Roma, and so did the municipality of Kula, which was involved in funding. The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina allocated from its budget for these purposes the amount of RSD 2,000,000.00 (cca €20,000). In 2009, funds were provided through the Capital Investment Fund from the budget of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and roads were built in Roma settlements in the municipalities of Odžaci, Žabalj, Kovin, Žitište and Ruma.

The same funds were used to resolve the issue of water supply for 400 Roma families in the municipality of Žitište. Three streets were paved in the Roma settlement in Zrenjanin. The investment was RSD 12,000,000.00 (cca €120,000).

In terms of the provision of infrastructure in Roma settlements in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, funds in the amount of RSD 300,000,000.00 (cca €3 million) were provided through the Capital Investment Fund, which shall be invested successively in the following years. The problem of absent or inadequate infrastructural facilities in Roma settlements are being solved at the recommendation of the Roma Inclusion Office with the participation of the local self-government in providing necessary project documentation. Selection of Roma settlements to be financed for infrastructure construction is conditioned by the existence of facilities built from solid materials and their number in a relevant settlement. It should be emphasised that these are the largest funds to be invested in the improvement of the Roma status that are allocated from the budget of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Solving the problems of poor and unhygienic Roma settlements shall, due to their complexity, require joint actions of not only the local community, inhabitants of the Roma settlement and local population, but also of the wider community, considering the substantial funds required. It is particularly important to emphasise that issues with Roma settlements should be resolved on a voluntary basis and exclude any form of coercion, and local population should be ready to accept the co-existence with the Roma.

6. HEALTH

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

- Roma life expectancy

Data obtained from the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MCIS) indicate to the reduced child mortality rate in Roma settlements (for 1000 live births) where, in terms of infants (children less than 1 year of age), it dropped from 25 in 2005 to 14 in 2010 and, in terms of children less than 5 years of age, it dropped from 28 in 2005 to 15 in 2010. The percentage of women who know where they can get tested for HIV has increased by 4% in the national, i.e. by 8% in the Roma sample, compared to 2005.

Implementation of the Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the health field in 2011 is carried out in two manners by the Ministry of Health: by approving projects that are jointly implemented by health care centers, public health institutes and Roma non-governmental organisations, and by engaging women health mediators.

Objectives of the approved projects were: improving health and living conditions of the Roma population, improving access to and use of health care by the Roma, improving knowledge and raising awareness of the rights in the field of health care and health insurance, and adopting a healthy lifestyle by the Roma population. In 2011, 14 projects were approved in the total amount of RSD 3,380,056.00 (cca EUR 33,000).

In 2011, 75 women health mediators were engaged in 60 municipalities and cities in Serbia. Objectives of such engagement of women health mediators are as follows: improving health of the Roma, in particular women and children, improving access to health care, level of obtaining information on health, and reducing inequalities. Implemented measures and activities resulted in the increase in the number of persons with health insurance; vaccinated children; medical examinations; Roma included in counselling and preventive health care centers; Roma who selected a doctor, adopted healthy lifestyles, acquired knowledge of health control, protection from infectious diseases, planning family, harmfulness of psychoactive substances, proper diet and food storage, personal and general hygiene, importance of waste disposal; violence, neglect, abuse, human trafficking, rights related to social and health care, as well as health insurance.

Engagement of women health mediators in the period 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012 resulted in the following: provision of identity documents for 920 Roma, and health identification cards for 3,921 Roma, 9,709 children were vaccinated, 954 adults (Anti Tetanus Vaccine), 1,255 pregnant women and new mothers were examined for their health, 3,837 women underwent medical examination, 269 mammograms, 2 083 children were medically examined and enrolled in preschool institutions and primary schools, 9,764 Roma selected their doctor, and 3,597 women selected their gynecologist.

There were 4,287 first visits paid to families during which 16,273 Roma were included and registered: 4,780 women, 4,287 men and 7,206 children. 66,020 visits were paid to family members who needed assistance in obtaining identity documents, health insurance, inclusion in the health system (gynecologist examination of women, selection of a doctor, vaccination of children, and selection of a pediatrician), enrolling children to schools, obtaining various forms of aid (material one-off aid, Red Cross aid, children allowances, scholarships, etc.). There were 52,769 visits paid to families or family members for the purpose of providing health-related education through a designed interview, and 16,374 health and informative materials were distributed such as: flyers, brochures, vaccination calendars and supplies such as condoms, wipes, toothpastes, toothbrushes, etc. Health and education-related work was conducted in small groups, in the form of lectures and distribution of posters to 10 244 persons.

The totals of 133,320 visits were paid to families and family members who need assistance and to other persons for the purpose of providing health-related education through a designed interview, lecture, workshop, and other ways.

Financial aid was provided to 1,267 Roma, Red Cross aid to 2,000 Roma, one-off financial aid to 1 463 Roma, and other forms of aid to 8,822 Roma.

Part of the project "Health Mediator" includes development of the "Economic Analysis of Cost-Effectiveness of the Introduction of Roma Health Mediators in the System of Public Health Institutions in Serbia" in 2011, by the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade, from the funds which the Ministry of Health received on the basis of the Agreement with the Fund for an Open Society. The Ministry of Health is, in cooperation with the Roma Women's Center "Bibija", and with the support from the Fund for an Open Society, working on the development of a standard for the Roma mediator profession. Listed activities create a basis for the systematisation of the position of a health mediator in the health system, which ensures sustainability of the system of women health mediators who are currently engaged on the basis of the Agreement with the Ministry of Health.

In cooperation with UNICEF and TELENOR Company, the Ministry of Health has been implementing the project called "Connecting" since 2010. The project involved development of software used by women health mediators for entering data. Lap-tops and mobile phones were provided to women mediators and visiting nurses to ensure faster and improved communication. In the period 1 February 2009 to 31 March 2012, data for 118,915 Roma, 34,802 families and 251,220 family visits were entered in an electronic data base. Data for 970 settlements in 60 municipalities and cities in the Republic of Serbia were also entered in the data base, in cooperation with the World Health Organisation.

UNICEF financial support and PBILD (Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development) project for the Ministry of Health commenced in the end of 2011, and is being implemented in Pčinjski and Jablanički districts in 13 cities and municipalities: Leskovac, Lebane, Bojnik, Vlasotince, Vladičin Han, Surdulica, Vranje, Bujanovac, Preševo, Trgovište, Bosilegrad, Crna Trava and Medveđa. The project is being implemented through two components: sensitisation of health care professionals about the history, culture and tradition of the Roma (to reduce discrimination) and provision of support to women health mediators. Within the project, apart from women health mediators, education on reduction of discrimination against Roma shall also be provided to physicians and nurses employed in health care centers, and the course is accredited by the Health Council of Serbia.

Within the Delivery of Improved Local Services – DILS project of the Ministry of Health, which includes 42 health care centers and is funded from World Bank loans, various activities are organised, including those related to the education of health care professionals, health care associates and representatives of local self-governments in the field of patients' rights, in particular the Roma population. In 2011, this project included education which is part of accredited programs aimed at health care professionals and associates. In 11 health care centers in Belgrade, 43 health care professionals were educated within the program "Sensibilisation of Health Care Professionals" – about Roma culture and history, communication, problems with legally invisible Roma, chronic non-infectious diseases of Roma, anti-discrimination law, and within the program "Improving Communication with the Roma Population" – introducing them to cultural characteristics of the Roma, additional sensitisation about Roma's needs, improving communication and raising awareness about the importance of multi-departmental connection. Such courses are aimed at primary care physicians, nurses and technicians from the Department of General Medicine of a health care center. The programs shall be used for additional sensibilisation of health care professionals about vulnerable groups' needs though education about cultural characteristics of the Roma for the purpose of gaining an additional insight in the needs of the Roma as a vulnerable group. Education within the programs shall be continued in 2012, and it shall include health care professionals and associates from other health care centers, out of the total of 42 health care centers included in the project.

All the activities and activities of women health mediators shall ensure and facilitate the Roma population to become involved in various fields of life, including health care. In addition, sensibilizaion about Roma's needs of health care professionals, health care associates and other personnel in the health care system of the Republic of Serbia shall be ensured by educating them about cultural characteristics of the Roma for the purpose of gaining an additional insight into their needs as a vulnerable group.

A proposal for the Action Plan on Improvement of Health of Roma for the period 2012-2014 was developed. In order to increase accessibility, availability and quality of health care for the Roma population, the Action Plan envisages activities concerning education about Roma's rights in the field of health care by organising seminars for persons employed in the Republic Health Insurance Fund with the topic on the specific status of the Roma population in the mandatory health insurance system; seminars and workshops for health care professionals and associates to learn about specific needs of the Roma population, create better communication and understanding; educate Roma men and Roma women about their rights to health care and to improve work of visiting nurses.

List of Abbreviations:

AP- Action Plan

DILS- Delivery of Improved Local Services

IPA- Instrument for pre accession

MDG- Milenium Development Goals

MICS- Multicluster Indicative Survey

PBILD- Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development

PISA- Program for International Student Assesment

TEMPUS- Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies