

## **Report on progress in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)**

The National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) was passed by the National Assembly by a Decision of 1 March 2012 (*State Gazette*, 21/13 March 2012). The Republic of Bulgaria is the only Member State of the European Union (EU), which has adopted the strategic document on Roma integration by a decision of the supreme body of State authority in a democratic State as is its Parliament.

The National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) (NRISRB) was established in accordance with the National Reform Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) and with the National Action Plan on the Initiative Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and based on the Framework Programme for Roma Integration in the Bulgarian society (2012-2020) as adopted in 2010.

Bulgaria has observed all European recommendations, by drawing up the National Roma Integration Strategy (2012-2020) as a document outlining the long-term vision to achieve effective Roma integration.

**The Report contains information on the progress made in the National Strategy priorities presented in two sections:**

- Implementation at National Level;
- Implementation at Regional and Local Level.

### **I. Implementation at National Level**

*(The text was prepared based on the information received from Ministries and Agencies in charge the implementation of the National Strategy)*

#### **Education Priority**

Being the leading institution in charge of the implementation of the targets contained in the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) in the Education Priority, **the Ministry of Education and Science** carries out its commitments under the targets, the tasks and activities as laid down in the Action Plan for implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2020) and Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

The existing regulation in the pre-school education and preparation and school education establishes conditions for equal access to education of all children and students, regardless of their ethnicity. The requirements supporting the activities related to the educational process for children and students, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue (Art. 4, Art. 8, Art. 9 of the National Education Act, Art. 8, paragraph 3, paragraph 4 of the Rules for Application of the National Education Act and others) are legally regulated. Guarantees are provided for preventing the discriminatory attitude towards children and students, which includes the ones from the ethnic minorities. The National Education Act (NEA) measures are mapped out against the manifestations of discrimination. Article 4, paragraph 2 of the NEA states: “Restrictions or privileges based on race, nationality, sex, ethnic and social origin, religion and social status shall not be tolerated”.

Education of children and young people shall be carried out in a uniform cultural and educational environment, which establishes guarantees for protection and development of individual cultures and traditions within the framework of one common educational policy. The policy aimed at comprehensive, accessible and quality pre-school and school education addresses all children and students, regardless of their ethnicity.

An amendment to the National Education Act effective as of the 2010/2011 academic year triggered a stage-by-stage introduction of the compulsory two-year pre-school preparation of children prior to first school class. According to Art. 20, paragraph 1 of the NEA (enforced as of 05.10.2010), “Pre-school preparation of children two years prior to their entering the first school class is compulsory, however, not earlier than the year when the child is 5-year-old“. Its introduction is aimed at an equal start of each child, by so contributing to an earlier socialisation and to a development of skills needed when entering the first school class. This measure is also a precaution given the reduction reported in the numbers of school students that are not covered by the school system or are leaving schools. The introduction of such compulsory preparation for school two years prior to entering the first school class significantly increased the numbers of children covered by the pre-school education and preparation, which includes those of Roma origin.

For the purposes of improving children’s access to quality education, activities are underway to assist early child development and pre-school upbringing and preparation. According to Art. 20, paragraph 5 of the NEA: “For children, who do not have a good command in Bulgarian, the preparation under paragraph 1 shall be supplemented by Bulgarian language training according to a specialised Bulgarian language mastering methodology“. The Bulgarian language mastering by the children, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue, is regarded as particularly necessary in the period prior to entering the first school class as the purpose thereof is reaching a language command level commensurable with the level the other children have. The curricula for the obligatory preparatory group include a children preparation module for children, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue. Also, individual mother tongue learning plans are applied.

As of the 2010/2011 academic year, the gradual introduction of all-day academic scheduling was initiated, with the children from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> class inclusive being already encompassed in the 2013/2014 academic year. Under such arrangement, the compulsory academic hours are combined with some forms of self-paced training, activities according to interest and leisure time. With this measure in place, the Ministry of Education and Science intends to provide to all children, regardless of their ethnicity:

- better adaptation to school life;
- diverse opportunities for development through their inclusion in various activities;
- academic environment that would help them assimilate the knowledge provided;
- individual approach to training and higher level of independence.

The stage-by-stage introduction of all-day academic scheduling is an essential tool to compensate the educational inequality when the quality of education of children of Roma origin is concerned and to prevent their dropping out from the educational system.

The effective legislation provides for free access to education in State-owned and Municipal schools (Art. 6 of the NEA; Art. 5, paragraph 1 of the Rules for Application of the National Education Act).

According to paragraph 2 of Ordinance No. 104/2003, free use shall be ensured of:

1. (amended – SG, No. 85 of 2010, enforced as of 29.10.2010) one set of school manuals and educational aid for each child from a preparatory group under Art. 20, paragraph 1 of the National Education Act;
2. one set of textbooks and school manuals, and educational aid per each school student from 1st to 4th class;
3. one set of textbooks per each school student from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> class;
4. (amended – SG, No. 24 of 2013) one set of school manuals and educational aid and materials in the special subjects per each child with sensor disabilities: with hearing impaired, from a preparatory group;
5. (new – SG, No. 24 of 2013) one set of textbooks and school manuals and educational aid and materials in the special subjects per each school student with sensor disabilities – with hearing impaired, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> class;
6. (new – SG, No. 24 of 2013) one set of textbooks in the special subjects per each school student with sensor disabilities – with hearing impaired, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> class;

7. (new – SG, No. 24 of 2013) one set of school manuals and educational aid and materials in the special subjects per each child with sensor disabilities – with sight impaired, from a preparatory group;

8. (new – SG, No. 24 of 2013) one set of textbooks and school manuals and educational aid and materials in the special subjects per each school student with sensor disabilities – with sight impaired, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> class;

9. (new – SG, No. 24 of 2013) one set of textbooks in the special subjects per each school student with sensor disabilities – with sight impaired, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> class.

In the 2013/2014 academic year and the 2012/2013 academic year, the Ministry of Education and Science continues to implement national secondary education development programmes, part of which are focused on prevention and restricting premature school leaving.

Under the National Programme “School: territory of school students”, the “Support of all-day training of school students in initial stage“ module is being implemented. This module enables the inclusion of school students, which includes those of Roma origin, in various activities within the framework of all-day training form. Children, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue, staying all day in Bulgarian language environment are inspired to better assimilate it, which is a guarantee for better educational levels, for enhancing their communication skills and efficient communication amongst school students from various ethnic backgrounds.

The National Programme “Optimisation of school network” creates conditions to guarantee the access to education commensurable in its quality to each child and student and to the development of network of schools meeting the interests and skills of children and students.

Apart from all measures specified heretofore, in terms of prevention of dropping out from school and reduction in the rate of children prematurely leaving the educational system, the Ministry of Education and Science also undertook the following measures.

– As of 2011, each regional education inspectorate should *inter alia* implement its own absence decrease oriented measures.

– As of 2012, the National Programme “No absences at school” has been implemented. Under measure “No absence” the schools are assisted, which are implementing their own school programmes for the reduction of the number of absences amongst school students, of those having prematurely left school, and for the reintegration of the school students who have dropped out from the educational system.

– With the purpose of improving the discipline at school and reducing the cases of aggression, and in relation to the Co-ordination Mechanism for interaction in the work in the cases of children who are victims, or for interaction in crisis intervention dated 15.03.2010, in 2011, by Order No. RD 09-1084/01.08.2011, the National Mobile Group for Psychological Support was established, the members whereof carry out interventions in critical situation and support the schools in drawing up care for children at risk programmes, especially in the areas where there are no relevant specialists.

– The school students in the schools join activities according to interest in various extracurricular and extra-school activities. As school students are included (including those of Roma origin) in the activities under the project BG051PO001-4.2.05-0001 “School for self-fulfilment and preparation toward European horizons“ USPEH (Eng.: “SUCCESS”), conditions are created to give a meaning to their spare time. This is particularly important for school students at risk of dropping out and/or manifestations of aggression and/or violence. Furthermore, their participation in extracurricular activities and extra-school activities leads to enhancing of school students’ motivation to participate in the educational process, according to their interests and needs.

Creating conditions for equality and adaptation of children and students of Roma origin in the educational environment is a priority for the Ministry of Education and Science, the regional education inspectorates and the Municipalities. For this purpose, the following measures are taken:

– Carrying out joint control together with non-for-profit legal entities on the enrolment in the special schools for preventing the children without impairments there.

- Carrying out control on the enrolment in kindergartens and schools for preventing the groups and parallel classes separated by ethnic origin.
- Specialised activity of the school psychologists and pedagogical advisors to facilitate mutual adaptation of the Roma and the other children and students to the new educational environment.
- Carrying out activities in the kindergartens and schools aimed at building positive attitudes toward the educational integration of Roma children.
- Conducting seminars and other forms of training of parents to overcome the negative stereotypes and building tolerant interrelations.

The rules of the kindergartens, schools and servicing units and the job descriptions of pedagogical specialists and non-pedagogical personnel include provision and clauses intended to guarantee tolerant attitude towards children from the ethnic communities and to boost favourable school environment.

The schools and kindergartens, where children and students of various ethnic origin are trained, shall elaborate and adopt at a teachers council a programme for educational integration in conformity with the updated Strategy for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities.

The central and protected schools shall ensure access to education to Bulgarian children and students, *inter alia* children and students of Roma origin.

Using funds from the Operational Programme Operational Programme „Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013”, activities are financed under the schemes addressing the groups at risk of dropping out:

- BG051PO001-3.1.06 “Enhancing the quality of education in the central schools by introducing all-day academic day scheduling”;
- BG051PO001-4.1.03 “Integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities in the educational system”.

Ordinance No. 33 of the Council of Ministers/15.02.2013 concerning the terms and conditions for school students receiving scholarships after graduating from the primary education level, establishes an opportunity to set up academic policies to encourage school students to improve their grades and to help the access to education and to prevent school students from dropping out.

As a result of the measures undertaken to prevent students from dropping out and the early leaving the educational system, the number of early school leavers has dropped: from 6 680 in the 2009/2010 academic year to 2302 early school leavers in the 2013/2014 academic year and to 2122 early school leavers in 2013/2014 academic year.

In 2013, with the participation of representatives of State and municipal institutions and civic organisations, a draft was drawn up of a Strategy for reduction of the share of early school leavers (2013 – 2020), where policies and key measures are laid down concerning the prevention and intervention against premature school leaving, and to compensate the effect of early school leaving. The implementation of the strategy will contribute to the reduction in the share of early school leavers to achieve the national goal, and namely, until 2020 under 11%, reduction in the social exclusion, enhancing the quality of work force and the well-being of citizens. The policies and key measures to prevent premature school leaving, as laid down in the Strategy include the provision of access to education and improving the quality of education for the children and students of vulnerable ethnic communities.

For the integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities, which includes the children of Roma origin, the educational system undertakes preventive, interventional and compensatory measures.

### **Preventive measures**

1. The obligatory pre-school preparation will be a tool ensuring an equal start for the children in unequal position at the start of school training.
2. By providing all-day learning at the initial stage of primary education, the Ministry of Education and Science intends to provide to all children a better adaptation to school life, opportunities for the intellectual, physical and personality development through their inclusion in various activities and individual approach to training and higher level of independence.

3. Guaranteeing opportunities for children, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue, to master it. Pre-school preparation provides for extra time to work with such children, and the school education regulates the school's obligation to ensure additional support to school students, who do not speak Bulgarian language.

### **Intervention Measures**

1. Implementation of the National Programme "With care for each school student": to provide support to children and students, who face difficulties and to encourage talented school students.

The programme was elaborated as a three-module programme:

– Providing training to talented school students for participation in school competitions in sciences;

– Providing additional training to children from preparatory groups;

– Providing additional training to school students aimed at enhancing the levels of their achievements in educational background.

The first module addresses teacher's motivation to work with school students, by taking account of their individual skills and interests and by stimulating them to apply innovative approaches in teaching children showing different skills.

The second module addresses providing support to children from the preparatory groups to achieve standard school preparedness and good command of the Bulgarian language. The main objective of this module is to guarantee opportunities to children, whose mother tongue is different from Bulgarian, for an equal start when enrolling in school.

The third module is a tool for financing activities with the aim to provide additional training to school students from the elementary and primary stages of primary education to compensate their sustainable lagging behind in one or more subjects due to poor command in Bulgarian language and underdeveloped learning skills.

2. Setting up a network of career targeting early career guidance. The Ministry of Education and Science is implementing a project on Career Guidance Service Development from Earliest Age. The project provides for setting up 28 career centres based in the respective administrative provinces.

3. Implementation of projects under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" (OPHRD) to provide all-day scheduling in the central schools and to organise additional activities according to interest aiming to transform school into a learning community by giving a meaning to school students' spare time, that including the periods of vacations, by establishing hobby groups and project groups in natural sciences and maths and in humanitarian sciences, health education and healthy ways of life and other key competencies within the meaning of the European Reference Framework, and by developing and applying programmes for school students with manifestations of aggression or violence; development of personal and social skills of such school students with the aim to restrict any similar phenomena in selected schools.

### **Compensation Measures**

1. Implementation of reintegration projects for school leavers. The objective of this operation lies in the reintegration of early school leavers who have dropped out of the educational system and prevention of their repeated dropping out by diagnosing the main reasons for dropping out, by drawing up flexible mechanisms for reintegration, motivating the students who dropped out early to return to school and to establish an adaptive receptive environment at school.

2. Implementation of project "A New Chance of Success" – Liquidation of illiteracy among adults – training of illiterate and barely literate persons aged over 16 years. A main target of the project is through liquidation of illiteracy and forming key competences to facilitate the further access of illiterate and barely literate people to general education and vocational training standards leading further to their more competitive participation on the labour market.

As compulsory national independent evaluations are being introduced in subjects at the end of each educational degree, the processes in the system are tracked and measures are undertaken to

ensure optimum support to school students. Conditions are provided for maximum efficiency of learning time by providing substitute teachers in different subjects. Financing is provided for the purposes of individual work to school students with well manifested skills in one area or another, with ensuring conditions for additional work with lagging school students.

Bulgaria marked a significant progress (6,6% for last 9 years) in terms of decreasing the share of young people aged between 18 and 24 with lower than secondary education level and those fallen out of the educational system. In 2001 this share was 20,5 %, while in 2010 it fell to 13,9%, which is below the average for the European Union (14,1%). The national target set in accordance with the targets of Europe 2020 is that by 2020 the share of these persons to fall to 11% (National Reform Programme, National Youth Strategy, National Lifelong Learning Strategy).

The Project “Improving the quality and introduction of European instruments and practices in the vocational education and training system”’s focus is improving the quality in vocational education and training (VET) by developing and introducing methodological and tutorial prerequisites for the introduction of efficient European instruments based on the results achieved in lifelong learning. The project implementation indices would include:

- 6 framework programmes developed along with variants for the various paths for vocational education and training of heterogeneous groups of learners and trainees;
- 200 secondary vocational schools where training is carried out in pilot professions and 400 vocational schools, secondary vocational schools and art schools applying the new framework training calendars (curricula);
- trainings provided to around 1200 people, aimed at developing framework programmes, framework training calendars (curricula), training calendars (curricula) and curricula in the 20 pilot professions.

Under the project “System for career guidance in the school education” the expected results are related to the participation of 466 000 school students in vocational guidance and career development programmes, the establishment of 28 career centres and hiring 150 consultants therefor.

Under the project „School students traineeships“, 53 670 are expected to participate in school students traineeships, of which 46 000 would be the number of successful trainees.

Scheme BG05PO001-4.1.05 „Educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities“started being implemented in 2012. 152 contracts worth 22 207 222,32 Bulgarian Leva were concluded and are in a process of implementation. The scheme provides support for the following activities:

- Providing appropriate educational environment for inclusion of children from the ethnically separated kindergartens by stage-by-stage enrolment in kindergartens outside the Roma neighbourhoods in multiethnic groups;
- Preparation of children in early childhood (3–6 years) for future full inclusion in the educational process, including children from the ethnic minorities. Additional classes with children in the kindergartens, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue.
- Activities focusing preservation and development of cultural identity of children and students from the ethnic minorities and their coevals, in international multicultural environment:
- Joint forms and activities between parents of Roma children and other parents.
- Qualification courses for teachers, headmasters and other pedagogical background specialists delivering appropriate training for work in multicultural environment.

Scheme BG05PO001-4.1.06 “Reintegration of school leavers in the educational system“ started being implemented in 2012. 19 contracts worth 2 955 271,97 Bulgarian Leva were concluded and are in a process of implementation. The activity „Educational integration and reintegration“ is supported under this scheme.

The implementation of the Scheme BG05PO001-4.3.01 „Liquidation of illiteracy among adults“ worth 15 million Bulgarian Leva and initiated in 2008 is still underway. The scheme provides support for the following activities:

- Liquidation of illiteracy among adult Roma people.

– Providing training in easily accessible and free programmes focusing the provision of a second chance to persons who have turned 16.

Activities under **the National Programme “Qualifications”** adopted by a Council of Ministers’ Decision No. 203/29.03.2013:

1. Master class with international participation “Creative training of teachers to support social inclusion of Roma children in the educational process“70 pedagogical specialists were trained and 3000 training materials were given out. Experience was shared from a pilot teachers training in Spain, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria;
2. Qualification course for training pedagogical advisors in: “Skills for design and management of projects for personal and career development” –100 pedagogical advisors were trained;
3. Qualification course for training teachers from schools with merged parallel classes in: „Improving the quality of education in work with merged parallel classes“ –120 teachers were trained;
4. Training of tutors in boarding houses to develop a competence in early prevention of risk behaviour and overcoming dependencies –120 participants were trained.

Activities under the project BG051PO001-3.1.03-0001 „Qualifications of pedagogical specialists“ under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme in partnership with the National Institute for Training and Qualifications in the System of Education

1. Under activity III.2 – Pedagogical specialists for formation of knowledge, skills and competences for work in intercultural environment – target group of 4500 teachers, 1778 participants were trained so far;
2. Under activity III. 5 – Pedagogical specialists for prevention of school violence, aggression, etc. – target group of 13 000 allocated by 5 people per school.

In 2011, the Ministry of Education and Science conducted a survey of the efficiency of the policy instruments aimed at improving the access to education and reducing the number of non-enrolled and early dropped out children. That survey was included as point 4.1.3. in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (the NRISRB).

There was participation in the Interdepartmental Work Group in the Council of Ministers, in accordance with Order No. P-183/25.07.2012 issued by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, on review and analysis of effective regulation in priority sectors of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012 – 2020, and drafting proposals for legislative amendments with the view to the implementation of the NRISRB.

There was participation in the Work Group for drafting a State Educational Standard for Civil, Intercultural and Health Education (CIHE). This activity was set out in the Action Plan as point 1.1.1. “Developing and introducing a standard for education on civil, intercultural and health issues “. A variant of a standard was drawn up.

There was participation in the Interdepartmental Work Group for drafting a project of Lifelong Learning Strategy for the period 2014 –2020. A final variant of a National strategy for Lifelong Learning project is expected to be presented by the end of 2013 to correspond with the processes of confirmation of equality, social cohesion and active civil participation of the Roma people and the other vulnerable ethno-cultural communities in the life long learning system.

### **Under activity 1.3. of the Action Plan in pursuance of the NRISRB – Providing positive educational conditions in the system of higher learning:**

– According to Art. 4 of the Higher Education Act, no privileges and restrictions connected with age, race, nationality, ethnical belonging, sex, social descent, or political views shall be admitted. Higher learning shall be independent from ideologies, religions or political doctrines.

– The effective regulation is aimed at granting scholarships to university students, PhD students and students in internships and should be carried out using the most objective criteria possible based on equality and competition. No tolerance shall be shown to binding scholarships or awards to ethnicity of students in higher educational establishments.

– The Open Society Institute in collaboration with the Roma Education Fund in Budapest is carrying out a scholarship programme for university students in medicine of Roma origin. The aim of this programme is to support education in medicine, tutorship and training in intercession of Roma university students in Bulgaria and improving the health care provision and giving examples for imitation, which are supposed to motivate young Roma people to chose a health care oriented career.

On 04.05.2012, The Centre for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities (CEICSEM) called for a competition procedure (CP) 33.10 – 2012 in: “Full integration of Roma children and students through desegregation of kindergartens and the schools in separated Roma neighbourhoods and establishment of conditions for equal access to quality education beyond them“. The ground for announcing the procedure are Art. 3 and Art. 20, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Structure, Activity and Work Organisation of the Centre, in pursuance of the 2012 Annual Activity Plan. and in pursuance of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2020). A main task of this competition is to collect project proposals coming from Municipalities; Regional Education Inspectorates; State higher education establishments; State and municipal kindergartens, schools and servicing units implementing projects either independently or with the participation of non-for-profit legal entities carrying out socially useful activity.

Under CP 33.10–2012, a total of 93 project proposals have been received, 28 of which have been dropped off at the administrative check, 65 have received evaluations, of which 22 have been approved for financing.

On 02.07.2012, the CEICSEM called CP 33.11 – 201, with the theme being: “Training in the spirit of tolerance and non-discrimination in kindergartens and schools by preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and students from the ethnic minorities“ for CP 33.11 – 2012, under the Priority „Education“ from the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2020) and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2020) and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

Under CP 33.11 – 2012, a total of 158 project proposals have been received, 34 of which have been dropped off at the administrative check, 126 have received evaluations, and 81 have been approved for financing.

On 27.05.2013, the CEICSEM called CP 33.12 – 2013 under the following three strategic targets, which priorities in the triennial programme for the activity of the CEICSEM for the period 2013 – 2015.

**Strategic target 1:** Guaranteeing the right to equal access to quality education, including via integration of Roma children and students in ethnically mixed kindergartens and schools.

**Strategic target 2:** Preservation and development of cultural identity of children and students from the ethnic minorities and transformation of ethno-cultural diversity into a source of mutual knowledge, respect and collaboration.

**Strategic target 3:** Cohesion and acceptance of Roma parents to the educational process and enhancing their participation in school life.

Using the funds raised from external donor organisations and the funds allocated from the State budget, the CEICSEM finances projects in line with the implementation of the strategic targets set.

Beneficiaries under the projects are State-owned and Municipal kindergartens, schools and servicing units within the national education system, the regional education inspectorates, the state higher education establishments and the Municipalities.

Under CP 33.11 – 2012, a total of 258 project proposals have been received, 41 of which have been dropped off at the administrative check, 217 have received evaluations and 62 have been approved for financing.

The target groups planned under the project activities are children, school students and parents from the Roma community and teachers working with these school students.



## **Planned activities for the period 2014 – 2020**

In pursuance of Decision No. 19 / 09.01.2013 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, a thematic Work Group has been drafting the Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” 2014–2020. (OP SESG). A version of the OP SESG, which is published on the website of the Structural Funds and International Educational Programmes Directorate General at the Ministry of Education and Science: <http://sf.mon.bg>, provides for the isolation of Priority Axis 3 “Educational environment for Active Social Cohesion“ with Investment Priority 2 “Integration of Marginalised Communities such as the Roma“. For the achievement of the goals set, indicative activities are provided for such as:

- Additional Bulgarian language training for the children and students, for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue;
- Enhancing the capacity of pedagogical specialists for work in multicultural environment;
- Providing an appropriate educational environment for inclusion of children and students of Roma origin from the ethnically separated kindergartens and schools through stage-by-stage enrolment in kindergartens and schools beyond the Roma neighbourhoods;
- Support of the educational integration process and of the social inclusion process through kindergartens and schools network optimisation;
- Support for Roma families for training of their children in kindergartens starting at the age of three years with the view of their early socialisation;
- Providing conditions and resources to cover children from the ethnic minorities in all-day academic day scheduling;
- Support for continuation of education through to the high school secondary education stage and into the higher education establishments;
- Support for building and preservation of cultural identity of children and students from the ethnic minorities, which includes creating conditions for mother tongue learning;
- Affirmation of intercultural education as an inseparable part of the Bulgarian educational system modernisation process;
- Encouraging the participation of parents in the educational process;
- Overcoming the negative public attitudes based on ethnic origin and cultural identity.

The specific schemes whereunder applications may be lodged, the eligible activities and the amount of grants will be developed upon the final approval of the OP SESG by both the Council of Ministers and the European Commission.

## **Health Care Priority**

**The Ministry of Health is a leading institution in charge of the implementation of the targets under the Strategy within the Health Care Priority.**

Ministry of Health’s priority is aimed at creating better conditions and providing equal access to all citizens of Bulgaria to health services, regardless of their sex, age, ethnicity or social status. Particular attention is paid to improving health service provision of groups in unequal position.

The adoption of the Health Strategy by the Council of Ministers in 2005 enabled annual planning and disbursement of financial resources, which showed a significant growth over the years. Financial estimates were made of the funds needed until 2015, which guarantees sustainability of the processes and continuation of the activities initiated in the precedent years.

The activities and priorities as laid down in the Health Strategy for persons in unequal position belonging to the ethnic minorities (2005-2015) were included in the Health care section of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (NRISRB) 2012-2020 and in the Action Plan thereto.

The funds from the budget of the Ministry of Health are spent mainly on precautionary examinations on the spot in settlements populated by Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin who do not pay their health insurance contributions.

Over the last few years, the Ministry of Health annually allocates funds disbursed on conducting precautionary examinations and analyses in settlements mainly populated by Roma people, by using the 23 mobile medical care practices received under the PHARE Programme.

An example of good practice is the precautionary examinations using the 23 mobile medical care practices. Within the framework of three subsequent projects under the PHARE Programme, the Ministry of Health has received: 5 medical care offices for general precautionary examinations, 2 radiological units, 2 mammography machines, 3 offices for ultrasonographic screenings, 3 offices for laboratory analyses, 4 paediatric and 4 mobile medical care practices.

#### **Activities accomplished in the period 2011—June, 2013**

In 2011 and 2012, the mobile medical care practices were used to carry out a total of 23 190 examinations and analyses:

- 2 120 immunisations of children with incomplete immunisation status;
- 2 494 radiological screenings;
- 5 221 gynaecologic examinations;
- 4 630 precautionary examinations of children;
- 2 124 mammography screenings;
- 3 289 ultrasonographic screenings;
- 3 312 laboratory analyses.

Making the examinations in the specified regions was anticipated or accompanied by lectures, talks and campaigns. The topics debated were in the spheres of contraception, sexually transmitted infections, breast cancer, cervical cancer, healthy nutrition, immunisations, patient's rights, socially significant illnesses, environment and health, osteoporosis and tobacco smoking. Enhancing health awareness is largely carried out helped by aid materials, i.e. health brochures and leaflets which contain easy explanations of the relevant health issue.

In 2011 and 2012 101 talks were given attended by 2066 persons; 102 campaigns having covered 3 956 persons; 2 press conferences; 17 175 health awareness materials were given out; and a survey among 100 persons was carried out.

During the first semester of 2013, the following were conducted: 83 trainings, with 1 000 persons covered; 243 talks and lectures, with 2793 persons covered; 20 campaigns, with 3 000 persons covered. 36 films and clips were shown. 2714 health awareness materials were given out. 473 epidemiological studies were carried out, 6 seminars, 563 surveys, 867 health awareness events were carried out;

Another good practice example is the achievement in the area of health mediators. The position 'health mediator' was included in the National Classification of Professions and Occupations in Republic of Bulgaria. The purpose of this mediator programme is: to overcome cultural barriers in communication between the Roma communities and the medical personnel on the spot, overcoming of existing discrimination attitudes in health service provision to the Roma people, optimising conducting of medical precautionary programmes amongst the Roma population, health education of the Roma people and active social work in the community and particularly amongst vulnerable Roma groups.

In 2011, 105 health mediators were active in 57 Municipalities. In 2012, 109 health mediators were active in 59 Municipalities, and in 2013 the number of those was already 130 distributed in 71 Municipalities. The estimated number for 2014 of health mediators is 150.

Periodically, the knowledge of the medical personnel of the health issues specific for the Roma population is enhanced by improving the curricula for medical education in medical universities and colleges.

A good practice found its place over the years: the Ministry of Health's collaboration with non-governmental organisations, with constant increase in the number of such organisations, operating in Roma community.

In the period 2010-2013, seven National meetings under the project "Initiative for Health and Vaccination" took place, which were organised by the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues at the Council of Ministers jointly with the Ministry of Health and

the Healthcare Committee at the 41<sup>st</sup> National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria in partnership with: the National Network of Health Mediators in Bulgaria, the National Association of General Practitioners in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Bulgarian Association of Innovative Medicine, the Bulgarian Association for Vaccination, with the support of GlaxoSmithKline and MSD.

These meetings strengthened the good collaboration between the main participants in the campaigns for prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases amongst vulnerable groups. The health mediators play a fundamental role when it comes to practical prevention of various diseases and improving the health status of the Roma communities as laid down in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy.

It was reported in September 2013 that for a period of three years, around 200 thousand children with incomplete or lacking immunisation status were vaccinated following the compulsory immunisation calendar. The joint efforts of stakeholders have led to this result.

In 2012, teachers from the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University in Sofia trained medical specialists and representatives of non-governmental sector a new group of 40 health mediators. The training of health mediators is backed by the pharmaceutical company of GlaxoSmithKline and is part of the activities under the project "Initiative for Health and Vaccination". Within 240 academic hours, the health mediators are familiarised with the legal regulations and the system of health services in Bulgaria, the rights and obligations of patients and are provided some information concerning some basic diseases (i.e. prevention, precautionary measures and treatment).

Thematic Fund Agreement "Reform Fund Linked to the Inclusion of Roma and other Vulnerable Groups" was signed on 21.01.2013 under the Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program. The objective of the Agreement is to support Bulgaria in promoting social inclusion of the Roma in implementing the National Strategy for the Integration of Roma until 2020. The thematic fund will provide an opportunity to implement the "Program for the Promotion of Social Inclusion of Roma and other Vulnerable Groups".

The program covers two priority lines:

- "Improvement of the Integration of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups in the Health and Educational System". The strategic objective of the intervention under this priority line will be to support integration of Roma children and women in the Bulgarian educational and health systems, which will be achieved through specific projects and by mainstreaming the good practices from the projects into sustainable policies.

- "Empowerment and Awareness" aims at supporting the Roma cultural integration and identity, continuity and enhanced Roma participation in decision making and establishing policies and priorities. This support is provided for sustainable changes in attitudes that are more likely to favour the inclusion of Roma in the Bulgarian society.

The main focus is financing measures for pre-school and school activities - stimulating children to attend schools and kindergartens, supporting parents in the process of stimulating children, organization of supporting lessons, bilingual lessons, development of social skills; advice to parents whose children do not attend school regularly; providing specialized care for children with SEN; improving the quality of education in kindergartens and schools located in major segregated neighborhoods and rural areas attended mainly by Roma children.

Regarding the health component, integrated services include basic elements of pre-hospital (primary) health, i.e regular medical examinations for the target groups, prenatal and postnatal care and family planning, contribution to the implementation of immunization campaigns for children, as well as prevention of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV / AIDS, other programs aimed at improving the health status according to the specific needs of the community, contribution to health education and ensuring access to health information. It is to encourage greater involvement of GPs in order to facilitate access of Roma to primary health care, and the establishment of effective dialogue between GPs, local authorities, regional health inspectorates, health mediators and the active in this field NGOs.

As part of an integrated approach, the projects should include services creating motivation to work and access to the labor market and the social services, local initiatives and training as well as campaigns among the host community which are in line with the national and regional Roma strategies.

The program will be implemented by the municipalities. Potential partners depending on the type of activities performed could be NGOs, schools, universities, employers and their associations, professional unions, special training centers, GPs, hospitals.

### **Activities financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria "Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS" Program**

1. **The main objective of the program** is to contribute to the reduction of new cases of HIV / AIDS and improve the quality of life of people living with HIV / AIDS in Bulgaria by:

- Increase from 37% in 2007 to at least 60% in 2014 the coverage of the most vulnerable population groups by targeted, sustainable and proven interventions for HIV prevention in order to reduce the risk of infection and transmission of HIV infection.

- Increase from 33% in 2007 to at least 75% of the coverage of the most vulnerable groups in services for voluntary counseling and testing for HIV in order to increase the percentage of people living with HIV who know their status. To achieve this, the overall strategy of the program focuses on three broad aspects of the national response: a) sustainability and nationality; b) increasing the scope and sustainability of the proposed comprehensive, high-quality programs and services that address the specific needs of the most vulnerable groups and c) professional services and support for people living with HIV / AIDS to improve their lives.

The program is structured into nine components to be implemented at national and local level in 28 regions:

**Component 1** Creating a supportive environment for sustainable national response to HIV / AIDS in Bulgaria;

**Component 2** Strengthening the scientific basis for targeted and effective national response to HIV / AIDS;

**Component 3** Increasing the scope of voluntary counseling and testing for HIV through a network of low-threshold services with a focus on groups at greatest risk; **Component 4.** Reducing vulnerability to HIV of the injecting drug users (IDU) by increasing the coverage of the group with a complete package of preventive interventions;

**Component 5** Reducing vulnerability to HIV of people from the Roma communities who are at greatest risk (aged 15-25 years) by increasing the coverage of the group with community-based prevention services and referral;

**Component 6** Reducing vulnerability to HIV of prostituting women and men by increasing the coverage of the group with a complete package of preventive interventions;

**Component 7** Reducing vulnerability to HIV among young people most at risk (15-24) by increasing the scope of services and programs aimed at young people;

**Component 8** Improving the quality of life of people living with HIV / AIDS through ensuring universal access to treatment, care and support;

**Component 9** Reducing vulnerability to HIV of men who have sex with men (MSM) through an increase in the coverage of the group with a complete package of preventive interventions;

The program is one of the most large-scale preventive health programs in Bulgaria and is implemented in 28 municipalities regional centers. To perform these tasks in 2013, the Ministry of Health, as the Principal Recipient, has signed more than 60 contracts with NGOs - sub-recipients of funds and has signed Authorization Orders to 28 Regional Inspectorates for Protection and Control of Public Health (RHI), National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases (NCIPD) etc.

**II. Main objective of Component 5 Reducing vulnerability to HIV of people from the Roma communities** who are at risk (age 15-25) by increasing the coverage of the group by community-based prevention services and referral.

The specific approach to health and social work among the Roma is based on the principle of empowering the community itself to develop and implement interventions and thus become an

agent of change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior. It is important to emphasize that all field workers, and the team coordinators are of Roma origin. The advantages of this approach to recruitment and implementation of the activities can be seen in several aspects:

(1) sense of ownership and leadership related to the activities is the strongest motivation for the field teams;

(2) education based on life skills as part of health education for the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections has an additional positive effect related to social development and integration of the community by stimulating demand for education, health and work;

(3) training and use of informal youth leaders on a "peer education" was successful in initiating positive change in behavior and community norms.

**Eight medical and social centers for work in Roma communities** operate and have been established by the Global Fund which through their services aim at reducing the negative health and social status factors for the Roma like programs for maternal and child health, programs for prevention and control of HIV / AIDS, programs for prevention and control of tuberculosis and other activities for social inclusion and participation in social life can become major centers for the development of basic life and health skills as part of health education for the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

**III. Data for the progress of the implementation of Component 5** Reducing vulnerability to HIV of people from Roma communities who are at risk (age 15-25) by increasing the coverage of the group by community-based prevention services and referral (for the period 01.01.2011 r. – 30.06.2013)

**For the period 01.01.2011 - 30.06.2013**, ten NGOs performed activities under Component 5 of the Program "Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS" working with vulnerable groups in the following **10 regions**: Burgas, Varna, Kyustendil, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Sliven, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Yambol.

- **Over 100 representatives from the NGO teams** were involved in the teams on the field and performed activities for the prevention and control of HIV / AIDS among vulnerable groups.

**In the period 01.01.2011-31.12.2011**, the following results were achieved on key indicators through field work in the Roma community;

- Total number of clients reached by services during field work - 28 929;

- Total number of contacts made to provide advanced services, including counseling, referral to hospitals and social institutions, accompanying for examination in KABKIS (medical offices for anonymous and free-of-charge counseling and testing for HIV / AIDS) and other - 84 017;

- Total number of persons tested for HIV and have learned their status - 10 048;

- Total number of examinations for the diagnosis of STIs – 5548;

- Total number of participants in the sessions on health education and prevention of HIV / AIDS and STIs - 1852;

- Total number of people reached by the "Case management" - 1454;

- Total number of condoms distributed - 256 394;

- Total number of distributed health education materials - 50 567.

**In the period 01.01.-31.12.2012** under component 5 of the Program the following results on key indicators have been reached:

- Total number of clients reached by services during field work - 33 739;

- Total number of contacts made to provide expanded services, including counseling, referral to hospitals and social institutions, accompanying for testing in KABKIS and other - 58 349;

- Total number of persons tested for HIV and have learned their status - 7 825;

- Total number of examinations for the diagnosis of STIs - 3,135;

- Total number of participants in the sessions on health education and prevention of HIV / AIDS and STIs - 1,176;

- Total number of people reached by the "Case management" - 1,070;

- Total number of condoms distributed - 340 871;

- Total number of distributed health education materials - 36,750.

**In the period 01.01.-30.06.2013** under component 5 of the Program "Prevention and Control of HIV /AIDS" the following results have been achieved under key indicators:

- Total number of clients reached by services during field work - 13 129;
- Total number of contacts made to provide expanded services, including counseling, referral to hospitals and social institutions, accompanying for testing in KABKIS and other - 25 211;
- Total number of persons tested for HIV and have learned their status - 2 562;
- Total number of examinations for the diagnosis of STIs - 1,087;
- Total number of participants in the sessions on health education and prevention of HIV / AIDS and STIs - 120;
- Total number of people reached by the "Case management" - 561;
- Total number of condoms distributed - 153 473;
- Total number of distributed health education materials - 19,787.

### **Program "Improving Tuberculosis (TB) Control"**

I. The main goal of the Programs for TB control funded by the Global Fund -

"Improving the Control of Tuberculosis in Bulgaria" and " To Strengthen the National Tuberculosis Control in Bulgaria " is to reduce the burden of tuberculosis in the Republic of Bulgaria. This aim is expected to be achieved by: strengthening of the infrastructure; introducing a system of epidemiological surveillance; implementation of effective strategies for modern diagnosis and quality treatment; prevention, care and support among the groups at highest risk; establishment of an external evaluation of the quality of laboratory diagnostics; monitoring and evaluation of the situation and the response to the problem, and active implementation of a multisectoral approach in the national response to the problem.

The programs are designed to remove the program and financial gaps in the "National Program for Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2007-2011" and ensure an integrated and balanced multisectoral approach in the implementation of the national response, which includes (1) prevention, (2) treatment, (3) care and support for people affected by the disease (4) special focus on poor and vulnerable people groups.

Specific areas to provide services and activities are organized in and subject to 5 operational objectives:

**Operational objective No.1:** Ensure efficient management and coordination of the National Program for Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis;

**Operational objective No.2:** Improve the efficiency of diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis in Bulgaria;

**Operational objective No.3:** Reduce the spread of tuberculosis in prisons in Bulgaria

**Operational objective No.4:** Improving access to prevention and treatment of tuberculosis in high-risk groups - refugees and asylum seekers, immigrants, at-risk youth, injection drug users, persons with alcohol dependence;

**Operational objective No.5:** Expansion of the efficient care for prevention and control of tuberculosis in the Roma community.

**II.** Data for the progress of the implementation of Component 5 "Expansion of the efficient care for prevention and control of tuberculosis in the Roma community" (for the period 01.01.2011 r. – 30.06.2013)

In the period 01.01.2011 - 30.06.2013 according to the programs funded by the Global Fund, the capacity for TB control at national and regional level was significantly strengthened through the implementation of the planned activities.

**In the period 2011-2012** total of 13 NGOs were involved in the implementation of the activities under Component 5 of the Program "Improving the Control of Tuberculosis in Bulgaria" and 16 NGOs under Component 5 of the Program "To Strengthen the National Tuberculosis Control in Bulgaria" which covered the entire territory of the country with their activities.

As at 2013, total of 15 NGOs implemented activities under Component 5 of the Program "To Strengthen the National Tuberculosis Control in Bulgaria" working with vulnerable groups in **15 regions** as follows: Burgas, Varna, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Kyustendil, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Sliven, Sofia, Sofia - region, Montana, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Yambol.

**More than 140 representatives of NGOs** participated in the teams involved with field work and implemented activities on prevention and control of tuberculosis among vulnerable groups. **In the period 01.01.2011-31.12.2011, the following results were achieved on key indicators** through field work in the Roma community:

- **20 272 persons were screened for risk of tuberculosis, of which 6 396 persons received medical examination** (examination of the sputum, Mantoux test or x-ray) for early detection of tuberculosis;

- **The data for persons who have received medical examination show - 137 have active tuberculosis infection and 546 have latent tuberculosis infection;**

- All persons with active tuberculosis infection have been offered free-of-charge treatment with first line antitubercular drugs while the rest of the expenditures associated with the treatment including diagnostic procedures, medication and hospitalization are covered by the budget of the Ministry of Health;

- **4 529 persons at high risk are referred to and/or accompanied to hospitals;**

- **Total 44 385 persons are contacted for the provision of services including educational activities and individual counseling;**

- **More than 32 432 health education and information materials are distributed**

**In the period 01.01.2012-31.12.2012, the following results were achieved on key indicators** through field work in the Roma community:

- **16 594 persons were screened for risk of tuberculosis, of which 6 405 received specific medical examination** (sputum examination, Mantoux test or x-Ray) for early detection of tuberculosis;

- **From those who received medical examination - 114 are with active tuberculosis and 515 are with latent tuberculosis infection;**

- All persons with active tuberculosis infection have been offered free-of-charge treatment with first line antitubercular drugs while the rest of the expenditures associated with the treatment including diagnostic procedures, medication and hospitalization are covered by the budget of the Ministry of Health;

- **3 363 persons at high risk are referred to and/or accompanied to hospitals;**

- **Total of 31 527 are reached by services including education activities and individual counseling;**

- **More than 27 545 health education and information materials are distributed.**

**In the period 01.01.2013-30.06.2013, the following results were achieved on key indicators** through field work in the Roma community:

- **3 591 persons were screened for risk of tuberculosis, of which 739 persons have received medical examination** (examination of the sputum, Mantoux test or x-ray) for early detection of tuberculosis.

- **From those who have received medical examination - 29 are with active tuberculosis and 56 are with latent tuberculosis infection;**

- All persons with active tuberculosis infection have been offered free-of-charge treatment with first line antitubercular drugs while the rest of the expenditures associated with the treatment including diagnostic procedures, medication and hospitalization are covered by the budget of the Ministry of Health;

- **355 persons at high risk are referred to and/or accompanied to hospitals;**

- **Total of 6 372 are reached by services including education activities and individual counseling;**

- **More than 6 942 health education and information materials are distributed.**

**Priorities of the Ministry of Health in the sphere of the Roma health care for the next Programming Period (2014 – 2020) are as follows:**

- Overcoming and cessation of the negative trends governing the health statuses of persons in unequal position belonging to ethnic minorities and creation of conditions for the improvement thereof;
- Preventive care for mother-and-child health care;
- Providing equal access to health services to persons in unequal position belonging to ethnic minorities;
- Increasing the number of qualified Roma people employed in the healthcare system Development of mediation and of various forms of work for and in the community (health and social centres, etc.);
- Improving health related knowledge and providing access to health related information;
- Training of health specialists for efficient work in multiethnic environment.
- Overcoming of cultural barriers in communication and different forms of discrimination attitudes;
- Expanding the scope of health insured persons in unequal position belonging to ethnic minorities by undertaking legislative initiatives regarding health care provision to socially weak persons, which includes of the long-term unemployed;

The priorities of the Ministry of Health are provided for to be achieved through the MH budget and external donors, with planning activities in the following directions:

- Carrying out the precautionary examinations of persons not paying their health insurance contributions, who are in unequal position and persons living in distant settlements with difficult access to medical care, by using the 23 mobile medical care practices provided to the Ministry of Health under the PHARE Programme.
- Organising and conducting campaigns and talks for better awareness of people in unequal position in terms of the importance of the precautionary examinations, immunisations, restricting behaviour related risk factors, and reducing early pregnancies and abortions.
- Organising and providing support by additionally financing the preparation of young people of Roma origin when applying for medical universities and colleges and providing support to Roma people, university students in medicine, with scholarships during their studies.
- Training university students in medical universities and colleges in work with ethnic communities, and organising seminars familiarising the medical personnel operating in neighbourhoods with compact Roma population, with Roma culture, traditions and health status.
- Expanding the network of health mediators, training health mediators and their fulfilment aiming to providing equal access to health services to people in unequal position belonging to the ethnic minorities.

In the new programming period, one of the so-called "investment priorities " of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development " 2014-2020 (co-financed by the European Social Fund) is the priority "Integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma" Within this priority could be implemented integrated projects of varied number of beneficiaries - municipalities, NGOs, other public and private entities operating in the field of social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Target group of these projects will be communities of people living in social exclusion, including people living in separate areas of high poverty, unemployment and other social problem, Roma and other ethnic minorities, disabled people, people at risk of discrimination and more.

The projects will be implemented in multiple directions and one of them will be improving access to social and health services (provision of access and delivery of quality health and social services, activities to improve access to health care and health education to marginalized communities, incl. through health awareness campaigns, improving the access for families and children from marginalized communities to services to improve the health and development of children in infancy; providing integrated cross-sectoral services, promoting family planning and responsible parenthood).



Besides, out of this investment priority, representatives of Roma ethnicity can equally participate in the implementation of other initiatives supported financially by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020.

### **Employment Priority:**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) is the leading institution in charge of the implementation of the targets in Employment Priority of the Strategy. The operational target as set out in the Section "Employment" of the National Strategy is: to improve the access of Roma people to the labour market and to increase the share of the employed persons among them.

The measures to achieve the targets were laid down in the Action Plan. Together with the implementation of the supplementary measures under the Education Priority addressing the enhancement of work force skill level, low-qualification workers' competence and qualifications, they will contribute to the declining of the poverty levels amongst the employees and workers and their families and to achieving National Target 5 "Reducing the Number of People Living in Poverty by 260 thousand".

The information under Employment Priority includes implementation measures proposed by the MLSP, the Employment Agency and the Social Assistance Agency.

**The Employment Agency** implements active policy on the labour market, which is prioritised as assistance to the socio-economic integration of the groups in unequal position on the labour market, with the focus lying on the Roma people. In its actions, the Employment Agency respects the discrimination prevention practices and prerequisites for violating equal treatment when providing services to job seekers, with the Roma people here included.

NEA develops and implements annual plans for assisting the integration of Roma people according to the aims and tasks of the National Roma Integration Strategy. The Plans contain activities for the employability and qualification of Roma people registered in the Local Labour Offices - motivations for active behaviour on the Labour market, professional orientation and inclusion in literacy trainings, professional qualification and key competences. The programmes and measures for employment and trainings, including the *Human Resources Development* Operational Programme, provide employing at the primary labour market. The plans contain also measures for increasing the entrepreneurial culture of Roma people by motivational trainings and trainings for initiation and management of own businesses as well as building a capacity and motivating the social and civil dialogue with nongovernmental organizations.

**Since 2010**, 69 389 Roma people have been included in activities for employability and qualification. 6 879 of them have been included in literacy trainings through the *Literacy and Vocational Trainings for Roma people* National Programme. 8 299 have been included in professional qualification and key competences trainings - 724 of them through the *HRD OP*. The employment of 121 063 has been provided - through *From Social Assistance to Employment* National Programme for nearly 60 000 of them. 1275 have been included in activities to increase their entrepreneurial culture.

It has been foreseen that in the period of 2011-2015, 26 500 Roma people registered in the LLO should be included in activities for employability and qualification, 50 000 should be recruited and 1500 should be motivated and assisted into initiating their own businesses

Measures taken in 2011 -2013.

**In 2011** the planned **competitiveness raising** on the labour market and providing employment to 15 600 unemployed persons of Roma origin was completed at 108,42% or 16 914 persons had enhanced their competitiveness on the labour market and were employed. The allocation by specific individual activities is as follows: 6025 persons were included in employability and qualification raising activities, of which: 4741 persons were included in individual and group forms of career guidance and motivation for active behaviour on the labour market; 1284 persons were included in occupational qualification and key competences acquisition training, with 1273

of those being included under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” (OPHRD).

In 2011 employment was provided to 10 889 unemployed persons through their inclusion in various programmes, employment oriented measures, and primary labour market measures. The National Programme “From social benefits to employment” includes 5 475 unemployed persons, while under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, employment was ensured to 1622 persons. The number of persons who received employment on the primary labour market is 2 869.

The Employment Agency organises and conducts specialised Roma community oriented labour exchanges. The goal of such exchanges is to provide a support to the labour fulfilment of the unemployed persons of Roma origin by facilitating their access to information concerning vacant workplaces and providing direct contact and bargaining with employers. 6 exchanges were organised in 2011– in Straldzha, Lom, Lukovit, Knezha, Chirpan and in Plovdiv, Stolipinovo neighbourhood. Those exchanges were attended by 778 job seekers and 47 employers, who announced 325 vacant workplaces. The number of persons who started work is 309.

In 2011, 15 persons were covered by entrepreneurship encouragement activities, of whom 11 were included in motivation training, and 4 – in own business starting and management training (start-up training).

In order to encourage the social and civil dialogue, 2011 saw 143 meetings with Roma NGOs for collaboration and support of the labour market participation of the unemployed persons of Roma origin.

The number of encompassed unemployed Roma people is dependant on people’s self-determination by ethnos, while the indicators are part of the activities in the Employment Agency Action Plan. In 2011, the activities are financed with funds from the budget of the Employment Agency allocated for active policy on the labour market and under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme.

**In 2012.** Training and employment included 21 663 persons of Roma origin. Employment was provided to 11 478 persons through inclusion in various projects, programmes and encouraging measures, and on the primary labour market. The biggest share belonged to those who started work under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme: 4095. The number of people who enjoyed new employment under the National Programme “From social benefits to employment“ was 3529. The primary market delivered jobs to 3122 new employees/workers of Roma origin, while encouraging measures ensured employment to 253 persons.

As to entrepreneurship encouragement, 25 persons were included in motivation training, and 101 persons were included in own business starting and management training (start-up training), of which 100 persons came under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme. Employment readiness improvement activities were enjoyed by 10059 persons, of which: 6004 persons attended individual and group forms for career guidance and motivation for active behaviour on the labour market; 1080 persons attended training for liquidation of illiteracy, with all of them being involved under the project “A New Chance of Success“ within the scope of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science; 2975 persons attended occupational qualification and key competences acquisition training, with 2947 of whom being under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme.

As regards the encouraging of social and civil dialogue, 134 meetings were carried out between the labour offices and Roma NGOs in 2012 in support of the labour market participation of the unemployed persons of Roma origin.

With the support of OPHRD, target schemes are underway addressing groups in unequal position on the labour market:

➤ The Scheme “Take Your Life in Your Hands” (2010-2013) provides motivation and support to people from the vulnerable groups, and opportunities for training and apprenticeships with an employer for 3-month terms. By 21.12.2012, the Scheme was joined by 2849 persons, of which 2431 were involved in training and 418 were involved in employment.

➤ The Scheme „Improving the quality of services provided by the Employment Agency to citizens and business community focusing the vulnerable groups on the labour market” (2010-2013) includes selection and appointments in the labour offices of 350 labour mediators assigned to work with individuals from groups in unequal position on the labour market, with 250 of them already having been appointed in August, 2011. Training is provided to the employees in the labour offices who would work with persons from the vulnerable groups and until the end of 2013, 12 specialised labour exchanges are to take place under the Scheme addressed to the unemployed from the Roma community, to people with disabilities and to the other groups in unequal position on the labour market.

➤ For the purposes of granting support in terms of employment and training of unemployed persons from the ethnic minorities, permanently unemployed persons and persons with low professional qualifications and shortage of skills, 2012 saw the start of the new Scheme under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, the Scheme „Support for employment“ (2012-2014). It enables training of unemployed persons under the guidance of a tutor in key competence needed for the purposes of adaptation to the conditions at the new workplace. Subsidised employment is provided to the unemployed persons with periods of 6 to 12 months. In 2012, 976 unemployed persons from ethnic minorities were included in employment under the Scheme.

**For 2013.** The Employment Agency Plan provides for 17 700 unemployed persons from Roma origin are intended to be turned on in various competitiveness raising activities on the labour market, providing employment and encouraging their entrepreneurship standards. The number of persons involved in employment readiness enhancement training over the first three quarters of 2013 was 6 824, of which: 6 139 persons took part in individual and group forms for career guidance and motivation for active behaviour on the labour market; 685 persons were involved in occupational qualification acquisition training, key competences and liquidation of illiteracy, with 476 of them being employed under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme. Employment was provided to 12 292 persons, by their inclusion in various programmes, projects, encouraging measures for employment, and on the primary labour market. The largest is the number persons of work under the National Programme “From social benefits to employment”: 6 529 persons, of which on the primary labour market, and under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme: 1 509 persons.

Further to encouraging the social and civil dialogue, in support of the labour market participation of the Roma people, by 30.09.2013. 80 meetings were held of the labour offices and Roma NGOs on the spot.

The Scheme “Support for the institutional building of institutions on the labour market, social inclusion and public health care” (project “Start in the Administration”) under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, provides an opportunity for apprenticeships of unemployed young people with low chances of fulfilment on the labour market, here included unemployed young people with disabilities, unemployed young people from <minority> ethnic groups, lonely parents, parents of little children, etc. MLSP, the Ministry of Health and a second level spending entity with budget credits to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and the Minister of Health hire unemployed young people with who are higher educational establishments’ graduates, however not possessing any further practical experience according to their university acquired skills, for 9-month internships in the units of the specialised administration. A total of 235 interns were hired as junior experts in the administrations within the systems of the Ministry of Health and MLSP.

2 specialised exchanges addressing the members of the Roma community were conducted in 2013.

**Operation “Raising the quality of the services provided by the Employment Agency to individuals and businesses with a focus on vulnerable groups in the labor market” under the HRD OP** , where the Employment Agency is direct beneficiary, aims to improve the quality of mediation services provided by the Employment agency by providing personal approach, oriented on the one hand to the specific needs of vulnerable groups in the labor market and on the

other – to the key employers in different regions of the country. This aim will be achieved through training the Employment Agency staff in order to improve the service to vulnerable individuals and hire labor mediators in the "Labour Office" directorates who are familiar with the specific needs of different target groups and can provide access to services tailored to their abilities and needs. Qualified individuals with the necessary education to maintain regular contact and provide advice on major employers of the region will be hired in the 'Regional Employment Service' directorates and the Central Administration of the Employment Agency. During the execution of the operation regional and specialized labor markets will be organized, allowing direct contact between employers and job seekers.

Operation "Modernisation of the system for provision of services" under the HRD OP, where the Employment Agency is direct beneficiary, aims the establishment of flexible service from the type "one stop shop " for all stakeholders, promoting participation of inactive, discouraged workers, by improving access and quality of services on the labor market. For this purpose, public terminals will be established to provide access to a database of vacancies and job seekers, access to the Employment Agency web-site, as well as obtaining information about the services offered within the system of the Employment Agency, including those financed by the ESF.

### **Impact of measures**

Currently, it is not possible to assess the impact of measures because the activities under the mentioned projects are still ongoing and will be completed in 2014.

### **Plans for 2014-2020**

In the new programming period, one of the so-called "investment priorities " of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development " 2014-2020 (co-financed by the European Social Fund) is the priority "Integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma" Within this priority could be implemented integrated projects of varied number of beneficiaries - municipalities, NGOs, other public and private entities operating in the field of social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Target group of these projects will be communities of people living in social exclusion, including people living in separate areas of high poverty, unemployment and other social problem, Roma and other ethnic minorities, disabled people, people at risk of discrimination and more.

The projects will be implemented in multiple directions and one of them will be to improve access to employment (activation of the inactive, mediation for employment, career information and counseling, psychological support, motivational training, provision of training, involvement in apprenticeship, employment, including in the social economy, promotion of self-employment , etc.).

Besides, out of this investment priority, representatives of Roma ethnicity can equally participate in the implementation of other initiatives supported financially by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020.

### **Good practices in the sphere of the employment**

*Active Inactive Persons National Programme* aims to activate and include in the labour market those being inactive and dispirited - mainly Roma people. This aim has been achieved by recruiting unemployed Roma people as employment mediators - *Roma mediators* at the LLOs.

Their main task is to motivate the inactive and dispirited unemployed to register at the labour offices and use the mediator services for employment and trainings.

They conduct information campaigns and individual and group meetings with inactive people. They also arrange meetings with social partners, nongovernmental organizations, employer organizations as a matching tool.

As of the end of 2011, 58 labour offices employed 67 mediators, of which 49 were female employees, and 12 were university/higher school graduates. As result of the implementation of the programme, as of the end of 2011, the labour offices had 8 248 inactive and discourages

persons registered. Of those, 1 384 persons had joined the labour market; 86 were included in trainings for adults, while 1 298 had taken the jobs offered.

In the months of May and June, 2012, new 28 mediators had been given job appointments, and by 30 June 2012, their number was 81. They were employed by 67 labour offices. Of all mediators, 55 were female employees, and 21 persons were university/higher school graduates. As a result of the activity of mediators in 2012, the labour offices had registered 10646 inactive and discourages persons, of which 2218 persons had started trainings or had taken the jobs offered, which includes those under programmes and encouraging measures.

From 19 to 22 June 2012, 15 mediators under the programme attended the training under the programme ROMED of the Council of Europe, which took place in the town of Bankya, jointly with 15 health mediators. The programme had been elaborated by the **Secretariat of Committee of Experts on Roma Issues** and was intended to upgrade the skills of labour mediators in their work. That Programme was carried out in 20 EU Member States, with the training in Bulgaria being carried out for the second time. In 2011, 20 mediators completed the course of training.

At the end of October 2013, 77 Roma mediators work at 62 LLOs. 53 of them are women, 20 have a university degree.

As result of the implementation of the programme and the activity of the mediators, by the end of this September, the labour offices had 10 075 inactive and discourages persons registered. Of those, 2 917 persons had joined the labour market, with 2 836 persons having taken the jobs offered, and 81 persons having been included in trainings.

For eight years the NEA has been organising and conducting **specialized job fairs for Roma people**. Their aim is to help the unemployed Roma people by facilitating their access to information about vacancies and providing contacts and contracts with employers. For the period of 2006-2013, 40 job fairs have been conducted - 3 680 Roma people have been recruited as a result.

### **Lessons learned in the sphere of employment**

One of the important lessons learned is related to partnership. People from the Roma community have experienced major impacts coming from the economic crisis and need special attention and purposeful measures to support their labour market integration. A key condition for the positive effect of these measures e the partnership between the institutions, the social partners and the civil society.

### **Funding**

#### **Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the National Roma integration strategy since 2011**

##### **EU funds**

3 030 469 EUR are paid under the OP “Human Resources Development” schemes mentioned in p. 1.2. Employment (277 668 EUR on project “Raising the quality of the services provided by the Employment Agency to individuals and businesses with a focus on vulnerable groups in the labor market” and 2 755 801 EUR on project “Modernisation of the system for provision of services under OP HRD”).

#### **Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020.**

##### **EU funds**

At the moment, it is not possible to provide information about the approximate amount of funds that will be allocated to support the implementation of the National strategy for Roma integration. The reason is that at national level there is still no decision on the amount of funds that will be directed to the individual operational programmes, including the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020.

The main lessons learned from the current programming period, which will be implemented in the programming of schemes under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020, aimed at integrating the Roma population can be summarized as follows:

- The need for programming to be consistent with the existing strategic framework at national level;
- Need to apply an integrated approach combining interventions in the areas of employment, education and training, health and social services, housing, etc., in solving the problems facing the integration of representatives of the Roma ethnic group at risk of social exclusion;
- Need for better coordination between the institutions with responsibilities in the implementation of policies and interventions in the field of Roma inclusion;
- Need to simplify the rules and procedures for granting financial assistance, as far as the implementation of integrated approaches would require a combination of financial resources from more than one source, including more than one operational programme;
- Need to justify the schemes to be supported by the EU funds, on the basis of clear assessment of the needs of the target groups and the specifics (linguistic, cultural, economic, social, etc.) of the individual regions /territories /areas where they will be realized.

**Information for Project "Drawing up complex measures for integration of the most marginalised communities among the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma" under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development"**

**Project BG051PO001-6.2.11 "Development of Comprehensive Measures for the Integration of the Most Marginalized Communities among the Ethnic Minorities, with a Focus on the Roma"** is implemented within the HRD OP. MLSP is a beneficiary of the project supporting the efforts of the Ministry in the implementation of comprehensive measures to address the multidimensional challenges of integration of the most vulnerable group.

The project started in August 2011 and will be implemented by October 2013 on the territory of the country.

The project aims to support the strategic approach for integration of ethnic minorities by identifying the most needy among them based on territorial criteria (mapping) and specific problems in key areas of integration policy (health, education, employment, incomes and living standards, housing, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, etc.), formulating a set of targeted measures for their integration and increasing the powers of the responsible institutions at national and local level for their implementation.

Brief information on the results achieved:

The Project is concentrated on the most marginalised groups of socially vulnerable ethnic communities with a focus on the Roma people.

A review and an analysis was made of programmes, measures and initiatives for Roma integration for the period from 1999 to the end of 2011 were made.

Good practices for integration were studied of people living in separate neighbourhoods/hamlets, 22 of which were published in a collection of good practices at local level. The circulation of the collection is 1200, coming both in paper copies and electronic copies.

A major task of the Project is to collect data on the issues that are specific for the ethnic communities living in separate neighbourhoods. For this purpose, two nationally representative surveys were carried out. Analysis was made of the information received concerning the existing problems in the main areas of the policy aimed at integration, i.e. education, health care, housing conditions, employment, non-discrimination. Based on statistical information extracted from the 2011 Census, an estimate was drafted of the socio-economic conditions, in which the minorities live in separate neighbourhoods. 15 criteria were used, with the basic being: illiteracy, unemployment and economic non-activity, dependency on the social benefit system, living in

small homes, lack of kitchen, electrification and main in the home, sewerage, hot running water, water source, bathroom, toilet, cooker, and fridge.

The most marginalised households were identified by applying a specially developed methodology. As such were identified 10% of the households living in the separate neighbourhoods. A national representative sociologic survey was conducted among those households to study the socio-economic characteristics. Marginalisation profiles were prepared of homes located in 320 settlements in 167 Municipalities, where the identified households are to be found.

On the grounds of the collected and analysed information, a Concept containing a complex of measures for integration of the most marginalised communities among the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma people was worked out. That Concept suggests special measures addressing the most vulnerable segment of those communities.

A Guidebook was published on planning and implementation of measures for integration at local level, its circulation being 1200, coming both in paper copies and electronic copies. This Guidebook contains practical guidelines for planning and implementation of specific measures at Municipal level.

Under the project, an indicative Action Plan at local level was elaborated containing specific typical activities for overcoming of the problems of the people in gravest need among the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma people, and sources were proposed for their financing.

10 trainings were carried out of a total of 600 municipal employees from 180 Municipalities addressing capacity improvement in development and implementation of local action plans for integration of the most marginalised communities among the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma people and for presenting the results of the project.

All activities under the project were promoted and discussed with more than 600 representatives of Ministries and Agencies, locally based State institutions, Municipalities, Provincial Governments, social partners, non-governmental organisations and media at a total of 12 public events at national and local level: 7 workshops, 2 seminars and a final conference and 2 press-conferences.

Awareness was raised on the issues of vulnerable minority groups integration with a focus on the Roma people of more than 1200 people across the country attracted as participants in the public events having been carried out under the project.

Print and information materials were worked out and disseminated under the project: information brochure, posters, a banner, etc.

The Project establishes prerequisites for formation and implementation of complex measures on various priorities of the integration of the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma people, which are in conformity with the local particularities and the needs of the people in gravest need among them.

**The Social Assistance Agency (SAA)** goes on executing the activities under its commitment to provide trainings to employees of the territorial structures intended to improve their awareness and qualification levels for the purposes of their work with representatives of ethnic communities and as part of the policy aimed at combating poverty and encouraging the social inclusion of representatives of ethnic communities in unequal position.

In 2012—2013, the following training seminars were organised for employees from the SAA under: Project “Let’s Touch the Untouchable - Fighting against Traditional and New Anti-Roma Stereotypes”, Project “Drawing up complex measures for integration of the most marginalised communities among the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma”, “For Decent Labour and Better Life without Discrimination”, “Health Issues of Roma people”, “Education of Roma People”, “Work with Risk Groups of Roma people”, “Good practices in Roma integration on the labour market in Bulgaria”.

**SAA** is a partner under the project “Let’s Touch the Untouchable - Fighting against Traditional and New Anti-Roma Stereotypes” financed by the European Commission under the Programme “Fundamental Human Rights and Citizens’ Participation” in six pilot Municipalities. Representatives of the Social Assistance Regional Directorates also take part. The training

consists of seven modules using a Guidebook of the Centre of Inter-ethnic Dialogue and Tolerance. The purpose of this project is to build a model for efficient use of public services by the Roma people, for collaboration with the Roma community and involving them in activities between the various communities, which would guarantee that all members of vulnerable communities such as the Roma will use their fundamental rights to an equal extent.

One of the major activities under the project is establishing impact groups, i.e. mobile groups at Provincial level consisting of one educational, one healthcare and one social staff, representing representatives the three institutions, respectively. The impact groups have two main targets: to organise trainings for colleagues in their institutions or for field staff, the purpose being to help them overcome some prejudice and discrimination; to react in cases of discrimination locally or coming from other institutions and to apply multisectoral approach when solving them. Each impact group is trained and certified by the Amalipe Centre. In turn, each impact group trains and certifies in seven modules of training 30 representatives from all three spheres: health, social and educational.

### **Housing priority**

The contribution of Operational Programme Regional Development (OPRD) 2007-2013 for integration of the Roma Community in Bulgaria

1. Information concerning **objective 6 “Building and providing social housing”** under **Priority 3. “Housing conditions”** In The Framework National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 - 2020)

#### **-Steps taken since 2011**

The main contribution to this objective has a grant scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 **“Support for provision of contemporary social homes for accommodating vulnerable, minority and low-income groups of the population, as well as other deprived groups”** under Priority axis 1 “Sustainable and integrated urban development”, Operation 1.2. “Housing”

The main objective of the scheme is to contribute for social inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups by increasing their standard of living and improving the quality of housing in urban communities

The specific objectives of the scheme are:

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

#### **Total amount of the scheme – 8 mln.euro**

The model for the implementation of the scheme is based on pilot projects selected by an interinstitutional working group within Council of Ministers for development a concept for an integrated project under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013 and the Operational Program "Regional Development" 2007 -2013 for building housing in the favour of disadvantaged groups, and to develop a mechanism for coordination with other horizontal policies financed by EU funds. The interinstitutional working Group approved 4 pilot municipalities with 3 pilot reserve municipalities (integrated projects) for beneficiaries under OPRD and OPHRD

Designated pilot municipalities perform integrated projects for sustainable social housing, including a combination of mandatory investment component (construction of social housing or repair/renovation of existing social housing, energy efficiency measures, etc.) funded by scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 under Operational Program "Regional Development" 2007 -2013, and activities to provide education, employment, health, social inclusion of the target group financed by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" .

On 30 August 2011 the scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 was launched as a direct grant procedure with concrete beneficiaries municipalities (previously approved by interinstitutional working group)-Burgas, Vidin, Devnya, Dupnitsa and 3 reserve municipalities are determined (in



case of release of sufficient financial resources): 1. Varna Municipality, 2. Peshtera Municipality and Tundja Municipality.

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

- Construction of a new housing intended for social homes in 100% municipal property areas where representatives of the target group are to be accommodated
- Reconstruction and renovation of the existing housing, 100% municipal property intended for social homes
- Delivery of adequate equipment and furniture for the abovementioned buildings/premises related to provision of basic living conditions
- Improvement of the access for people with disabilities to the abovementioned buildings/premises
- Public works measures for the adjoining surrounding area of the newly built/renovated social homes.

In 2012 the Managing Authority of OPRD approved three proposals with a total value of 10.3 million BGN:

№	Applicant	Name of the project proposal	Total amount of the project, BGN	Grant amount (BGN)	Own contribution	Duration of the project
1.	Municipality of Vidin	Contemporary social housing in Vidin	3 992 592,19	3 992 592,19	N/A	24
2.	Municipality of Devnya	Support for the provision of modern social housing for vulnerable, minority and low-income populations and other disadvantaged groups in the municipality Devnya	1 406 112,76	1 378 729,40	27 383,36	20
3.	Municipality of Dupnitca	Home for everyone	4 905 947,82	4 905 947,82	N/A	24
4	Municipality of Burgas	By letter dated 12.04.2012 of the Mayor of Burgas the project proposal withdrawn from the assessment				

On 24.10.2013 under scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 the first reserve beneficiary - Varna municipality is invited to submit a project proposal with a maximum project amount of 3 890 038.55 BGN. Deadline for applying the project is December 16, 2013.

### Impact of measures

On 28.06.2012 grant contracts are signed with the municipalities of Vidin and Dupnitca and on 18.01.2013 grant contract is signed with municipality of Devnya for implementation of pilot projects under the scheme BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011.

Envisaged interventions within the framework of the selected pilot municipalities:

- **Vidin Municipality** – reconstruction of 50 homes in 9 existing buildings and construction of 30 new homes in 4 new buildings for 381 representatives of vulnerable groups
- **Devnya Municipality** – renovation and reconstruction of 33 homes in existing multifamily building for 165 representatives of vulnerable groups
- **Dupnitsa Municipality** – construction of new 150 homes in 15 multi, one- and two-family residential buildings for 460 representatives of vulnerable groups.

**Currently the pilot projects are under implementation.**

In 2013 began the implementation of operation "INTEGRA". The overall objective of the scheme is related to improving the quality of life and long-term integration of the most marginalized communities through an integrated approach. The specific objectives of the scheme include:

- Support the integration of the labor market for marginalized groups;
- Providing access to education and training;
- Support for social inclusion by improving access to social services and health care;
- Improvement of existing models and practices for social inclusion and stable desegregation of the most marginalized groups.

Targets will be achieved on the basis of an integrated approach. For this purpose in a complementary way the capabilities of two operational programs - Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013 and the Operational Program "Regional Development" 2007-2013 are used. In particular, the scheme "INTEGRA" complements interventions in procedure BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 "Support for the provision of modern social housing for vulnerable, minority and low-income groups of the population and other disadvantaged groups" under the Operational Programme "Regional Development" 2007-2013. The procedure provides assurance of modern social housing for vulnerable, minority and low-income populations and other disadvantaged groups. On the other hand, for people provided with social housing under the procedure under the OP "Regional Development" 2007-2013, "INTEGRA" will provide the so called "Social package" - complementary services in four key areas - "Access to employment", "Access to education", "Social inclusion" and "Measures for lasting desegregation".

Up to now, under the scheme "INTEGRA" contracts were signed for the total sum of 4 814 043.03 BGN with three municipalities – Vidin, Dupnitsa and Devnya. As a result of the projects implementation, which will last until 2015, the following results are expected:

- 850 persons to obtain mediation services in the labor market, of which nearly 400 people to start working, including 270 people working in the social economy;
- About 1,100 children to participate in activities aimed at preventing school dropout and / or reintegration into the education system;
- To improve access to social services for nearly 150 persons.

The three municipalities will implement the planned project activities in partnership with schools and NGOs. If necessary, their efforts will be supported by the staff of the territorial divisions of the Employment Agency, the Social Assistance Agency, the State Agency for Child Protection, the regional health inspections and other state structures.

### **Impact of the measures**

For the moment it is not possible to assess the impact of measures as project activities under the scheme "INTEGRA" will be implemented until the end of 2015, and the implementation of the project began in October 2013.

### **Plans for 2014-2020**

The pilot model implemented with the scheme "INTEGRA" will be extended in the next programming period. For this purpose, in case that in the Integrated plans for urban rehabilitation and development, which will be financially supported by the new Operational Programme "Regions in Growth" 2014-2020, (co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund), the municipalities identify measures for building social housing for social inclusion of marginalized communities, Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020, (co-financed by the European Social Fund) will provide support for improved access to employment, social and health services for the target groups.

### **Plans for 2014-2020 in the Operational Programme "Regions in Growth" 2014 - 2020 (OPRG 2014-2020).**

Relating to progress of integrating the Roma population in Member States hereby we present to your attention information concerning the planned investments in the Operational

Programme "Regions in Growth" 2014 - 2020 (OPRG 2014-2020), which is in the responsibility of the Ministry of Regional Development.

**With this regard in the field of employment and social inclusion** Operational program "Regions in Growth" 2014 – 2020 contributes to the implementation of the country specific recommendations to the Council and to the achievement of national targets 2020, namely:

- **Investment Priority 4 : "Investing in health and social infrastructures** which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in health, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services, and transition from institutional services to community services", Priority Axis 1 "Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development" and priority Axis 3 "Regional Social Infrastructure" are directly targeted at the achievement of concrete results under "National strategy to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion 2020" and "National Strategy for integration of Roma population" and "to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of social services, particularly for children and the elderly" in response to the country specific recommendation 3 - Employment and inclusion of the Council, and to achieve the national target of reducing poverty by providing adequate living conditions for vulnerable populations and improving the quality of social infrastructure, and hence of social services.

In order to support marginalized groups, including Roma population, OPRG 2014-2020 has direct relation to priority 3 "Housing" of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012-2020).

In the next programming period, OPRG 2014 - 2020 will support the infrastructure measures for Roma integration within Priority Axis 1: "Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development". Activities are directly aimed at implementing specific objective "Social inclusion through investment in social infrastructure in the cities" by providing adequate living conditions for vulnerable populations.

Investments will be implemented in the **territory of 67 cities** (beneficiaries under Priority Axis 1: Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development) within the intervention zones of Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development (IPURDs). The envisaged activities will support provisions of modern social housing to vulnerable, minority and indigent groups of the population and other disadvantaged groups through construction, reconstruction, renovation and expansion of social housing for the target group.

In addition, concentration of support under Priority 1 within the impact zones of IPURD will further contribute to the implementation of the recommendation, as in the social impact zones are often concentrated representatives of disadvantaged groups - people living in poverty, Roma population and other minority groups.

**Operational program envisages at least 5% of the total budget of Priority Axis 1** to be focused in activities for municipal social infrastructure within IPURDs. In accordance with the criteria for selecting the operations, projects with the highest potential for social inclusion will be financed. The indicative budget for Priority Axis 1: Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development amounts of **€852 231 918** (61.90% of the program budget, for social infrastructure – €45 158 654).

In view of the recommendations given by the European Commission and in relation with a better demarcation and complementarity with the Rural Development Program for cities of level 1 to 3 projects may be funded by groups of activities: "areas with potential for economic development", "Social infrastructure", as well as municipal educational infrastructure outside the intervention zones of IPURD within the municipal territory. Activities funded under this exception clause cannot exceed 20% of the pre-set cap for the relevant city or town under Priority Axis 1.

Priority 4: Regional Social Infrastructure is targeted at social inclusion through investment in social infrastructure throughout the country to achieve the objectives set out in the sectoral paper on social policy, particularly deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities and the elderly, such as the National strategy "Vision for deinstitutionalization of children in Bulgaria" (2010) and the National Strategy for long-term care. The priority axis will support activities for construction, repair, reconstruction of centres providing services for children at risk, family-type residential centres and the adjacent yards for children at risk, development of infrastructure for accompanying

services for children and elderly people; buildings for community-based social services, construction, reconstruction and repair of infrastructure for provision of services for early development of children for children and their families, improving access for people with disabilities to the above buildings and others, energy efficiency, etc.

Information concerning **objective 9** Building/reconstructing the social infrastructure for the purposes of education, culture, etc.” **under Priority 3. Housing conditions** in the framework National roma integration strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 - 2020).

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

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

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

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

The following schemes within OPRD are oriented for improving the access of vulnerable group including roma to educational, social and cultural infrastructure:

#### **Educational infrastructure, including 5 schemes:**

- BG161PO001/1.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational, social and cultural infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”, Component 1 Educational infrastructure
- BG161PO001/1.1-02/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective state educational infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”
- BG161PO001/1.1-09/2010 “Support for implementation of energy efficiency measures in municipal educational infrastructure in urban agglomerations”
- BG161PO001/4.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational infrastructure contributing towards sustainable local development”
- BG161PO001/4.1-03/2010 “Support for energy efficiency measures in the municipal educational infrastructure of 178 small municipalities”

#### **Social infrastructure, including:**

- BG161PO001/1.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational, social and cultural infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”, Component 2 Social infrastructure
- BG161PO001/1.1-03/2008 “Support for the provision of an adequate and effective state social infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”
- BG161PO001/1.1-04/2008 “Support for the provision of an adequate and effective infrastructure of the labour offices, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”

#### **Cultural infrastructure, including:**

- BG161PO001/1.1-01/2007 “Support for the provision of an adequate and cost-effective educational, social and cultural infrastructure, contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”, Component 1 cultural infrastructure
- BG161PO001/1.1-05/2008 “Support for the provision of an adequate and effective state cultural infrastructure contributing towards the development of sustainable urban areas”

### **Impact of measures**

In 2012 under the above schemes are completed the following number of projects, which have been reported **positive impact on Roma and the following results:**

- For construction/reconstruction of objects of educational infrastructure - 32 projects have been completed for a total amount of verified expenses 60 461 352,10BGN, 127 educational buildings were reconstructed, 36,707 people are benefited, of which 6,948 are Roma.
- For construction / reconstruction of social infrastructure- 18 projects have been completed for a total amount of verified costs 18 827 519,00BGN , 60 social buildings were reconstructed, 157 829 people are benefited , of which 23992 are Roma.
- For construction/reconstruction of objects of cultural infrastructure- 16 projects have been completed for a total amount of verified expenses 25802 629,05BGN, 46 cultural buildings were reconstructed, 815 015 people are benefited , of which 23 655 are Roma.

**In the period from 1 January to 30 September 2013 under the above schemes are completed the following number of projects, which have been reported positive impact on Roma and the following results:**

- For construction/reconstruction of objects of educational infrastructure. For the period 01 January to 30 September 2013 have completed 57 projects with a total value of verified expenses 89 429 152,86 BGN, 248 educational buildings were reconstructed, 8 407 roma are benefited.
- For construction/reconstruction of objects of cultural infrastructure. For the period 01 January to 30 September 2013 have completed 2 projects with a total value of verified expenses 1 186 332,00 BGN, which were reconstructed total of 2 cultural buildings and 123 roma are benefited.

### **Plans for 2014-2020**

**In the field of education and healthcare** OP "Regions for Growth" 2014 – 2020 will contribute for the implementation of country specific recommendations of the Council and the achievement of national targets 2020, namely:

Investment Priority 3 "Investing in education, training, including vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure" of Priority **Axis 1 "Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development"** and **Priority Axis 2 "Regional education infrastructure"** of the Operational Programme directly addresses a **country specific recommendation 4 of the Council** "Improving access to inclusive education for disadvantaged children, notably Roma" by implementing measures to ensure accessible built environment for people with disabilities , as well as achieving the **national target of reducing share of early school leavers and increasing the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary education** by improving the quality of education infrastructure, and hence the learning process, providing opportunities for full-time education and extracurricular activities and increase overall motivation students through better environment.

Activities under **Priority Axis 1 "Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development"** are directly aimed at achieving the specific objective of the investment priority 3, namely " Reducing the number of early school drop-outs through investments in educational infrastructure in the cities" providing activities for the construction, reconstruction and repair of municipal educational institutions, energy efficiency measures and energy audits, as well as measures to improve access for people with disabilities. For specific beneficiaries 67 municipalities are identified concerning projects within the impact zones for cities of the first, second and third level and for the entire urban area in the cities of the fourth level, according IPURDs. Specific target group on which a special focus is placed is Roma population, which has the lowest

educational status and limited access to educational services. The indicative budget available for the educational infrastructure in the cities OPRD 2014-2020 amounts to €77 375 499.

In view of the recommendations given by the European Commission and in relation with a better demarcation and complementarity with the Rural Development Program for cities of level 1 to 3 projects may be funded by groups of activities: “areas with potential for economic development”, “Social infrastructure”, as well as municipal educational infrastructure outside the intervention zones of IPURD within the municipal territory. Activities funded under this exception clause cannot exceed 20% of the pre-set cap for the relevant city or town under Priority Axis 1.

Activities under **Priority Axis 4 "Regional educational infrastructure"** are directly aimed at the achieving of the specific objective of the investment priority, namely: “Reducing the number of school drop-outs through investments in educational infrastructure in urban areas”. One of the causes of early school drop-out is exactly the poor educational infrastructure, the limited opportunities for receiving vocational training and the lack of capacity for full-time schooling and other activities in the schools.

One of the reasons for early school leaving is precisely the poor educational infrastructure, limited opportunities for professional education, lack of capacity for daily activities in schools. The activities will supported the construction, reconstruction and repair of public schools of national and regional significance, and universities, including the adjacent yard and hostels for them; implementation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy sources, energy audits, improving access for people with disabilities. Specific beneficiaries are Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports for schools owned by the relevant ministries, universities and municipalities for municipal educational infrastructure of national and regional importance. The indicative budget available for the public education infrastructure OPRD 2014-2020 amounts to € 77 375 499.

**Priority Axis 3 "Regional health infrastructure"** of OPRD 2014-2020 has a direct contribution to the implementation of the recommendation in the part "To ensure effective access to health care" by supporting investments in health infrastructure that will contribute to improving the quality and accessibility of health services population and to achieve the national goal of reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion.

The existing problems in health bring to the front the need to ensure equal access to healthcare services for people and to improve the quality of healthcare services by modernizing the health infrastructure, providing hospitals and clinics with new and modern medical equipment.

Investments in health infrastructure shall be integrated with the remaining priorities in the healthcare sector and target all levels in the national healthcare system in conformity with the needs of the population and the principles for determining the cities for integrated development as well as in conformity with healthcare measures outside these cities and towns.

The provision of access to services and mostly access to basic healthcare, educational and social services is a key instrument for overcoming the consequences of poverty and social exclusion.

Activities under **priority axis 3 "Regional health infrastructure"** are directly aimed at delivery of appropriate equipment, furniture and construction and repair works to emergency wards (including ambulances), for the buildings/premises of medical institutions for hospital care, which have the resource and the potential to diagnose and treat cancer, for the buildings/premises of state-owned and municipal medical institutions in conformity with the National Healthcare Strategy until 2020, action plan and the Hospital Care Master plan as well as introducing energy efficiency measures in the buildings/premises, energy efficiency audits and constructional inspections of the buildings, Improving the access for people with disabilities to the buildings.

Ministry of Health for regional health infrastructure and municipalities for municipal health infrastructure are designated as specific beneficiaries under this priority axis. The indicative budget available for the regional health infrastructure under the priority axis 3 "Regional health infrastructure" of OPRD 2014-2020 amounts to €55 071 529.

## **Culture priority**

The measures of Culture Priority is aimed at the Roma's equal participation in the cultural life, equal access to cultural goods and services, preservation of the specific ethnocultural identity and deployment of this community's creative potential, which will also help the self-fulfillment of each of its members.

This strategic goal is formulated in the context of the principles in the foundation of the national cultural policy on the equality of artists and cultural organizations, and the protection of cultural diversity. It is aimed at expanding the access to cultural values, products and services in order to improve the quality of living, including that of the Roma community in our country.

The preservation and the promotion of the Roma's traditional culture (sub-goal 1 of the strategy) is part of the Ministry's measures for preserving the intangible cultural heritage. Since 2008 the Ministry of Culture has been maintaining a national system of "Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria", which is focused around people who are bearers of the tradition. A National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage is kept at the Ministry of Culture there and includes the elements of ethnic communities' traditional culture elements, including Roma holidays, rituals and customs, on a regional and national level. It is planned that through the system traditional cultures will not only be registered, but also their condition will be monitored, they will be promoted in the society, they will be documented and digitalized, and possibilities will be sought for the tradition to be passed on through various educational forms. The next addition of intangible cultural heritage elements will be in 2014 for which actions have been performed to encourage the Roma community to take part in the regional stage of the procedure.

The development of amateur art in the Roma community is also part of the national cultural policy on amateur art, being the basis of personal and professional development. This operational sub-goal is aimed mostly at involving children and adolescents of the Roma community in the system of extra-curricular education for the development of creative skills and knowledge. In that sense, great success has been achieved by the Ministry of culture's policy on the development of community centers and on maintaining permanent educational forms in the fields of art and culture. Practice shows that it is really the community centers where Roma children join a development – favourable environment and are mentored by professional teachers. In recent years there have also been established community centers initiated by the Roma community in support of this process. The community centers' management, the Roma community's non-governmental organizations and other institutions working for the benefit of integration processes can be relied on for children's orientation and preparation for applying at a suitable school.

The third operational sub-goal is aimed at encouraging the Roma community to actively participate in the public cultural life and is related to the more effective interaction between the Roma community as represented by its civil unions and the state institutions, the regional administrations and the local authorities, as well as with the local cultural institutions with a view to the Roma's equal access to the public cultural life. The Ministry of Culture regularly provides expert and methodical support for the improvement of the coordination between different institutions, aimed at increasing the consumption of educational services and cultural values, of culture programmes for the solving of specific problems of the Community.

The National Action Plan under the Strategy includes specific programmes in support of creative projects for the implementation of the goals described.

Under the programme on the development of amateur art in 2012, the following organizations and activities received financial and institutional support: Roma's Confederation "Europe" on the celebration of the International Day of the Roma on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The support was in the amount of BGN 300 for a photo exposition. National Community Center "Stoyanka Sokolova 1999" received BGN 1000 for the organization of the ethnocultural holiday Bari Bogorodtsa. Democratic Union Roma took part in the organization of the concert on the occasion of the Roma New Year Vasilitsa. The amount was BGN 1500. These events are traditional and sustainable and produce quality results in the preservation of the Roma's traditional culture and its promotion and the building of a positive image of the Roma community in the civil society.

Institutional support is obtained by the National Ethnofestival for songs and dances with international participants – town of Vidin, the Children Roma Festival Open Heart – town of Veliko Tarnovo and the National Ethnicities Festival Bulgaria for All in the city of Varna.

Representatives of the Roma Community are still getting involved in community centers' activities. The information collected from the Regional expert and advisory and information centers "Community Centers" shows that the number of participants in different activities of local centers is increasing, mostly in different forms of developing amateur art activities and library services, using the Internet and computer training. In many places there are also activities on the preservation of the traditional Roma folklore.

Specific examples of positive results stand out in the summarized data of the community centers' information maps from the public register at the Ministry of culture, where in 2012 866 community centers declared to have involved representatives of the ethnic communities, incl. Roma, in their activities. There were 388 language courses, the leading ones being foreign languages, followed by courses in Bulgarian and mother tongues. Dance formations which were 1900 are also worth distinguishing, as a part of them cover Roma music and dances.

Under project "Global Libraries – Bulgaria" there have been included more than 950 libraries (mostly community centers'), which are connected in the global network and provide access to information and human knowledge. About 860 of them are located at places with mixed ethnic population. Libraries have been renovated and equipped with new computers, and, without the programme, through a targeted grant for community centers, in recent years 6355 computers have been installed in community centers, which benefits people, including Roma in finding information about work, education, etc.

Data from questionnaires is also affirmed by the projects submitted to the Ministry of Culture concerning funding of activities by community centers, whereby the centers' managements emphasize on having success in attracting Roma children in their community centers' activities, which they would like to continue with them. In order to support these activities and with a view to sustain them, the Ministry of Culture annually provides an additional state grant which in 2014 amounts to 150 new subsidized community centers.

The Regional Community Centers themselves, being structures under the methodical management of the Ministry of Culture, implement activities for the promotion of the National Strategy for the Integration of the Roma in the Republic of Bulgaria and provide expert support to the local community centers' activities.

Roma integration activities have also been performed through the network of museums. For example in 2012, Vasil Levski Museum in the town of Karlovo implemented an educational programme "My First Lesson at the Museum" together with Rayno Popovich Elementary School. The students in that school are predominantly Roma. Museum specialists visit kindergartens, organize meetings in villages nearby Karlovo where the participants are whole Roma families. The museum organizes literature and artistic competitions for which it attracts Roma communities on the territory of Sofia city, etc.

In order to implement the goals of the National Roma Integration Strategy and the National Strategy Action Plan, the Ministry of Culture continues to work on the Roma community's cultural integration, as well as that of all ethnical communities in the country by cooperating with regional and municipal administrations, other cultural institutions and representatives of the communities, so as to distinguish the needs of people on a certain territory and to implement effective cultural policies aimed at the development of human capital and increasing the quality of living. The main emphasis is put on the strengthening of the links between education and culture in order to facilitate and improve young people's integration, to expand the possibilities for acquiring the knowledge and artistic skills necessary for taking part in social life. To that aim, the Ministry of Culture is the main partner of the Ministry of Education in the update and implementation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy and the National Strategy for reducing the number of school drop-outs.

By decision of May 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 Programme BG 08 "Cultural Heritage and Modern Arts" under EEA's financial mechanism 2009 – 2014 was formally approved by the Committee of the Financial Mechanism, including representatives of the donor countries – the Kingdom of



Norway, Iceland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. The general aim of the Financial Mechanism is to reduce the economic and social gaps in the European Economic Area, and to strengthen the bilateral relations between the donor countries and the beneficiary countries.

Programme “Cultural Heritage and Modern Arts” will contribute to the protection and preservation of Bulgaria’s cultural heritage by creating the necessary conditions for a wider access to it. At the same time, assistance will be provided for the development of intercultural dialogue and enhancing European identity as a combination of a diversity of cultures.

The budget of the programme amounts to EUR 16 470 588 with national co-funding, under the following measures:

Measure 1: Restoration, renovation and preservation of cultural heritage;

Measure 2: Documenting cultural history;

Measure 3: Public’s accessibility to cultural heritage;

Project identified in advance: Sofia arsenal – Modern Art Museum, second stage;

Measure 4: Modern art and culture’s reaching the public;

Bilateral relations fund.

Ten percent of the funds under the programme will be used to improve the situation of the Roma population.

The Ministry of Culture will function as the Programme Operator under Programme Area 16: Conservation and renovation of cultural and natural heritage, and Programme Area 17: Stimulating diversity in culture and arts within the European Cultural heritage.

The Agreement for the programme’s implementation was signed on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and the public calls for proposals under the respective measures will be published by the end of the year. Public and non-governmental organizations will be able to apply for funding under this programme.

### **Anti-discrimination and Rule of Law Priority**

**The Ministry of Interior** is in charge of purposeful activity focused at the protection of public order and undertakes all necessary measures for protecting minorities’ rights and for preventing the manifestations of discrimination, racism, extremism and xenophobia. The capacity of the law-enforcement authorities is improving in their fight against crimes and the manifestations of discrimination, violence or hatred based on ethnicity. A dominant accent is prevention in terms of crimes based on racism and propaganda against the ethnic minorities, and sanctioning the authors of such offences. Innovative methods are applied in the process of developing and applying modern training methodology. Thematic trainings are conducted on human rights, with a possibility of updating the academic modules by applying an interactive and interdisciplinary approach and situational module training of practical and applicable nature.

For the purposes of applying the good practices in this field, a guidebook was issued, which is titled “Police without Discrimination” as result of the project “European Police and Human Rights” under the European Commission’s specific Prevention of and Fight Against Crime Programme.

Jointly with the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, measures were drafted to be applied against persons who demonstrate and sermonise violence and violating of the ethnic peace and antidemocratic ideology based on hatred toward groups of people or ethnicities.

- If the Action Plan of the National Roma Integration Strategy (2012-2020) and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 are concerned, MoI is implementing activity 1.1.2. On-the-job Training of police employees in human rights and in problems of minorities within the framework of Ministry’s academic year under Priority 5 “Rule of Law and Non-discrimination”.

The police structures conduct work-related training/occupational training at duty station in human rights and police ethics. The training is delivered by employees who have passed special trainer qualification courses. Diverse topics for further training courses of police employees for work in multiethnic environment were considered: “Specificity of police employees’ work and specific actions in executing their powers in areas with predominant Roma population”; “Putting crisis situations under control when restoring the public order”; “Formation of skills appropriate for work with representatives of the Roma community”; “Collaboration executing service duties in

areas with predominant Roma population"; "Ethic behaviour in work with citizens"; "History, habits, traditions and religious beliefs of the various ethnic groups and of the Roma population, in particular"; "Problems of the Roma people in the social sphere"; "Actions of police authorities in cases of group violations of the public order and other grave unlawful offences in neighbourhoods with compact Roma population"; "Observance of human rights and ethic code in work with persons of Roma origin"; "Behaviour in communication with citizens" (with the Roma community, in particular); "Identifying public order and security problems in local Roma community"; "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination" ; "Discrimination: basic terms. Social dimensions", etc.

In 2012, 949 seminars and trainings were attended by 32 283 police employees. During the first nine months of 2013, the number of trained employees was 24 483, and the number of organised forms of training was 726.

The Academy of MoI has developed the curricula "Protection of human rights", "Police protection of human rights" and "Police ethics". The 2012 Manual in the obligatory subject "Operational investigations for counteracting conventional crime" includes a special section, "Operational service of regions with compact Roma population in the context of counteracting conventional crime".

The plan for initial work-related training/occupational training of MoI trainees and employees contains topics related to the operational service of areas with compact Roma population, human rights and police ethics.

At the initial work-related training/occupational training courses trainees are taught the subjects "Police protection of human rights" and "Police ethics".

The Bachelor's courses in the Police Faculty provide studies in the obligatory subject "Protection of human rights", and each academic year around 200 attendees sit an examination in the subject.

- Implementation of projects

In pursuance of the Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and MoI, in 2012 the efforts continue to the implementation of project HOME/2010/ISEC/FP/C2/ 4000001454 "European police and human rights" under the EC's specific programme "Prevention of and Fight against Crime" (ISEC 2010). The Project is carried out in partnership between the National police Directorate General, the Academy of MoI, the Institute of Psychology at the Ministry of Interior, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, the Center for the Study of Democracy, the Belgian Federal Police, the Federal Police of Baden-Wurttemberg Land and the Polish Police. The Project is innovative, with the innovation being in development and applying modern adult training methodology aiming to multiply the training in human rights emphasising on anti-discriminatory attitude. The method is flexible, allowing to conduct thematic trainings in human rights on the basis of periodical overviews of police practice consisting in conducting thematic trainings in human rights. This method goes with situational module training using cases taken from the police practice.

The value added of the project at EU level is in the methodology and teaching/learning aids, i.e. in the guidebook for trainers and the guidebook for trainees in human rights where the focus lies in the non-discriminatory attitude to be multiplied as EU practice in other EU Member States via the CEPOL network. The Project has the aspiration to supplement the CEPOL Uniform curriculum Common Curriculum "Police Ethics and Prevention of Corruption". The results are presented, partner organisations are CEPOL and FRA.

- In pursuance of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the MoI and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the OSCE at the Academy of MoI in 2012, a training was conducted and attended by 50 employees who are planned to become trainers in matters connected with hatred inspired crimes, hatred inspired crimes legislation, impact of hatred inspired crimes and the police role, reaction and investigation. Some matters are considered having bearing to hatred inspired crimes, Art. 162 of the Criminal Code: what is a hatred inspired crime, hatred inspired crime definition and legislation, studying diversity, impact of hatred inspired crimes and the police role, reaction and investigation, cases. There are investigating police officers, police officers working with sufferers, and teachers from the Academy of MoI among

the participants. At the end of 2012, the trained officers conducted trainings in each structure of the District Directorates of the MoI and at the Sofia City Directorate of the MoI.

- Moreover, the National Police Directorate General is also active under the project "Good practices in the management of intercommunity conflicts in Central and East European Region" (HOME/2010/ISEC/FP/C2/4000001469) under the Programme EC's "Prevention and Fight against Crime" (ISEC) 2010. The beneficiary thereto is the MoI of Hungary, with the participation of Slovakia and Romania. The purpose thereof is the participating experts to present between 3 and 5 national projects related to good practices in the management of intercommunity conflicts, and thereupon to draft a national report thereto. The activity under the project is continuing.

The project "Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings who Belong to Ethnic Groups with a Focus on the Roma Minority in Bulgaria" is a pilot project for the country executed by the **National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB)**.

The project is implemented on the territory of **Municipality of Varna** with the financial support of the *Embassy of France in Bulgaria*, the *Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna* and the *Embassy of France in Romania*. The project implementation began in December, 2011 and has a total duration of 30 months (December, 2011 – June, 2014). Partners of the NCCTHB in the implementation of the project are the **Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association (BFPA)**, **Association "National Network of Health Mediators"**, **Municipality of Varna** and **"Sautchastie" Association – Varna**.

The **target group** is **men, women and children of Roma origin**. The **main objective** of the project is to **reduce the number of potential victims of trafficking** of Roma origin on the territory of the Municipality of Varna. The **specific objectives** include *prevention of early pregnancy, information sessions related to family planning and sexual health, decrease of the number of abandoned children and increasing of the public sensitivity on the issue of human trafficking*.

During the **initial phase of the project** a group of experts prepared **methodology** and survey lists for a **sociological survey** on the issue "*Risk factors for involvement in trafficking and reproductive tendencies among the Roma in the Municipality of Varna.*" The target group of the survey was the citizens of three Roma districts of Varna.

During the **implementation phase** of the project a **Handbook for Prevention of Human Trafficking among the Roma Minority** was published. The Handbook was used as basic instrument during the trainings of volunteers, specialist and experts as well as in the fieldwork. The topics include the main characteristics of the problems related to the human trafficking, early pregnancy, abandonment of children in institutions and preventive fieldwork among the Roma society.

The **fieldwork** conducted by "Sautchastie" Association included a lot of direct work in the communities on specific cases and different problems. The fieldwork teams used **several approaches**: street outreach approach, working in the youth club of "Sautchastie" Association, work on specific cases and home outreach approach. About 400 persons with risky behaviour from the most vulnerable groups were covered.

The **current activities related to family planning, sexual and reproductive health** are implemented by the partnering organization BFPA. There is also **current supportive supervision**: regular consultation and assistance to the local teams regarding the implementation of the services related to family planning and human trafficking. During the fieldwork 130 examinations were carried, 63 spirals were enclosed, 63 Pap smears and 200 consultations were held.

**The Ministry of Defence** of the Republic of Bulgaria takes an active part in all meetings of the interdepartmental working group on the integration of the Roma ethnic group into society.

Despite the fact that the leading institutions in this complex and diverse process are the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science, The Ministry of Defence, within its legal capabilities, takes the necessary steps to integrate the representatives of

the Roma ethnic group into society, particularly into the Bulgarian Army. Of much importance is the fact that with the change of the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Minister of Defence may determine positions for soldiers (seamen), who may be occupied by persons with basic education, where the occupation of the position does not require access to classified information. Thus the representatives of the Roma ethnic group are enabled to apply and serve as professional soldiers in the Bulgarian Army.

The study programs of the military education and training institutions includes studies regarding the ethnic tolerance and the service of commanders in a multiethnic environment. In the preparation of the military contingents for participation in missions and operations outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria particular attention has been given to the training on the relations with the civilian population in these countries and avoiding conflicts based on ethnicity or ethnic issues. The military servicemen are trained to respect the rituals and the religion of the local population.

On military service in the Bulgarian army are 18 military servicemen, representatives of other ethnic groups, who hold different command positions. Depending on the character of their functional duties they actively participate in the processes of implementation the tasks of the army.

It should be noted, however, that the number of the representatives of the ethnic groups, different from the Bulgarian, in the Bulgarian Army is small. This is due to the fact that the requirements for educational qualification state that the candidates must have secondary or higher education, with the exception of the determined by an act of the Minister of Defence positions, which may be occupied by persons with lower education than secondary.

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Our institution is always open to the development of the process of the admittance to military service of young people from other ethnic groups, while observing the requirements of the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.

### **Ministry of youth and sports**

In 2010, the programme "Sport for people with disabilities and children at risk" has been developed and approved within the Ministry of youth and sports and it is implemented in two directions:

- „Basic training/individual and group activities for people with disabilities"
- „Basic training on type of sport and sports training for children at risk"

**The programme has started in 2011 and it is annually approved by the Minister of Youth and Sports. The programme is currently being implemented for the third consecutive year.**

The goals and the objectives of the Programme are to developed conditions and opportunities for participation of the children with disabilities and children at risk in free sports activities in order to improve their quality of life, physical and mental capacity as well as opportunities for personal realization and prevention of the negative social occurrences, prevention of the intolerance and the violence, opportunities for social integration, adaptation, and complete realization in the public life.

**The concrete objectives of the direction „Basic training on type of sport and sports training for children at risk" are:**

- To establish conditions and opportunities for the extension of the scope of the children at risk for participation in sports activities in order to improve their physical abilities as well as for the full use of their leisure time and social integration;
- Acquisition of basic skills, habits and knowledge for practicing a preferable sport;
- To increase the social functions and the community service activities of the sport organizations by increasing and diversifying the sports services for children at risk;
- To challenge a lasting interest in the children at risk for systematic sport activities and to provide opportunities for the coaches in the sports clubs for selection and perspectives for sports development;
- To improve the access to sports facilities and to provide sports equipment for conducting a

physical activity and sport for children at risk;

- To use the possibilities of the sport as a prevention against the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs as well as against the intolerance and the violence in the society;
- By the impact of the sport to establish and develop social qualities, team work skills, tolerance, solidarity, moral and volitional qualities, leadership skills, and to respect the principles of the "Fair Play";
- To implement of an active media policy for promoting the benefits from the sport and the physical activity as a base for healthy lifestyle for children at risk.

**Direct beneficiaries are the sports organization** with a post license and sport member clubs of a license of sport federation.

**The target group** which is expected to have effect and benefits from the results of the implementation of the projects are the children at risk, people with disabilities, IMGs and organizations of people with disabilities.

**The duration of the implementation of the projects** financed by the Programme is from 3 to 12 months.

### **Implementation of the Programme**

**In 2011**, projects of 16 sports organizations were financed where activities were conducted in 12 kind of sport with 26 sports experts as 666 participants from the target groups were covered and 2505 classes have been conducted.

The allocated funds in this direction were 78 000 levs.

**In 2012**, projects of 22 sports organizations from 22 cities in the country were financed. The activities were conducted in 16 kinds of sports with 26 sports experts as 706 participants from the target groups were covered and 2505 classes have been conducted.

The allocated funds in this direction were 91 572 leva.

**In 2013**, projects of 24 sports organizations from 22 cities in the country in 28 kind of sport were financed as 9000 participants from the target groups were covered.

### **Upgrading activities**

From 2011 under the Programme "Development of the sport for leaners" a project of the "Bulgarian sports federation for children deprived from parental care" (BSFCDPC) is being annually financed with scope of activities: От 2011 г.ежегодно по Програма „Развитие на спорта за учащите" се финансира проект на „Българска спортна федерация за деца лишени от родителски грижи"(БСФДЛРГ) с предмет на дейност: Organization and conducting of National sports calendar in five kind of sports which are divided in four areas in the country and to national championships for children in institutions such as Homes for persons deprived from parental care (HPDPC), Homes for training of children deprived from parental care (HTCDPC), Socially-educational and pedagogical units (SEPU) as well as Educational and training boarding schools (ETBS).

The main goal is to established conditions and opportunities for the participation of the children at risk in sports competition activities in order to build self-confidence, personal realization through sport and social adaptation.

### **Impact assessments**

Currently an impact assessment is not carried out but feedback from the beneficiaries of the Programme and representatives from the target groups who are involved in the projects is based on survey forms.

The reluts from the implemented Programme activities shows that the objectives are largely achieved and annually optimal and affordable conditions for practicing physical exercises and sport for children at risk who significantly contributed for overcoming the isolation, integration and adaptation in the society.

The entered project funding gives the opportunity for supporting the activities of the sports organizations and the sports clubs which are the beneficiaries of the Programme and to increase the efficiency of their public activity.

### **Plan for the period 2014-2020**

The Ministry of youth and sports envisages that the programme "Sport for people with disabilities and children at risk" to take place annually within the desired period.

**The State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad** is the driver of the state policy as regards Bulgarian communities over the world. The associations of Bulgarians abroad are open for participation to all Bulgarians; for them it is irrelevant whether the people who contact them belong to the minorities or not. They work with people without making any difference of when or how the persons have travelled away from the country and for how long they have stayed abroad. These associations work in co-operation with Bulgarian institutions to offer cultural and educational projects. Organised Bulgarian holidays are open to all fellow-countrymen. In many cases, especially where there are the most multitudinous Bulgarian communities in Europe, and those communities fall within the scope of the most recent economic emigration, there is true and solid interaction between the structures whenever there are patriotic initiatives.

The Programme "Mother tongue and culture abroad" activates the establishment of new Bulgarian schools abroad, the number of which exceeds 200; for the 2013/2014 academic year financing was received by 137. As result of our contacts with the managements of the academic units, we have information that Bulgarian Roma people attend schools established by our compatriots in Spain, Austria and Cyprus.

**The Social Assistance Agency (SAA)** goes on executing the activities under its commitment to provide trainings to employees of the territorial structures intended to improve their awareness and qualification levels for the purposes of their work with representatives of ethnic communities and as part of the policy aimed at combating poverty and encouraging the social inclusion of representatives of ethnic communities in unequal position.

In 2012—2013, the following training seminars were organised for employees from the SAA under: Project "Let's Touch the Untouchable - Fighting against Traditional and New Anti-Roma Stereotypes", Project "Drawing up complex measures for integration of the most marginalised communities among the ethnic minorities with a focus on the Roma", "For Decent Labour and Better Life without Discrimination", "Health Issues of Roma people", "Education of Roma People", "Work with Risk Groups of Roma people", "Good practices in Roma integration on the labour market in Bulgaria".

SAA is a partner under the project "Let's Touch the Untouchable - Fighting against Traditional and New Anti-Roma Stereotypes" financed by the European Commission under the Programme "Fundamental Human Rights and Citizens' Participation" in six pilot Municipalities. Representatives of the Social Assistance Regional Directorates also take part. The training consists of seven modules using a Guidebook of the Centre of Inter-ethnic Dialogue and Tolerance. The purpose of this project is to build a model for efficient use of public services by the Roma people, for collaboration with the Roma community and involving them in activities between the various communities, which would guarantee that all members of vulnerable communities such as the Roma will use their fundamental rights to an equal extent.

One of the major activities under the project is establishing impact groups, i.e. mobile groups at Provincial level consisting of one educational, one healthcare and one social staff, representing representatives the three institutions, respectively. The impact groups have two main targets: to organise trainings for colleagues in their institutions or for field staff, the purpose being to help them overcome some prejudice and discrimination; to react in cases of discrimination locally or coming from other institutions and to apply multisectoral approach when solving them. Each impact group is trained and certified by the Amalipe Centre. In turn, each impact group trains and certifies in seven modules of training 30 representatives from all three spheres: health, social and educational.

#### ***State Agency for Child Protection***

Government policy on child protection in the country is coordinated and managed by the chairman of the SACP. Efforts being made towards social inclusion and integration of vulnerable

groups in Bulgarian society, particularly to children, involves all spheres of social, economic, social and cultural life. Policies of de-institutionalization of children to avoid social exclusion and marginalization of children and families, development of services and more., Combine successfully with initiatives, activities, events, meetings and events that support and promote the social inclusion of children and families.

The State Agency for Child Protection, monitoring and control signals submitted in connection with the violation of the rights of children in educational institutions. In 2012, continued to increase the number of alerts in the SACP for violating the rights of children in educational institutions, leading to an increase in the number of inspections carried out in schools and kindergartens. Key the problem in these educational institutions established during the inspections is to use methods of discipline and behavior of teachers who violate the interests and undermine the dignity of children. Were carried out 65 inspections by the Directorate General "Control Rights of the Child" - 22 in childcare and 43 - in schools. In 2012, there were 4 checks Socio-educational boarding / MET / and Boarding Schools / CBS /.

Pedagogical staff checked on cue educational establishments not know the duties and responsibilities stipulated in the Law on Child Protection and Rules for Implementation of the Law on Child Protection. Not well recognized risk factors, the impact they can have on the child and the possible consequences. Do not know the provisions of Art. 7, para. 1 and 2 of the Law on Child Protection to assist the competent authorities, where appropriate, as well as a signal to the SAD, suspected child at risk. School counselors do not carry enough individual work with children to overcome the conflict is not sufficiently documented the work done.

All this affects the educational process organization and approach to students. Unfortunately, gaps have been identified in selected educational institutions which are associated with the direct performance of official duties and obligations under the Education Act and its implementing rules, such as: lack of documentation does not discuss the results of education - educational process and behavior problems and development of specific children, individual programs for children from special schools are similar, provided no medical care.

Results of inspections in SBS and EBS show that the established internal rules and procedures, and actions taken by the teams of these institutions do not provide a safe and secure environment and safeguard the rights and interests of children in such schools. Inmates, juvenile delinquents live in inadequate conditions, permanently separated from their families.

Still is the issue of the need to take urgent measures to change the model of correctional work with children in juvenile delinquency and create appropriate and supportive environment - the prevention services for children with deviant behavior services to work with the child and family during his stay, and services to support and assist the child and family after his release from CBS. Departments for Child Protection not recognize these children as children at risk who need protection and support both the continuing gaps in the regulatory framework and the specific nature of working with this group of children and families, which requires certain skills and training.

For residents in SBS children do not make personal funds, which is why they often occur between conflict and risk situations. The question of personal funds for children placed in special schools and boarding schools which are permanently separated from the family environment, you need to find a solution as quickly as possible at the national level.

#### *Priority "Health"*

Creating conditions for social inclusion and integration of marginalized communities is a priority area, which includes a set of measures, which include the establishment of a well functioning network of integrated social services in the community.

**Through integrated services and cross-sectoral policies will be possible:** providing suitable conditions for coverage of children (3-5). Living in segregated communities who do not attend kindergartens program for early childhood care and education, improved access to health services; work with families, information about available vacancies in the labor market, opportunities for continuing education of adults and the qualification, development of social skills requirements of the labor market, interest-free loans to improve housing conditions, services that are based in the community and that support parents and children. Especially

needed are those measures to the most vulnerable groups such as Roma, where the accumulation of different problems (health, educational, social, employment, housing) determinate the intergenerational poverty. Such measures involves the construction of social infrastructure and human resource development as well as in public institutions and the system of services and social work.

In response to these needs, by order of the Minister of Health was formed a working group headed by the Chairman of the State Agency for Child Protection to assess the epidemiology of HIV - positive people in "Orlandovtsi" Sofia and making emergency plan.

The working group held meetings with representatives from the Ministry of Health, the State Agency for Child Protection, UNICEF, Sofia Municipality, the Regional Offices of the Agency for Social Assistance, NGOs, the State Hospital - suhodol, National Addiction Centre, representatives of Roma organizations and NGOs had adopted an action plan with specific goals spelled out the planned activities for implementation, responsible and deadlines.

Epidemiological situation in Orlandovtsi not been established, but were found poor sanitation and living conditions, use of psychoactive substances, including injectable use, limited access to health services due to lack of personal documents, HIV-positive persons and children, or circumstances that could lead to epidemics.

This study has prompted the development of a follow-up plan of action aimed at the study of the health and social situation of the population in all high-risk communities living on the territory of Sofia and follow preventive health and social action. By the end of November 2012, the Action Plan was agreed by the mayors of the ten (10) target areas of Sofia Municipality, namely: Poduyane, Renaissance, Slatina, Ilinden, Students, Lulin, Vitosha, Krasna Polyana, Youtube and Vitosha. In all regions was conducted extensive social and health survey population of discrete areas with risk communities. After summarizing the data were prepared periodic reports on which the assay was developed with the problems and proposed measures to overcome them.

Summary was prepared an analytical report with the main results, problems identified and suggestions for follow-up actions and policies at municipal level. Identified the most urgent and immediate adaptation measures and actions and the actions that need to be planned in the long term.

**In the new programming period, one of the so-called "investment priorities " of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development " 2014-2020 (co-financed by the European Social Fund) is the priority "Integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma".**

Within this priority could be implemented integrated projects of varied number of beneficiaries - municipalities, NGOs, other public and private entities operating in the field of social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Target group of these projects will be communities of people living in social exclusion, including people living in separate areas of high poverty, unemployment and other social problem, Roma and other ethnic minorities, disabled people, people at risk of discrimination and more.

The projects will be implemented in multiple directions and one of them will be the development of local communities and overcome negative stereotypes (planning, management and monitoring of initiatives to integrate marginalized groups and community development; community activities to change practices that have a negative impact on inclusion of target groups; support for the inclusion of representatives of marginalized groups in the process of formulation and implementation of national and local policies; support for initiatives to overcome stereotypes; support for initiatives to promote the cultural identity of ethnic groups, incl. stimulation by development of traditional activities and talents, including arts and crafts).

Besides, out of this investment priority, representatives of Roma ethnicity can equally participate in the implementation of other initiatives supported financially by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020.

## **Funding**



3 030 469 EUR are paid under the OP “Human Resources Development” schemes mentioned in p. 1.2. Employment (277 668 EUR on project “Raising the quality of the services provided by the Employment Agency to individuals and businesses with a focus on vulnerable groups in the labor market” and 2 755 801 EUR on project “Modernisation of the system for provision of services under OP HRD”).

At the moment, it is not possible to provide information about the approximate amount of funds that will be allocated to support the implementation of the National strategy for Roma integration. The reason is that at national level there is still no decision on the amount of funds that will be directed to the individual operational programmes, including the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020.

### **Lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward**

The main lessons learned from the current programming period, which will be implemented in the programming of schemes under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020, aimed at integrating the Roma population can be summarized as follows:

- The need for programming to be consistent with the existing strategic framework at national level;
- Need to apply an integrated approach combining interventions in the areas of employment, education and training, health and social services, housing, etc., in solving the problems facing the integration of representatives of the Roma ethnic group at risk of social exclusion;
- Need for better coordination between the institutions with responsibilities in the implementation of policies and interventions in the field of Roma inclusion;
- Need to simplify the rules and procedures for granting financial assistance, as far as the implementation of integrated approaches would require a combination of financial resources from more than one source, including more than one operational programme;
- Need to justify the schemes to be supported by the EU funds, on the basis of clear assessment of the needs of the target groups and the specifics (linguistic, cultural, economic, social, etc.) of the individual regions /territories /areas where they will be realized.

**According to the Action Plan at the National Strategy**, some sections provide for the formation of two workgroups – Chapter 4 Interdepartmental Work Group for review, analysis and amendments to the effective regulation on the priority sectors as listed below: education, health care, household conditions, employment, rule of law and non-discrimination and culture and media of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012- 2020), and Chapter 5: Interdepartmental Work Group for Resource Assistance of Roma integration using funds from the EU Funds. The two groups held their sessions in 2012, and upon the expiry of the precedent Government’s mandate, reports were drawn up on their work addressed to the chairperson of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues.

Interdepartmental Work Group for resource assistance to the Roma integration with funds from the EU Funds set up by an order issued by the Prime Minister in August, 2012. is still active at present. The work group includes representatives of the NG sector selected as a result of an open and transparent interest declaration procedure by the NGOs and determining their representatives. The chairperson of the Work Group is the secretary of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues.

The activity of the Work Group focused on planning the resources to be invested during the next Programming Period 2014-2020, however there are also efforts in seeking opportunities to integrate the measures across the individual funds and programmes during this Programming Period, although the resources are largely programmed in their entirety. Also, attention is paid to seeking additional support in the context of other donor programmes. Moreover, the work group also acts as a co-ordination group in the Thematic Reforms Fund related to the inclusion of the

Roma people under the Bulgarian-Swiss Co-operation Programme. The true effective management of the fund is entrusted to the MLSP.

Basically, the Work Group is united behind the understanding of the necessity to draft a Plan with indicative programmes for support of the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy, which should contain types of interventions to be supported in the next Programming Period. This plan should be a framework plan guaranteeing sufficient flexibility given the fact that the operational programmes are still in a process of development. We may say that until February, 2013, the Work Group only works on proposals coming from the representatives of the non-governmental sector, i.e. Planned Operations. With the view to the new Programming Period 2014-2020, the work group's work is also concentrated on the thematic groups as set up under the new operational programmes, and under the Partnership Agreement.

In the period August 2012–December 2012 was active the Interdepartmental Work Group for review, analysis and amendments to the effective regulation on the priority sectors as listed below: education, health care, household conditions, employment, rule of law and non-discrimination and culture and media of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012- 2020) established by an order of the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairperson of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues. Members of the work group were representatives of institutions and of the non-governmental sector nominated by the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues member organisations.

There are proposals drafted by the work group and addressing the formulation of amendments to the legislative framework in the spheres of education, public health, employment and social services, rule of law and non-discrimination and media. During the period of Work Group's activity, amendments to the Spatial Development Act were enforced covering the proposals discussed in the group. The proposals made to the Culture Priority are at place in the legal regulations and need to be promoted accordingly.

The Action Plan provides for the development of a General Communication Plan, its major purpose being to change the negative attitudes in Bulgaria's society to the Roma community by providing better publicity and transparency of the activities intended to implement the integration policies to the Roma people and to other vulnerable ethnic groups living in situation similar to that of the Roma people and to promote good practices and examples in the field of the Roma integration. Therefore, the National Focal Point awarded the drafting of such Plan for 2013-2014.

**Target groups covered by it will be:** Institutions of the central executive authority, territorial units of the central executive authority, municipal authorities; European and international institutions;

- Political parties, Media, Vulnerable groups of Roma or other ethnic origin, opinion leaders, NGOs, the general public.

The proposals of the organisation working on the Communication Plan are basic messages and communication tools: information materials, information brochure, CD containing the text of the brochure, a Letter/contact card to the provincial governors, Calendar of ethnos related events; Communication with the media, Invitation to the media, Press-release/Factsheet, Press-conference, Website of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, FB page of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, information events, National conference, Regional meeting, Workshop, Workshop with health mediators, Identifying key spokespersons.

Part of these proposals have been started now, and another part is planned for 2014.

In 2012 and 2013, support was granted for activities to more than 30 NGOs for promoting the Initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015". Two analyses were elaborated: "Mechanism of regulation of mediator's approach to work with vulnerable communities" and "Sustainability and efficiency of health mediators in the Republic of Bulgaria".

**According to Section VII. Mechanisms for implementation of international policy, it is provided to develop jointly with representatives of the local Roma community and subject to adoption by the Municipal Councils, specific annual action plans on the priorities of the National Roma Integration Strategy in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020). These plans should have resource backing.** The Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (SNCCEII), which is National Focal Point in the implementation of the National Strategy, is a central co-ordination unit in the process of provincial planning. The Secretariat, jointly with the non-governmental organisations *in situ* planned, assisted, co-ordinated, conducted and monitored the process by undertaking on-the-spot visits in 10 Provinces and Municipalities. The civil organisations, which are members of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and also non-members, were the National Focal Point's 'ambassadors' *in situ*.

## **II. Implementation at regional and local level**

*(This text was compiled on the grounds of the information received from the provincial administrations and treats the implementation of the provincial strategies and the municipal action plans)*

In 2012, a large-scale process of provincial and municipal planning was triggered in accordance with the NRISRB for drawing up provincial strategies for integration of Roma people and municipal action plans. The problems with the Roma integration have different degrees of gravity and are on the agendas in many Municipalities. They are well known to the relevant authorities and the implementation of the strategy would be unthinkable without its specification at provincial and municipal levels.

Once the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2020) was adopted by the National Assembly, the efforts of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and its Secretariat turned to the process of provincial planning. A number of meetings were conducted, which outlined the activities within the scope of the implementation of what was planned.

On 30 May 2012, the Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and the World Bank organised a working meeting focused on the "Preparation for working out a methodology of drawing up provincial and municipal strategies for integration of Roma people in accordance with the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) and action plans". It was made clear at the meeting that the provincial administrations would be drawing up new provincial strategies, and the Municipalities would prepare biannual municipal action plans (2013-2014).

On 15 June 2012, the Conference titled "National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012 – 2020: a Look to the Next Programming Period", took place. The event was organised by SNCCEII and the Center for Interethnic Dialog and Tolerance Amalipe. The matter of discussion was the resource backing of the National Strategy for Roma integration by funds from the European Funds and the planning of international policy at municipal and provincial levels.

In the period October –November, 2012, the process of drawing up provincial strategy and municipal action plans in the Sofia Province was carried out as a pilot effort. Provincial strategy for integration of Roma people in the Sofia Province (2012-2020) and three Municipal Action Plans were drawn up for the municipalities of Dolna Banya, Ihtiman and Slivnitsa. The Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues took part, its contribution being consultations to help the provincial and municipal teams draw up the documents. Methodological aid was also provided to the Municipalities of Botevgrad and Samokov. The process involved representatives of non-governmental organisations, and in particular, representatives of the Center for Interethnic Dialog and Tolerance Amalipe.

SNCCEII is a central co-ordination unit of the process and is co-ordinating the overall process of provincial planning. On the grounds of the practical experience accumulated during the intensive preparatory period, the Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues drafted Aid Guidelines for Provincial Planning.

These Guidelines were developed with the aim to assist the province governors and the administration governed by those to organise the development of the provincial planning.

The provincial planning encompassed the objectives, tasks and measures relative to the Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin and other citizens in vulnerable social situation living in a situation similar to that of the Roma people. During the planning process, a review was made of the existing strategic documents at municipal and provincial levels conforming the priorities as laid down in the NRISRB. An integrated approach was applied to find solutions to problems, which are sometimes beyond the capacity of the individual municipality, and to upgrade and enhance existing practices and expertise.

On 15 November 2012, a meeting was held with the provincial governors who were presented the results from the planning made in the Sofia Province, and the aid guidelines were elucidated. Such meetings were held together with the mayors of the regions within the Sofia Municipality on 14 December, and on 19 December, another meeting took place, which was attended by representatives of municipal administrations across the country, where NGO representatives were present, too.

By the end of 2012. the process at provincial and municipal planning gained momentum and expanded nationally. The logistical support and co-ordination of the process was further carried out by visits *in situ* in 10 provinces where experts from the SNCCEII worked hand in hand with the teams, which were busy drawing up the provincial strategies and the municipal plans.

The provincial strategies are not a mechanic sum of information and statistics, they rather reflect in a complex way the needs of the target groups, the cost-effectiveness and the financial capacities of all participants in the process. The drafting of the Provincial Strategy required the participation of representatives of each municipality in the territory of the province, of the regional divisions of all State institutions, other interested bodies, non-for-profit legal entities operating in the area of the ethnic integration issues, members of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and the Municipal Councils for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues. Provincial operational teams were established to include a representative of the Provincial Administration, a representative of the Provincial Council on ethnic and integration related issues, the Mayors of all Municipalities in the territory of the province, the secretaries of all Municipalities in the territory of the province, the municipal co-ordinators ( a representative of each municipality in the territory of the province), a representative of the territorial structures of the State institutions; a representative of locally based structures of the central; representatives of the local communities, NGOs and civil initiative groups.

The provincial strategies were endorsed by the provincial governors upon agreeing thereof with the Provincial COUNCIL for collaboration in ethnic and integration related questions).

The municipal plans coincide with the periods as provided for in the Action Plan to the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)

The plans in question are based upon the respective analysis of the needs and specificities of the local communities. The biennial municipal action plans are specific and mark which activities and measures might be implemented with local financial backing and which must use other financial resources.

The Municipalities drafted their own municipal action plans to the Provincial Strategy based on the analysis of the situation. Municipal operational teams were set up, which included: the Mayor of the Municipality, the Secretary of the Municipality, the chairman of the Municipal Council, the Municipal co-ordinator in the Provincial Strategy drafting, representatives of the Municipality in charge of education, health care, household environment and infrastructure, culture, representatives of: Social Assistance Directorate, Labour Office Directorate, the Local Committee for Fight against Antisocial Manifestations of Minors and Underage; MoI officers

(Juvenile Delinquency Commission), representatives of the communities, for which the measures are intended, and non-governmental organisations active in the sphere of integration.

By order of the Mayor, each municipality assigns a municipal co-ordinator. The Municipal Co-ordinator represents the Municipality in the provincial operational team and undertakes to inform the Mayor of the Municipality, the Municipal Council and the other divisions in the Municipal Administration about the progress made in the provincial planning.

The municipal action plans were adopted by the Municipal Council of the relevant municipality.

By the month of March, 2013, **27 provincial strategies and 220 municipal action plans were worked out.**

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are regulated of the provincial strategies and municipal plans: Monitoring and evaluation units are established with representatives of the provincial government, experts from the Municipal Administration, NGOs, etc. The Monitoring and evaluation unit prepares a summarised monitoring report on the implementation of the action plans by the Municipalities in the territory of the province for, which will be sent to the Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues. Information of these reports is used in making an Annual Report the implementation of the Strategy. The Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues co-ordinates and summarises the information received in the Report. The Report shall be subject to the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issue's agreement. The Report on the implementation of the Strategy shall be adopted by the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers shall submit the annual report on the implementation of the Strategy for adoption in the National Assembly by 20 April the subsequent year.

At the end of 2013, the preparation starts for the updating of the Action Plan on the implementation of the NRISRB and for drawing up the municipal action plans to 2020. SNCCEII will be co-ordinating the process, which will involve the institutions engaged at central level, the provincial and the municipal authorities, the civil Roma organisations and other non-governmental organisations. With World Bank's assistance, mentors are planned to be trained, who will be supposed to steer the process *in situ* and to help prepare the action plans according to the tutorial requirements to drafting that kind of strategic documents.

Having estimated the significance of the international policy, the Government put in the Roma Inclusion into the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the World Bank for partnership and provision of technical support related to the implementation of the EU Structural Instruments signed on 23 January 2012. The National Council has had the World Bank's support as of the very beginning of the process of implementation of the NRISRB.

On 23-24 January 2012, a two-day conference was held titled "Management for Achievement of Results: Effective Monitoring and Assessment of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma integration (2012-2020)", which was organised by the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and the World Bank. The World Bank's vice-president for Europe and Central Asia, Mr. Philip Leroux took part in the conference.

The collaboration with the World Bank continued with analysis and evaluation of the municipal action plans for integration of Roma people for the period 2013-2014. 1 provincial strategy and 10 municipal plans were analysed. The recommendations from the analysis will be used at the time of developing the municipal action plans until 2020.

The work of the Interdepartmental Work Group for resource assistance to the Roma integration with funds from the EU Fund is planned to carry out the information logistics and this to assist the Municipalities in developing future projects and programmes for the period 2014-2020.

The EU Investment Funds (EUIF) will be supporting the implementation of the provincial strategies and the municipal action plans for integration of Roma people according to the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020). The assistance thereto will be provided basically by financing integrated projects with the Municipalities and other stakeholders at local level being the beneficiaries thereof. The projects will be addressing

the improvement of the access to employment, the access to education, the access to quality social and health services and measures for building tolerance to the various ethnic differences, the popularisation of various ethnic groups' cultures, etc.

Essential element in the effective implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is the existence of adequate mechanisms for monitoring and control. **The Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the World Bank for partnership and technical support for the implementation of EU Structural Instruments provides for the development of a monitoring and control system for the implementation of the National Strategy. Currently we are looking for financial and human resources to implement the provision. Discussions are being held for that purpose with the Institute "Open Society" - Sofia that expresses readiness for support. The National Point of Contact with regard to the implementation of the National Strategy - NCCEII Secretariat, which is part of the administration of the Council of Ministers, is a beneficiary under priority axis "Modernization of the Institutions of the Labor Market, Social Inclusion and Health" of the Operational Program "Human Resources Development 2014 -2020" under which there is also a potential for providing funds. In 2014 concrete steps will be made for setting up such a system.**

## **REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATION OF ROMA IN 28 ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS IN BULGARIA**

### **1. SOFIA REGION**

The Strategy for integration of Roma people in the City of Sofia (2012-2020) follows a purposeful integrated approach toward the citizens in vulnerable situation of Roma origin. The Strategy is implemented following Action plans as developed by the 24 district administrations, which are considered as a common plan of the Sofia Municipality and are updated periodically.

By Decision of the Sofia City Municipal Council, a Programme for measures in support of children and families in vulnerable situation and living at risk in the territory of the Municipality. This programme was developed on the basis of an integrated approach and a health and social field survey conducted with the participation of the State Child Protection Agency, jointly with the Ministry of Health, the Sofia Municipality, the territorial divisions of the Social Assistance Agency, The National Centre for Addictions, territorial divisions of the Labour Office, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science.

#### **Education**

In Sofia Province a mere 1% of the Roma population have graduated from universities/higher learning establishments (163 people). 2018 people or 12.8 % have secondary education diplomas. 6 370 people (40.5%) have primary education, 5 683 people (36.2%) are below those degrees, and one of each twelve has never been to school. The educational policy in the Sofia Province focuses full integration of Roma children and students, by creating conditions for equal access to quality education beyond the schools in the separate Roma neighbourhoods.

In pursuance of the Provincial Strategy, the following measures were undertaken:

- The pedagogical specialists have attended various forms of qualification courses to improve multiethnic environment at schools and to improve the quality of education,.
- Large part of educational establishments, i.e. kindergartens and schools, are busy working for the integration of children and students under the projects, under the Operational Programmes and other sources of financing:
  - in the Ilinden district, the kindergartens are implementing the project titled "Ready for School" for Roma children in pre-school age;
  - in the Novi Iskar district, under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme the projects "Success" and "Enhancing the quality of education in the central schools by introducing all-day academic activity pattern";

- in the district Kremikovtsi: projects under National programmes of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and the Human Resources Development Operational Programme „Let’s Make School Attractive to Young People“, “USPEH” [Eng.: Success], "Enhancing the quality of education in the central schools by introducing all-day academic activity pattern"; “Qualifications of Pedagogical Specialists”; “Reintegration of School Leavers”; “Together in Learning and Games”; “Training in the spirit of tolerance and non-discrimination”; a project under the Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 129/11.07.2000 “Provision of funds to Assist Physical Education and Sports of School Students”; the National Programme “With Care for Each School Student” - Module 3 “Providing additional training to schoolchildren to increase their achievements levels in their educational background”.

- an extremely successful project is the programme “School of Inclusion” – the daily traffic of students transported from the *Fakulteta* neighbourhood comes to a total of 343 children attending the schools.

- there has been successful work on a number of projects covering more than 200 school students in 15 various clubs: “Applied Mathematics”, “Applied Cycling”, “Mirror of My Behaviour”, “Health”, “Folklore of Ethnic Groups: Roma Folklore”, “Chess Club”, “Digital competences”, etc.

- this year some schools are involved under the Programme “With care for each school student” where school students from 6<sup>th</sup> class and preparatory classes are included.

The 67<sup>th</sup> *Vasil Drumev* Primary Comprehensive School has increased the number of all-day training groups for 2013/2014 academic year: 4 all-day training groups in 1<sup>st</sup> —4<sup>th</sup> class and 2 preparatory classes, for 5 and 6-year-old children, respectively. The school is a partner under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme under two projects: “Together in the Future” and “School for Ambitions”, jointly with the *Vasil Drumev Narodno Chitalishte* [Eng.: *Vasil Drumev* People’s Community Centre]. Furthermore, efforts have been made under measure “Without a Free Hour” as part of the National programme “School with no Absences”. I

In 2013, school students were included in projects implemented by the Local Commission for Combat against Anti-Social Behaviour of Minors and Juveniles in Sofia, district Vazrazhdane: “Life with No Drugs, Alcohol or Tobacco Smoke” and “Life without Violence and Tears” and in district chess tournament.

Work has been underway in the educational and children’s establishments in the Vrabnitsa district under the projects for integration of children and students: 70<sup>th</sup> Primary Comprehensive School and 42<sup>nd</sup> United Nursery/Kindergarten/Crèche have been working on the project “More Different: More Successful” at the Centre for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities; 140<sup>th</sup> Secondary Comprehensive School has been working on the „School for self-fulfilment and Preparation Towards European Horizons” under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”, cofinanced by the European Social Fund and the project “Inclusive Education: Prerequisite for Prevention of social Exclusion of children of the Roma ethnic group” under Priority 3 „Efficient work with parents of children and students from the ethnic minorities for prevention of early school leavers and decrease of unjustified absences” at the Centre for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities, which was approved in September, 2013; 74<sup>th</sup> Secondary Comprehensive School has been working on two projects: „Educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities” and „Inclusive training” under the Scheme „Grant provision by the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development at the MLSP; 5 All-Day Nursery has been working on the project „Unity, Collaboration, Teamwork” under the programme „Integration of children from the ethnic minorities and creating conditions for equal access to quality education.

Very good results have been reported in the Slatina district with the inclusion in the project „Schools of inclusion”; under the summer learning pattern, 25 children were prepared to join the first school class. The facilities thereto were provided by 148<sup>th</sup> *Professor Lyubomir Miletich* Primary Comprehensive School.

Successful efforts were also reported from the 94<sup>th</sup> Secondary Comprehensive School under projects: “Success” is the project, in which around 500 school students participate for a third year

in a row; "With Care for Each Student" was joined by around 50 school students; "New Chance" was organised for dropped out students.

In September 2013, the district administration and the *Zornitsa* [Eng. Morning Star] All-Day Nursery joined the project of the Sofia Municipality titled "Children and young people at risk" financed by the ESF.

- A sustainable programme was created in the efforts aimed at decreasing the dropping out of the Roma children from school by introducing intercultural education, including pedagogical and interinstitutional activities and Mechanisms, authorising of parents and their engagement with the education of children as key conditions for their life and labour market participation, under the project "So I Have A Future Tomorrow", which has been implemented in the Poduyane district.

**Good practice** in this sphere is the project "Social inclusion by establishing community centres for children and families at risk groups in the territory of the Sofia Municipality".

The contract of 31.05.2011 signed by the Sofia Municipality on World Bank financing through MLSP's "Project for social inclusion" of the project proposal "Social inclusion by establishing community centres for children and families at risk groups in the area of the Sofia Municipality" (in the neighbourhoods Slatina and Ovcha Kupel) amounts to 6 357 640 Bulgarian Leva, including the Sofia Municipality's cofinancing worth 1,4 million Bulgarian Leva.

The main aim is prevention of social exclusion and decrease of poverty among children by investment made in the early child development, including restricting the cross-generation poverty transfer. The services and activities focus the improvement of the overall wellbeing of children and, most of all, of children belonging to the risk groups, predominantly from the Hristo Botev neighbourhood. Within the framework of the two Centres, kindergartens will also be functioning with a total of 4 groups, and day-care and by-the-hour care will be ensured for children aged between 0 and 3.

With the implementation of the Project, the following results are expected to be achieved:

- Developing a new type of social services and forms of care in the community and institutions;
- Providing equal access to quality pre-school training and education through improved school readiness of children from risk families and children with disabilities aged under 7;
- Formation of health culture for appropriate upbringing of children;
- Improving children's health. The duration of the implementation of the Project is 24 months.

In the groups will integrate up to 30% children at risk. The purpose is these groups to train and care for children at risk, , predominantly from the Hristo Botev neighbourhood, and to give them an equal start and access to education.

Despite the efforts put, work still needs to be continued to increase parents' commitment and to enhance the collaboration in the educational process, to stimulate the inclusion of Roma parents in the school boards or public councils.

## **Healthcare**

A major target in the sphere of the public health care is to provide equal access to quality health care and medical precautionary programmes to all citizens of the capital city, including the Roma population.

The lack of health insurance contributions among the Roma population is a serious problem: large part of the Roma community are either uninsured or have a status of discontinued health insurance rights, and therefore, diseases come as a result of poor household hygiene conditions. The members of large minority communities are more prone to such diseases as hepatitis, gastrointestinal diseases, and a variety of diseases caused by parasites. A very acute problem in the Roma hamlets in Bulgaria are the infectious diseases. Overpopulation in neighbourhoods and homes is a serious hurdle faced by the efforts to set isolation measures against virus makes it quite difficult to isolate virus carriers and diseases often turn epidemic.

The activities carried out in this sense are aimed at providing equality in the access to health services and prevention programmes; implementation of Sofia Municipality's social policies addressing various vulnerable groups, here included the Roma integration and other social activities aimed at improving health awareness and providing access to health information:

- In order to improve health awareness and to achieve efficient prevention in children's



establishments in the area of the Vrabnitsa district, talks healthy way of life related to are conducted.

- The Bulgarian Red Cross and other non-governmental organisations, with the collaboration of the Slatina district organise in the *Asen Zlatarov* Community Centre some health promotion talks, HIV or AIDS self-protection talks, etc.; as of this August, this district is a partner to the *Positive* Foundation to support children and families at risk; a talk was carried out concerning the need of inoculation; a campaign was run in the ways of infectious diseases prevention and protection.

- At a field health and social study, the Management of Specialised Donor Programmes Directorate at the Ministry of Health put organised field efforts in the areas studied in Sofia with compact Roma population; those efforts included locating a mobile medical practice aiming to conduct voluntary consultations and making voluntary HIV tests, Hepatitis B tests, Hepatitis C tests, syphilis tests and tuberculosis test; follow-up included an estimate made of the health status of children and the persons of Roma origin to be used for planning of future health services.

The basic activities related to the improvement of public health care and health awareness and culture amongst the Roma people to be done in the Pancharevo district and are associated with conducting talks with GPs aiming to improve the precautionary examinations among the Roma population and the awareness campaigns meant to familiarise the target population with the methods of protection against the commonest diseases.

- In the Vazrazhdane district, lectures and health talks were conducted around the educational and children's establishments aimed at enhancing health awareness and culture among groups at risk to provide equality in the access to quality health services and preventive programmes. In the area of that district, the Sofia City Regional Health Inspectorate has carried out health-educational activities in the 13<sup>th</sup> Primary Comprehensive School, the 136<sup>th</sup> Primary Comprehensive School, the 67<sup>th</sup> Primary Comprehensive School with students, primarily of Roma origin; the topics concerned in the course of the work done were: "Prevention of tuberculosis and hypertension"; and parents' conferences have been conducted with mothers of 11 and 12-year-old girls at the 67<sup>th</sup> Primary Comprehensive School and the 136<sup>th</sup> Primary Comprehensive School on "Prevention of cervical cancer".

- In the Serdika district, campaigns are conducted meant for the immunisation of local communities and for improving health assistance for the persons of Roma origin.

- In the Lyulin district, a health awareness campaign to improve health care awareness of vulnerable groups from the Roma community in the area of Filipovtsi neighbourhood is underway, the topics being related to: prevention of leaving children in institutions, family planning and female and child health protection. 4 awareness campaigns were conducted encompassing the following spheres: prevention of leaving children in specialised institutions; prevention of early and/or undesired pregnancy (contraception methods); primary precaution and prevention of female health and cervical cancer; prevention of child health (immunisations).

- Under the programme "Health and social development" in the Krasna Polyana district, according to a contract between the district and the Social Protection Fund, efforts have been made aimed at improving health awareness and culture among young parents of the Roma community by conducting a series of information programmes covering 200 families.

The number needs to be increased of health mediators and NGOs, which should field work with the Roma population. The district administration may not exert control over personal doctors' activities related to prevention and health awareness that they carry out with Roma communities and with other citizens living in similar conditions.

Setting up innovative services for the vulnerable communities is an integral part of the developing network of services for the children showing risk behaviour, parents and families of children at risk seeking to improve parental care:

- The Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration opened in the Zaharna Fabrika neighbourhood by a decision of the Sofia Municipal Council will work with children and people at risk from all vulnerable communities, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. A priority in their efforts will be to guarantee that services would cover the children and families from the most vulnerable ethnic communities in unequal position and would reach the isolated and distant

settlements. The Centre is above all intended to provide the largest possible range of services connected with prevention of risks leading to deviant behaviour among children and young people, to poor parental care for the children dropping out of school, among the groups at risk in the vulnerable ethnic communities. Two centres are to be opened for work with street children and those centres will carry out mobile services for broad prevention of risk behaviour amongst children from minorities, of neglecting children by supporting the families in their efforts to improve care for the children inside the family, restricting the risk factors, prevention of the processes of marginalisation and social inclusion among high-risk vulnerable communities.

Under the MLSP's project "Social soup-kitchens", 11 soup-kitchens were opened, which are frequented by a large portion of Roma people. Non-governmental organisations provide a warm lunch in the Poduyane and Serdika districts. The Sofia Municipality is active in the integration of children and families from vulnerable and risk groups, including those from the Roma community, in active collaboration with non-governmental organisations. A good example thereto is that cofinancing was ensured from the municipal budget until the end of 2013 under the projects of foundations, which have proved their efficient and active work in the Roma community such as Health and social development Foundation (project Integrated services for prevention of health and social risks for children and families in the area of Bratska Druzha street and Suhodolska street, the Fakulteta neighbourhood, the Krasna Polyana district) and the Children and Juniors Association (project "mobile social work with children and families in vulnerable situation and those living at risk in the territory of the Sofia city, which is being carried out in the districts Serdika, Slatina and Mladost).

### **Housing**

A serious problem is the expansion of space separation among the Roma community. The concentration of Roma people in separate neighbourhoods has been growing over the last years, which is a prerequisite for social isolation of their dwellers, deterioration in the household conditions, problems with the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and hygiene, and difficulties with the provision of services.

Part of the Roma people inhabit places without any or with poorly running main and sewerage and often with an illegally laid electric network or even electric network without electricity, with poor sewerage system or without any sewerage system, and this determines the worst household conditions. With a view to prevent the increase of the number of illegal buildings and carrying out preventive measures to restrict any eventual law violations committed by the illegally self-accommodated persons. This district is where working meetings are held between the managements of the district administration and those of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Office of the Sofia Directorate of Police for undertaking specific actions falling within the scope of the jurisdictions of the two institutions that are supposed to lead to the achievement of the above aims.

The Sofia Municipality provides social services in the community: provisional shelter to the vulnerable groups (three Centres for Temporary Accommodation and a Crisis Centre for the winter months. As of the summer of 2013, an Accommodation Centre of Family Type of Children at Risk: two buildings in quarters Ovcha Kupel, 9 Zemlyane with funds of Sofia Municipality.

The basic activities intended to improve the Roma people's living conditions have a bearing on providing funds for repair of Municipality owned homes, where persons of Roma origin were accommodated. There are individual Roma families, which are accommodated in municipal homes. There is also the problem with the restricted number of apartments and the irregular payments by the Roma families of the costs on the homes that were provided to them. Some of the persons of Roma origin are provided with municipal homes, which they may purchase afterwards.

The collaboration between the administration at local and central level yields certain results in solving the problems Roma people face in accommodation issues. The district administrations of the Sofia Municipality, namely the Management of Municipal Property and Building Stock Divisions, the Regional Divisions of the National Construction Control at the Regional Directorates at the National Construction Control are leading institutions in charge of the

implementation of the targets in the Strategy addressing the Improvement of the Housing of Roma Priority.

Good practice has been applied by the Slatina district regarding the construction of municipal homes for Roma families. With European Development Bank's financial co-operation, 12 blocks of flats were constructed, 18 flats each, where families from the minorities were accommodated. Those blocks have favourable locations within the infrastructure especially created for them: in the Centre of Hristo Botev neighbourhood, near the bus stop, a school and a kindergarten, all of them highly frequented. The most part of those accommodated there take good care of the flats, with regeneration of the properties carried out by the tenants. Clear rules were introduced applicable to tenancy and maintenance of the homes, as well as to rent and utility charges. The rules are strict and are applicable to all. 7 families have been taken out over the last 6 years, and in their place new tenants have been accommodated amongst the eligible persons entered in the index. Most of the accommodated persons and families are employed, predominantly in the cleansing companies, and their children attend the respective educational institutions. As at today, a project has been elaborated for an extra condominium building, however financing is sought for its construction.

The existing infrastructure is planned to be improved and new technical and social infrastructure is planned to be built in neighbourhoods with compact Roma population.

What is needed is to put efforts addressing the land ownership problems and illegal construction issues.

### **Employment**

The unemployment level among the Roma ethnic community is strongly differentiated and varies from one Sofia district to another, with the highest values under this index being recorded in the Krasna Polyana district, - 28.3%. A major reason for such limited access of the Roma population to the labour market are their educational levels. Significant part of the unemployed persons from this group consists of lonely parents, 23.3%, while 1.2% of them have reduced work capacity, which puts them in even worse situation in the labour market.

The measures applied in this domain are: providing access of the Roma people to the labour market and to the various instruments and initiatives for self-employment; improving employability and qualifications of the unemployed Roma people; developing projects included in qualification programmes for employment under the relevant programmes, seasonal employment, etc.; training of young people in professional skills applying apprenticeships; inclusion of local community into the implementation of infrastructural projects, land developing and managing, landscaping, children's playgrounds; stimulating economic initiative among people from minorities for development of business and manufacture industry.

A project for Roma vocational training and advanced vocational training is being developed and implemented, jointly with NGOs, conducting a course for 15 bricklayers/stonemasons/plasterers, sewing classes for 30 people; hairdresser's classes for 60 people; training group sessions are also underway based on development of life and social skills among teenagers and young people in conformity with the requirements for competitive participation in the labour market; the Lyulin Labour Office Directorate has appointed a Roma mediator in charge of the activities as referred to herein above, who are also in charge of consulting Roma population members how to make use of the services provided by the Labour Offices; as a result of joint efforts of the district administration and the Lyulin Labour Office Directorate, 18 persons of Roma origin have started work.

Classes and courses for unemployed are organised as listed herein after: motivation for active job-seeking; career guidance; professional qualifications, within the framework of the annual programmes for training under the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) and other plans.

In districts such as Vazrazhdane, there has been active realisation of the state policy for encouraging the employment and protection in case of unemployment and promoting the current programmes and encouraging measures for employment among employers in the district. This is positive for the local labour market as it covers a substantial part of the risk groups. Moreover, the share of unregistered unemployed is substantial; the share of unemployed among females is

even higher; there has been a tendency toward an increase in the share of registered permanent unemployed; the share of people of low education grades is high, which is a serious obstacle when it comes to job provision; employers are reluctant to hire unemployed persons registered in the labour exchange.

In 2012, 36 persons had taken the jobs offered under the employment programmes in the area of the Vazrazhdane district, the primary labour market provided jobs to 566, of whom 156 are persons with no qualifications and of Roma origin. In addition, employers are stimulated to open new jobs, and, on the other hand, unemployed persons' active behaviour is stimulated in terms of improving their labour motivation. For the period 01.01.2013—30.09.2013, the Vazrazhdane Labour Office Directorate has registered on the average 781 unemployed job seekers monthly. For the period, the Vazrazhdane Labour Office Directorate has registered 1108 dismissed and newly registered persons; 583 persons have started work for the period, of which 68 persons were employed under the programmes and measures within the scope of the Employment Promotion Act, of which 12 were people from the minorities.

The following data was provided on trainings and apprenticeships under qualification schemes within the scope of the Operational Programme „Human Resources Development“:

BG051PO001-1.1.09: "Qualification services and encouraging of the employment";

BG051PO001-1.1.07: „Take Your Life in Your Hands“;

BG051PO001-1.1.10: Qualifications and motivation for competitive inclusion in the labour market covered 24 persons, of which 12 persons from the minorities.

108 unemployed, of which 12 job seekers from the minorities have started work under the active schemes within the scope of the Operational Programme „Human Resources Development“, namely “Support for employment”, “A New Start” “First Job”.

As an example of good practice may be considered the working visit titled “Sofia in the context of active inclusion of those farthest from the labour market” organised on 21 and 22 June 2013 by the Sofia Municipality within the framework of the EURO CITIES initiative (organisation of the large European cities) *Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion*. This initiative is backed by the programme *Cities for active inclusion*, a partnership between the European Commission (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and EURO CITIES. At the official opening, the *Programme for Measures in Support of Children and Families in Vulnerable Situation and Living at Risk in the Area of the Sofia Municipality* was presented, and so was the Report *Results and Recommendations from the Health and Social Study of Persons and Children from Risk Groups Living in the Area of the Sofia Municipality* made out by State Agency for Child Protection, etc, and thereafter a visit was made to Sofia social services provided to vulnerable groups far from the labour market, including Health and Social centre in the Krasna Polyana district and the Day Centre for work with street children. The visitors had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Plan for implementation of “Provincial strategy for Roma integration” of the Krasna Polyana district at the Sofia Municipality.

### **Anti-discrimination**

In the area of the Sofia Province, there is active work underway to guarantee the rights of all citizens, regardless of their ethnos, religion or political affiliation, designed to maintain the public order, to boost sensibility and overcome the manifestations of intolerance and discrimination, to respect the dignity of each person and to overcome the social exclusion of the vulnerable communities. The provision of administrative services is carried out regardless of the ethnicity of the citizens, of their social status, or religious beliefs to racial features.

The Kremikovtsi district has been actively providing information to Roma citizens regarding their legal rights and interests and has been directing them to the relevant institutions.

The Slatina district has also been active: there the anti-discrimination activities are underway in such spheres as education, sports and culture. Each year they celebrate the International Roma Day, 8<sup>th</sup> April, with the financial support of the Sofia Municipality Culture Directorate and the cofinancing from the Slatina district of the Sofia Municipality; this year the holiday was celebrated at the *Zornitsa All-Day Nursery No.62*. Each year there are joint celebrations of the

*Bango Vasil* and the *Holy Spirit* holidays. There has also been support provided to the activity of the *Asen Zlatarov Chitalishte* (Local Community Centre) in the form of repairs and sponsorship provided by some sponsors for some trips related to their artistic activity (festivals, competitions). The Schoolchildren Sports Games for the 2012 /2013 academic year also took place. The 2013/2014 games are underway at present. Social integration through physical education and sports: all schools have formed groups in various kinds of sports; sports calendars were set. Emotional support to children of Roma origin registered with the Juvenile Delinquency Commission and to their parents has been provided by the specialists of the Local Commission for Combat against Anti-Social Behaviour of Minors and Juveniles. There have been no indications for discrimination acts reported during the past reference period.

Some of the districts have been busy working on improving the efficiency in the work done by the police officers (e.g.: Krasna Polyana, Triaditsa, Lyulin). The Lyulin district, jointly with the 9<sup>th</sup> District Police Office (part of the Sofia Police Directorate), has been active in annual advance and further training to achieve more efficient work results by police officers in multiethnic environment, subject to observing human rights standards. Therefore, all officers from Guard Police division of the 9<sup>th</sup> District Police Office (part of the Sofia Police Directorate) have been trained to work in ethnically diverse environment. They are familiar with the Action Plan of the Lyulin district designed for the implementation of integration policies and are fully co-operative in the matters concerning the implementation thereof. In addition, district inspectors have daily talks with local Roma neighbourhood dwellers, being that work part of the District Police Office's preventive activities addressing drug distribution in mixed population neighbourhoods, against the expansion of prostitution, on matters concerning the social behaviour and home violence.

Demonstrations of police and anti-fire squad machinery and other special equipment and police dog shows were carried out in three educational institutions in the Krasna Polyana district with the credits of the Community Prevention Centre under *The Police Close to Society* programme.

## **2. BLAGOEVGRAD REGION**

### **1. Policy measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1 Steps taken since 2012**

There were implemented several project initiatives related to the integration of Roma pupils in some schools in Blagoevgrad in 2012 as follows:

- SOUICHE "St. KlimentOhridski " - Blagoevgrad – the project "Learn and have fun together" together with the municipality of Blagoevgrad
- "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" - Garmen - project "School for traditions, knowledge and unity" for 80 children in 8 clubs, financed by scheme "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities "
- III School " Miladinov Brothers " - GotseDelchev - project "Integration of children from ethnic minorities", financed byscheme "Integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the educational system" – 240 participants, involved in project
- Primary school " Miladinovi Brothers" –Eleshnitsa, Primary School "St. PaisiiHilendarski" - Banya and PGT - Razlog - a joint project "Talented and tolerant to the differences, financed by scheme "Educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities"
- Sandanski with representatives of NGO " Good Mother – good kids " realized municipal program of local commissions for summer school in July for integration of Roma children through the understanding of the students free time in the summer.
- Yakorouda – preventing children from dropping out of school in a vulnerable position of Roma and others in a similar situation , work with vulnerable children , taking hold monthly campaigns of public educators to local commission for inclusion of Roma children in preschool .

##### **2013 - First half**

Regional educational inspectorate /REI/ Blagoevgradis implementing a project for the organization of adult education in school "A new chance for success" in the following municipalities of GotseDelchev, Petrichand SimitliMunicipality. The realization of the projects and initiatives related to the integration of Roma pupils continues in all these municipalities.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2012**

133 individuals from the records of the Employment Bureaus were included in the initiative "Improving the competitiveness of Roma in the labor market", 70 of them were involved in increasing the employability and skills of unemployed Roma.

About 63 persons from the Roma community were provided with suitable employment.

14 persons have started work on The program "Human Resources Development".

There have been conducted 22 campaigns with inactive persons under the title of "Come and register with the Department Labor Bureau"

There have been 305 individual informal meetings with inactive persons and 148 group meetings. There have been 19 meetings with local organizations, in which have participated 116 institutions.

There have been 40 meetings with employers to offer applications on inactive Roma to participate in the program "Activating the inactive persons".

As a consequence, there have registered 147 persons and 17 of them have found its realization in the labor market.

38 persons from the municipality of Kresna have been trained in the professions "Gardener" and "Road maintenance". All of them were employed for 1 year.

### **2013 - First half**

At the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015" were included 326 persons registered at the "Labor Bureau Departments".

171 of them were involved in the campaign "Increasing the employability and skills of unemployed Roma". On campaign "Motivation to actively search for work" have been trained 122 persons.

There have been included 40 persons in "vocational guidance" and 9 persons in "become a literate".

About 155 members of the Roma community have been provided by a suitable employment.

On Operational program "Human resources development" have started work 20 Roma.

In the National program "From social subsidy toward providing an employment" have been included 73 persons, 15 individuals were employed on the scheme encouraging measures and 47 were arranged on the primary labor market.

There have been conducted 5 campaigns with inactive persons - "Come and register with the Labour Bureau Department" attended by 206 persons.

There have been conducted 262 individual informal meetings with inactive persons and 4 group meetings.

There have been 10 meetings with employers to offer applications on inactive Roma to participate in program "Activating the inactive persons". As a consequence, there have registered 24 persons and 10 of them have found its realization in the labor market. In Sandanski and Petrich has appointed mediators.

## **1.3. Health**

### **1.3.1 . Steps taken since 2012**

There have been conducted 28 lectures and talks with growing up and young people and their parents on the ways for preventing unwanted and early pregnancy and dangers that hide the early pregnancy for both mother and baby and also the kinship and early marriages.

### **2013**

There have been conducted analyses on HIV/AIDS rapid tests on 62 Roma people in Petrich and Blagoevgrad municipalities and also 32 persons were tested for tuberculosis.

2 held events for explaining the rights and obligations of the Roma population, as patients in the municipalities of Petrich and Simitli.

There have been conducted explanatory campaigns for Roma people on the following topics:

- "Health check - health care"
- "Responsible for vaccines"
- "One step ahead of the disease - immunized!"
- "Regular immunizations - the guarantee of health"

### **3. BURGAS REGION**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1 Steps taken since 2011**

Education has a leading role for solving many of the Romani community's problems, for that reason the efforts of the municipalities in Burgas are aimed at ensuring equal access to quality education for every child. For this purpose we developed a set of measures aimed at the inclusion of children and students in pre-school and school age and improvement of the education and training process.

##### **1.1.1. Measures taken in the municipalities are:**

- To keep the children and students in public pre-schools and schools (by maintaining the database of eligible children and students of preparatory groups and first class;) to support children whose native language is not Bulgarian by developing individual programs to address the Bulgarian language, organizing "summer schools" and others;
- To stimulate all-day organization of training and provide benefits to kindergarten, free tuition and no fees for parents in most municipalities;
- To work with the parents of the Romani community to encourage parental activity, which is a prerequisite to prevent early dropping out of school, by using traditional forms - parent meetings and individual meetings as well as involving parents in activities with children and teachers;
- To implement various forms and programs for youth and adults from minority groups that have been dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out in order to reintegrate them;
- To support children and students from poor families;
- To improve the qualifications of teachers and principals to work in a multicultural environment;
- To participate in extracurricular school activities and clubs of interests;
- To improve facilities in schools, renovation of kindergartens;

##### **1.1.2. Impact of measures:**

The measures in the field of education are many and connected to a specific community, and their impact is possible to achieve good results as:

- To find a better inclusion in kindergartens for children from 5 - and 6- years old , which will give them equal start when entering the first grade . This will ensure their better integration into school teams in the future.
- To improve spoken Bulgarian language students and to help them to increase their success in school.
- To improve education and care of children at risk and to reduce early school dropping.
- To involve parents in the school, which will lead to their interest in the future of their children, and increase the process of upbringing and education of children .

##### **1.1.3 . Plans for 2014-2020.**

The taken measures give a positive result, but it needs persistence. The educational institution is not yet a center of interest for Romani children. Activities that are organized by the school management to keep the students in school must continue for the next years.

##### **1.1.4 .Good practices.**

Municipality of Bourgas – The school bus in Bourgas provides free transportation for children from families of Bulgarian citizens of Romani origin living in the districts with a concentration of Romani population and no child care facilities.

Municipality of Sredets - teachers from the school "Byrborino" in Sredets are trained to work in multicultural environment. The training is part of the project "For Our Children", funded by the

Ministry of Education and Science and the European Social Fund Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2007 - 2013 Schedule: BG051PO001-4.1.05 "Educational Integration of Children and Students from ethnic minorities". As a result of this training and activities carried out under the project there are published: textbook for accelerated training in Bulgarian language, a guide for teachers and school record.

**1.1.5 Conclusions:** - A better planning is necessary for more interaction with NGOs

## **1.2. Employment**

Unemployment affects individuals depending on their education. Low level of education is always associated with a weak competitiveness in the labor market and the inability to meet the demands of employers.

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- To encourage the promotion of education, training and retraining of unemployed Romani and the Romani employed in certain professions in demand on the labor market.
- To develop projects on employment programs at the national, regional and local level in various projects of the National Employment Agency to provide training and employment for the unemployed, most of them unskilled and socially vulnerable.
- To appoint labor mediators of Romani origin to the labor offices.

### **1.2.2 . Impact of measures**

- Deepening the social and civil dialogue to attract partners among the Romani community;
- Providing employment under the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" in "New Employment Opportunities" from different schemes of the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development"
- A good option is the regional employment programs to solve specific needs in communities and create additional jobs.

### **1.2.3 Plans for 2014-2020**

- Promoting employment measures described above;
- Promoting economic initiatives for Romani people, encouraging the small business development and production.

### **1.2.4. Good practices:**

Municipality of Kameno: Development of key competencies and social skills of Romani women to increase their participation in the services sector. Achieved results: dealing with the problem of Romani women to integrate into the labor market due to low education through motivation and encouragement to participate in training.

Municipality of Sozopol: In several years there are developed projects on regional employment programs that are directly related to the main economic sectors in the municipality - tourism and in particular the study and preservation of cultural monuments. Representatives of the Romani community are involved in this project. The results have been mixed, but particularly interesting and fruitful is their responsibility to raise the cultural monuments. (working on similar projects for several municipalities in the region)

**1.2.5 . Conclusions:** Importance in encouraging economic initiative for Romani people in small business development and production.

## **1.3. Health**

One of the most serious problems for the Romani people and people of vulnerable social status is the health care. This problem is complex and is determined by various conditions and possibilities of the municipalities in the field. The main problem seems to be low health literacy and the fact that the majority of members of the Romani community does not have health insurance and do not have family doctors.

### **1.3.1 . Steps taken since 2011**

- To implement, together with DPS, RHI, GPs and other institutions and NGOs, various immunization and health campaigns aimed at prevention of various diseases and campaigns related to insurance rights and obligations of the Bulgarian citizens;



- To increase awareness of the benefits of health mediators - almost all municipalities have jobs created for mediators;
- To link child benefit by presenting the board with immunization leads to the complete implementation of immunization;
- To make the mobile medical examinations.

**1.3.2. Impact of measures:** As a result of the measures the public awareness of vulnerable groups in terms of their health and social security rights and obligations is increased; the prophylactic activities among Romani people has been improved.

**1.3.3. Plans for 2014-2020:**

- To continue the taken activities and plans.

**1.3.4 Good practices:**

Municipality of Karnobat: Documents for the persons from vulnerable groups to prepare EP of LEDC have been processed and submitted with the help of mediators; funds have been raised for the restoration of health insurance for 2 persons.

**1.3.5. Conclusions:** A need to conduct campaigns for family planning and mobile offices.

**1.4. Housing**

In all municipalities and most of the villages there are segregated Romani districts, usually located at the end of the towns. Ownership structure limits the ability of local government to carry out social housing.

**1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

To develop and update detailed plans - municipal property; to rehabilitate existing social housing; to design various programs and funds aimed at improvement of Romani settlements.

**1.4.2. Impact of measures:** These measures provide a higher living standard.

**1.4.3. Plans for 2014-2020.** To motivate the community to improve their own living conditions by cleaning, landscaping, construction of bathrooms in homes, etc.

**1.4.4 Conclusions:** The main problem is the illegal construction and overcrowding of occupied buildings.

**1.5. Anti-discrimination**

**1.5.1. Measures:** To educate the Romani community with Discrimination Act through meetings with the regional representative of the CPD activation activity of municipal committees to combat the nuisance of the minor children by involving community members in the committee, working to ensure the rights of citizens with emphasis on women and children.

**1.5.2 . Impact of measures:** Actions of municipal administrations subject to the principles of non-discrimination based on sex, age, economic status, etc..

**1.5.3 . Plans for 2014-2020.** To work more actively to overcome negative public attitudes and xenophobia.

**2 . Financing**

**2.1.** The problems of the Transition and the economic crisis of recent years changed the social status of the population and the Romani people have been driven to an utterly deepening poverty and exclusion, insecurity and marginalization, questioning their value systems. This requires a highly responsible attitude of all institutions and non-political organizations in implementing the regional strategy for the integration of Romani (2013 to 2020). For the implementation of municipal plans all funding opportunities are needed: funding from the state and municipal budgets, the EU funds. Visible conclusion from the report is that progress on the main key areas (education, employment, health and housing) is developed by European funds projects in national and regional programs. Priority are the possibilities of EU funds for the implementation of integration measures.

These trends in funding will continue in the next programming period. Successful integration of the Romani population requires a complex approach: parallel to work on key priorities - education, health, housing and employment, ensuring greater participation of Roma in the design, implementation and evaluation of measures for their integration.

## **4. VARNA REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Varna Region has been undertaken and implemented preventative measures against Roma children dropout from school in the mandatory education age: individual support programmes have been developed for students with learning difficulties, work is being done with the students' families in order to increase their motivation to ensure student attendance on a regular basis ; consultations are being given to assist in learning the academic content of different school subjects, where students may encounter difficulties in meeting the government education requirements; students join extracurricular activity groups under the Success Project, whereby students' specific gifts are developed and/or their interests in any given type of activity are met; reintegration processes are carried out easier and the issue of students returning to class from abroad is compensated with extra work on part of the teachers; additional work is being done with students who are not fluent in the Bulgarian language, to help their accomplishment in class. Working with parents is being carried out in many and different forms and activities such as consultations on issues with their children, pedagogic support through the activities of the school psychologist and academic counsellor, school for parents, holiday calendar involving the parents, charity initiatives. A great part of the schools in the municipalities of Varna Region have been working for a fourth year running along the Reduction of School Dropout Rate for Roma Children Programme, together with the Amalipe Centre, and schools for students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian have developed school programmes, formed parent clubs and a school parliament, which facilitates the work with children and leads to reduction in the school dropouts. For the academic 2012-2013, 78 of the regional schools were included in the implementation of the EU project 'Let's Make School More Attractive to Young People' under OP HRD. Pedagogic activities are being carried out, directed at solving the problem of the large number of absences, low academic grades, and the relatively low percentage of Roma continuing their education in secondary schools (high schools), and the non-involvement of Roma parents in school life and in the school management systems. To-date, 27 principals and over 30 teachers have undergone training for working in multicultural environment. One of the main approaches used in the work on increasing students' success rate is 'Teachers Training Teachers'. To this end, were identified schools with accumulated experience and success in the efforts to attract and keep Roma students in school within the programme of introducing the optional activity of Roma Folklore, along with other programmes assisting schools with less experience in working with Roma students.

Varna Council stimulates school administrations carrying out a desegregation policy, with the aim to achieve a higher degree of motivation and competence of those working in kindergartens and schools with mixed groups and classes, and increasing the number of kindergartens and schools enrolling Roma students. Since 2007, Varna Council has adopted a programme for educational integration of children and students from different ethnic groups and underprivileged children. The funds allocated to this programme over the years exceed 700 thousand leva in total, while for the period 2011 to 2013 inclusive, the money is 310,000 leva.

From 2011 to 2013 under the Programme have been funded 46 projects for kindergartens, schools and NGO's, totalling over 400,000 leva. Vacation schools and centres for five-year olds and six-year olds have encompassed 400 children living in bilingual environment. Forming of groups to support students in transitioning to the next level of education after the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and after the 12<sup>th</sup> grade provides conditions for professional development for the students, as well as being a measure for the undisputed result of retaining students at school, graduating from a higher level of education, which in turn grants results in the way of labour market, and toward a more successful social adjustment. In the period 2011-2013 Varna Council has implemented projects that have assisted students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade to prepare for the matriculation exams - 'To successfully graduate from high school' and 'Equal start in the profession'. The successful

training and socialization of underprivileged students through providing funds for food and transport is another sustainable practice fulfilled at the two professional high schools, at a total cost exceeding 38,000 leva. In the past couple of years with the joint efforts of NGO's, local authorities RIE and school administrations, nearly 200 Roma at 18 to 35 years of age, have graduated a consecutive grade and educational level at school.

Parent schools, training and appointing Roma mediators are forms of interaction between school and family, aiming at a change in the attitude of adults toward education and increasing trust in the institutions. On the territory of Varna municipality are organized Schools for Special Skills targeting groups of students of Roma ethnicity. **The good practices achieved via 'Ethnicities Folklore - the Roma Folklore'** - motivate children, to perceive school as their own; raise the self-esteem and increase the self-confidence in children, activate the family and its involvement in school life.

All children take part in the rites and carrying through the Roma, Bulgarian and Turkish traditions, regardless of the ethnic origin - active work in multicultural environment; conditions for creating a tolerant environment. In the **Plans for 2014-2020** - Teacher's work to be supported by school administration, to update the information on schools where groups have been formed - if they are not OA [TN: Optional Activity], or ICD [TN: Intercultural Dialogue], particularly those created under different projects, they are not entered in the List - Form 1, to activate more tangibly the work with parents of non-Roma origin. The methodology needs to be developed with efficiency indicators - controls at the input and output for numbers of children in school, number of dropouts. Constant monitoring is necessary, which requires regulation, in order for the experts to have the resource for this. More intensive regular meetings among experts in charge of learning integration to exchange experience. To work towards quality real information against building up dry statistics that doesn't reflect the real school situation. There should be meetings with principals to make them aware of what the programme implementation is about. It is important that the experts have up-to-date information about teachers' completed qualifications. It is also advisable that they should be present at trainings, so they are clear what they need to monitor after that. To create a handbook for the preparatory group as well. **Positive practices in the education field and their impact** - Getting to know and becoming aware of cultural identity by working with groups under the SUCCESS project, a prejudice-free dialogue through group work in 'Ethnicity Folklore - the Roma Folklore', parent, teacher and student motivation through the School for Parents Initiative, boosting children's self-esteem through performances during celebrations of ethnic calendar holidays, retaining and attracting children by turning the school into a social and cultural environment and a place for the students and their parents. **Achieving the goals of integration requires a complex approach** and the short-term objectives of Varna Municipality on its territory for 2014 are: to introduce an electronic book for those entitled and an electronic register for enrolment in the first grade, which would allow to identify everyone outside the system of pre-school and school education, opening of education centres for bilingual children in the areas with formed neighbourhoods to work with children and parents, programme support for the educational integration process in order to implement proven forms - schools for parents, vacation/summer schools, education mediators in schools and areas, club forms of informal education, program support for the educational integration process by increasing the capacity of school administrations to work with structural funds. It is necessary to further develop and improve communication between municipalities, RIE, NGO - if they begin to work together; there is no way things will not clear up.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the municipalities are being implemented projects for overcoming illiteracy among young people, and applied programmes for youths' professional qualification and employment, developing qualification and employment programmes for disabled persons, FSBPE, 'Career Start', 'Disabled Persons' Assistants", OPHRD, regional employment, training youths by internship and apprenticeship. The mediators engaged at JCD Varna, Valchi Dol, Dolni Chiflik and Provadia contribute with their activity for meeting the municipal plans indicators; recently a

mediator was appointed in Byala Municipality. Over 20 information campaigns have been organized dubbed 'Come and register at the JCD', informal meetings were held with inactive persons, as a result of which 246 inactive persons, mostly of Roma origin, registered as unemployed in Varna Region during 2011. A working focus is placed on providing information on the essence of professions, possibilities to enrol in training and employment under OPHRD and particularly in the Development Scheme, the qualifications market, academic programmes content, the state and development of labour market and job vacancies, rights and obligations pursuant to JCD registration, taking advantage of preferences under the EEA, opportunities to work abroad. No literacy courses have taken place in 2011. In 2012, under OPHRD - Literacy for adults Scheme was implemented the New Chance for Success Project, within which predominantly persons of Roma ethnicity were motivated and included for training in literacy or training for secondary school level classes. 34 Roma were included in programs for acquiring professional qualification in the specialties of 'landscaping and flower-growing' and 'basic finishing jobs in construction'. Regional programs are a specific instrument of the labour market policy in coping with local issues; they would allow an opportunity to take action toward reducing poverty, acquiring working habits and overcoming the negative trends in the labour market. As a priority in 2014, under the regional programmes, will be financed activities aimed at the following target groups: unemployed youths up to 29 years of age, with a sub-group up to and inclusive of 24 year-olds; unemployed over 50; unemployed with professional qualification that is low or out of demand on the labour market and a shortage of key competencies, including: lower education unemployed (incl. of Roma origin); disabled persons; inactive persons, incl. discouraged persons. 12 regional employment programmes (from the 12 municipalities on the territory of Varna Region) have been presented for discussion, approval and proposal for inclusion in the 2014 National Employment Action Plan at the Employment Commission at the Varna Region Development Council.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Within the objectives framework have been held large-scale campaigns to raise awareness among the ethnic groups about the health insurance mechanisms, the rights and obligations of medically insured persons, in order to improve the Roma population access to health services; national and regional programmes for health education have been implemented and participation in them encouraged in order to raise awareness among the Roma population regarding practices representing health risk, as well as about the ways of leading a healthy lifestyle; circulating and disseminating health education materials among the Roma population; explanation campaigns have been carried out about the need for population's vaccination with the compulsory immunisations under the National Immunization Calendar and the importance of preventive checkups among the Roma population. Work is being done to enhance health and environmental education through lectures, discussions, leaflets and brochures during homeroom teacher class, holding discussions on family planning and health education on the dangers of smoking and drug use, contamination and prevention from infectious diseases, holding preventive checkups, ultrasound tests, hepatitis, AIDS and other laboratory tests. In areas where Roma population is present there are DCC's [TN: Diagnostics and Consultancy Centres] (DCC II St. Ivan Rilski-Asparuhovo Varna, DCC III, DCC IV) offering complex health services and specialists, which provide an opportunity for access to quality health care for each medically insured citizen in the area. As an example of a good practice in Varna Municipality, we could point out the appointment of 5 health mediators, allocated to different districts of the municipality, and there are 2 health mediators in the Municipality of Provadia. Work is being done to improve the control to better fight Tuberculosis, through the joint activities of the DOTS Manager for Varna region and NGO's. In January 2012 started the **'Prevention of Human Trafficking of Ethnic Groups with a Focus on Roma Minority in Bulgaria' Project**, covering the area of Varna Municipality, which aims at reducing the number of potential victims of trafficking of people of Roma origin. Its implementation is backed by the ambition that it should serve as a model for a comprehensive government policy in the fight against human trafficking. **Varna has become an example for bringing the physicians back to schools, this is the only city where all schools**

**have a health care unit and this model serves as an example across the country.** In order to achieve adequate control and assessment of the results from health intervention carried out, it is necessary in the future to create a regional information system. Through that will be carried out the collection and analysis of true and timely statistical data from a wide range of social and health indicators, including for underprivileged children, belonging to the ethnic minorities. Health data needs to be disaggregated (as much as admissible under the acting Bulgarian legislation) by gender, economic status, income, place of residence and by ethnic group, in order to identify a specific health profile and the needs of people from vulnerable communities, so that resources and subsidies could be channelled to those most in need. Since the illness and death rate indicators are higher for people in active age among the underprivileged people from ethnic minorities, as opposed to other ethnicities living in the region of Varna, special measures are going to be taken to collect health and demographic information required to analyze the reasons for these higher levels and to develop specific policies to resolve the health issues, in consideration of the specifics of different communities.

#### **1.4. Housing**

##### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The Municipalities are trying to lead a proactive policy involving improvement of the living environment and living conditions of the Roma population through the council budgets and participation in infrastructural maintenance programmes and projects. Housing is carried out according to the **Regulation on the terms and conditions for identifying citizens' housing needs, housing and sale of council houses**, which applies to all citizens in municipalities, regardless of ethnic, religious or other basis of segregation. Varna Council has signed a contract under Project BG161PO001/5.3.02-0011 „In Support of Varna for the Programme Period 2014-2020” with MRD, the funds from which will be used to finance the planning and design of 'Building 250 houses for underprivileged persons in Mladost District, City of Varna. **Varna Council is expecting an invitation** to also draft a project proposal for 36 council housing units under the scheme of BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 „Support for providing modern council units to house vulnerable, minority and socially disadvantaged groups of the population and other underprivileged groups in Devnya Municipality". **In Devnya Municipality** implementation is undergoing for the project „Support for providing modern council units to house vulnerable, minority and socially disadvantaged groups of the population and other underprivileged groups in Devnya Municipality" under the budget line № BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011, aimed at a target group of 165 people in underprivileged social situation. The main project activities are: Repairs, reconstruction and renovation of the existing four-storied building; differentiating 33 council housing units to house vulnerable, minority and socially disadvantaged groups of the population and other underprivileged groups on municipal territory; furnishing the above housing units to provide basic living conditions; accommodation, the project value is 1,626,000.00 leva with term of completion 17.08.2011-18.09.2014.

##### **1.4. Anti-discrimination**

The municipalities of Varna Region provide equal access to all services, employment measures, projects and programmes. There are no prerequisites or reported signals for discrimination or occurring cases of interethnic tensions. Varna Municipality is conducting the project "**Prevention of trafficking of people from ethnic groups with a focus on the Roma minority in Bulgaria**", which is a pilot project for the country and *will serve as a model to the comprehensive government policy in the fight against trafficking*. **In 2014 will be carried out monitoring of achieved objectives and plan will be developed by NATC [TN: National Anti-traffic Commission] to gradually introduce prevention of human trafficking programme among the Roma community in Bulgarian towns with established local anti-trafficking commissions. Varna Municipality is implementing Mobile work in the community of Roma youths (15-25 yrs) with problematic behaviour.** The programme is being implemented by the Co-participation Society, whereby the methodology has been developed and provided to the organisation by the International Society for Mobile Operation with youths (ISMO - Germany).

**Good practices** - In meeting the priority of Rule of law and Non-discrimination, for three years running Varna Municipality has been actively involved in the Protection, Prevention and Promotion of Roma Rights Project, implemented by the Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives Foundation, whereby proactive work is being done in the field, at the Roma neighbourhoods of Maksuda and Asparuhovo, providing the Roma community with legal advice and assistance in dealing with administration. Varna Municipality is supporting as a partner another **project: Network of Roma Administrative Mediators** by the association of Youth Alliance - Varna, which envisages training and hiring of trained Roma administrative mediators in the five administrations of Varna.

### **Culture and media**

Varna Region has no cultural institute or organisation specialized in the preservation and promotion of Roma culture. There are 167 Literacy Centres working in the region, and eight of them offer specialized activities in preservation of the Roma culture: 1 in Varna Municipality, 1 in Avren municipality and 6 in Valchi Dol Municipality. The activities offered are narrowly specialized in the preservation and revival of Roma song and dance. Around 3.7% of all non-governmental organizations registered in the region have been specifically established to work on ethnic issues. Approximately 56% of the projects implemented by the municipalities include activities in the cultural development of children of Roma origin and promoting Roma culture. A whole 78% of the projects involve organizing and running studios and workshops for children of Roma origin to develop their creative skills and foster a positive attitude to artistic culture. The other two types of cultural events included in the projects are marking of festive holidays and carrying out cultural studies on ethnicities by the students themselves. During the period 2010-2012 all regional municipalities demonstrated sustainable policy of proactive inclusion of Roma ethnic residents in the municipal cultural events. The policy is based on 4 main types of activity the municipalities undertake: inclusion in celebrations to mark the International Day of Roma in all the municipal annual cultural calendars; support for performance in festivals, competitions or exhibitions to ensembles, groups and individual participants of Roma origin; investing municipal funds in start-up and maintenance of studios for ethnic cultural studies, workshops and song and dance schools; annual holding of two ethnicity festivals in Varna and Beloslav. A local press overview shows that despite the relatively high percentage of Roma population, Roma's representation, their way of life, culture and issues have marginal coverage in the region's local media. Only the municipal newspaper Avren provides a wide coverage on the theme of ethnic minorities, their traditions, festivities and issues.

For the period 2014-2020, Varna Region will be searching for possibilities to use and promote the positive practices of Roma integration, whereby the main municipal priorities in demographic development will be oriented to stabilization and retention of the population, as well as curbing unfavourable trends.

## **5. VELICO TARNOVO REGION**

### **1. Policy measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The problem of the education of Roma children stems from the poverty of Roma families. Most of them live on the edge of poverty and this is a reason for them not to send their children to school. In schools with a predominant number of pupils for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue, the problem refers to the fact that those children do not speak Bulgarian at the time of entering first grade at school.

Activities aimed at Roma children in vulnerable social situations have been realized and are being realized on the territory of the Velico Tarnovo region in order to improve the quality of their education. Projects for improving access to education and encouraging active participation in the process of education of children and pupils from ethnic minorities are being implemented. The projects are one of the main tools for Roma children integration, for overcoming anti-Roma stereotypes and reducing pupils dropping out.

**1.1.2. Impact of measures** – The undertaken measures contribute to ensuring equal access to quality education for children and pupils of Roma origin.

**1.1.3. Plans for 2014-2020** – Implementation of “Education” priority of the Regional strategy for integration of Roma people in the region of Veliko Tarnovo (2012-2020).

**1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact.**

**Good practice 1:** “Reducing Roma pupils dropping out” project. The main objective was aimed at showing the pupils that they are good at something. The project expands the programme for intercultural education through introduction of “Ethnic folklore-Roma folklore” school activity; methodological support for creating a classroom, that takes into account the needs and interests of all children and attracts Roma parents to the learning process including them in school life, is being provided. The final result was a change and noticeable improvement of the quality of education for Roma children. The basic approach of the programme is “teachers teaching teachers” and “pupils teaching pupils”, the goal is to find the area in which the pupil is good and help him/her further develop his/her knowledge and skills.

**Good practice 2:** “To touch the untouchable struggling with traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes” project and its sequel “Youth is tolerance”. 53 teachers, health workers and social workers have been trained. The idea was to test the Bulgarian tolerance and in this context to assess the ethnic tolerance of the people working in education, health and social sectors and in this way models for overcoming ethnic prejudices of teachers and people working in public administrations were created.

**1.1.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education** – Involving parents in the process of education is a key factor in reducing Roma pupils dropping out, better integration and overcoming anti-Roma stereotypes.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Unemployed persons of Roma origin are involved in various activities related to increasing their competitiveness on the labour market, employment and encouraging their entrepreneurial culture.

**1.2.2. Impact of measures** – Social integration of long-term unemployed persons of Roma origin.

**1.2.3. Plans for 2014-2020** – Implementation of the “Employment” priority of the Regional strategy for Roma people integration in the region of Veliko Tarnovo (2012-2020).

**1.2.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact** – Inclusion of Roma people in schemes of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme.

**1.2.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment** – Need for labour mediators.

## **1.3. Health**

**1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011** – The Regional health inspectorate of Veliko Tarnovo implemented a number of activities and initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and health knowledge of the Roma population in the region. Activities for integration of Roma people, and other groups of people in vulnerable situations, aimed at prevention of risks for health, behavioral factors (smoking, alcohol and drug addiction, low physical activity, unhealthy eating habits) and prophylaxis of chronic diseases which are not infectious, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases have been realized in partnership with municipal administrations, schools, social service institutions, NGOs, regional inspectorates of education, youth clubs, media, hospital, etc.

**1.3.2. Impact of measures** – Prevention of morbidity among the Roma population.

**1.3.3. Plans for 2014-2020** – Implementation of the “Health” priority of the Regional strategy for Roma people integration in the region of Veliko Tarnovo (2012-2020).

**1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the field of health care** – Sociological study of knowledge, behaviour and attitudes of disadvantaged people with a focus on the Roma community; campaign on the World Heart Day – the 29-th of September, campaign dedicated to the World tuberculosis day – the 24-th of March; information and educational programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention; distribution of health information materials.

**1.3.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of health care.** – Need for health mediators.

#### **1.4. Housing**

**1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011** – The degree of urbanization in the different ethnic groups is different. On the territory of the region of Veliko Tarnovo 211353 people have identified themselves as Bulgarians, most of them inhabiting the towns of the region. The Roma population on the territory of the region of Veliko Tarnovo, numbering 3875 people, is concentrated mostly in the villages. The number of the Roma people in the towns is 1351 while in rural areas it is 2524.

According to the data of the National statistical institute related to the last census of the population, the average living space per person at regional level is 31.6 square metres. Some of the Roma families live in their own homes but most of them live in rented residential property. The municipal administrations, which have municipal housing fund, implement a policy of providing homes for needy Roma families.

**1.4.2. Impact of measures** – Provision of municipal housing to Roma families.

**1.4.3. Plans for 2014-2020** – Implementation of the “Housing” priority of the Regional Strategy for Roma people integration in the region of Veliko Tarnovo (2012-2020).

**1.4.4. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of housing** – It is necessary to take steps to legalize lodgings suitable for habitation and destruction of lodgings unsuitable for habitation after previously providing families with homes for the time needed for obtaining their own homes.

#### **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

**1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011** – Meetings at the schools for explaining the child’s rights. Lectures on smoking, alcohol addiction, Internet threats and aggression among adolescents; meetings organized by the Commission for protection against discrimination; provision of information materials.

**1.5.2. Impact of measures** – Increasing sensitivity against discrimination.

**1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020** - Implementation of the “Supremacy of law and non discrimination” priority of the Regional strategy for Roma people integration in the region of Veliko Tarnovo (2012-2020).

**2.2.5. Please describe how lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward.**

The lessons learnt will be applied to the successful implementation of the Regional strategy for Roma people integration in the region of Veliko Tarnovo (2012-2020).

### **5. VIDIN REGION**

#### **1 Policy Measures**

##### **1.1 Education**

###### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Entering of full day education form;
- Single financial assistance for parents of socially weak families for provision of textbooks at the municipal level /Belogradchik Municipality/;
- Provision of free breakfasts to socially weak students in primary and secondary stage of education, free lunch for traveling students, textbooks and appliances for children from socially weak families at the municipal level /Kula Municipality/;



- Single financial assistance on municipal level for newborns and children in the first grade at the municipal level /Kula Municipality/;
- Reducing of fees for kindergarten (lower fees for the second child) at the municipal level /Chuprene Municipality/;
- Establishment of organization on municipal and regional level for closer monitoring of school absence;
- Providing free transport to school;
- Providing scholarships for students at secondary level, incl. free textbooks, transportation;
- Activities involving parents in school life;
- Active development of extracurricular activities, incl. creation of multicultural clubs;
- Additional hours for children with difficulties in mastering the educational material;
- Training courses to teachers from kindergartens and schools to work in a multicultural environment;
- Integration of Roma children in schools outside Roma neighborhoods;
- Providing mentors for communication between parents and teachers.

#### **1.1.2. Impact of measures**

- Reducing the number of dropouts from primary education;
- Inclusion of children subject to compulsory education in preparatory groups and school;
- Inclusion of 3 years old children to kindergarten;
- Inclusion of Roma children in many extracurricular activities;
- Increase the number of children who enter and continue their education in high school and higher education;
- Increased education quality for Roma children.

#### **1.1.3. Plans for 2014-2020 – The Municipal plans have been developed for the period 2012-2014**

- Priority measures identified by the municipalities:
- Development of a comprehensive program to work with all parents and children, especially Roma people to form a good attitudes to the educational needs of their children and continuing in the upper stages of secondary and higher education.
- Provision of continuing vocational training for persons aged 16 and literacy courses for adult Roma.
- Involvement of parents of children and students from ethnic minorities in school boards and community councils.
- Training of teachers, principals and other educational professionals to work in a multicultural environment.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

Implemented project in the Municipality of Novo Selo “Different as spring flowers, grow and learn under the same sky” under the scheme "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities", funded by the European Social Fund, OP "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013. The project was implemented in the period 09.10.2012 - 10.09.2013, from non-profit organization "Equal opportunities for children at risk" in partnership with kindergarten "Academician Stefan Mladenov" - Novo Selo. The project focuses on the early integration into the education system through the creation of multicultural integration environment aimed at preserving and developing the cultural identity of ethnic minority children and their peers. The project directly corresponds to the need for prevention of dropping out of the next stages of education for children from ethnic minorities. The target group has a range of 30 children of whom 21 Roma children.

The main outcomes of the project implementation are: Complete educational integration of Roma children and increasing their environmental and health culture; Provide professional support and training for teachers and parents from an expert; Preserved and developed cultural identity through organization and implementation of 5 celebrations to maintain cultural identity and diversity; Developing a positive multicultural environment for children and parents in one day ethnic festival; Formed an emotional and positive attitude towards folk art in children.

## **1.2 Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Inclusion in employment of unemployed persons, incl. persons who identified themselves as Roma through various projects, programs and measures – under the National Programme "From Social Assistance - to Employment", through schemes under OP "Human Resources Development", support measures under the Law on Employment Promotion and the primary labor market.
- Implementation of project to facilitate the access of small and start-up enterprises and individuals wishing to have their own business, to free financial resources needed to develop and expand their activities.
- Implementation of project for development, approbation and dissemination of a comprehensive model for sustainable integration into the labor market of unskilled young Roma.
- Implementation of project to encourage all unemployed people of working age to be registered in the "Labor Bureau", organizing of motivational training, providing training for the acquisition or improvement of professional skills, providing training for the acquisition of key competencies, providing employment for members of the target group in local social enterprises.
- Organization of courses for retraining unemployed.
- Carrying out literacy courses for adults.
- Providing employment during the implementation of municipal projects in the social sphere /e.g. providing social services at home to elderly and disabled persons/.

### **1.2.2. Impact of measures**

- Providing earnings to non-employed persons without education and skills, creating work habits, work skills and acquire certain qualifications that contribute to the subsequent realization of the open labor market through employment by National and European programs.

**1.2.3. Plans for 2014-2020 - *The Municipal plans have been developed for the period 2012-2014***  
Priority measures identified by the municipalities:

- Continuation of current programs and incentives for employment, covering much of the risk groups.
- Involvement of local communities in the implementation of infrastructure projects, public works, landscaping and construction of playgrounds.

## **1.3 Health**

### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Appointed health mediator in the municipality of Belogradchik;
- Operation of the health office in the Roma neighborhood in the town of Belogradchik with assigned medical person providing health care to people living there.
- Providing free medical services to reduce the birth rate among young mothers and mothers of many children;
- Searching of Roma people without GP.
- Organizing preventive examinations on site in Roma neighborhoods, incl. immunizations of children;
- Implement the requirements of the Social Assistance Act to present a certificate of immunization;

- Organizing campaigns for the prevention of various diseases.
- Conducting health lectures in schools on hygiene, prevention of unwanted pregnancies, prevention of colds, hepatitis A and tuberculosis, first aid In case of injury, prevention of cervical cancer, AIDS, HIV, drugs, health and sexual education, etc.
- Free anonymous testing for HIV and AIDS, incl. in the Roma neighborhood;
- Implementation of projects for prevention of socially significant diseases / tuberculosis, HIV /;
- Activities for coverage of pregnant women to consult a specialist and timely admission in hospitals during childbirth;
- Operation of health facilities in schools and kindergartens.

### **1.3.2. Impact of measures**

- Increased coverage of immunization and re-immunization of children;
- Increased health awareness of the Roma population;
- Improving access to health services;
- Early coverage of pregnant women, monitoring during pregnancy, timely hospitalization for childbirth.

**1.3.2.** Plans for 2014-2020 - The Municipal plans have been developed for the period 2012-2014

Priority measures identified by the municipalities:

- Providing of health mediators;
- Strengthening the cooperation with GPs and their interaction with schools and kindergartens for carrying of lectures and discussions both with children and students and their parents;
- Provision of temporary posts for prevention and patient care in the villages and districts/neighborhoods with Roma population;
- Informing members of the Roma community about their health insurance rights and obligations and their rights as patients.

## **1.4. Housing**

### **1.4.1 Steps taken since 2011**

- Implementation of a project “Support for the provision of modern social housing for vulnerable, minority and socially disadvantaged population and other disadvantaged groups” under Operational Programme “Regional Development” 2007-2013.
- Public works in urban areas, incl. in Roma neighborhoods.
  - Special Fund in the municipal budget of the municipality of Kula for buying houses for homeless Roma people where they are housed with a minimum rent.

### **1.4.2 --**

**1.4.3** Plans for 2014-2020 - The Municipal plans have been developed for the period 2012-2014

- Priority measures identified by the municipalities:
- Building and legitimating of homes;
- Improving of technical infrastructure including Roma neighborhoods – asphalt paving, building sidewalks, reconstruction of water infrastructure, construction of green areas, playgrounds, etc.
- Improve the living environment through activities related to the organization of voluntary green groups.

## **1.5 Anti-discrimination**

### **1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Approving the Regional strategy 2012-2020 and Municipal plans 2010-2014 for integrating Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin and other people of vulnerable social condition in similar to the Roma conditions;
- Creation of units, where the above mentioned documents to be fulfilled and monitored;
- Periodically organized open-days in municipalities by the regional representative of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination Vidin;
- Fulfillment of the “Measures for permanent desegregation” in the framework of project “Realization by integration” of Municipality of Vidin, - beneficiary of scheme “INTEGRA” – Operational Programme "Human Resources Development", budget scheme BG051PO001-1/4/5/6.0.01. In the framework of the project will be assigned: 1. Social mediator; 2. Healthcare mediator; 3. Educational mediator; 4. Legal mediator
  - Project of “DROM” Association: providing free legal consultation for Roma and socially weak non-Roma people, organizing lessons for human rights, European citizens and the Mediation center.

### **1.5.2. Impact of measures**

- Ensuring equal access to services, health care, employment, social services and education.
- **1.5.3.** Plans for 2014-2020 - The Municipal plans have been developed for the period 2012-2014
  - Priority measures identified by the municipalities:
  - Organizing discussions and role games on: “Violence in and out of school”, “Interpersonal relations”, “Antisocial acts and their consequences”;
  - Educational lessons about human rights and children rights in school.

**2. Funding** – no information for all municipalities;

### **2.3. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the funding area.**

After the work meeting from 08.03.2013, organized by Municipality of Vidin, because of an incident, where three Roma children lost their lives at a fire, the Mayor of Vidin municipality by order №RD-02-11-377/12.03.2013 appointed a Commission to coordinate the actions between national, local institutions, and non-governmental organizations working with people with disabilities and also were formed working teams. There were defined concrete actions, tasks of the Commission and of the working groups, concrete schedule for carrying out street patrols and survey.

During the survey was collected the following information: 1. Children, people, families, people without home, living in tents, in poor material conditions, (with no water or electricity supply); 2. children under 14 with or without identity cards; 3. rate of employment, incomes, whether they receive social benefits or not; 4. current address during the research compared to the last address; 5. any other information concerning the social status.

Over 150 families and households were checked and were described 140 cases. Based on the results there was made a report with the identified problems and were pointed concrete measures. Also was developed an action plan for the Commission for coordination of actions between the government, local authorities and NGOs to work with people from vulnerable groups.

The following problems were found thorough the research: people with expired identity card as well as with no ID cards at all (including people between 14 - 16); people living at a place different than the constant address written in their ID card.

The lack of Identity Card restricts the human rights of people and it is a main obstacle for them to be registered in the Labor Office - Vidin, where they could be included in the labor market or to receive social financial help from Social Assistance Department. Having an Identity Card is the first step for an individual to be socially included in the labor market and the possibility for delivering educational, health, social help by observing the principles of the Bulgarian legislation.

Regarding the necessity of issuing identity documents to those of the aforementioned records was set up other committee by Order № RD-02-11-670/22.05.2013 of the Mayor of Vidin, under Article 92, paragraph 8 of civil Registration Act, whose task was to identify and investigate the

circumstances of the address registration of persons who are unable to present a document under Article 92, par. 2 of the Civil Registration Act.

Based on the processed information was prepared a proposal to the City Council Vidin and there was a Decision №119 with protocol №8 of 25.09.2013 to be issue 43 (forty-three) ID cards and certificates of permanent address to persons of vulnerable groups in the amount of 679 (six hundred seventy-nine) Lev. For this purpose the transfer of funds for payment of the fee is made under Tariff № 4 for the fees collected by the Ministry of Interior under the State fees from the budget of the Municipality of Vidin and Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Vidin. The decision of the City Council is in force since 17.10.2013 and the municipality of Vidin provides organization for its implementation.

#### **2.4. Please describe how lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward?**

The funds will be directed primarily towards the priorities Employment and Education which are the most significant for the integration of Roma people and improving their lifestyle /Dimovo Municipality/.

## **7. VRATSA REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

Vratsa Regional Council for cooperation on ethnical and integration issues and the municipalities within Vratsa Region elaborate and adopt each year Action Plans for Roma integration, including the following measures:

- Ensuring the equal access to good quality education ;
- Prevention on early school leaving and education failure of Roma pupils;
- Raise of the educational quality in kindergartens in Roma districts and in the small mixed neighborhoods populated on ethnicity principle
- Improving the education quality provided to children and pupils from ethnical minorities;
- Improving the conditions for good quality education and good qualification of the pedagogic specialists for interaction in multicultural educational environment;
- Training in tolerance and non-discrimination in the kindergartens and schools preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and pupils of Roma origin ;
- Inclusion and accepting the Roma parents in the educational process and strengthen their participation in the school life;

##### **1.1.1.Steps taken since 2011**

- Vratsa Regional Council for cooperation on ethnical and integration issues organizes at least 2 meetings per year.
- Vratsa Regional Council for cooperation on ethnical and integration issues prepares an Annual Action Plan for Roma community integration.
- Vratsa Regional Administration realizes its own initiative related to the education , which is implemented for 4 consecutive years.
- In 2010 Vratsa Regional Administration founded a Roma students Club. The objectives of the Club are connected to the activities which will contribute to diminish the negative image of the Roma in media, by promotion of the good practices, with the aim to build a positive opinion in the young generation, as well as supporting the Roma integration process.

**1.1.2.** The impact of the most part of the measures depends on the financial sustainability of the municipalities and the specificities of the different Roma sub-groups, located in different neighborhoods. In this connection it could be noted that the measures impact is different for the different municipalities in the region. Stronger is the impact in the municipalities, which have more-stable financial situation and there is no big variety of the sub-groups.

**1.1.3.** It is not foreseen to include new measures in the Plans for the programming period 2014-2020.

**1.1.4** .One of the objective of the Roma Students Club is to realize mentoring activities in particular the advocacy before the schools authorities, families and institutions, as well as to act in support , guide and motivate the younger Roma to continue their education, to be oriented in their choice of the specialty, University and in general to prepare them for having a clear vision for the future and their individual development. Mentoring provided from an undergraduate to a secondary school student.

**1.1.5.** Mixing of the Bulgarian and Roma children incase the Roma children do not surpass 30-35% is the best practice to integrate the Roma children with the Bulgarian education . The role of the parents for attending or not the classes of their children is very important, therefore we can make the following conclusion : as much as the parents are educated and as much as they are involved with the activities close to the education , the more positive is their attitude towards education and the stronger is their will for their children to attend school.

**1.2.** Ensuring the access of Roma to the labor market and to various tools and initiatives for self-employment;Ensuring employment and social integration of unemployed people;Specific mechanisms to ensure sustainable employment of Roma in working age together with representatives of employers, trade unions, municipalities and organizations of the Roma community;Promoting employment through training of unemployed persons for key competencies; Training and retraining of unemployed Roma and the Roma employed in accordance with the occupations in demand in the labor market;

**1.2.1** . The Standing committee on employment at the Regional Development Council - Vratsa organizes meetings six or seven times a year.Over the last three years the Regional Administration - Vratsa, the five directorates "Labour Bureau" , the municipalities and the NGOs have implemented projects by regional programs , NP " Employment program from social support to employment " , " Start in the Career " within which are employed also representatives of the vulnerable groups and Roma communities;On the basis of the measures set out in the strategy document the number of unemployed was reduced in the region. In 2011 the number of employed persons in Vratsa Region is 1950 , and 111 of them are included in programs and employment measures;In 2012 the number of employed persons in Vratsa Region is 8394. 3144 of them are included in programs and 150 worked on incentive measures;Within Vratsa region projects were realized by VratsaRegional Administration,Directorates "Labour Bureau",municipalities and NGOs.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

**1.2.2.** The implemented measures set out in the strategic documents have an important impact on the territory of Vratsa Region. This is due to the fact that Vratsa Region is characterized by a high level ofThe measures set out in the regional programs have also a strong impact on the employment. During the realization of those measures people from small towns where the unemployment rate is extremely high, got the offered job.

**1.2.3.**It is not foreseen to include new measures in the Plans for the programming period 2014-2020.

**1.2.4.**Thanks to the Regional Program they acquire new knowledge and skills related to the study and preservation of the cultural heritage. The skills and knowledge of the employees improve and thus increase the possibility to be integrated in the labor market. The Regional Museum of History - Vratsa also was provided by a support through this Regional Program and the possibility of attacks by looters also was limited to a minimum. Real conditions for the development of tourist destinations to archaeological sites were created through new discoveries since the dawn of the ancient European civilization until the Bulgarian Middle Ages , given the potential and the dating of the sites discovered by the archeologists.

**1.2.5.**The reasons for the higher level of unemployment and low level of unemployment within the territory of Vratsa Region are the economic crisis and the limited financing from the State budget.They have negative consequences on the groups of least educated people, between them the representatives of Roma community which is affected the most and there are additional reasons for the high level of unemployment. The low level of education and qualification is a

problem for those who are less educated. However the high educated people face the national problem - a lack of job vacancies. Some of those who had acquired qualifications have problems of another type associated with the ethnicity, whereat many Roma can't be included in the temporary employment programs. It is necessary to amend the Employment Act stipulating that every employer hired a person claiming to be a representative of the Roma community will receive higher benefits;

**1.3.** Improving the preventive activities among the Roma; Increasing the health knowledge and awareness of the Roma population; Reducing the child mortality; Improving the health care for the newborns and preschool children; Improving the health status of the Roma population; Prevention through awareness for HIV / AIDS , tuberculosis , STDs , and dependencies; Increasing motivation and skills of the Roma population on the protection , maintenance and enhancement of a healthy living environment. Reducing teenage pregnancy and parental marriages.

**1.3.1.** Awareness campaigns organized and realized monthly on the benefits of the prevention vaccine activities among the Roma community and visits to the homes of young mothers to monitor the immunization status of the newborns; Regular meetings in Vratsa Regional Administration - in connection to define the measures related to the health of the Roma community; Realized disinfecting measures together with RHI in connection to the increased number of cases of Hepatitis type A in the neighborhood Yantra , Kozloduy , for the prevention from epidemic situation. Distributed 1000 brochures and 15 posters , 300 pieces of condoms and 200 red ribbons in the schools in the municipality during the World Day against AIDS. The Children from ODMF realized an information action and distributed flyers, red ribbons and condoms in the center of the town.

**1.3.2.** The measures set out in the strategic documents have different effects in the different localities. For instance one and the same measure is applied through different methods of work depending on the Roma subgroup inhabits in a specific municipality. Greater is the impact of the measures observed in the municipalities in which health care mediators are employed. Their fieldwork reduces the existing gap between Roma and institutions and between Roma and doctors, which facilitates the work in both directions . There is a need of training and appointment of mediators for example in Byala Slatina municipality where the Roma neighborhood is big, there is a variety of Roma subgroups , some of them having a minimum one of which social status is minimum low.

**1.3.3.** It is not expected to include new measures in the plans for the programming period 2014-2020.

**1.3.4.** The practice with the work of the health care mediators is a bridge between vulnerable minority communities and the health and social services. They have the respect and trust of people in the community and institutions and has the necessary knowledge, skills and competence to do their work.

## **1.4. Housing**

### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

**1.4.** The improvement of the living conditions in neighborhoods with compact Roma and other population living under the same conditions; • Identifying and assign new areas for housing construction with potential for the deconcentration of the compact and separated Roma neighborhoods; Elaboration of cadastral maps and cadastre registers of areas, including areas of compact Roma and other population living under the same conditions; Update / preparation of detailed management plans of existing and new assigned areas; Design and construction of the technical/physical infrastructure; Construction and rehabilitation of social housing; Provision of alternative accommodation in case of eviction of the vulnerable families from the houses where they live;

**1.4.1** . The improvement of the housing conditions including the adjacent technical infrastructure is a result of the realized projects by the municipalities , as well as through funds provided by the municipal budgets.

• Kozloduy Municipality will work for 45 months starting from January 2012, on the integrated investment project in the water sector "Improving and developing the infrastructure for water

and wastewater in agglomerations above 10 000 equivalent residents” ; within this project Kozloduy Municipality will have as partner “Water and canalization” Ltd. Vratsa .

- Park management of recreation zones in the villages Selanovtsi , Ostrov and Gorni Vadin . Construction of playgrounds , installation of benches and bins , lighting, landscaping and irrigation;

- With funds from other sources have been renovated two streets in the Roma neighborhood in Oriahovo ;

- The Regional Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues - Vratsa set out measures to improve the living conditions of Roma . For this purpose during the meeting of OSSEIV was presented a model for improving the housing conditions of Roma by Mr. Deyan Kolev, a member of the interinstitutional commission chaired by the Minister on the management of EU funds , to determine the operations aimed at improving the living conditions of disadvantaged groups . He explained to the members that the National Programme for Improving the Living Conditions of Roma and the Action Plan have no budget and do not work . The only source at this stage is the European Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund , which didn't finance until now the construction of housing.

**1.4.2** .Similar to the other spheres of activity , the measures for the living conditions of Roma have different effects . This is because the Roma in cities live in one way and in rural areas in a different way . Those in rural areas own a property and do not have any particular problem with living conditions unlike those in cities. They are landless , or live in public housing or in illegally constructed buildings , which results in many problems .

**1.4.3** . It is not expected new measures to be included in the plans for the programming period 2014-2020

**1.1.4.** As it was already mentioned, the impact of the measures in the different regions is different. As a good practice may be the case in the town of Vratsa, where in Roma neighborhoods were removed 11 dangerous municipal buildings ( sheds ) in which Roma lived for decades , although those buildings did not meet the standards of safety and hygiene. The families which inhabited these buildings were accommodated in public housing in mixed areas , where it is expected to be integrated.

#### **1.4. Anti-diskrimination**

**1.5.**Encouraging the tolerant interethnic relations;Overcoming the cultural barriers in the communications and all forms of discriminatory attitudes through various methods and forms , including sports;Extensive awareness and information campaigns to raise the awareness and intolerance of the discrimination in all its varieties;Improving the work efficiency of the police officers in multicultural environment in compliance with the standards of human rights;Increase of the parental capacity and legal culture of the families from vulnerable groups;Ensuring proper functioning and development of the legal framework, institutional structures and instruments for protection against discrimination , which could increase the guarantees for the effective protection of the rights of Roma, their equality , decent living and full participation in public life ;Strengtheningthe inter-institutional coordination for effective implementation of the policies for Roma integration;Improving the mechanisms for cooperation , dialogue and consultations between the public sector, Roma and civil society organizations working for the integration of Roma;Strengthening the work locally to raise the awareness of the rights and responsibilities of Roma.

**1.5.1.** OSSEIV prepares and adopt annually an Action plan for integration of the Roma community withspecific measures and targets corresponding to those in the National strategic documents concerning the integration of the Roma community. At the end of each calendar year, the Regional Administration - Vratsa reports on the activities of OSSEIV, which includes information on the activities undertaken, the measures implemented and the targets achieved previously included in the annual plans. Work on projects aimed at preventing discrimination and guaranteeing the rights of the citizens.

**1.5.2.** The impact of the measures is different in this field too. Stronger is the impact of the measures in areas with larger number of Roma population. This is because when they are more,



Roma feel more secure which security they receive from the community, and in this case they do not feel themselves discriminated when applying the measures.

**1.5.3** . It is not expected new measures to be included in the new programming period 2014-2020.

## **2. Funding**

**2.1.1.** EU funds – by the support of EU funds were realized measures aimed at employment, education, protection from discrimination, culture and media, and improvement of the living conditions of Roma

**2.1.2** . national funds – the support from the national funds was directed to areas of employment, education, health, culture and media, improvement of the housing conditions of Roma and health care.

**2.1.3** . other sources (if applicable) – with funds from other sources are implemented measures aimed at education, culture and media, housing and protection against discrimination.

**2.2.1.** EU funds – it is planned through the support of EU funds to assist the areas of employment, education, protection from discrimination, culture and media, improving housing conditions of Roma, protection against discrimination.

**2.2.2.** national funds - from the national funds will benefit the areas of employment, education, health, protection from discrimination, culture and media, improvement of the housing conditions of Roma, protection against discrimination

**2.2.3.** other sources (where applicable) - from other sources will benefit the education, protection from discrimination, culture and media, improving housing conditions of Roma, protection against discrimination

**2.3** The National and European funds, as well as the other sources of funding are essential for the integration of the Roma community. The elaboration, application and implementation of projects in all the above areas of activities contribute to the reduction of illiteracy and unemployment among the Roma, which is essential for the progress of the integration process.

The project "Color creations" funded by the OP "Human Resources Development", within a grantscheme for projects, is in implementation in the village of Bhutan, Kozloduy Municipality and can be identified as a good practice, because the measures are aimed at several age groups among which is a group of young children from 3 to 6, with which it is necessary to start to implement all the measures aimed at Roma integration. In the activities pupils and students from primary and secondary schools are included, as well as education professionals from schools. The project can be identified as good practice, because through the implementation of activities are reached the following results: improvement of the conditions and resources for equal access to education, increased motivation and interest of the minorities in the educational process and encouraging their active participation in additional activities in the integration environment.

## **8. GABROVO REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

Integration in the sphere of education is a top priority in local strategic documents. There has been much effort for increasing the education and care since early childhood, reducing early school leaving, promoting secondary and higher education among Roma people. A series of measures in the field of education have been planned in each municipality, which are expected to contribute to bridging the educational differences of Roma and non-Roma people, as well as measures to ensure the right of equal access to quality education for students from ethnic minorities.

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

As a whole in Gabrovo region every year plans for educational integration of ethnic minorities are developed and implemented in all 38 schools and 29 kindergartens. In Gabrovo Municipality there is a consistent policy for access to education for children from the ethnic minorities. A

Municipal programme for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities (2010-2015) and an Action plan to it were designed and adopted by the Municipal Council of Gabrovo with Decision 187/16.09.2010. The priority of the programme is the adequate integration of Roma children and students in the kindergartens and schools in Gabrovo municipality, as well as stimulation of possibilities for equal access to educational institutions and guarantee of the right of all children to quality education.

Sevlievo Municipality is seriously committed to the problems of education, including the integration process of students from the ethnic minorities and the creation of conditions for equal access to quality education. In order to realize such integration activities an effective cooperation between schools, kindergartens, Regional Education Inspectorate, Municipal Council, Child Protection Department at Social Assistance Directorate, Child and Youth Centres, Civil Prevention Centres, Local Commission for Combating Juvenile Delinquency, community centres. The local government is aware that the creation of supportive and attractive environment in integrated schools and kindergartens is of top importance for the adaptation of Roma children and students. For this reason it envisages measures for improving the conditions for education and upbringing in all municipal schools and kindergartens.

Every year, with a decision of the Municipal Council, Dryanovo Municipality adopts an Action Plan for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities. The aim is to preserve the ethno-cultural identity of children and students from the minorities and create an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. A Public Council for Minority Integration was established to operate in the municipality. There is no municipal strategic document concerning Roma integration precisely.

The integration policy of Tryvna municipality is based on the accepted view that all citizens have equal right and there are created conditions for maximum tolerance toward different ethnicities. There is no municipal strategic document concerning Roma integration precisely.

#### **1.1.2. Impact of measures**

There is a tendency for lowering the number of students leaving school. The number of Roma children visiting kindergartens is growing. The socialization of children is achieved by involving them in different activities in schools and kindergartens. Such activities enrich the inner world of Roma children and change the attitude of other children to ethnic minorities.

As a result of the demographic collapse an optimization in the network of municipal kindergartens and schools is being carried out. Students living settlements without schools are directed to other places where parents can choose the school. On the basis of this a route of the student transport lines was developed and free transportation provided.

#### **1.1.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

The implementation of the Municipal programmes for educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities shall continue in Gabrovo, Dryanovo and Sevlievo municipalities. Some of the municipalities plan to develop municipal strategic document concerning Roma integration. The development of Regional strategy on Roma integration is also envisaged.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact.**

There are several projects for multi-cultural environment realized successfully in the territory of the region – “Together”, “Directions”, “Success”. Their results contribute very much to raising the tolerance toward minorities and facilitating integration. On the other hand, there is a positive tendency more and more Roma parents to participate in the work of School Boards. This is a very good practice with positive results on overcoming the problems of Roma students. A good practice in Dryanovo is the participation of Roma representatives in the Public Council for ethnic integration and the participation of Roma parents in School Boards.

#### **1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education.**

The lessons learnt in our practice show that Roma people should be involved in the decision-making process whenever the decisions concern them. In this sense the inclusion of Roma parents in School Boards changes the attitude of Roma communities toward the educational

system. The participation in the decision-making process makes them more responsible to the education of their children. The experience also shows that advocacy campaigns are necessary in order to facilitate children's access to schools, while public campaigns and incentives can ensure greater involvement of the community and parents in integration measures, especially in protected and central schools.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

When implementing different national and regional programmes, as well as projects financed by the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, the municipalities of Gabrovo, Dryanovo and Sevlievo employ on labour contracts people from the ethnic groups. For 2013 the number of newly-employed Roma people in Gabrovo municipality is 18. There are no official statistics on the ethnic origin of recruited people by municipalities, because such information was not collected. According to the expert opinion almost all employment measures of the municipalities are targeted to Roma people.

#### **1.2.1. Impact of measures**

According to the statistics of the Labour Office Directorate it has been planned for the period 2011- 30.09.2013 120 unemployed Roma people to be included in different activities for increasing their competitive ability on the labour market, ensuring employment and encouraging their entrepreneurship. The total number of people included in different activities according to the plan for that period is 94 or 78,3 % implementation of the plan. 34 people out of the 50 planned were included in activities for improving their employability. 60 people out of 70 planned got employed to 30.09.2013 or 85,7 % implementation of the plan, by including them in different programmes, projects, employment encouragement measures and primary labour market. Most of the people who started working are financed under the National Programme "From social assistance to employment" – 21 people, Human Resources Development Operational Programme – 19 people, regional employment programmes – 9 people, employment encouragement measures – 6 people and primary labour market – 5 people.

The number of unemployed people for the period 2011 - 30.09.2013, who identified themselves as Roma people varies from 61 to 49 people.

The stated data is statistical but the real data is quite different because a great number of the Roma people in the region didn't identify as Roma in the census. Moreover, most of them are not registered in the Labour Office or they have their registrations terminated due to not abiding the rules for sustaining a registration.

#### **1.2.2. Plans for 2014-2020**

During the next planning period it is envisaged more and more Roma representatives to be included in different projects, programmes and employment measures.

#### **1.2.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

The good practices are connected with the implementation of the national programmes and ensuring equal access of all representatives of the target groups.

#### **1.2.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment.**

The basic lesson learnt is connected with the fact that it is very hard to achieve a long-term effect and respectively to have a real integration on the labour market.

## **1.3. Health**

### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The local efforts are in line with the national policy and are targeted toward providing equal access to quality health-care, ensuring the basic social security coverage and comprehensive health services to Roma people. In order to achieve effective preventive measures, ensuring regular medical check-ups, prenatal and postnatal care and family planning, there should be reforms and additional regulations. In Gabrovo and Sevlievo municipalities measures have been taken up within projects and programmes for improving the health culture of Roma people and

health integration of disabled Roma people. Actions have been taken up to improve the vaccination coverage according to the National Immunization Calendar of newborns and children up to 7 years old. Talks are conducted with young mothers on the importance of immunizations and motivation to apply them regularly. Interviews are conducted with the aim of reducing teenage pregnancy. For limiting infectious and parasitic diseases different information campaigns are conducted to promote health awareness. Health education was deliberately introduced in schools with a predominant number of people from ethnic minorities, by means of the class lessons. The measures are being implemented in partnership with Regional Health Inspection - Gabrovo, which provides specialists for lecturers and information materials, etc. according to the measures envisaged in the Action Plan. All this will contribute for overcoming the differences between Roma and Non-Roma, as well as the obstacles for real integration.

#### **1.3.1. Impact of measures**

The impact is basically in several directions: increasing the awareness of adolescents in order to improve their health and sexual education; including children and young people in campaigns regarding international days for defeating major diseases; increasing the number of health insured Roma; increasing the number of informed people including parents and relatives involved childcare; spreading information on the importance of prevention check-ups.

**1.3.2. Plans for 2014-2020** – We will continue implementing the started initiatives, as well as implementing the national policy on local and regional level.

**1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.** - A mobile team of two pediatricians works on the territory of Gabrovo, covering 60% of Roma children aged 0-3years for immunization and medical check-ups, information on infectious and non-infectious diseases.

**1.3.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.** - Over the last three years the class lessons are used to deliver information for various infectious and non infectious diseases and presentations prophylactics with and health prevention.

### **1.4. Housing**

#### **Steps taken since 2011**

Since 1998 Balabantsa neighborhood in Sevlievo municipality, which is inhabited by ethnic minorities, has a developed and approved cadastral and regulation plan and constructed street network. The neighborhood has a technical infrastructure - water, electricity, sewage on all the main streets. Investments have been realized in the past year under projects and programs. Gabrovo Municipality has an active policy to ensure equal access to accommodation of people/families in public housing. Currently with an Order of the Mayor according to the Ordinance on conditions and procedures for determining housing needs and rental accommodation in public housing 84 ethnic people/families are accommodated (total 257 people); since 2012 8 persons / families are included in the waiting list / total 25 persons / in 2013 due to a lack of available public housing 21 persons / families / total 52 persons / are filed for accommodation.

#### **1.4.1. Impact of measures**

The provision of social housing to people/families from ethnic groups and support to solve the housing problem is part of the policy for creating conditions for the integration of minorities.

#### **1.4.2. Plans for 2014-2020**

To apply with project proposals for building social housing under various operational programs during the next planning period.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

As an initiative of Gabrovo municipal administration a web application in the geographic information system of Gabrovo was developed for registering Roma people. It helps identify the residence of Roma people in the municipality and thus provides a clear outlook on the state-of-the-art.

### **1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of housing.**

It is essential to use the opportunities provided by EU funds in order to seek and find adequate solutions to the problems.

### **1.4. Anti-discrimination**

The main measures that have been taken are related to raising awareness, combating multiple discrimination faced by Roma minors and women - mostly projects and initiatives of NGOs.

#### **1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011**

On the territory of the region there were established and now operate different social services that cover the widest possible range of target groups like children, families and individuals with various needs. The experts from the Community Support Centres are actively working with people and children from ethnic minorities – they provide social, educational and psychological support, counseling and assistance to Roma people.

1.5.2. Impact of measures – provided support and assistance to Roma people/families to solve different problems.

1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020 – In order to implement the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2012-2020 in 2013 Gabrovo Municipality started developing Municipal action plan for integration of Roma people and people living in similar conditions on the territory of Gabrovo municipality. In 2014 the action plan is expected to be developed and presented for discussion and adoption to the Municipal Council of Gabrovo. In the other municipalities discussions on the issue are still going on.

## **2. Funding**

**2.1. Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011** (please indicate which of the 4 key areas, or which other area, benefitted from the referred funding)

2.1.1. EU funds – partial and not enough

2.1.2. national funds - no

2.1.3. other sources (where relevant) – private initiatives and NGOs

**2.2. Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020** (please indicate which of the 4 key areas, or which other area, is planned to benefit from the referred funding) – There is no information from the municipalities

2.2.1. EU funds

2.2.2. national funds

2.2.3. other sources (where relevant)

**2.3. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the funding area.**

In 2012 Gabrovo municipality started the implementation of the project "DIRECTIONS - Provision of socio-educational consulting and integration in the community." The project is funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

**2.4. Please describe how lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward?** – to search more actively the opportunities of the European programmes

## **9. DOBRICH REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

№ of budget line: OPHRD-BG051PO001-4.1.05 "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities", Project name: **Together at School**

**Responsible institution / beneficiary:** Ministerstvona Education, European Social Fund / Municipality Tervel, PARTNERS School "C. Droumev 's Orlyak, school "Hristo Botev" Kableschkovo the kindergarten "Zdravetz" Tervel

**Target Group / District:** 873 children and students from Roma and Turkish ethnic attending local schools and kindergartens.

-16 Teachers in preschool and early stages of learning.

-130 Parents of children of Roma ethnicity.

**Type of activity:**

**Activity 1:** Improving internal environment of kindergartens kindergarten "Zdravetz" Tervel-furnishing gym;

**Activity 2:** "Taking a child six years of preparatory classes in segregated Roma schools in villages and Orlyak Kableschkovo for classes in educational domains 'Physical Education' and 'Play Culture and recreation' in kindergartens" Zdravetz "in Tervel" **Activity 3** "Adaptation of children who do not speak Bulgarian as their mother from an early stage of training vNachalno school" Hristo Botev "Kableschkovo village and school" Vasil Droumev "s.Orlyak through joint cognitive activities with children from an early stage of learning in school "Jordan Jovkov" Tervel "

**Activity 4:** To preserve and develop the cultural identity of children and students in segregated schools "V.Drumev 's Orlyak and foster SOU'Yordan Jovkov" Tervel through the creation and collaboration of clubs "From the Source" in both schools'

**Activity 5:** Mutual knowledge of the folklore of the ethnic groups in the Municipality Tervel by expanding municipal celebration of folklore by the addition of the "school together."

**Activity 6:** Training for training teachers to use interactive bilingual technologies for Bulgarian language learning by children for whom Bulgarian mother tongue "

**Activity 7:** Awareness campaign for ethnic tolerance in municipal schools and kindergartens in the municipality of Tervel

**Implementation period:** 01.01.2013-10.10.2013

**Value of the project lev / Euro:** 155 682.59 lev

**Results:**

Overcoming language barriers in communicating and learning material; Overcome communication problems ; Enhancing motivation for schooling through attractive to children and school events; Enhancing motivation for attending school by bringing in shared interests and values with children from other ethnic groups; Increased level of ethnic tolerance among students of different ethnic groups in schools and kindergartens ;

Teacher training of municipal kindergartens and schools working with bilingual children; Increased interest among parents in school life , in consequence of which motivate children not to leave the school.

Forming groups EPA "Roma folklore"

Timeframe: September 2013

In the academic year 2013/2014, were **formed 2 groups EPA "Roma folklore" in school "J.Jovkov. "** In this form the students with theoretical knowledge of Roma groups in our country and their characteristic differences. Studying Roma folklore - songs and dances, stories, traditions and customs. Developing and collecting activities, the fruit of which is an ordered area with Roma antiques in school "J. Jovkov. " With kids dance lessons from EPA "Roma folklore" participate in festivities Bango Vasil (Roma New Year) International Roma Day - April 8, at concerts and other community projects. Representative group taking part in the festival "Open Heart" organization "Amalipe" in Veliko Tarnovo, where its performance is excellent.

**№ of budget line:** BG051PO001-4.1.05

**Project name:** "Different Together"

**Responsible institution / Beneficiary:** Municipality Krushari

**Target group / community:** Krushari

1.Uchenitsi from 1st to 7th grade from ethnic minority groups, students in schools Krushari and Lozenets

2.Pedagogicheski specialists in schools Krushari and Lozenets

3. Parents of pupils from ethnic minority groups Krushari and Lozenets.

**Type of Activity**

1. Organization and management of the project;
2. Visualization, information and publicity
3. Develop plans and programs to conduct additional classes for students BEL;
4. Identify children who are in need of additional classes in language and literature and the participants in the clubs interests;
5. Conduct additional classes in BLL with identified children;
6. Forming interest clubs;
7. Education and training of teachers to work in a multicultural environment;
8. Working with parents who prevent their children to visit school;
9. Technical and material supply project

**Implementation period:** 10 months

**Project cost:** 82 172,08 lev

**Results:**

- 7 • Developed curriculum for class 7 for further activities in the Bulgarian language ;
- Some 64 students from 1st to 7th grade who need extra hours to learn the Bulgarian language ;
- Provedenii least 362 extra hours in Bulg . Language, forming 5 club interest - hockey, basketball , applied arts , carving, choir ;
- Organized and conducted Celebration » Various together ";
- Conducted bi-modal two-day training of professionals who work directly with children of ethnic origin ;
- Provedenii 4 bi-modal workshop with parents.

**1.2. Employment**

**1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Dobrich Municipality:

National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment"

Target group:

- People receiving social assistance, without education and training and with minimal chance to get a job in the primary labor market.

Activity: Placement in the program.

Implementation period: January - September 2013

Results: the program employed 60 people from the Roma community.

**Activity:** Placement in the program.

**Implementation period:** January - September 2013

**Results:** the program employed 60 people from the Roma community.

Krushari municipality:

No of budget line: **BG051PO001-1.1.11**

**Project title:** Support for Employment

**Target group:** The unemployed with low qualifications and skills shortages, low educated unemployed, unemployed from ethnic minorities.

**Type of activity:** trained 75 unemployed persons at risk provided with 12 months of employment for 60 of them in the field of environmental protection, road maintenance, construction and repair

**Implementation period:** 12 months

**Project value:** 324 000 Levs

**Results:** Employ persons from vulnerable groups in the labor market.

**1.3. Health**

**1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

General Toshev:

Order of the Ministry of Health RE: The epidemic situation in the country to spread measles and stay prophylactic and anti-epidemic activities.

**Target group:** Children from 13 months to 15 years old without a GP and interrupted immunizations.

**Activity:** Immunization - a combined vaccine against measles, parotitrubela all troops to be covered with an incomplete status for old age and underlying priority risk groups that are incomplete status for trivaksinata or no data held imunizatsiy measles.

**Implementation period:** from month July 2013

**Results:** Informed underlying forces are at risk and are aimed at personal GP.

#### Dobrich Municipality

№ of budget line: **financed by the World Bank**

**Project name:** Project "Social inclusion" of MTPS, creating a community center for children and families

**Target group:** Children under 7 years old and their parents from vulnerable ethnic groups, particularly the Roma community in the Municipality of Dobrich

**Activity:** Eleven number of integrated services - kosultirane and family support, health advice, preparation for an equal start in school.

**Implementation period:** 2 years - from 1 September 2011 to 1 September 2013

**Project cost:** 1199806 lev, co-financing of Dobrich municipality is 20,562 Levs

**Results:** At present, the building of a community center is ready for commissioning. Funding is expected to launch the services.

**Activities:** assist mediators for the implementation of screening. As a result, the mediators were conducted screening of 739 children and 507 screening to elderly Roma.

### **1.4. Housing**

#### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

**Responsible institution:** "Jilfond - Invest" EOOD, Dobrich

**Target group:** in need of housing residents of the town

**Activity:** Rent of municipal housing

**Implementation period:** January - September 2013

**Results:** In the period January to September 2013 in 71 public housing (apartments) are housed needy citizens. Of these, **36 apartments are rented to people of Roma origin.** Through public accommodation rent increases quality of housing and living conditions and providing modern living environment for needy residents of the town.

**Target group:** Bulgarian Roma citizens and residents in vulnerable situations.

**Activity:** Housed in public housing in the city Municipality. Total municipal housing - 36 units. 26 are inhabited by Roma families and 10 Bulgarian families.

### **1.4. Anti-discrimination**

#### Krushari Municipality

Animation of the Municipal Committee against delinquency of minor children by involving representatives.

In the municipality Krushari a Centre for Social Prevention to local commissions, through which four public educators s.Krushari, s.Telerig, Lozenets and s.Koriten work on prevention of antisocial behavior among adolescents. Priorities of public educators in working with children is to limit the risk of performing asotsilni events, engagement and understanding of their free time with useful and necessary for their development activities, mentoring skills and interests in the arts, creativity, artistic speech and Sports .

#### Tervel

And supervisors from local commissions and inspectors of the MRF, together with teachers from School "Jordan Jovkov", PGTO «Docho Mihaylov" and PS "C. Droumev »village Orlyak conducted 25 initiatives aimed at preventing crime and maintaining public order and personal health with over 900 participants from 4 to 12th grade. Exported Discourses on the topic:



"Bullying at School", "Life is precious", "safe vacation", "road safety", "Tolerance", "We can be positive human values", "Guidance-defying aggression" and others. Completed campaigns are Day pink jersey for the International Day of people affected by HIV / AIDS in Mobility Week. There have been competitions «Sport against addictions."

## **10. KARDZHALI REGION**

### **1. Integration Policies.**

#### **1. 1. Education.**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the scope of education there are some well operating models in the Region of Kardzhali. Several elementary schools are working on the prevention of school dropout and literacy of uneducated and illiterate Roma adults through the New chance for success Project under Human Resources Development Operational program.

Under the initiative of the Regional Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and the joint efforts of the Regional Inspectorate on Education, Child Protection departments of the Social Assistance Directorate, Labour Directorates, the municipal administrations an Action mechanism to implement an integrated approach to gather and retain students at risk up to 16 years has been developed. An information database of left and permanently not attending students has been prepared as well as the reasons for that for every individual case.

The partnership with the Commissions for combating delinquency among under-aged, Child Protection Departments and Community Support Centres from which information about the measures taken concerning retention of students is required, gives good results. For example in Ardino municipality there are only two cases of early school leavers. Each school prepares a School program for acquiring Bulgarian language. Free textbooks to students from 1st to 8<sup>th</sup> grade are provided.

Joint inspections on the actual school attendance and control of family benefits in 20 schools in the region of Kardzhali during school years of 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 with the participation of representatives of the District Administration, the Regional Inspectorate of Education, the Social Assistance Regional Directorate' (SARD), municipal administration and Child Protection departments had led to more frequent reporting of absences in the records and submitting them to the SARD. As a result of the three inspections in PK Yavorov School of Kardzhali effective control measures and reporting of student absences had been taken.

##### **Activities planned for 2014 - 2020**

Also in the next programming period, the focus will be on providing conditions for the inclusion of children from an early kindergarten age in order to be socialized and to master Bulgarian language, year-round literacy courses for students and parents, creating interest clubs, forming groups in optional training in the field of culture, folklore and traditions of different ethnic groups, increased involvement of parents and strengthening the cooperation, involving mediators assisting the educational process and much more.

**Good Practices** Appendix 4. Good Practices for Integration of Roma in PK Yavorov school of Kardzhali.

### **1.2. Employment**

#### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Still there is no progress in the inclusion of members of the Roma community with education and skills to work in state and municipal structures. In very rare cases, Roma young people continue their education at universities. As a result of the close connection between school principals, Regional Inspectorate on Education and Labour Directorates where lists of unemployed parents are available, those are invited to register, while among others expired IDs were set out. According to the regional employment service of Haskovo through the labor offices, for the period 30.09.2013 - 01.01.2012, 11 individuals passed programs and measures under the Law on Employment Promotion and 13 – under Human Resource Development OP. In 2012 on the primary labor market one person is registered in the Labour office of Kardzhali, in 2013 those

were 5 people - 4 registered in the office of Kardzhali and one in Momchilgrad.

#### **Activities planned for 2014 – 2020**

1. Literacy programs and training courses through Labour Offices in connection with offering a job.
2. Training in starting and managing own business.
3. Developing regional programs in order to provide real opportunities for employment.
4. Leasing municipal land for farming.

### **1.3. Health care**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Still there is not a survey of health and demographic status of disadvantaged groups in the Kardzhali region. When choosing GP and receiving medical assistance, people do not fill in the data on ethnicity. That is why examinations of Roma and disadvantaged people cannot be distinguished from other ethnic groups in the records of the programs. According to the Regional Health Insurance Fund of Kardzhali an upward trend in the number of people without health insurance is sustained. A specific information and motivation campaign in Roma community is necessary to encourage the collection and control over the collection of health insurance contributions.

According to the Regional Health Inspection of Kardzhali (RHI) in 2012 Roma pupils are involved in conducting health education activities through four national programs. In September 2012 a meeting with parents of students from P. K.Yavorov School was organized with a presentation on Ensuring access to quality health services and preventive health programs.

During the first half of 2013 a total of 17 trainings on prevention of risk factors were conducted. In 2013, in the municipality of Kardzhali a health mediator works on a project of the National network of health mediators Association who conducts awareness and information activities among residents of Borovets district and actually helps them in their visits to health and social institutions.

#### **Activities planned for 2014 – 2020**

1. Conducting specific motivation campaign in Roma community to encourage the collection of health insurance contributions.
2. Conducting health education activities regarding the use and abuse of psychoactive substances, healthy lifestyle, information campaigns on family planning and reproductive health.
3. Development and implementation in school health offices special programs for health promotion and education of children from socially vulnerable groups done by the regional health inspection, municipal administrations and directors of children's and school units.

#### **Good practices**

In 2013, the "Young people - health, sex, drugs" club at RHI - Kardzhali won a project named "Health Today - secure investment in the future" under the "Partners for Social Change" program of the Bulgarian Youth Red Cross, funded by Velux Foundation, totaling 1 793.30 leva. The meetings with parents on health and ethical issues, the "Recommendations for parents" Guidelines containing prevention of risk factors, the collage contest themed "Life is precious" have an effect on health and ethical education and raising the awareness of parents and students in P.K.Yavorov School in Borovets quarter of Kardzhali.

### **1.4.Housing**

#### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Still the problem of housing is a heavy one. Desegregation is a long and difficult process that requires time and money. In some towns like Kardzhali and Roma neighborhoods in the municipality of Kirkovo and Momchilgrad there are compact groups living in overcrowded housing and poor sanitation. In many places there are no detailed plans for Roma neighborhoods. To solve the problems of social housing in Ardino certain areas are assigned - detailed plans for individual housing.

In 2013 in the municipality of Krumovgrad improvements to the road surface are made in four places and sanitation in one of them.

In Djebel Municipality up to now no requests for municipal housing by citizens of Roma origin have been received and therefore they are not placed in such public housing. In 2013 the road and street infrastructure of Dzhebel has been improved. In the municipality of Kirkovo repair and reconstruction of the road surface in several Roma neighborhoods are made.

The municipality of Momchilgrad plans developing projects related to the improvement of living conditions and lifestyle of Roma families and support procedures for the legalization of illegal buildings.

In the municipality of Kardzhali a proposal for repair and reconstruction of the road surface in Borovets square and adoption of municipal housing programs for low-income Roma families is being prepared.

### **Activities planned for 2014 – 2020**

1. Developing community programs to improve living conditions in neighborhoods with compact Roma and other population living under similar conditions.
2. Development of cadastral maps and registers of areas, including areas of compact Roma and other people living under similar conditions.
3. Update detailed plans of existing sites and development of such for newly designated areas;
4. Design of technical infrastructure and building technical infrastructure objects.

### **1.5. Antidiscrimination**

There have been no registered cases or signals of discrimination in Kardzhali region.

The first regional team in Bulgaria for prevention of aggression among students was formed in Kardzhali district in March 2012 at the initiative of the Regional Inspectorate of Education in Kardzhali to initiate a number of measures to reduce aggression among students through cooperation between different institutions (municipalities, schools, Kardzhali district administration, police units dealing with juvenile crime).

A contest named "Games without aggression" was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June at the initiative of the Momchilgrad police station with students from Momchilgrad municipality.

Themes with possible solutions of discrimination issues have been presented to the police staff of the regional directorate of the Ministry of Interior in Kardzhali in April and June 2013. ("Legislation, principles and forms of discrimination", "Improving the efficiency of the police officers working in multicultural environment and protection of human rights").

Joint activities have been carried out to prevent antisocial behavior of adolescents - lectures, consultations, campaigns and more.

Police inspectors dealing with juvenile crime have lectured adolescents on different types of law violations.

### **Activities planned for 2014 – 2020**

1. Close cooperation with informal leaders and NGOs for prevention and management of social tensions.
2. Conducting more joint operations in order to prevent antisocial behavior of adolescents - lectures, consultations, campaigns and more.
3. Improvement of the interaction between municipalities and state institutions and updating public law and order regulations and not allowing antisocial behavior.

## **2. Financing**

For 2012-2013, through programs under the Law for Employment Promotion an absorption of 9356 levs was achieved and under Human Resources Development Operational Programme - 14,786 Levs.

In Kirkovo Municipality in 2012-2013 the absorbed funds under Operational Programmes are 41,040 Levs, and under national programs - 40,120 Levs.

In Krumovgrad Municipality the absorption of EU funds projects is 15,000 Levs, national funding - 20,000 Levs.

In Krumovgrad Municipality for the period 2014-2020 from EU funds are expected 215,000 Levs and from national funds - 24,075 Levs.

In Momchilgrad Municipality:

- In 2011-2012 the project "Interactive training to support the integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in Momchilgrad Municipality" under Human Resources Development OP, financed by the European Social Fund amounting to 375,172 Levs is implemented;
  - In 2012-2013 the project "We are different" for supporting the education of children and pupils with SEN worth 239 672.52 levs, which includes Roma children from five schools and two kindergartens is implemented;
  - Under Environment 2007-2013 Operational Programme the project "Reconstruction, modernization and completion of water supply and sewerage network in Momchilgrad" will be finished in 2014. The grant from the EU Cohesion Fund will be 19.868 million levs, from the national budget – 4.967 mln. levs, about 3% will be funded by Momchilgrad Municipality.
- Financing of the activities in the field of integration in health care is provided by the Regional Health Inspectorate exclusively with own funds, which are not sufficient to support their development.

In the implementation of the Programme for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities projects from kindergartens and schools were developed of around 350 000 levs under Human Resources Development Operational Programme, Ministry of Education and Science and the Centre for Educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities.

In PKYavorov School in Kardzhali during 2012/2013 under Human Resources Development Operational Programme a total of 29 794 lv. are absorbed through the SUCCESS project "Making school more attractive to young people", and the project "New chance for success" - 101 100 Levs.

At this stage there is no clarity on the financial resources in the new programming period (2014-2020).

At the forthcoming meeting of the Regional Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues in the month of November 2013, the focus of attention will be the information from the Regional Information Center of Kardzhali about opportunities for integration in the implementation of projects in the new programming period as well as an update of municipal action plans in the new programming period (2014 and 2020).

There is goodwill to jointly solve the problems in the integration of institutions and organizations in the region of Kardzhali.

## **11. KYUSTENDIL REGION**

### **1.1. Education**

#### **1.1.1.Steps taken since 2011**

1. Integration of students from the Roma neighborhood "Iztok" throughout schools in the city. As of February 2013 the following number of students are integrated in classes in schools throughout the city:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First grade – 28 students</li><li>• Second Grade – 32 students</li><li>• Third Grade – 41 students</li><li>• Fourth Grade – 41 students</li><li>• Fifth Grade – 39 students</li><li>• Sixth Grade – 36 students</li><li>• Seventh Grade – 37 students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eight Grade – 26 students</li><li>• Ninth Grade – 57 students</li><li>• Tenth Grade – 52 students</li><li>• Eleventh Grade – 45 students</li><li>• Twelfth Grade – 35 students</li><li>• Evening form of education – 96 students</li></ul>
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2. Throughout the territory of the Kyustendil Region the schools participate in the National Programme of the Ministry of Education and Science "Caring for every student" for additional education of the students who have difficulties with the school curriculum – 5 schools –

“NeofitRilski” – 12 groups, “Ivan Vazov” – 8 groups, “St. St. Kiril and Metodi”- Dupnits – 4 groups, “Prof. M. Drinov” – Kyustendil – 3 groups and “N.Y. Vaptsarov” – BobovDol – 2.

3. Schools implement full-time organisation of the school day, 20 of which implement project "Improving the quality of education in central schools by introducing a full-time learning process" of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development". Priority is the inclusion of part-time Roma students in order to improve their results in the educational process.

4. A survey studying the needs of qualification improvement of the teachers who work with students whose mother language is not Bulgarian was conducted. Survey's population included teachers from “Ivan Vazov” School in Kyustendil.

5. Since the academic year 2013/2014 there is an optional subject in First Grade of “Ivan Vazov” School, Kyustendil, aimed at provoking students' interest in reading and literature.

6. An evening form of education in “John Atanasov” School has been adopted for the academic years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, for achieving First Degree of Professional Qualification.

7. For the academic year 2013/2014 in the Agricultural School – Kyustendil a new class has been formed – an evening form class, achieving “Livestock production worker” first degree of professional qualification.

## 1.2. Employment

### Steps taken since 2011

By 09.30.2013 in the Kyustendil region there are 8097 people, registered as unemployed, 550 of which have identified themselves as Roma by completing a declaration of ethnicity /6.8% of all registered persons/.

During the period January-September 2013, 702 Roma individuals registered at the Employment offices in the Kyustendil region were involved in the initiative "Improving the competitiveness of Roma in the labor market". 238 of these people participated in the "Improving the employability and skills of unemployed Roma"; 188 actively searched for work, 26 did professional orientation and 24 – achieved professional qualification. 464 Roma people, registered as unemployed have found a proper job. Having in mind their low educational and qualification level, the different work programmes are most commonly, the only alternative for their work realization. They are most likely to participate in the National Programme “From social benefits to finding employment”, because of the low educational and qualification requirements for public works, activities of a durable nature or hourly activities. There are 241 people included in the programme and 4 people are employed in incentives according to the Law on Employment Promotion. 98 Roma started work in the means of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" .

**121 persons of Roma origin were employed** on the primary labor market during the first nine months of 2013, on vacancies declared by employers. The representatives of the observed group are with low educational level and without qualification, and therefore their entering the primary labor market is problematic. Nevertheless, job brokers are seeking opportunities for finding a suitable job, treat them with the necessary care and support. The psychologist of the Kyustendil Employment Office provides methodological assistance and support to the Dupnitsa Employment Office by motivating individuals of Roma origin, registered as unemployed at the labor offices, to acquire skills for successful presentation to employers and active behavior on the labor market.

Activities from the National program "Activating inactive persons" were performed during the first nine months of 2013 on the territory of the Kyustendil region, by the Kyustendil Employment Office and Dupnitsa Employment Office , with the assistance of a mediator of Roma origin. The mediator establishes contact and encourages the inactive Roma citizens, registered as unemployed, for active behavior on the labor market in order to improve their employment realization. The unemployed are assisted by providing information, consultation and involvement in various programs and employment projects, incentives for employment and training, and education on various projects and programs, according to the Law on Employment Promotion and the National Action Plan for Employment and the Operational Programme „Human Resources Development “. The National Programme " Activating inactive persons "

shows its efficiency through the work of the designated in labor offices Roma mediators who promote the activities of the labor offices among the Roma community and the implementation of specific measures for employment and training , which is good practice within the implementation of the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015 ".

As a good practice of the labour offices can be pointed out the organization of job fairs, aiming in particular at a specific target group, such as Roma citizens, people with disabilities, young people or specialized in the field of tourism, hotels and restaurants.

During the reporting period 5 campaigns with inactive people were conducted named "Come and register at the Labour Office " attended by 212 persons. 220 individual informal meetings took place with inactive citizens as well as 4 group meetings, attended by 96 inactive citizens. 16 meetings with local organizations were held, with the participation of 16 institutions. The meetings were attended by representatives of five NGOs, two labour organizations, seven employers' organizations , and two others. The opportunities and challenges in recruiting employees of Roma origin as well as future actions for their successful placement on the labour market were discussed during the meetings. For the reporting period 62 Roma citizens, registered as unemployed at the Labour Offices in the Kyustendil region, were included in the project „New Chance for Success“.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- All health insured persons of Roma origin, and all children under 18 years, who, according to the regulations in Bulgaria have health insurance are included in the patient lists of GPs, which ensures them to be examined in the event of illness and be subject to prophylactic examinations, immunizations and dispensary, if necessary;
- For health uninsured patients of Roma origin (that are a large part of the Roma community ) timely and qualified medical assistance is ensured by the Center for Emergency Medical Care and its affiliates , and by the Emergency Department at the Hospital "Dr. N. Vasilyev " in Kyustendil ;
- Among the activities aiming at reducing the percentage of minor mothers are: realization of educational activities at schools where the students are predominantly of Roma origin as well as implementing activities under various programs, such as lectures by the Public Health Department at the Regional Health Inspection Kyustendil , project activities of the Expertise center for alternative care for children, and others.

### **1.4. Housing**

#### **1.4.1.Steps taken since 2011**

Dupnitsa Municipality has an approved project for the construction of 150 social housing under OP Regional Development.

Project BG161PO001/1.2-02/2011 "**Support for the provision of modern social housing for vulnerable, minority and low-income populations and other disadvantaged groups**".

Project "House for Everyone" by the Operational Program "Regional Development".

**Beneficiary:** Dupnitsa Municipality, **Budget:** 4 909 000,00 leva

#### **The overall objective of the project is:**

To construct new buildings in the Dupnitsa Municipality, and thus improve the housing and the living conditions of vulnerable groups on the territory of the municipality, as well as overall improvement of the urban environment.

#### **The project specific objectives are:**

To provide 150 modern social housing, designated for vulnerable, minority and low-income populations and other disadvantaged groups;

To ensure social inclusion, spatial integration and equal access to adequate housing for at least 460 people in disadvantaged and vulnerable positions.

#### **Target groups:**

- Homeless people and / or those living in very bad conditions
- Parents with children, including minor parents, large families, children in poor health and disability;
- People at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

**Best practices:**

1. Within the context of the National Programme for “Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in the Republic of Bulgaria” for the period 2012 - 2015, and the program “Improving the control of tuberculosis in Bulgaria ” good cooperation and coordination were achieved between the contractors, which led to a reduction of morbidity rate and increased the early detection of the disease. Adequate measures were taken in outbreaks; the coverage of HIV testing in cases of tuberculosis was increased. The cooperation with NGOs under the National Programme for “Prevention and Control of HIV and AIDS in Bulgaria”, 2008-2015 and the program " Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS" had a positive impact on the Roma community which resulted in reducing the risk behavior among vulnerable groups, access of the target groups and people living with HIV / AIDS and tuberculosis to quality care and treatment. The programs are aimed at providing appropriate and high quality health and social services to target groups at different levels of intervention, increasing the expertise and institutional commitment, as well as achieving significant positive changes in community norms, risk sexual behavior and behavior associated with drug use, within the context of prevention and control of HIV / AIDS in Bulgaria.

2. A sufficient number of well-trained medical mediators (total 11, distributed as follows: 4 for Kyustendil Municipality, 6 for Dupnitsa Municipality, 1 for Bobov Dol Municipality) who take an active part in the implementation of preventive and anti-epidemic measures for communicable diseases, health promotional activities and immunization campaigns.

**Conclusions:**

1. Lack of planned financial resources for the implementation of the Regional Strategy and municipal plans slows the integration of Roma in the region.
2. There is no coordination mechanism for inter-agency cooperation at the central, regional and local level regarding the implementation of national, regional and local programs for the integration of Roma citizens..

**Annexes:** Reports of Regional Health Inspectorate Kyustendil and the Regional Inspectorate of Education, Regional Employment Office - Blagoevgrad, Dupnitsa Municipality, Kyustendil Municipality, Bobov dol Municipality, Kocherinovo Municipality.

**12. LOVECH REGION**

**1.1. Education**

**1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011:**

- 2011 - Project “For the kids of Letnitsa Municipality – with care and responsibility” – Letnitsa Municipality in partnership with the “Knowledge” Association – NGO based in Lovech, financed by Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICSEM) and Roma Education Fund (REF) – Budapest. Direct beneficiaries are 39 Roma students age 7-18 and 25 students from other minorities; Roma kids not included in pre-school education; parents of kids in risk; 25 teachers. Activities included also Mobile school for parents with target group 20 identified families in risk;
- 2011/2012 - project “Decreasing of dropouts of Roma students from school” financed by Amalipe Centre with target group Roma students and their parents -Letnitsa Municipality;
- 2012/2013 – project BG051PO001-4.3-01 “New chance for success”, OP "Human Resources Development" – education of adults – Ugarchin Municipality;

- 2011/2012 – project “Decreasing number of Roma students dropouts from school”, financed by Foundation America for Bulgaria;
- 2012/2013 - project “Improvement of quality of education through full-day education” financed by OP "Human Resources Development"; National programs “At school without absences” 4 community school in district Lovech;
- 2012/2013 - project “With care to every student” module “Providing additional education to students for improvement of general educational achievements” with groups in Bulgarian language and literature, geography and economics (Municipality Letnitsa);
- 2012-2013 - project “To make school attractive to young people” – Lovech Municipality;
- 2012 – 2013 - “School for self-affirmation and preparation to European horizons – Success”, call for proposals BG051PO001-4.2.05 OP "Human Resources Development" Lovech Municipality;
- 2012-2013 – project “School for everyone” BG051PO001-4.1.04-0096 OP "Human Resources Development" – 136 Roma students and 20 teachers and tutors in “Sv.Sv.Kiril I Metodii” school Lovech;
- 2011-2012 – project “School Oscars – intercultural dialogue in Lukovit municipality”, OP "Human Resources Development" – direct beneficiaries - 151 minorities students in 3 schools.
- Municipality officials yearly identify Roma children subject to enrollment in preschool education and first school grade; Municipality Troyan tailors complex measures for inclusion of Roma children in pre-school education on yearly basis including provision of preferential taxes for pre-school education for children from socially disadvantaged families;
- Parents with Roma origin are subject of measures to become part of educational process through inclusion in school boards and participation in regular meetings with school staff; given consultations by psychologists and pedagogues;
- Parents of students in risk of dropout are given regular information for student’s attendance on regular basis according to Education Act by school and Municipality officials and given consultations.

#### **1.1.2. Impact of measures:**

- Decreased number of students not enrolled to school or dropping out from school including students from poor families from all ethnic groups; 39 Roma students included in individual education schedules;
- Decreasing number of absences of students from different ethnic groups with ( in Municipality Troyan - 0,2% for 2012/2013 school year);
- Provision of favorable school environment for quality education of Roma students and students from all ethnic groups, improvement of average school performance;
- Better qualification of pedagogical staff to deal with children at risk and in multiethnic environment; inclusion of parents in active school boards;
- Reintegration in schools of dropout students;
- Increased average school performance.

#### **1.1.3. Plans for 2014-2020 г.:**

- Implementation of complex of stimuli and measures for establishment of multicultural education at all stages of school education;
- Prevention of school dropouts of Roma students and students from families in risk;
- Changing of attitudes of Roma parents and enhancement of their cooperation with school and pre-school officials;
- Formation of intercultural competence of school principals, teachers and other pedagogical professionals;
- Project proposal to be contracted under “Together” project, Program BG06 “Children and young people in risk” financed by financial mechanism of European Economic Area. 210 Roma children included age 3-6 and 5 pre-school facilities. Main goal of the project is better preparation for entering school with additional activities with children with mother tongue



different from Bulgarian; school for parents, summer school and etc. 8 educational mediators with Roma origin to be provided in all villages with preschool facilities;

- Establishment of set of Career centers for providing students with consultations for career choice, navigation through different education stages and starting a job;
- Establishment of Donation fund with participation of municipality, parents, local businesses, charities and etc. for financial support of talented Roma students;
- Literacy training of adults with Roma origin.

#### **1.1.4. Relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact:**

- 2012/2013 – in the villages Oreshak and Kaleica, Troyan Municipality, were provided additional activities involving Roma children in Preschool facilities and additional qualification to the staff. The project were financed by National program “With care to every student”;
- Provided free transport to preschool facilities, schools and students dormitories to the Roma students;

#### **1.1.5. Relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education:**

To be provided continuity of the results by implementation of projects dealing with Roma integration; involvement of NGO and local communities, providing better physical environment in schools and preschool facilities, providing better social support to Roma students and their families.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011:**

For the period 2011 – 30.09.2013 1543 unemployed Roma registered in the Employment offices in Lovech district participated in different activities for raising their competitiveness on the labour market, providing of 577 jobs and improvement of their entrepreneur culture and attitude. Following programs and measures are implemented on the territory of Lovech district:

- OP "Human Resources Development" – 111 jobs for unemployed Roma

Project “New Choice – development and realization” – provided training and jobs to unemployed Roma;

Scheme “Support for employment” – provided training and jobs to unemployed Roma;

- National Programs:

“Activation of inactive persons” – 3 Roma (employment) mediators in 3 municipalities on the territory of Lovech District are involved in motivating unemployed Roma to renew their participation on labour market;

“From social benefits to employment” - provided jobs to 327 unemployed persons;

“Career start” – provided 2 job positions as junior expert “Business administration” for 1 Roma person with relevant university degree;

- Regional programs for employment in Ugarchin Municipality provided jobs for unemployed Roma;

• Center for vocational training, established under PHARE program at vocational school “S. Rumyancev” – continued through the period to give vocational training mainly to Roma minority persons;

- In the period 2011г.- 2013in Troyan municipality 35 beneficiaries under art.9 of Rules for the implementation of SAA have been included in programs for community activities on part-time jobs (4 hours a day, 14 days per month).

### **1.2.2. Impact of measures:**

- Provision of access to labour market to unemployed Roma;
- Facilitation of social and civil dialogue in support to labour realization of Roma minority;
- Impact is manifested through provision of minimal wages and salaries for Roma participating in project under Operational programs, as well as provision of vocational licenses for participants in vocational trainings.

### **1.2.3. Plans for 2014-2020:**

- Encouraging of Roma employment through projects and programs under Bulgarian *Employment Promotion Act* and in the frame of Annual programs for training according National action plan in the field of employment and other.

#### **1.2.4. Good practices:**

- 2013 -Association “National network of health mediators” and Troyan municipality signed an agreement and under project “Enhancement of health status of Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe” have been recruited Roma minority representative as a health mediator. After 14-days training the health mediator works for better social inclusion and health status of Roma communities.

#### **1.2.5. Relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education:**

For achievement of the goal of sustainable Roma employment it is necessary to establish lasting partnership between employers, municipalities, labour offices and private sector to form effective system for providing jobs to Roma minority.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1 . Steps taken since 2011:**

- Health lectures to young Roma people;
- Info campaign and promotion of immunizations to the Roma parents;
- Information campaigns for HIV/AIDS prevention, tuberculosis, hepatitis in Roma communities;
- Prevention of socially important diseases and teen pregnancies.

#### **1.3.2 . Impact of measures:**

- Better coverage of Roma minority with immunizations;
- Better health education of Roma minority for disease prevention;
- Better health culture of Roma minority.

#### **1.3.3 . Plans for 2014-2020:**

- Improvement of health services to Roma children in pre-school age group;
- Improvement of health prophylactics in Roma minority;
- Improvement of health knowledge and culture of Roma minority, establishing of Family consultation Center at the Center for community support.
- Establishing of Register of pregnant Roma women for better medical supervision and medical assistance;

1.3.4. Good practices: Coordinated efforts of Regional Health inspection Lovech, Municipality Troyan and health mediator for solving problems of Roma community, giving health information lectures at school “Ivan Hadjisky” Troyan by a psychologist from RHI.

### **1.4. Housing**

#### **1.4.1 . Steps taken since 2011:**

On the territory of district Lovech there are 7 lots designated for construction of new housing for Roma minority representatives and 99 municipality owned housings for rent.

### **1.5. Anti-Discrimination**

#### **1.5.1 . Steps taken since 2011:**

- 2011-2012 – as part of the project “School Oscars – intercultural dialogue in Lukovit municipality”, OP "Human Resources Development" was held campaign for intercultural tolerance between Bulgarian, Roma and Turkish ethnic groups;
- At schools and neighborhoods in Troyan municipality with higher share of Roma population were held meetings with regional coordinator of Commission for Protection against Discrimination;
- Individual consultations with psychologists and pedagogical advisors were held at schools for improvement of health culture and knowledge regarding rights and responsibilities of members of public life;

- In Ugarchin municipality regional coordinator of Commission for Protection against Discrimination visited schools and held meetings with citizens.

### **1.5.2. Impact of measures:**

Slow but steady improvement of knowledge of Roma minority, occasional feedback from representatives of Roma minority, demand of information and professional aid.

### **1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020:**

- Consultations;
- Inclusion in trainings on specific topics

## **2. Funding**

### **2.1 .Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

- Education – 80 000 lv
- Employment – 12 000 lv
- Health – 2 000 lv
- Housing – 100 000 lv

#### **2.1.1 . EU Funds**

- Education – 200 000 lv
- Employment – 380 498 lv
- Health – 2 000 lv

#### **2.1.2 . national funds**

- Education– 2100 lv
- Employment –112 300 lv
- Health – 3000 lv

#### **2.1.3 . other sources**

- Education – 25035lv
- Employment – 5000lv

### **2.2 . Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020**

**2.2.1. EU funds** – 200 000 lv (education)

**2.2.2. National funds** – 405 000 lv (employment, health)

**2.3 Good practices in the funding area** - charity campaign “Equal start” donating to poor families with children in school age complementing to the activities of the project “For the kids of Letnitsa Municipality – with care and responsibility”.

## **13. MONTANA REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The process of school desegregation initiatives in one of the largest municipalities of the region of Montana - municipality of Berkovitsa has started a few years ago. Currently a part of the students from neighborhood Rakovitza are transported to host schools in the city. Transportation is the responsibility of the schools which are working on projects Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICSEM).

Municipality of Berkovitsa has developed a transport system for free transportation to the center school for children and students from villages Borovtsi, Gaganitsa, Kotenovtsi, Komarevo, Mezdreya, Bokilovtsi.

In 2012 a project for adult literacy “New Chance for Success” trained 73 persons over the age of 16. In 2013 were 145 trainees.

##### **1.1.2. Impact of measures**

The desegregation process provides daily transportation for children and students, free textbooks for children from poor origin, offers extra hours to make up the missed material, provides

multicultural training for teachers, suggests mentors that connect teachers and parents and organized a variety of extracurricular school activities to integrate children and parents in school and school environments.

### **1.1.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

- Ensure equal access to quality education, retract and detention of all subject to the mandatory training students. Training of adolescents in accordance with the new public realities and education of the students in the spirit of democratic principles of the civil society.
- Ensure the stability, order and protection of children in the school.
- Providing a wide range of extracurricular forms for free time for the students and creation of conditions for their personal expression, initiative and creativity.

### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact.**

Work on the project **“Effective and complete educational integration of children of roma origin through innovative motivation of their parents”** contributed to the establishment of integrated environment by supporting measures to facilitate the academic and social integration of children of Roma origin and their families. The main problem which is decided by the project is to provide presence of the children from the remote Roma neighborhood Rakovitsa in reception children’s gardens in the town of Berkovitsa. Through the main groups of activities: "Educational and motivational activities relating to the detention of children in kindergartens"; "Working with parents"; "Work in the Community" and "Insurance of awareness and publicity of the project" was officially approved innovative approach for informing and motivating parents to change and validation of positive attitude and behavior in the direction presence of their children in reception children's gardens and full participation in education and care processes. Basic idea – during the journey time from the remote Roma neighborhood the children are accompanied by mediator (pedagogue) and by invited (for the day) parent of which are provided information materials on critical future threats to the children as human trafficking, drugs and prostitution. Additional "stationary" activity was realized in the available public spaces in the neighborhood, where with the help of the partner of the project (public education council – Berkovitsa), are among the activities “Working with parents” and "Work in the Community" with didactic materials owned by the partners.

### **1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education.**

The analysis of the situation shows that early school dropout, disinterest and low interest of the parents to educational institutions leads to low degree of reintegration of dropout rate. Investment in the school training is of crucial importance for successful integration in school for the children. Educational level of the parents also is a strong factor, exerting influence on risk of poverty among children - now and in the future. The lower educational level of the parents, the greater the chance they are unemployed and/or to receive low-income, by exercising employment of low quality.

To be broken down into the closed cycle children to repeat the model of social isolation of their parents is a need for a coherent intervention to help families to provide chances for the development of their children.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In order to improve the access of the Roma to the labor market and increasing the share of employees among them are taken concrete actions:

Organization of training courses for unemployed persons:

- a) motivation to actively search for work.
- b) professional orientation;
- c) professional qualification in the framework of the annual training programs for National action plan for employment (NAPE) and other plans;

- Promote employment through programs and measures in the order of Employment Promotion Act (EPA) the framework of the annual training programs for National action plan for employment (NAPE) and other plans;
- Training on key competencies "Proactive and entrepreneurship" or "Public and civil competencies" to the relevant vocational training;
- Organization of motivational courses (within the framework of the annual training programs for NAPE and other plans);
- Training for start-up and management of their own business;
- Inclusion the local population in the implementation of infrastructure projects, gardening, landscaping and playgrounds;
- Meetings, seminars, discussions, round tables, campaigns.

#### **1.2.2. Impact of measures**

In the period of employment programs in the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) and in projects under the Operational Program "Development of human resources" (OP "HRD") included a number of persons from the Roma ethnic group. Professional qualifications in the field of construction have acquired 17 persons, more than 400 people are motivated to actively search for work, triumphed in the operation of the primary labor market more than 250 people.

#### **1.2.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

- Promote employment through programs and measures in the order of EPA within the framework of the annual training programs for National action plan for employment (NAPE) and other plans;
- Professional qualifications in the framework of the annual training programs for National action plan for employment (NAPE) and other plans.

#### **1.2.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

One of the best practices of established effect, as well as for employees, and for the municipality is inclusion of the local population of Roma origin in the implementation of infrastructure projects, gardening, landscaping and playgrounds.

#### **1.2.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment.**

The Bureau of labor are more effective in finding a permanent job for highly educated and qualified citizens. In most cases Roma are uncompetitive on the labor market. In this problem we can add and discriminatory reasons for ethnic indicators, which further impair situation. A big part of unemployed Roma in the municipality of Berkovitsa are not registered in the Bureau of labor, are not covered with support from the relevant specialist authorities under the Social Assistance Act and the rule for the application. For many Roma relations with the two institutions are rather fiddly manual process that demands skill with a familial clustering of cases, rather than real offering support. Logically this results in the presence of hidden social status and hidden unemployment in the Community. A continuous decline of the labor market is the strongest indicator of socio-economic exclusion at the time.

### **1.3. Helath**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Active assistance of the mediator in the efforts of the private physician for coverage of pregnant to the fourth month of pregnancy with registration, consultation with a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology and timely entry into medical center for hospital birth.

Gynecologic and obstetric examinations are conducted with mobile labs in settlements with compact Roma population. Provide contraceptive means of willing persons belonging to the group.

Conducted tours with adolescents and young people, and with their parents on ways to prevent unwanted and early pregnancy, of the dangers, which stands for the early pregnancy for mother and baby, for the risk of birth of children with congenital anomalies and inherited diseases and ways to prophylaxis.

Intensification of mediator acts to search for the children without personal doctor and explain to their parents' importance for the registration-it them.

Conducted are lectures and talks with the young mothers of the importance of immunisation and motivate them to the regular application, pursuant to the National-vaccination calendar.

Held early diagnostics and screening studies with mobile mammograms for the prevention of cancer of the milk gland.

Conducted are communication campaigns on the importance of preventive examinations among the Roma population.

### **1.3.2. Impact of measures**

Implementation of the measures in the field of health care contribute to the improvement of access to health care and disease prevention for the children and the rise of health knowledge and awareness of the Roma population.

### **1.3.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

Support for the functioning of outpation for primary care in neighborhoods populated predominantly by Roma population, co-financed by the municipality and to the activities of mobile equipment.

Increase in the number of health mediators.

Increase qualifications of health mediators through participation in seminars, meetings, round tables, etc.

Regular lectures by health specialists and mediators to the injury of the most common risk factors – smoking, abuse of alcohol, unhealthy diet, the advantages of healthy way of life and for the prevention of sexually transmitted and others infectious diseases.

Searching for people who are outside of the system of social support and assistance for their coverage.

### **1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.**

Negative impact on the health of the children have early pregnancies inadequate monitoring and care of the children particularly among families of the Roma community. Difficult to hold compulsory vaccination because of the lack of full cooperation of the parents due to their low healthy culture.

In comparison with other communities health problems in children of Roma community are the largest which is due to numerous risk factors.

## **1.4. Housing**

### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Municipality of Berkovitsa has a functioning cadastre map and cadastral surveying and regulatory plans for villages for which there is no approved cadastre map.

For the town of Berkovitsa has cadastre map and cadastral surveying records approved by order of the mayor. In its range is include neighborhood Rakovitsa predominantly by Roma population.

For villages is not compiled cadastre map. For them there are existing cadastral and regulatory plans.

The measures taken with respect to improving housing conditions and infrastructure are:

- Develop municipal program to improve housing conditions in neighborhoods with compact Roma population;
- Triumphed are networks of alleys, green areas and children's playgrounds;
- Improved is the status of technical infrastructure, asphaltting streets, construction of pavements, reconstructing Water-supply and Sewerage networks.

### **1.4.2. Impact of measures**

For neighborhood Rakovitsa is constructed cadastre map for territory with area 100 sq.m. settled with Roma and their inclusion in regulation.

Partially resolved problems with property on the ground and illegal construction.

### **1.4.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

Municipality of Berkovitsa seeks to lead an active municipal policy. In the next programming period will be focused in the energy efficiency of homes and improving standards of living of the

citizens (including Roma, Roma quarters), including through the use of renewable energy resources. In this sense municipality plans long-term policy for the promotion of the new trends and specific consecutive measures that lead to the desired efficiency.

#### **1.4.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

The concentration of Roma in separate neighborhoods increased in the last fifteen years, in both urban and rural regions. This concentration in separate neighborhoods usually leads to social isolation of their population, to the deterioration of living conditions, to problems with the construction and maintenance of the infrastructure and hygiene, to transport problems and difficulties in the provision of services.

### **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

#### **1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the implementation of these obligations municipality of Berkovitsa has taken action on the drafting and adoption of relevant regulations, rules and other forms of regulatory acts for the purpose of the implementation of the objectives of the law.

There are activities for getting started and clarification of the Regulations of the Municipal council for public order and security among the Roma population. Conducted are working meetings against drug distribution in neighborhoods with mixed population; were conducted trainings on human rights and the rights of the child in school. Heavy duty is the activity of Municipal Committee for combating against antisocial manifestations of minors through the inclusion of the representative of the Community and NGOS in the commission.

#### **1.5.2. Impact of measures**

The measures taken have contributed to establishing the conditions for equal opportunities and non-discrimination. In this way is reached strenghten the solidarity and social cohesion of the society and the provision of equal access to rights, benefits and goods and services.

#### **1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

Increasing the administrative capacity and the sensivity of the employees and management staff in the administration of all levels in respect of the rights of minorities, the issues of discrimination and communication in multiethnic and multicultural environment, increase their skills in formulating and implementing policies for the integration of the Roma. Avoid the double standard in respect of the Roma and all vulnerable groups.

Promoting cultural pluralism in the media and the application of professional standards for ethical reflection on issues of the Roma.

Promotion of equality between women and men and the provision of prerequisites for successful implementation and a new social role of the Roma woman.

## **2. Funding**

As a good practice in the field of finincing are financial mechanisms which are based on the concept of renewable funds. Such funds assist municipalities or other institutions such as interest-free or low-interest loans for the implementation of projects to their verification.

### **2.1. Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

Construction of effective co-operation and partnership between local institutions, minority community, non-governmental organizations and leaders are the guarantee for solving specific problems of the population and proactive action for the realization of joint programs contributing to the process of integration of minorities.

Need to create a clear and precise rules to be followed as well as by the beneficiaries and the ruling authorities; in the team for the management of the projects to be included experienced staff by the administrations to receive high payment from present to the budgets of the projects because in this period pay is minimal and responsibility for the implementation and execution of the projects of the employees is high.

## **14. PAZARDZHIK REGION**

## **1 - Policy Measures**

### **1.1. Education**

#### **1.1.4.Steps taken since 2011**

Pre-school and school education for children and young people including those of Roma origin is a priority for all municipalities in the region of Pazardzhik. Therefore, actions for their motivation and reduction of drop-out risks have been undertaken.

1.1.1 предприети след 2011;

Since 2011 a number of activities have been undertaken by municipalities to ensure school attendance by children from vulnerable social groups. Such activities include: consulting parents, children and young people to motivate them to attend classes and reduce drop-out risks as well as advise them on early marriage issues. Extra curricula activities for this target group were undertaken within the framework of the “Success” and “I can” projects which are being implemented in most of the municipalities comprising the region.

According to data supplied by municipalities no so called segregated schools and kindergartens are available in them but according to expert data sources including Pazardzhik Regional Administration the existing ones in the Roma districts of Pazardzhik and Peshtera can be defined as such.

#### **1.1.4. Impact of measures**

As a result of the activities undertaken and in compliance with the social policy being implemented by municipal governance structures a high percentage of children from socially vulnerable groups are receiving support through the provision of cooked food and other social and domestic services, psychological and preventive consultations, introducing improvements in school buildings, providing attractive surrounding conditions for students, etc.

#### **1.1.5. Plans for 2014-2020**

All municipalities in the region of Pazardzhik have drafted, approved and received endorsement by decisions of their Municipal councils two-year Action Plans for the implementation of the 2013-2020 Strategy for integration of Roma population of the region of Pazardzhik. Activities envisaged under “Education” priority axis are being implemented in cooperation with teachers, parents, NGOs, the Regional Education Inspectorate, the Regional Health Inspectorate and other governmental structures on the territory of the region of Pazardzhik.

#### **1.1.4. Good practices**

Support for Roma children provided by local business: provision of textbooks and supplementary learning materials for students in high schools (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> form) on the territory of the municipality of Panagyurishte within the framework of the “Education for all” project in order to stimulate completion of secondary education and acquiring higher education.

It is necessary to have mediators in the municipal administration in order to work directly with vulnerable communities on the territory of the municipality (Municipality of Panagyurishte);

It is necessary to increase children’s interest for the learning process (municipality of Rakitovo)

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.3. Steps taken since 2011**

Large portions of Roma population in the different municipalities have been offered employment within the implementation of various projects funded under the operational, national and regional programmes for which Roma communities are the priority target group.

#### **1.2.4. Impact of measures**

Employment is provided for six or nine months preceded by targeted training. Employment mainly involves building and equipment maintenance activities, road maintenance, maintenance of parks and gardens, green plantations, etc. considering individual qualifications of workers. Lack of higher education among Roma people prevents them from employment in jobs requiring high qualifications.

Health mediators of minority origins and experts in ethnic and integration issues of Roma origins are employed in the municipal administrations in the region of Pazardzhik. Such employees were reported by the municipalities of Pazardzhik, Lesichovo, etc. and some report



for such staff employed in management positions (municipality of Rakitovo) and for counselors (municipality of Peshtera).

The “Employment” priority has been given due consideration in the municipal plans and provision of employment is by means of implementation of above mentioned projects and programmes.

**1.2.6. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment.**

Low level of education is definitely a problem for ensuring employment of Roma population for jobs requiring higher qualification.

**a. Health**

**1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Any mainstream measures in the field of healthcare, which are expected to contribute to closing the gap between Roma and non-Roma in the field of healthcare or any mainstream measures that can have negative implications on Roma and how such negative implications are minimised.)

**1.3.3. Steps taken since 2011**

Active campaigns to increase health culture among Roma population have been carried out on the territory of the entire region in cooperation with municipalities, the Regional Health Inspectorate, health mediators and NGOs. Multiple discussions have been held on topics relating to Tuberculosis, smoking, drugs, early pregnancy, rising sexual culture, etc. as well as screening campaigns and free medical check-ups.

A major part of the social services offered are also oriented towards increasing health culture and sickness prevention

**1.3.4. Impact of measures**

Morbidity and death rate among Roma population were reported to have decreased including among infants (municipality of Rakitovo);

Improved access to health services (municipalities of Belovo and Velingrad)

Prevention of neglected infants (municipality of Panagyurishte) ;

**1.3.5. Plans for 2014-2020**

The “Health care” priority axis envisages feasible activities to increase health culture among Roma population and reduction of problems occurring in this area.

**1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.**

Free gynecological check-ups and HIV, hepatitis and Tuberculosis tests;

Free check-ups for 530 people without health insurance in the municipality of Rakitovo.

**1.3.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.**

A large number of Roma people without health insurance and insufficient number of health mediators in the municipalities; introducing changes in health insurance legislation in order to cover all socially vulnerable groups of.

**1.4. Housing**

**1.4.3. Steps taken since 2011**

Needs assessment has been carried out for the conditions in Roma districts in relation to infrastructure and corresponding actions have been taken in accordance with the Law on territorial layout.

**1.4.4. Impact of measures**

Partial improvement in housing conditions was reported for Roma population in Roma districts (municipality of Velingrad) and partner search to carry out common activities for improvements (municipality of Bratsigovo).

**1.4.5. Plans for 2014-2020**

Activities envisaged under “Housing conditions” involve the inclusion of detached living areas into the town-planning schemes of the towns/villages; improvements through the provision of

green areas; providing laying asphalt in streets and maintenance of technical infrastructure; endorsement of cadastre maps. Co-financing of activities for improvement of housing conditions for Roma population is sought.

1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of housing.

Implementation of a project for modernization of the integrated water and sewerage system in the town of Peshtera – additional construction and rehabilitation of the existing water and sewerage network and construction of a waste water treatment plant, where the project also included the districts in the town of Peshtera inhabited by concentrations of Roma population.

Implementation of a project for integrated investment project for the water and sewerage system in the town of Panagyurishte funded under the “Environment” Operational programme where streets from the Roma districts in Panagyurishte were also included.

Legalisation of illegal housing and issuing necessary documents in proof of ownership.

## **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

### **1.5.4. Steps taken since 2011**

The activities of the regional representative of the Committee for protection against discrimination and Pazardzhik regional Administration in cooperation with municipality and territorial governmental structures gives priority to non-admission of discrimination on grounds including ethnicity.

Provision of equal access to all services, including administrative, social, public and health care, through actions of municipal governments, Pazardzhik regional Administration and territorial governmental structures.

Meetings and discussions have been organised with representatives of the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, the Committee for protection against discrimination and Pazardzhik regional Administration to review reported discriminative actions against representatives of the Roma community.

### **1.5.5. Impact of measures**

The culture among Roma population has been increased for implementation of anti-discrimination policies and seeking legal rights of citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Union;

More than 300 students of Roma origin from the municipality of Pazardzhik have been given advice to continue their education in schools outside their living districts, i.e. the so-called segregated schools (municipality of Pazardzhik);

### **1.5.6. Plans for 2014-2020**

Activities are envisaged under the “Rule of law and non-admission of discrimination” priority for the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, the regional representative of the Committee for protection against discrimination, Pazardzhik regional Administration, municipal administrations and territorial governmental structures;

Active sports and cultural activities in order to improve general culture and limit the vulnerability profile of this minority group.

## **2. Funding**

**2.1.** Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011 (please indicate which of the 4 key areas, or which other area, benefitted from the referred funding)

### **2.1.4. EU funds**

Funding activities under operational programmes through projects implemented by municipal administrations and NGOs targeting Roma communities in the priority areas of “Education”, “Employment”, “Health care” and “Housing conditions”.

### **2.1.5. national funds**

National programme “From social subsidies towards employment”, regional programmes for employment and education, activities delegated by the state for implementing social policies

### **2.1.6. other sources** {where relevant)

Municipal budget, funding and co-financing of activities in the priority areas listed above; donations.

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## **2.2. Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020**

### **2.2.4. EU funds**

300 000 Leva – Municipality of Panagyurishte;

500 000 Leva – Municipality of Strelcha;

33 328 070 Leva – Municipality of Rakitovo

### **2.2.5. national funds**

1 200 000 Leva for education – Municipality of Velingrad;

15 000 000 Leva for housing – Municipality of Velingrad;

1 000 000 Leva for social integration – Municipality of Velingrad;

9 000 000 Leva for technical infrastructure – Municipality of Velingrad

6 500 Leva for health care – Municipality of Rakitovo;

35 000 Leva for employment in the Municipality of Rakitovo;

70 000 Leva for the Municipality of Panagyurishte.

### **2.2.6. other sources** {where relevant)

3 000 Leva - Municipality of Belovo

120 000 Leva – Municipality of Panagyurishte.

## **15. PERNIK REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the four municipalities are working on preventing dropout of Roma children by working with parents and the involvement of children in extracurricular activities , depending on their interests. Teachers who work in schools that teach Roma students go through periodic training to work in multicultural environment .

In School " Geo Milev" in Tran given free transportation of pupils from class 1 to 8 who live in the countryside , and for all students under 16 years of Pernik Municipality provides free transportation and optimum transport system that enables children Roma travel to their chosen school. For IX - Primary School " Temelko Nenkov " - Pernik school bus is provided , in order to expand the opportunities for access to students from minority groups to education and training. This simplifies the process of desegregation in the municipality of Pernik .

In Breznik municipality in the period 2012 to 2013 . 3 campaigns were conducted to collect clothes to help children from poor families. Breznik municipality is a beneficiary under a contract for fiscal year grant assistance № BG051PO001-4.1.05- 0170 Project "Support for integration and equal start for children and students of Roma ethnicity in Breznik municipality " of EUR 178 893.65 OP"HRD".

The aim of the project is to provide conditions for successful inclusion and elimination of prerequisites for dropping out of children and students from ethnic minorities in Breznik municipality through the implementation of inovatovni approaches in learning ( interactive learning ) , while creating an environment to preserve and develop the cultural identity of the communities in the region. Established clubs are interested in culture , folklore and traditions of Roma ethnicity , traditional arts and crafts, covering nearly all children and pupils of Roma origin . The project has been appointed consultant - educator to work with parents who prevent their children from regularly attending school . There were three workshops for parents of children at risk of dropping out . Working with parents is aimed at changing attitudes and

increasing their motivation to send their children to school. Appointed consultant teacher to work with parents.

At its meeting of City Council - Tran by Decision № 123/19.11.2008, it had adopted a decision that the user fee for day stay in the nursery is reduced and is determined by the income of a family member, whether the child a single parent or in a large family.

The municipality of Radomir "Hristo Smirnensky " The school , which taught many pupils of Roma origin. In 2012 / 2013 . school working on a project " Different but together in their spare time" OP " Human Resources Development " . The school is one of the basic Project "Reducing the dropout of Roma high school students ." The project has a three-year program , which is implemented by the Centre "Amalipe" in support of he " America for Bulgaria " . It is aimed at preventing dropout of Roma children. Trained 43 persons specialists to work in multicultural environment.

In the municipality of Trun in School " Geo Milev" , where he taught 300 students , 211 of whom are Roma , was appointed governess of the Roma ethnic group, which is currently a student of pedagogy and teaching students from grade 1 to 4 .

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the four municipalities that have adopted municipal plans for Roma integration has appointed mediators who work together with local authorities and hospitals inform people in the community about their health insurance rights and obligations and their rights as patients closely monitor compliance with mandatory immunization schedules for children and organize lectures on health issues involving medical professionals / including sexual culture / the community. Mediators help conduct screening among Roma , to guide them in hospitals and introduced members of the Roma ethnic group of NGOs and hospitals with a Government Decree № 17 , which defines the provision of medical care to uninsured persons.

### **1.4. Housing**

#### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The main problem in Pernik seems the lack of social housing in which to house the Roma families. Following the earthquake of 22.05.2012 , in neighborhoods with predominantly Roma population were distributed over 100 tents. In square Rudnichar granted 5 trailer and 5 more in other neighborhoods. 5 families square Rudnichar are distributed materials. Vasil Levski in Sofia for a value of 10 thousand Levs were provided building materials and volunteer labor is repaired units.

16 Romani families were temporarily housed in public housing , and a Roma family has built a prefabricated house .

A major problem in the Roma population is land ownership and legality of the buildings. Legal uncertainty generated in an extremely short- Roma attitude towards housing . This can be improved by improving the infrastructure and support regulatory compliance in planning . In the municipality of Tran Roma population lives mainly in three districts of the city: square ,, Murgovitsa " sq ,, Barintsi " street Peoples will. " In the square ,, Murgovitsa " most Roma live in their own houses, built with plumbing and electricity, and other large families living in public housing. There are Roma families living in poor housing and sanitation , dilapidated dwelling houses and shacks .

In the municipality of Breznik care for maintenance of the infrastructure in the neighborhood " Mogilitsa " which focuses Roma for maintaining green areas and playgrounds in the Roma neighborhood . 90% of municipal dwellings are inhabited by Roma and the municipality due care for their necessary living condition.

In the municipality of Radomir in two neighborhoods with compact Roma population were repaired 5 streets with 1,265 m<sup>2</sup> pavement , worth 26,000 lev . 11 families using public housing scheme is made for deferred payment of fees owed for rent.

### **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

Secretary of the local commission , together with the Children's Pedagogic Inspector of Municipality Radomir, regular lectures and distributing pamphlets among students from all schools in the municipality of Radomir, human rights and the rights and duties of children in school , what is against public order and crime , introduction to disciplinary measures under Article 13, paragraph 1 of the JDL . The work of all the institutions is very good level. Izvarshvat be joint inspections of drinking and entertainment establishments , computer clubs, gambling and dr.targovski sites frequented by minors. Carry out patrols of mobile groups establishment of wandering and begging children . There is a multidisciplinary team to interact with children who are victims of violence or at risk of violence .

### **Priority: culture and media**

In the municipalities of Radomir, Pernik and Breznik Tran with NGOs and centers for years marked the 14th January Bango Vassili and 08 April International Day of the Roma

## **15. PLEVEN REGION**

### **I. Policies in the area of integration.**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Measures for the period after 2011**

- Education in a spirit of tolerance and non-discrimination in kindergartens and schools by preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and pupils of Roma origin;
- Prevention of school dropout and literacy courses for illiterate and uneducated Roma adult;
- Implementation of various forms and programs for working with children with difficulties and deficits in learning and school dropouts aiming their reintegration;

##### **1.1.2. Provide concrete results of the measures**

I. Monitoring the impact of the development and implementation of various forms and programs of the approved projects for basic schools in program "Reducing the dropout of Roma students from high school" for the school 2012/2013, and to ensure equal access to education.

For the school year 2012/2013:

In terms of **Programme for the Inclusion of Roma parents** to the educational process and enhance their school life participation, the schools working under the program present the following achieved results:

- Improved motivation of parents from ethnic minorities to integrate their children into the education system by introducing them as assistants to teachers for study, transmission, storage and reproduction of customs and traditions of the various ethnic groups;
- Student parliaments, parents' clubs and students - mentors were established in the schools, working under the program;
- Involving parents as an active part – in parents' club and organizing lectures;

Results achieved from the work under program "Reducing the dropout of Roma children from school" for the school year 2012/2013:

- Increased activity and created more responsible attitude to learning by students;
- Improved their knowledge and proficiency in Bulgarian;
- No dropouts of the included in the Optional Elective Courses groups, working on the program;

##### **Coverage of 5 and 6 year olds, subject to compulsory pre-school education:**

1. For the school year 2012/2013 of preparatory classes for the preparation of 5 and 6 year olds are covered:

- 5 year olds - 115 children in preparatory groups in schools on the territory of District Pleven and 1862 children in preparatory groups at kindergartens on the territory of District Pleven;

– 6 years old - 369 children in preparatory groups in schools on the territory of District Pleven and 1818 children in preparatory groups at kindergartens on the territory of District Pleven.

2. For the school year 2013/2014 of preparatory groups for the preparation of 5 and 6 year olds are covered:

– 5 year olds - 160 children in preparatory groups in schools on the territory of District Pleven and 2172 children in preparatory groups at kindergartens on the territory of District Pleven;

– 6 years olds - 325 children in preparatory groups in schools on the territory of District Pleven and 1667 children in preparatory groups at kindergartens on the territory of District Pleven.

### **Information for the dropouts in school year 2012/2013**

Total for the schools on the territory of District Pleven during the school year 2012/2013, 188 students dropped out, distributed as follows:

- Permanently not attending school with accumulated absences -64 students;
- Permanently not attending school due to poor grades - 2 students;
- Permanently not attending school because of social and family reasons - 69 students;

#### **1.1.3. Activities planned for the period 2014-2020**

• Maximum coverage of the subjects at the age of five in the kindergarten and school, keeping in school and completion of education level to ensure a professional activity and social inclusion.

• Directing Roma youths who have dropped out of the education system or having low literacy to activities and services for further education and professional orientation.

• Involvement of parents of Roma children during activities for improvement and maintenance of the facilities and active participation in the learning process and in the kindergartens and schools' boards.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two best practices in the area of education and their impact.**

Good practice: Inclusion of the parents of Roma children into the educational system through motivating parents to enroll them into a kindergarten and a school, establishment of additional forms for better orientation of the parents and future students, creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding between the representatives of various ethnic groups.

Conclusion:

- Significant improvement of the Roma people's lives;
- There are conditions for all Roma children and students to study in ethnically mixed courses in the schools and to attend ethnically mixed groups in kindergartens. Coverage of the Roma children of compulsory school age in the education system.
- Encouragement of early childhood education;
- Reduce of the dropouts from the educational process;

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Encouraging the demand and supply of labor in the labor market;
- Increasing of the efficiency of the institutions for reintegration of the economically inactive unemployed;
- Promoting of labor participation in flexible and alternative forms of employment.

### **1.2.2. Provide concrete results of the measures**

According to the Regional Employment Service - Lovech, for the period 2011 to 09.30.2013, 1146 unemployed Roma people, registered with the LBD from District Pleven, were included in various activities related to improving their competitiveness in the labor market, employment and the promotion of entrepreneurial culture.

In the activities for raising employability qualification and skills, 233 people were included as follows:

- In individual and group forms of professional guidance and motivation for active behavior at the labor market - 80 people;

- In literacy training under the project “New Chance for Success” of OP “Human Resources Development”, implemented by the Ministry of Education - 14 people;
- In training for acquiring professional qualification and key competencies - 139 people, as 131 of them under OP “HRD”.

There was employment provided for 913 unemployed people, who identified themselves as Roma, by participation in various programs, projects and incentives for employment and primary market. They have been basically included into subsidized employment - 689 people, 38 of whom under measures and 651 under employment programs. Only under NP “From Social Assistance to Employment” 289 unemployed Roma people were included, and 297 were included in the schemes of OP “HRD”. 224 persons of Roma ethnicity has begun work on the primary market.

### **1.2.3. Plan for 2014-2020**

Within the international initiative Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2012 - 2020, and the following years, the purposeful work with discouraged people of Roma ethnoses will continue as well as with the registered as unemployed people who identify themselves as Roma, in order to improve their access to the labor market and to increase the share of people employed among them. Utilization of funds will continue by implementing various projects, programs and measures for employment and training included in the National Action Plan for Employment for the relevant year as well as in projects financed by EU funds.

### **1.2.4. Please briefly describe one or two best practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

Mother of 8 children, after the loss of one child in a flood in the local river, came with a request for assistance to work. The woman had completed fourth grade, but could not provide a document. After assistance by the municipality, she received a one time support with which she managed to stabilize her condition for some period of time. She used the sum to go to her place of birth, and thus to obtain proof of her level of education. Then she submitted an application to join the scheme “Development”. Once accepted, she successfully completed her training and received specialization - worker keeping flowers. With this degree she started working at Municipality Knezha.

## **1.3. Healthcare**

### **1.3.1 Steps taken since 2011**

Improving the health care for infants and preschool children;

- Improving the preventive activities among the Roma population;
- Increasing health knowledge and awareness of the Roma population;

### **1.3.2. Provide concrete results of measures**

- Participation of Roma community representatives in organized information events and campaigns to mark Summer AIDS campaign - 2012-2013;
- National campaign for immunization against human papillomavirus - 2012;
- Participation in the Second phase of the National Campaign for free and anonymous testing for HIV/ AIDS and sexually transmitted infections - 2013, villages of Stavertsi, Bozhuritsa, and towns of Dolna Mitropoliya and Trastenik.

### **1.3.3. Plan for 2014-2020**

- Conduction of interviews and talks with young mothers on the importance of immunizations and motivating them to observe the regular immunizations according to the requirements of the National Immunization Schedule;
- Immunizations by mobile units in settlements without general practitioners;

### **1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two best practices in healthcare and their impact.**

In the administration staff of Municipality Dolna Mitropoliya, two health mediators of Roma origin work. They were employed under a project of the Association “National Network of mediators”. The activities of HMs are directed to assist in the implementation of prevention activities and the awareness campaigns in Roma communities in Municipality Dolna Mitropoliya

and assistance to the needy in minority communities and groups, and the health and social services. The health mediators help to overcome the cultural barriers and improve the communication with institutions.

Conclusion: There is a good interaction between institutions at the regional level, support and willingness to achieve the ultimate goal of the National and Regional Strategy for integration of Roma people. Because of the poverty of the population and the lack of a steady job, many Roma are healthcare uninsured.

## **1.4. Housing**

### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Improvement of living conditions in neighborhoods with compact Roma and other living in similar conditions people;
- Designation of new areas for house building including social housing, with options for devolution of compact and isolated Roma neighborhoods;
- Creation of cadastral maps and cadastral registers of areas, including zones of compact Roma and other living in similar conditions population;

### **1.4.2. Provide concrete results of measures**

- Differentiation of Roma neighborhoods where the houses were municipal property, but after a decision of the City Council, opportunity for tenants was created to buy their houses by the application of labor. There is improving the Roma lives.
- The housing conditions of Roma people are improving constantly. There is a system for waste disposal and transportation.

### **1.4.3. Plan for 2014-2020**

- Improvement of living conditions in neighborhoods with compact Roma and other living in similar conditions people;
- Designation of new areas of housing including social housing, with options for devolution of compact and Roma neighborhoods;
- Creation of cadastral maps and cadastral registers of areas, including zones of compact Roma and other living in similar conditions people;

### **1.4.4. Please briefly describe one or two best practices in the area of housing.**

In the town of Dolna Mitropoliya there is a separate neighborhood where the homes were municipal property. The City Council decided to let tenants buy their houses by performing work. At present, almost all have already been purchased and the cares for them are taken by their owners.

## **1.5. Antidiscrimination**

### **1.5.1. Measures for the period after 2011**

On the territory of District Pleven, five main ethnic groups live: Bulgarians, Roma, Vlachs, Turks, and Russian speakers, who live in harmony.

### **1.5.2. Provide concrete results of measures**

There is no ethnic tensions and intercultural misunderstanding. In the local administrations there are appointed experts on ethnic issues, who coordinate the work in the field of cultural exchange between the various ethnic groups.

### **1.5.3. Plan for 2014-2020**

- Increase of the participation of Roma and other living in similar conditions population in public administration at regional level and the local administration.
- Confirmation of tolerant interethnic relations through all forms, including sport.

## **2. Financing**

2.1. Expenditures related to Roma within the framework of the National Strategy for Integration of Roma since 2011.

2.1.1. From EU funds – 5 773 482,56 BGN

2.1.2. From national funds – 1 554 229 BGN



2.1.3. From other sources – 202,771 BGN

2.2. Please indicate the planned for funding means to the relevant priorities for the period 2014 - 2020:

2.2.1. From EU funds – 25 000 000 BGN

2.2.2. From national funds – 15 000 000 BGN

2.2.3. From other sources – 2 000 000 BGN

### **2.3. Please share good practices in the area of financing for integration policy.**

The implemented by Municipality Knezha project “Construction of drainage along street “Rodopi” – Knezha, Component 1 under grants scheme “Improvement and integration of minority groups at a disadvantage with a special focus on Roma” was funded by the European Union. Project cost – 380,000 Euro. With the realization of this project 956 meters new sewer was built and 67 service pipes were made from the new sewer system, subsequent pavement was made along street “Rodopi”, which is located in the Roma neighborhood of the city of Knezha. The main objective of the project was reached, namely the stimulation of social and economic integration of the population from the Roma neighborhood in the city of Knezha, by improving the technical infrastructure. The communal/ living conditions and quality of life were improved.

## **17. PLOVDIV REGION**

### **1. Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **Steps taken since 2011**

The educational infrastructure for equal access to quality education is being constantly improved. New forms of extracurricular classes for prevention of early school dropouts, lagging students at risk of dropping out are introduced. All municipalities are implementing projects aimed at developing a model of cultural pluralism and tolerance, parenting skills, fostering the creative potential of children, promoting equal opportunities, integration and social inclusion and developing an overall interest in the educational process. Results show that this type of commitment leads to increased motivation for learning, but due to the limited duration of the projects this process is not constant and is restricted to the duration of the projects. The problems that we’re working on and that reflect on Roma integration are the student dropout rates, the incomplete coverage and concentration of Roma students in schools located near or within Roma neighborhoods.

##### **1.1.6. Impact of measures**

Introduced fulltime education in primary education; 90% coverage of children from pre-school; Steady increase of student attendance and reduction of school dropouts from the educational system for obtaining a higher educational status; Continuous disclosure of extracurricular activities fostering the development of skills and competences; Inclusion of parents in the school life.

##### **1.1.7. Plans for 2014-2020**

In late 2012 and early 2013 17 municipalities in Plovdiv district have adopted Plans of action 2012-2014, which are an integral part of The strategy of district Plovdiv for Roma integration 2012-2020 and in accordance with NSRBRI. Municipal development plans 2014-2020, as a key strategic document, that reconcile all sectoral plan and programs will be adopted by municipality councils by the end of 2013. All municipal planning documents have a priority area of integration policy: education, applying territorial and and mainstreaming approach.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact.**

In municipality of Brezovo and municipality of Karlovo students and children from preschool are transported at the cost of the municipal budget, in municipality of Perushtitza, foundation “The land – source of income” provides transportation and textbooks to the more prominent Roma students. A project that directs Roma students to mainstream schools is implanted in the municipality of Plovdiv. A consistent and sustainable adaptation to the new educational system is aimed through the help of mentors, psychologists and educators. The project is of great interest to the Roma community and has a wide response among the public.

#### **1.1.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education.**

Practices in the municipality of Plovdiv and municipality of Hisarya show that free and equal access of Roma children is best carried out through their early integration into mixed groups in mainstream schools.

### **1.2. Employment**

#### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The percentage of unemployed people in the district of Plovdiv is rising. The unemployment level is 12.4% and is with 0.04% higher than the previous month. The most people are arranged to work on the programs and measures for employment with funds from the EU and state budget. New market conditions set higher requirements for of education and professional experience. The majority of registered Roma people have a low level of education, and vocational training. Employment among the Roma population is mainly temporary, subsidized and refers to unskilled labor.

#### **1.2.2. Impact of measures**

Forming working habits of the people involved in the programs; Acquiring vocational training; Social integration of the unemployed, improving the living conditions and the quality of life; Ensuring equal access to employment services to all registered job seekers.

#### **1.2.5. Plans for 2014-2020**

In all municipal planning documents is developed a priority area of integration policy: employment and social inclusion.

#### **1.2.7. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

The foundation “The land – source of income” provides continuous employment of Roma people by promoting entrepreneurship in agriculture in the following municipalities Perushtitza, Rakovski, Kuklen, Parvomay. Farmland is provided for a 5-year period. The land is paid with the income resulting in the farms acquiring the land and an increase in the utilized agricultural area. In the municipality of “Maritza” there is an annual fair, JOB FAIR. An informal meeting between the business and unemployed people in the area in which Roma people take part.

#### **1.2.8. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment.**

Practice suggests that employment is closely associated with training and qualification in careers in demand at the job market.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Schools together with practicing doctors, GPs and dentists play a major role in awareness raising of the environmental and health culture of Roma by providing healthcare consultations and trainings for children, parents and adults. Cooperation between public sector bodies and civil sector NGOs as is the case in Krichim /Foundation for regional development “Roma – Plovdiv”/, Kuklen /Social foundation “Indi Roma” 97/, Plovdiv /Foundation “Roma95”/, Saedinie /The Bulgarian red cross/ and Brezovo /The Bulgarian red cross/ has proven to be an important tool for awareness raising and reduction of early births. One problem persists; however, the civil sector is not as active in all municipalities of district Plovdiv. Another problem is that the number of natural persons without health insurance keeps rising.

### 1.3.6. Impact of measures

The awareness raising campaigns and activities have led to an increase in the number of people who have been vaccinated among the ethnic minorities and also have contributed to improving the access to healthcare and social services. The municipalities Plovdiv and Parvomay report a significant decrease of births from mothers under 18 years of age as a result from the campaigns for improving the knowledge of reproductive health among Roma.

### 1.3.7. Plans for 2014-2020

All municipal development plans include healthcare as a priority field

#### **1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.**

The introduction of a health mediator who mediates and facilitates access of the Roma to healthcare, works in close cooperation with doctors, nurses and dentists and informs the Roma about the positives of undergoing regular check-ups and vaccinations. Health mediators are currently active in Asenovgrad, Karlovo and "Rodopi". Brezovo and Sopot have made a request for allocation of posts. Another good practice is the constitution of Centers for public support that work with minority groups by providing family consultations, parental preparation and also provide health consultations for children, kindergarden integration of children and support for families with financial difficulties. Such centers are active in Asenovgrad, Plovdiv, Krichim, Rakovski, Sopot and Saedinenie.

#### **1.3.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.**

Good results achieved in the municipalities are connected to the successful implementation of cooperation networks between practicing health specialists, public bodies /such as schools, municipal administrations/ and NGOs. The lesson here is that sustainable results can be achieved through these networks and through the dialogue between mediators and other interested parties.

## **1.4.Housing**

### **1.4.1.Steps taken since 2011**

Municipal administrations have undertaken measures to rent property with the right to build to poor and helpless persons. Municipal houses have been rented under favorable terms to a limited number of persons. Measures are also taken to organize garbage collection and disposal in certain neighborhoods as well as construction, reconstruction and renewal of the water supply network. Efforts are made to integrate Roma by providing houses outside Roma neighborhoods. An example in that field is Parvomay that reports having no concentrated Roma neighborhoods and that the Roma population there is fully integrated.

Concentration and overpopulation of Roma in Roma neighborhoods is a major problem that needs solving which can be done through the development of new territorial development plans for the municipalities.

### 1.4.6. Impact of measures

The measures taken have led to a considerable improvement of the living conditions among minority groups. However they do not offer a long-term solution since the income of a significant part of the families remains low and they cannot maintain the assigned buildings. Infrastructure in Roma neighborhoods remains in poor condition. Due to the fact that municipality budgets are insufficient to finance large projects construction of social and engineering infrastructure is financed mainly by project financing with EU funds.

### 1.4.7. Plans for 2014-2020

All municipal development documents include a priority concerning the housing policy.

#### **1.4.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

Municipality Asenovgrad reported a good practice in developing private-public partnerships for maintaining the municipal housing. In municipality Hisarya there's a practice of signing lease agreements with house owners with financial difficulties originating from ethnic minorities.

#### **1.4.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of housing.**

Practice dictates that housing issues can be solved by deconcentration and legalization of housing under certain conditions.

### **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

#### **1.5.7. Steps taken since 2011**

The local committee for combating antisocial behavior in minors and adolescents in the municipalities together with the local police departments and the schools conduct informative meetings for clarification of legal documents concerning public order and security, for education about human and children rights, for clarification of criminal liability for early cohabitation with minors or adolescents, for developing of cooperation between different ethnic groups and for fostering gender equality and ensuring the prerequisites for successful realization of the new social role of the Roma woman.

#### **1.5.8. Impact of measures**

Inclusion of Roma people in all forms of social activity /student councils, boards, mayors' councils/; Sensitize the staff and management of the administration at all levels with respect to minority rights, non-discrimination and communication in multicultural environment, increase their skills in formulating and implementing policies for Roma integration. Avoiding double standards in the application of the state laws against Roma people and all vulnerable groups.

#### **1.5.9. Plans for 2014-2020**

All municipal development documents include actions within the policy "Rule of law and nondiscrimination"

## **2. Funding**

### **2.1. Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

**2.1.7.** EU funds - education, employment, social services and infrastructure

**2.1.8.** national funds - education, employment

**2.1.9.** other sources - education

### **2.2. Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020**

**2.2.7.** EU funds – education, employment, housing

**2.2.8.** national funds – education, employment, healthcare, housing

**2.2.9.** other sources {where relevant) – education, healthcare, employment

### **2.3 Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the funding area.**

Municipality Plovdiv cofinances activities linked to the ethnic-cultural calendar. With decision of municipal council – Plovdiv 40 000 leva from the municipal budget are allocated for cofinancing of a project for deconcentration.

### **2.4. Please describe how lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward?**

The dialogue between communities, government agencies and non-governmental organizations, which is a prerequisite for successful work and long-term results, has improved as a result of the implemented measures and projects.

## **18. RAZGRAD REGION**

### **1. Policy measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken in 2011**

Participation of municipal schools in Razgrad District in the projects for ensuring of the equal access to quality education. In 2012, in Razgrad municipality launched a project for early childhood development among vulnerable groups, including the Roma community. The project is sponsored by MLSP with the World Bank loan. In the period: October 2011 - October 2013 Integro Association implemented project for the reintegration of students who dropped out of the education system, Razgrad Municipality was one of the target communities in the project. There was and project "The beauty of the traditions and culture of my ethnicity" of Municipality

children complex Loznitsa town implemented with financing support from the programme "Preserving the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities". Participation of teachers in the qualifications to work in a multicultural environment.

**1.1.2. Impact of measures** - measures taken contribute to ensuring equal access to quality education for children and students from Roma and ethnic minorities and make cultural diversity a factor for mutual understanding and creating an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and understanding of diversity.

**1.1.3. Plans for the period 2014-2020** - Implementation of Priority "Education" of the Strategy of Razgrad District for Roma Integration 2012 – 2020. Under the project "Social Inclusion" will be build community centers in neighborhoods with vulnerable communities to support parenting, building parental capacity and providing access to resources for early childhood development for children and families in three municipalities in the region: Razgrad, Kubrat and Samuil.

**1.1.4. Briefly describe one or two best fit practices in education and their impact.**

**Good practice 1:** For two school years: 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 determined by order of the Governor of Razgrad Commission for inspection of the actual school attendance of students in in the schools in District Razgrad, made checks in over 20 schools. The Commission includes representatives of the Razgrad District Administration, Regional Directorate "Social Assistance" and Regional Directorate of Education Razgrad.

As a result of the checks, there is a significant increase in the number of incoming in Regional Directorate "Social Assistance" - Razgrad notifications to stop child benefits, as required by the Law for social assistance, which is an indicator of increasing in the level of the control in the schools in terms of regular marking of absence from school. With regular marking of absent students can be achieved by the legislature sought effect, namely regular attendance at school by all students.

**Good Practice 2:** The most successful practice can be given is the project "School for every child" Leading organization is "Integro Association" and its partners are school "Cyril and Methodius" in the Zavet town School "Ivan Turgenev" in Razgrad. The main objective of the project was to support the reintegration of permanently dropped out of school Roma children in Razgrad and Ruse. The project activities were aimed at improving coordination between all institutions which have an obligation to work on the problem and increase the capacity of schools and civil sector working together on motivating children and families on school attendance, retention of students in class and avoid relegation. For the implementation of the activities in each community there is trained and appointed a Community worker. For all children were made social reports and individual plans for resolving their cases. For about 40 children have developed individual learning plans to close the gaps in training and in school at the end of the project are reintegrated 46 children in different classes and study forms. In the performance of Community workers have conducted over 1650 visits to the families of dropouts. As a result of the project more than 40 children from 4 municipalities in Razgrad District and 3 from Rouse District are returned to school.

During the school year 2011/2012, Integro Association implemented project "Let's make secondary education accessible and attractive for Roma youth from rural areas" funded by the Roma Education Fund – Budapest and Bulgarian American society - Washington. The project provided textbooks for 200 students, mostly of Roma origin and built in debating clubs and civil journalism in 10 secondary schools.

**1.1.5. Briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learned, leading to a review of the policy in education** - The effect of joint inspections in schools is very good and we offer this good practice to become permanent in the long run will increase school attendance. It is to ensure the implementation of the Community approach and supporting social work to families, to increase community capacity and personality of Roma parents in dropout prevention. Through legislation in the school to ensure that the school's focus of work will be on the needs of the child, subject to his right to provide opportunities for its full development and personal growth. To improve

coordination between the institutions which are responsible for the rights and protection of children by developing clear rules and mechanisms.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken in 2011**

Municipal administrations actively participate in projects under OP "HRD" program "From Social Assistance to Employment" and in other national programs of the Employment Agency.

**1.2.2. Impact of the action** - through the implementation of the above measures is insured job and social integration for long-term unemployed people, including people from the Roma community.

**1.2.3. Plans for the period 2014-2020** - to be updated and adoption of action plans in the field of employment. Implementation of Priority "Employment" from Razgrad strategy to integrate Roma 2012 - 2020.

**1.2.4. Briefly describe one or two best fit practices in the field of employment and their effects** - including Roma and people of other ethnic minorities in the OP "HRD" program "Support for Employment", Program "New Choice - development and implementation", national programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" regional programmes for employment and education.

**1.2.5. Briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learned , leading to the revision of the policy on employment** - a mechanism to tackle unemployment among the Roma community and the appointment of labor mediators.

## **1.3. Health**

### **1.3.1. Steps taken in 2011**

The organization and provision of free medical examinations for Roma and non-Roma.

A discussion was held on the topic "The need for timely selection of GPs to conduct immunizations according Immunization Schedule of the Republic of Bulgaria with Women Roma NGO "Carmen". Specialists from the Regional health inspection Razgrad held 2 meetings - training with multimedia presentation on HIV/AIDS NGO "Carmen" and Integro Association. The is project implemented for improving of the health programs for ethnic minorities with a special focus on Roma and assistance for the implementation of the screening and early diagnosis of tuberculosis, cancer, cardiovascular and hereditary mobile equipment. The project has the following objectives:

- Overcoming cultural barriers in communication between Roma communities and medical personnel;
- Overcome existing discriminatory attitudes in health care for Roma;
- Optimizing the implementation of prevention programs among the Roma;
- Health education of Roma and active social work in the community;
- Active social work with vulnerable groups.

**1.3.2. Impact of measures** - prevention of high morbidity among the Roma population.

**1.3.3. Plans for the period 2014-2020** – Increasing the number of the health mediators. Continuing operations of the fund to supporting of persons in vulnerable social situations needing emergency treatment. Increasing the number of examinations among vulnerable communities with mobile technology. Implementation of the Priority: "Health and Social Services" from the Strategy of Razgrad District for Roma Integration 2012 – 2020

**1.3.4. Briefly describe one or two best fit practices in health care and their impact** - free medical examinations for osteoporosis, gynecological examinations for Roma women, screening for lung and heart disease. Is a highly successful model of health mediators, as they are an intermediary between communities, health and social services. The practice with operating with mobile teams are successful, because they found many cases of disease among the groups.

**1.3.5. Briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learned, leading to the revision of the policy in the field of health** - It is the expansion of the network of mediators, revising the policy for payment. Until now, almost all mediators have a minimum wage, which is often a disincentive to the heavy field work they do.

## **1.4. Housing**

### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Over 72% of Roma live in villages and small community centers. Most of them live in separate suburbs, but not that different from the rest of the settlements. In recent years, however, there is a trend the wealthy Romas to buy homes in other parts of the settlements in Razgrad Districts. In general, most families in the villages live in their own massive houses and they have sufficient living space and no acute need for new homes, which is typical of the rural population in general. The number of houses not regulated and illegal homes is not large. Measures were taken to limit illegal construction. There are not many initiatives both by municipalities and by the people for the legalization of already built homes. Urbanization of settlements under OP "Regional Development" and The Programme for the rural development do not yet cover Roma suburbs. Some of the Municipality administrations held municipal housing policy with providing houses to needy Roma families.

**1.4.2. Impact of measures** - measures taken to limit the illegal construction lead to minimize the illegal construction. Some of the municipalities provides municipal houses to the Roma families.

**1.4.3. Plans for the period 2014-2020** - Inclusion of Roma suburbs in reconstruction and infrastructure projects. Implementation of the Priority "Infrastructure development" from the Strategy of Razgrad District for Roma Integration 2012 – 2020.

**1.4.4. Briefly describe one or two best fit practices in housing policy and its impact** - the role of community centers as part of the living environment is essential for the inclusion of vulnerable communities in their social life. There are positive examples of this in the Sevar village, Kubrat Municipality and in the Zavet town, where community centers provide resources for young people from disadvantaged communities to practice their traditions or to be engaged in meaningful activities in their free time. In the Vazovo village, Isperih Municipality there is registered Roma community center, which organizes cultural events with the participation of children and young Roma. These activities will increase their socialization and learning the Bulgarian language in extracurricular time.

**1.4.5. Briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learned, leading to the revision of the policy Housing** - It is necessary to review the status of housing in Roma and take steps to legalize houses that are solid and fit for habitation as and destruction of dwellings unfit for habitation after previously providing families with homes for as long as acquire their own homes. All this should be followed by strict controls to prevent illegal re- construction. You also need to take measures to needy families to provide plots with right of construction, and to develop programs to build social housing, with the active involvement of the most needy members of vulnerable communities.

## **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

**1.5.1. Steps taken in 2011** - the organization of seminars and workshops on issues of discrimination and human rights. From 29 to 30 January 2013, the Association Integro and the Razgrad District Administration conducted a workshop to reduce stereotypes and prejudices between Roma and non-Roma in Razgrad. Divided into focus groups by priority, officials from regional and municipal governments, municipal councilors, social workers and activists of the local Roma organizations from 6 municipalities discussed the situation together and identified the major problems faced by the Roma communities. There were identified and debated also the main stereotypes existing between Roma and non-Roma. Professor Ilona Tomova from the Institute for Population and Human BAS presented the main results conducted in 2012 qualitative study and survey of ethnic relations and attitudes towards Roma in Razgrad. One important outcome of these studies is that the social distance between different ethnic groups, including Roma in Razgrad are shorter than in other parts of the country. This is the kind of resources and opportunities for achieving greater efficiency in the implementation of regional policy for the integration of Romas in socially vulnerable situations.

From 15 to 17 November 2013, Integro Association organized a training seminar on the subject "How to act on discrimination". Main objectives of the training are determining effective

mechanisms and instruments to combat discrimination and use of effective legal instruments and mechanisms to counter discrimination.

**1.5.2. Impact of the action** - activities at the regional representative of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and Integro Association lead to increased sensitivity to discrimination.

**1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020**, From the middle of 2012 in Razgrad not representative of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. It is the resumption of the mission. Implementation of Priority "Rule of law and non-discrimination" in the Strategy of Razgrad District for Roma Integration 2012 – 2020

**2.1. Estimate of the spending measures in the national strategy for Roma integration since 2011.**

**2.1.1. European funds** - 150,000 Levs

**2.1.2. National funds**

**2.1.3. Other sources** - 2,200,000 Levs

**2.2. Estimate of the budget planned in the context of the national strategy for Roma integration for 2014-2020**

**2.2.1. European funds** - 15 000 000 Levs

**2.2.2. National funds** - 1,000,000 Levs

**2.2.3. Other sources** - 2,000,000 Levs

**2.2.4. Briefly describe one or two relevant best practices in the field of finance.**

**Good Practice 1** Project "Reconstruction and repair of the building of the school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", Yasenovets village, Razgrad Municipality providing integrated education of Roma students" for total amount 197 282.53 euros. Successful implementation of the project contributed to the improvement of education and the educational process in the school with mostly Roma children, protecting their health and safety studying to minimize heating costs during the autumn- winter period, adding a better aesthetic nauchilishtnata building, nurturing a sense of stewardship and protection of school property, equal access for all students, regardless of their social and physical characteristics.

**Good Practice 2** The implementation of projects for building of community centers in the municipalities of Razgrad, Kubrat and Samuil. The project aims to prevent social exclusion and poverty reduction among children from vulnerable groups - children with disabilities and children at risk. Services to be provided are focused on investing in early childhood development and improving the readiness of children for inclusion in the education system. In addition to children's projects also focus on supporting parents to form a parenting skills how to care for a disabled child , or a child with special needs, which aims to limit and transmission of poverty between generations.

**2.2.5. Describe how the lessons you have learned from the current programming period will be applied?** - As the most successful practice can be defined the elaborating of the Strategy for Integration of Roma in Razgrad in a spirit of partnership and in full transparency and cooperation, from operational team defined by order of the Governor Regional including experts from the Regional Administration Razgrad, Regional Directorate "Social Assistance" and Regional Directorate of Education Razgrad, Regional health inspection, Municipality administrations from the municipalities from Razgrad Districtr, civic organizations Integro Association Razgrad, Roma Women organization "Carmen" Razgrad; Association "Amare phala" Seslav village, Municipality Kubrat , the "Roma – Zavet 2003" Razgrad Town, Community Center "Roma - Vazovo", Vazovo Village, Municipality Ispcrih; Association"AMOR - Association of Local Community development" Kubrat Town and representatives of vulnerable communities throughout the area.

## **16. REGION RUSE**



## 1 - Policy Measures

### 1.1.Education

#### 1.1.1.Steps taken since 2011

In all kindergartens and schools on the territory of Ruse are taken actions for better inclusion of children in pre-school and early stage to create a tolerant multi-ethnic environment. In order to reintegrate them into the learning environment, various forms and programs are developed and implemented for children with difficulties and deficits in learning, children at risk of dropping out, and children who already dropped out of school.

The annual plans of the schools in the academic year 2012/2013 include activities preventing students from dropping out of school. Steps have been taken and the schools work on the following national programs (NP) and projects: NP “Participate and change”, project “SUCCESS” of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science for organizing the students’ leisure time, project “Improving the quality of education in central schools by introducing all-day organization of the educational process”.

The measures which are taken for overcoming the identified problems include:

- Involvement of parents in the educational process and enhancing their participation in school life.
- Integrating and preserving the ethno-cultural identity of students from different communities.

#### 1.1.9.Impact of measures

	<b>Years 2010/2011</b>	<b>Years 2011/2012</b>	<b>Years 2012/2013</b>
Total amount of dropout students per academic year for the Ruse Region	100	56	55
Number of students in preparatory groups for the Ruse Region	180	206	259

It is obvious that the number of dropout students is decreasing and the proportion of pupils in preparatory groups is increasing.

#### 1.1.8.Plans for 2014-2020

The plans for the period 2014-2020 include identifying and implementing opportunities for:

- Joint implementation of projects with non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Covering all fees for kindergartens for the families in need by the social services;
- Compliance of the overall educational activities with the ethno-cultural characteristics of the students; mastering of the Bulgarian language; development of communication skills; knowledge of the surrounding world; education of moral values.

#### 1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact.

Project “Socialization through educational integration”, grant contract № BG051PO001-4.1.05-0049, priority axis 4 of the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme. The beneficiary is the Association “Bulgarian-Romanian border Institute of Mediation” and the project is implemented in partnership with 4 schools: “P. R. Slaveykov” Primary school in the village Smirnenski; “Vasil Levski” Secondary school- Ruse, Kindergarten “Ralitsa”-Ruse, Kindergarten “The Red Riding Hood”-Ruse.

The project focuses on children from minority ethnic groups and the main activities are aimed at providing the necessary conditions and resources for implementing the full process of educational integration. With the targeted additional work to overcome the language barrier in primary students, the motivation of their parents to support their children's education and the improvement of the skills of teachers to work with children and parents from ethnic minorities, the project has helped the early integration into the educational system, which in turn is a dropout prevention in the subsequent educational stages.

There are 4 school mediators appointed and trained for the purposes of the project. They are the link between students, parents and teachers. The project includes 455 children and students from ethnic minorities from the partnering schools, 110 parents and 135 pedagogical professionals. Approximately 900 children and students from the partnering schools participate in the activities and this achieves full integration process, engaging all children and the whole school community.

**1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education.**

Winning the Roma parents for the educational cause is the best guarantee for the retention of children and students in kindergartens and schools.

**b. Employment**

**1.2.1.Steps taken since 2011**

**Operational objective: Improvement of the access of Roma people to the labor market and increasing the share of employment rate.**

The "Regional Employment Service" Ruse (REO) is the responsible institution for the implementation of the "Employment" priority. The activities and initiatives of the REO teams in Ruse and the labor offices in the region are focused on:

- providing effective mediation services to the primary labor market in the implementation of the main function of the National Employment Agency (NEA) as a public mediator for the local labor markets;
- timely information and consultation for employers, social partners and unemployed people about application requirements for programs, incentives of the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) and employment and training projects;
- taking actions for utilizing the disclosed subsidized jobs by rapid selection of suitable candidates and orientation to employers;
- ongoing active measures aimed at increasing competitiveness and employment of the Roma people in the labor market and the promotion of social and civil dialogue in the support of their realization on the labor market.

**1.2.6. Impact of measures**

The number of the registered unemployed persons who identified themselves as Roma people is 1 562, as of 31.10.2013.

The total number of persons covered by programmes, projects and measures for improving competitiveness and employment on the primary labor market, who identified themselves as Roma people, is 2 028 persons as of 30.09.2013, while their number in 2012 was 2 287 and in 2011- 1 547 persons.

**1.2.7. Plans for 2014-2020**

Period	Total number of studies
2011	1611
2012	928
First 9 months of 2013	920

Seeking new opportunities for participation in new projects funded by the European Union together with non-governmental organizations in the next programming period of 2014-2020. Organizing job fairs with the participation of Roma people.

**1.2.9. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

A good practice in the employment of Roma people is the recruitment of Roma labor mediator in the Labour Bureau of Ruse, who assists Roma citizens with vulnerable socio-economic status and people in the similar situation in the field of employment.

Regional Administration Ruse has been able to provide employment for more than 200 unemployed Roma persons by using the capabilities of various national and regional programmes such as: National Programme “From Social Assistance to Employment”, Regional Programme for Employment, Human Resources Development” Operational Programme “Development” scheme, Project “New Choice-Development and Realization”, Project “Support for Employment”, National Programme “New Employment Opportunities” and others.

**1.2.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment.**

It is necessary to focus on improving the quality of the Roma workforce by making it more competitive. Most unemployed Roma people are illiterate and cannot participate in qualification courses and this requires the conduction of literacy courses to the people covered by the programmes and projects of temporarily subsidized employment. To motivate those individuals it is necessary to seek the assistance of the Roma NGOs in the area, including their involvement in the implementation of the motivational training of the unemployed Roma people.

**1.2. Health**

**1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

**Operational objective: Ensuring equal access to quality health services and preventive programs.**

- Epidemiological studies of patients with acute infectious diseases (not only persons of Roma origin) conducted in Ruse region;
- Activities providing services of voluntary counseling and HIV testing through Voluntary counseling and testing centres for HIV/AIDS (VCT Centres) for the Regional Health Inspectorate –Ruse (RHI-Ruse):

Period	Proportion of customers receiving the service (determined themselves as Roma people)
2011	5%
2012	6%
First 9 months of 2013	3.85%

A campaign with a mobile medical center was organized and within which 88 people were consulted and tested, and given condoms and health educational materials. Three actions-on-terrain were held: in the city of Ruse- district “Sredna kula” and district “Selemetya”, and Vetovo.

The analysis of immunization in the recent years indicates the remaining high proportion of those not covered for reasons of non-medical nature (migration, changing of GP, negative attitude towards mandatory immunization, etc.). According to the Regional Health Inspectorate- Ruse, the number of covered people, who are subjects to immunizations and re-immunizations, is as follows: for the year of 2011 - 58 437 people (83%), for the year of 2012 - 45 777 people (81.46%) and for the first 6 months of 2013 – 20 901 people (72.60%).

Discussions with parents and pupils were conducted in the municipality of Vetovo, on the topic “Prevention of early marriages”. With the association of the Regional Health Inspectorate- Ruse many courses with students were made on topics such as “Dangers of Smoking”, “Clean Hands” and “Drug Related Harm”. Free spirals were implanted to mothers of many children.

**1.3.1. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.**

A good practice in Ruse region is the appointment of health mediators in who are of Roma origin in the municipalities of Ruse and Vetovo.

Twice a week specialists from the Centre for Social Services for Children and Families (CSSCF) visit Obstetrics and gynaecology centres and consult mothers that are in risk of abandoning their children. Individual, timely and flexible psychological and material support is given to overcome the severe crises, connected to raising the infant. As a result many of the mothers gain their confidence in raising their babies and the risk of abandoning them in special institutions is prevented. In 2012, 57 risk mothers have used the services of CSSCF - Rousse. In order to educate and inform on issues related to women and children health, family planning, prevention of risks, leading to institutionalization of children, 51 women from risk and marginalized communities were consulted.

There is a team in the Centre for Social Services for Children and Families formed for mobile working in marginalized risk communities and it assists in family planning-such as prevention of unwanted pregnancy and therefore risk of abandonment, information about the proper raising of children in order to prevent the neglecting of their needs. Mobile “on field” working is conducted to identify children whose needs are neglected by their parents and who don’t attend school or are in risk of dropping out and more.

### **1.3.2. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.**

The achieved results in the field of healthcare are caused by the existing good work organization and close collaboration between the Regional Health Inspectorate-Ruse, the Regional Health Insurance Fund, the GPs, the municipalities and health mediators and the NGOs.

## **1.2.Housing**

Operational objective: Improvement of living conditions, including the underlying technical infrastructure.

### **1.4.8.Steps taken since 2011**

The activities of the municipalities in the Region of Ruse are focused mainly on improving the infrastructure, non-spatial segregation in the Roma community and constant search for opportunities, including the participation and implementation of regional and European projects for improving the living conditions of the target group.

### **1.4.10.Impact of measures**

- Street pavements are re-sealed, covering approximately 2,000 sq. m. streets in “Selemetya” and the constituent cities of Ruse Region.
- The street lights in the Roma quarter of the village of Tetovo have been restored by installing approximately 50 units of energy efficient street lighting.
- More than 100 units of energy efficient street lighting worth 15,000 leva were installed in the Roma quarter “Selemetya” in the city of Ruse.
- Streets with a total area of 2, 000 sq. m. in the residential area “Trite galaba” in the quarter “Sredna kula” – Ruse were repaired.
- The municipal enterprise “Road maintenance and signaling” has repaired the main street in “Selemetya” in Ruse. A preliminary repair of the base of the pavement and a complete re-sealing with asphalt were made with total area of 3 055 sq. m.
- Unregulated landfill was cleaned in order to improve the social infrastructure of the residential area “Trite galaba” in the quarter “Sredna kula”. Bins were placed in the district.
- There are playgrounds that were constructed in Roma neighborhoods in Tsenovo municipality under the “Agora” project and also there are newly-constructed playgrounds in the municipalities of Ruse and Byala.
- In 2013 sanitation was built for 6 buildings in the quarter “Osvobođenje” that were not covered by the central sanitation.

### **1.4.9.Plans for 2014-2020**

Focusing on new opportunities in the new programming period of 2014-2020 for participation in new projects that are funded by the European Union, together with non-governmental organizations.

Inclusion of Roma people in programmes and projects for improvement of their living areas.

**1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

In Tsenovo Municipality the Roma families are provided with uninhabited houses on very low rent prices.

**1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of housing.**

Building awareness of the protection of property and the environment through personal involvement in the cultivation and improvement of living conditions. Construction of hygienic habits and aesthetic taste in the minds of Roma people.

**1.5. Anti-discrimination**

**1.5.10.Steps taken since 2011**

The actions are aimed at strengthening the work with Roma families and other residents living in similar circumstances.

The Center for social adaptation and support to the Local Commission for Combating antisocial manifestations of minors in the Municipality of Ruse has made 208 psychological, social, educational and legal advice consultations with children and parents.

Awareness and informational campaigns have been implemented to raise the awareness and intolerance of acts of discrimination.

**1.5.11.Plans for 2014-2020**

Training sessions on the topic “Diversity and Tolerance” are planned in the schools with predominant number of Roma pupils in the Municipality of Ruse.

**2. Funding**

**2.1.Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

2.1.1. EU funds-1 903 345 leva.

2.1.2. National funds-Employment

2.1.3. Other sources.

**2.2. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the funding area.**

The municipalities in the Ruse Region use funds from their own budgets in the implementation of co-funded projects.

**2.3. Please describe how lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward?**

Future strengthening of the partnership between institutions, municipalities and NGOs in the working process with vulnerable groups.

Increasing of the capacity of the administration and NGOs to identify the problems and their overcoming, including writing and implementation of projects of Operational programmes, National and Regional Programmes.

**20. SILISTRA REGION**

**1. Policy Measures**

**1.1.Education**

According to the incoming reports on the implementation of municipal plans to support integration policies, it is clear that the purpose of education, such as quality of education, access to education, and support for personal development is set for all students, regardless of their ethnicity. Achieving these goals for students, whose first language is not Bulgarian requires additional methods for more effective teaching, working with parents, motivation for education, etc.

Development of the Bulgarian language skills is a major theme in the control of preschool education. Annually inspections are planned for selected part of the childcare institutions; for the reviewed period, the following activities were carried out:

Thematic inspection "Organization and results of the two-year compulsory schooling of the child" –2011/2012. The inspection included two educational institutions of mixed ethnic composition (school "Cyril and Methodius", Sekulovo and school "Yuri Gagarin", Silistra).

Thematic inspection "Situational activity in Bulgarian language and literature - forming attitude for learning and improving the Bulgarian language and sociability as an essential feature of speech behavior and preparation for school" - 2011/2012. Four childcare institutions of ethnically mixed composition in the settlements Razdel, Mejden, Ishirkovo and Alfatar were included.

"Preparation for child literacy from preparatory classes and attitude for learning Bulgarian language" - 2012/2013. Four childcare institutions of ethnically mixed composition in the settlements Sredishte, Golesh, Iskra and Okorsh were included.

The conclusions of the inspections show that there is not any significant breakthrough in the use of the Bulgarian language for children with non-Bulgarian first language. Significant reason for this, is that their families do not speak Bulgarian language and the parents make no effort in helping their children to learn the official language of the country. The Bulgarian language is spoken as a second and only in childcare institutions, as far as the teachers managed to impose it. Dropped out of schools in Silistra region during the school year - a percentage of the total number of students at the beginning of the school year:

2013 – 0, 64 %; 2012 – 0, 67 %; 2011 – 0, 72 %; 2010 – 0, 65 %; 2009 – 0, 80 %; 2008 – 2, 8 %

There is a trend towards reduction of school leaving.

Main reasons for early school leaving:

- Many of these students are Roma and from indigent families and they don't have money for food and clothing for children under the age of sixteen.
- The education level of the parents themselves is very low; they are not interested in education and cannot motivate their own children to do well in school.
- The huge amount of absences from school leads to difficulties for the students in curriculum implementation. That leads to demotivation of the students, dissatisfaction of the educational process and early school leaving.
- Many of the parents work abroad and leave their children without parental control. The changes of the lives of the parents (divorce, transfers, unemployment, health condition) reflects to the children. For example, part of the drop-outs are reported as such due to moving to another settlement and lack of conformation of enrollment there.
- Marriage of the Roma girls at early age (12-16 years of age).
- The low lever of speaking Bulgarian language at early age cannot be compensated even in high school.
- Unwillingness of the students to continue their education.

**Measures for reducing early school leaving:**

- Development of school programs for learning Bulgarian language;
- Development of school programs for education to help socializing the students. Stimulating extracurricular activities;
- Target programs for students, endangered of early school leave;
- Training of teachers for specific pedagogical approaches for students with little knowledge of the Bulgarian language and low motivation to learn it;
- Planning thematic sessions of the pedagogical councils in schools;
- Seeking assistance from the Child Protection Agency and municipalities.
- Conversations with students and parents with the class teacher, the guidance counselor and the principal;
- Sanctions against parents and municipalities;
- Involvement in day organization of the learning process, which includes lunch provided;
- Free transportation to schools;
- Free textbooks for students from first to seventh grade;

- Breakfasts for students from first to fourth grade;
- Donation campaigns for families in need.

**Students from District Silistra, that have left the country** – percentage of the total number of students at the beginning of the school year:

**2013** – 1,3 %; **2012** – 1,6 %; **2011** – 1,2 %; **2010** – 0,9 %; **2009** – 0,7 %; **2008** – 1,1 %.

Data shows, that there is no change in the trend of leaving country.

**Negative factors for children and students are:**

poorness of the family; poor social – living conditions of the families, bad hygiene and health hazards for the children; rapid migrations of the families, searching for a job in the country and abroad, family breakdowns; ethnic traditions, that support early marriage and large families, despite the lack of the needed income to provide for; older children are used to help the housekeeping and to raise the younger children, and their chance for education is limited; low level of education of the parents and their incapability to maintain the ambition for education in their children; lack of strong positive models for success; low level of speaking Bulgarian language.

**1.1.1. Steps, taken since 2011.**

**Integrative projects for students in District Silistra:**

- **“Flowers and children are different – the sun is one for all”** – project of Municipality Glavinitza, Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” under the grant scheme “Integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the education system” – involving experts in preschool education from Regional Inspectorate of Education, Silistra in the inner monitoring of the 2011/2012 activities;
- **“Effective school integration, tolerance and success”** – project of „Hristo Botev” high school, Paisievo, Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” under the grant scheme “Integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the education system” year 2011/2012;
- **„Educational model for intercultural education and training of students from ethnic minority groups ”** – project of “Center for education, culture and ecology 21” Association, including “Hristo Botev” high school, Aydemir and “Tzanko Tzerkovski”, Sredishte - Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” under the grant scheme “Integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the education system” year 2011/2012;
- **„Prevention of the early school leave of Roma students”** – project of “Amalipe” center for interethnic dialogue and tolerance, financed by “America for Bulgaria” foundation. Participants in the year 2011/2012 are: „Tzanko Tzerkovski” high school, Sredishte and „St. Kliment Ohridski” high school, Professor Ishirkovo. Participants for the 2012/2013 year are: „Tzenko Tzerkovski” high school, Sredishte, „St. Kliment Ohridski” high school, Professor Ishirkovo, „Otez Paisii” high school, Stefan Karadja, „St. St. Cyril and Methodius” high school, Nova Cherna, „Hristo Botev” high school, Tutrakan. Organized trainings were scheduled by leading teachers in all schools in the following modules: „Ethnic folklore – Roma folklore”; „Roma commissions in Bulgaria in terms of attitudes and educational needs”; „Working with students – Student Parliament”; „Working with parents”; „Prevention of early marriage”; „Working with bilingual students”. A meeting was held with principals of the schools and two work meetings were held with the lead teachers from the schools. The schools participated in the scientific-practical conference "Intercultural education as a means to reduce Roma children drop-out from school", June, 2013, Veliko Tarnovo;
- **„Travel to education”** (Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”) – project of Silistra Municipality, including three nursery schools and two schools;
- **„Educational integration - a chance for a better future for ethnic minorities ”** (Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”) – Professional School of production technologies „Evlogii Georgiev”, Silistra, partnership with "Stefan Karadja" high school, Iskra;
- **„The sun shines equally on all ”** – project of Professional School of Management, Administration and Services „Atanas Burov”, Silistra, partnership with Professional School of mechanization of agriculture "Nikola Vaptzarov", Sredishte, funded by the Center for

Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities under the program 33.11.

### **1.1.2. Impact of measures**

- Measures taken in education support the integration of children from ethnic groups, increase their language and culture and are aimed at reducing the negative trends of early school leave.

- **Plan 2014-2020 – In development.**

- The inclusion of six schools in the project "Prevention of early school leaving of Roma high school students' Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe"; clubs and schools for parents are built within the module: "Working with parents";

- Realized activities with Roma students in Civil and Health Education;

- A round table on "Models to collaborate effectively with parents" and parents' participation in meetings of the School Committee against antisocial behavior for minors and developing correctional programs to address the problems.

### **1.1.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education.**

Working with children and students from ethnic minorities to increase their motivation to continue their education is of great importance to their professional and social development. Therefore, it is necessary to have institutional support at all levels and to focus resources for implementation of integration policies.

### **1.2. Employment**

The growth of unemployment in the region of Silistra by the end of December 2012 is 10.98%. Reference, obtained on a voluntary basis through Application-declaration, says that 635 of the unemployed identify themselves as Roma.

The highest percentage of the unemployed are those with primary or lower education. Considering this, there is a trend toward hiring persons from vulnerable groups, including Roma, mainly by municipalities of Silistra. Employment is provided to unemployed Roma under the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" and under grants of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development". Through the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" social integration and employment of unemployed people is provided. As an acute problem stands out the fact that most of the unemployed Roma are illiterate and cannot be included in the training courses, which severely limits the recruitment of suitable work in the conditions of growing competition and increased demands of the labor market.

#### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011.**

- Programs, under the grants of Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" for providing employment;
- National programs of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

#### **1.2.2. Impact of measures**

- Developing work habits and reducing the gap between Roma and non-Roma;
- Social integration of long-term unemployed;
- Enhancing employability of ethnic representatives and reduce the unemployment among Roma.

#### **1.2.3. Plans for 2014-2020 – In development.**

#### **1.2.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact**



- In accordance with the prevailing agrarian nature of the regional economy, the employees of the "Labour and Social Policy Directorate" consult representatives of the Roma ethnic group to develop their own business in agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts;
- Ensuring equal access to long-term unemployed and people with low education regardless of their ethnicity to the labor market.

### **1.2.5. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

It is necessary to implement appropriate measures to encourage the Roma to increase their level of education in order to reduce the negative trends affecting their professional development. Channeling more resources to finance activities that will help vulnerable group - the subject of this analysis to minimize the gap between Roma and non-Roma.

### **1.3. Health**

In the active work of the "Surveillance of contagious diseases" of the Regional Health Inspection – Silistra (RHI) in search of newborns without GP, the following is established: 2011 – in the primary screening of 40 children, 12 was newborn Roma (30%). In the final search for these newborn Roma is found that all have a GP;

2012 – 11 Roma children from 43 children (25.6%) in primary screening have proven without a personal doctor who was later chosen for them; For the first half of 2013 - 10 children of 23 are without doctor (43.5%). In the final stage of the search a GP has been chosen for all.

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

From 2011 to present Regional Health Inspectorate is actively working on the following projects and programs:

- National Programme for Prevention and Control of TB - external funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;
- Project "Stop and take a medical exam" in a "National Campaign for early diagnosis of cancer," funded by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development 2007-2013", financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union;
- National Programme for Prevention and Control of HIV and sexually transmitted infections 2008-2015 and Programme BUL-202-G01-H-00 „Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS ", financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;
- Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" - project „Informed and Healthy" - external finance with budget of 4692 754.30 leva, under the "Health campaigns" grant;
- National Action Plan for the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" - State budget;
- Seven thematic discussions in schools and kindergartens in Silistra, Alekovo, Yordanovo and Bistra held by "DZK". According to the "Surveillance of contagious diseases" reports, scheduled prophylactic immunization in the community is effective within the 90 to 99% for different types of vaccines. The mandatory prophylactic re-immunization was carried in the range of 93% to 99.8%.

In 2011, by order of the Ministry of Health was implemented campaign for polio immunization of children with irregular immunization status, held by the "Surveillance of contagious diseases" at RHI - Silistra. From the 254 children with irregular polio immunization (located in the region) 243 were immunized (96 %).

#### **1.3.2. Impact of measures**

A successful polio immunization campaign was held in Glavitza Municipality, in the following settlements: Kalugerene, Nojarevo, Dichevo, Zafirovo and Kolarovo. 53 of the discovered 66 children without immunization, (80%) were immunized by the team of RHI. The majority of these children are of Roma ethnicity. In the final search for newborn Roma was found that all of them have a GP.

### **1.3.3. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.**

- Campaigns for consulting and testing for HIV/AIDS, emergency immunizations, campaigns with mobile teams for hard-to reach areas, health - promotional lectures in schools with Roma students, etc.;
- Good practice with outstanding results on the range of choice of GP is the legislative amendments to the Rules for the Implementation of the welfare of children, through the monthly child support mandatory vaccinations and medical check-ups carried out by GPs.

These practices lead to increasing the scope of the consulted and immunized people and to improve the health literacy of the Roma.

**1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.**

The process of protecting the health of the Roma is difficult, the negative processes are associated with:

- high rate of health-uninsured people;
- lack of GP;
- high percentage of infected people;
- high percentage of disability;
- lack of registration of the pregnant women;
- problems with mandatory immunizations;
- low health literacy.

**1.4. Housing**

Roma population is concentrated mainly in the outer parts of the settlements in naturally created Roma neighborhoods. Regarding the Roma housing in Silistra, there are various problems. Most houses are built in regulation and others are built in urbanized areas. Street networks and communal infrastructure are not in good condition. In some areas there is a tendency of buying houses in the inner settlements by the Roma.

Alarming is the situation with the state of the housing for a higher percentage of the Roma population, living encapsulated by the end of the settlements. Their living conditions are extremely bad. Only Silistra has provided public housing for Roma, but they are in bad condition due to their bad management. Municipality intends for the possibility of donation of the municipal housing occupants. During 2009 one house was donated, during 2010 – 19 houses, 2011 – 11 houses, 2012 – 9 houses, during 2013 - 16 houses. This measure is expected to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma in the field of housing.

Some municipalities have opened family-type centers for children from vulnerable groups, facilities, food and everything necessary for the integration of these children into society are provided.

**1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011.**

Improving the technical infrastructure for opening of small group of homes and other facilities funded under the EU OP.

**1.4.2. Impact of measures**

The results of the measures will be known after the completion of activities.

**1.4.3. Plans 2014-2020 – In development.**

**1.4.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact:**

- Donated houses;
- Projects for construction of a wastewater treatment plant and sewerage.

**1.4.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of housing.**

Poor conditions in which Roma live and the high level of poverty in these families hamper the integration of ethnic groups and lead to a deviant behavior in society.

## **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

Local authorities in the territory of Silistra region work towards avoiding restriction of rights or privileges based on race, ethnicity, gender, origin, religion, political affiliation, personal or social status or property status, following interests of all social groups represented in their territory, respecting, creating and perfecting mechanisms to prevent discriminatory practices.

Municipalities of Silistra directly cooperate with Child Pedagogic, NGOs working in the field of protection of human rights, regional coordinator of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination in order to raise awareness among citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, including Roma.

There is equal access to education, health care and the labor market. Legal mechanisms to support the poor and socially vulnerable groups of people apply to all citizens in the region. Measures shall be taken, combining the basic principle of tolerance, non-discrimination and understanding between ethnic communities.

### **1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Initiatives in prevention programs to address the problems of teenagers - children's aggression, use and distribution of drugs, tolerance between different ethnic groups;
- Cooperation with the Community Support Centre Silistra "Katerina Karavelova" - institutional support to individuals (mostly women and children), experienced domestic violence;
- At the initiative of the Regional Governor of Silistra in 2012 and 2013, a campaign was organized to help children with honors in a difficult financial situation, in order to continue their education. In both formats about 80 children were supported (40% were Roma children).

### **1.5.2. Impact of measures**

Intertwining of commitment, attitude and teamwork, promotes the objectives of the institutions and stakeholders on sustainability and development of the ideas concerning the integration of different ethnic communities.

### **1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020 – In development.**

## **2. Funding<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.1. Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

Those amounts represent the share of funding in specific areas, aimed at integrating minorities in the period since 2001.

#### **2.1.1. EU funds**

Specific values for spending under the National Strategy for Roma Integration since 2001 were given by Municipality Silistra, Municipality Kaynardja and Municipality Alfatar. The values of these resources for the period were approximately:

**Social policy** – 125 000 leva;

**Education** - 72 000 leva;

**Housing** - 850 000 leva;

**Culture** - 37 000 leva.

#### **2.1.2. national funds**

Specific values for spending under the National Strategy for Roma Integration since 2001 were given by Municipality Silistra, Municipality Kaynardja and Municipality Alfatar. The values of these resources for the period were approximately:

**Education** – 120 000 leva;

**Employment and social policy** – 680 000 leva;

**Culture** – 160 000 leva;

**Healthcare** – 105 000 leva.

#### **2.1.3. other sources – municipal funding:**

**Education** – 250 000 leva;

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<sup>1</sup> The data is approximate and taken from the reports of Silistra, Kaynardja and Alfatar.

**Culture – 80 500 leva;**  
**Healthcare – 61 000 leva.**

## **2.2. Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020. <sup>2</sup>**

Estimate of the budget, planned in the context of the National Strategy for Roma Integration for 2014-2020, represents the ratio of funding in various areas, aimed at integrating the minorities.

**2.2.1. EU funds – 2 350 000 leva.**

**2.2.2. national funds – 500 000 leva;**

**2.2.3. other sources - municipal funding – 250 000 leva.**

## **17. SLIVEN REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Project "Ensuring equal access to quality education for 120 Roma children from the "Nadezhda" district in Sliven in four host schools";

- Project under the grant scheme BG05PO0101-4.1.06 "Reintegration of dropouts in the educational system." It covers 120 children;
- Project under the grant scheme BG051PO001-4.1.05 "Educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities." It covers 140 Roma children and their parents;
- As a result an access to education for over 300 Roma children was ensured. Effective measures for integration and reintegration into the educational system of children from vulnerable groups, with a focus on the Roma community, were implemented.

##### The Municipality Of Kotel

- Making the school and kindergarten a more attractive place for pupils and children;
- Improving the interior and exterior in kindergarten and school buildings: repairs, schoolyards, places to play in the primary schools in the villages with predominantly ethnic minority population - Yablanovo, Gradets, Ticha;
- Providing free textbooks and books for the children from the kindergartens-5 and 6 years old, and for the pupils from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> grades;
- All-day organization of education in schools to help all pupils from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> grades, and especially Roma children, to fill the gaps in their knowledge;
- Satisfying the desire of pupils to determine the mandatory selective training (MST) and the free selective training (FST) in school - Roma pupils participate willingly in them;
- In the schools in the villages of Ticha and Gradets and in the town of Kotel preparatory groups which are dominated by Roma children were opened aiming to obtain better language skills for entering the school;
- In the Secondary school of general education in Kotel since December 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 a school program with lectures on the cable TV and radio has started in connection with the National program "At School without absences";
- We live on the same land: people - the same and different;
- Making the pupils familiar with the Child Protection Law and their rights and obligations, and with the Anti-Discrimination Law.
- Youth work - creating interest groups such as:

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<sup>2</sup> The data is approximate and taken from the reports of Silistra, Kaynardja and Alfatar.

- “Children's art” group – aiming to increase the linguistic culture of the pupils, introducing them to classic literary characters, writing essays, studying Bulgarian and Roma folklore, carrying out collection activities of folk songs, legends, curiosities from homeland;
- Children's choir – aiming to introduce the pupils to the classics and studying various folk songs of ethnic groups;
- Work with the parents - at the beginning of the school year the children's teachers and class teachers visit the homes of all children and pupils, especially those of Roma origin. Most of the members of the parents' boards at school are parents of Roma origin.

#### The Municipality Of Nova Zagora

- Measures to reduce unexcused absences;
- Meetings with parents, home visits;
- Analysis by the pedagogical council of the reasons leading to problems with the pupils;
- The schoolwork on projects under the National programmes "With care for each student" and "At school without absences";
- Most of the schools have developed three-year programmes for extracurricular activities under the "Success" project. Students from minority groups have been included in the groups;
- Work with the parents:
- Lectures with students' parents to prevent early marriage and to reduce the number of dropouts;
- Classes dedicated to problems connected with the health education, including the students' sexual behaviour, in order to overcome some negative practices – teenage pregnancy, childbirths at early age and high rates of sexually transmitted infections;
- Active involvement of parents in the school celebrations and holidays.

#### Regional Inspectorate Of Education- Sliven

- Providing additional training for children from the preparatory groups under the National programme "With care for each student" – 25 is the total number of participating schools and kindergartens from the region of Sliven, as 15 of them are kindergartens and 10 of them are schools. The total number of groups is 38 and the number of involved children is 274. Of these, 267 have made progress. Additional language stimulation in 70 additional teaching situations has proved to be a very important step and a prerequisite for the successful entrance of the children in the first grade as well as a good reason for their parents to take them to school. At least 7 activities with the children's families were carried out.
- Project BG051PO001-3.1.06 “Improving the quality of education in the central rural schools by introducing an all-day organization of training”.

##### **1.1.4. Good practices in the area of education and their impact**

The excursions carried out with children under the project "Reintegration of dropouts in the educational system within the territory of the Municipality of Sliven" is a good practice – they had a very positive impact on children and their parents. The distances in the relationships were shortened, the children learned many interesting facts about our history and traditions. Within the Summer Academy, held in the village of Ichera, a different environment for the children was created where the indoor lessons were replaced by open-air activities.

Participation of children from different ethnic groups, their parents and relatives in the events during the first Festival of Lifelong Learning in 2012. The celebration was a part of the NELLII project – Network of initiatives and information for lifelong learning, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science, with the financial support of the European Commission.

Mrs. Valentina Zheleva - senior teacher in the “Zvezditsa” kindergarten in Sliven, presented her good practice at the National Conference on Preschool Education “Hand in hand we lead into the future” in Varna, in April 2013. The topic of her report was “The inclusive role of the family and kindergarten for the socialization of children of different ethnic origin”.

##### **1.1.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt in the area of education**

The involvement of a wider range of institutions and partners, the implementation of adequate policies consistent with the ethnic specificity, the training of the teaching staff in intercultural

communication and skills to work in a mixed bilingual environment, as well as the active motivational and educational work with the parents and their involvement in various educational activities gives positive results.

The all-day organization of education and the provision of lunch to the children, especially those of Roma origin, solve the problems with absences to a great extent;

The extracurricular activities contribute to the prevention of early school leaving of students in the junior high school and high school stages, including the free selective training in Roma folklore.

## 1.2. Employment

### 1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011

#### The Municipality Of Sliven

Programs/projects for employment with an employer- the Mayor of Sliven:

"New Choice -development and realization" under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" - employment was provided to over 507 long-term unemployed, with low educational level;

National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" - for the period between 2012 and 2013 employment was provided to more than 450 long-term unemployed, with low educational level;

Programme "Socially useful activities for our favorite town" - for the period between 2012 and 2013 on a monthly basis more than 2,300 people on social assistance were involved in the programme.

Generally, temporary employment for over 3,000 persons from vulnerable groups, with a focus on Roma, was provided.

#### The Municipality Of Kotel

According to the data of the "Labour Office" - Kotel the Roma's employment for the period since 2011 is 63 people.

In 2012 the project "New Choice -development and realization" under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" provided jobs to 204 people.

Under the project "Support for Employment" - 68 people.

#### The Municipality Of Nova Zagora

- A total number of 439 persons of Roma origin were included in the programs and measures for subsidized employment for the period 2011-2013:

National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" for the period 2011 -2013- 320 people of minority origin were employed;

Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" - "Development" for the period 2012 - 2013 there were 71 employees;

Regional Employment Programme - in 2012- 8 people;

Project "Support for Employment" - in 2013- 40 people;

National Programme "**Activation of inactive persons**" - in 2011 one Roma mediator was hired.

Four full-time persons of Roma origin were hired in the Municipality of Nova Zagora.

#### "Labour Office" Directorate – Sliven

Active policy

Unemployed persons included in employment measures, including Roma:

2012			30.09.2013		
Total number	Incl. Roma	%	Total number	Incl. Roma	%
2668	344	12.9%	2919	502	17.2%

Programs and projects directed to the vulnerable groups on the labor market for “Labour office” Directorate – Sliven in 2013:

National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" - employment provided to Roma until September 2013 - 183 people;

National Programme "Activation of inactive persons" – two Roma mediators and one psychologist work at the “Labour office” Directorate – Sliven;

National Programme “A chance to work-2013” - 31 persons were included in the trainings, employment was provided to 27 persons, as 4 of them were of Roma origin.

Under the other national programs employment was provided to 46 persons of Roma origin.

Scheme BG051PO001-1.1.11 „Support for Employment” –employment was provided to 215 persons, 11 of them were of Roma origin;

Roma included courses for vocational orientation motivation, literacy, vocational qualification:

	2012	30.09.2013
Vocational orientation	119	32
Motivation	146	99
Literacy	86	0
Vocational qualification	104	5

“Labour Office” Directorate – Nova Zagora

- The "Labour Office"- Nova Zagora, as a territorial division of the Employment Agency, annually implements an individual plan on the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy. In this regard, the "Labour Office" - Nova Zagora has the following results for the period 2011-2013:

Increasing the competitiveness and providing employment to the Roma people at the labour market:

-Increasing the employability and skills of unemployed Roma - 1309 persons:

- Providing employment to the Roma - 549 persons.

Promoting social and civil dialogue in support of the Roma's employment - 11 events: meetings, round tables, seminars, debates and campaigns with Roma organizations.

The "Labour Office" - Nova Zagora carries out actions to implement the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" through the implementation of the annual action plan.

#### **1.2.4. Good practices in the area of employment and their impact.**

To activate the inactive people from the target group at the labor market an individualized approach is necessary. Roma mediators and psychologists work in the "Labour Office" - Sliven and the "Labour Office" – Nova Zagora. Mediators work according to the individual needs and characteristics of the beneficiaries. To achieve the goals, the mediators work in districts with a population of predominantly Roma ethnic origin, as well as remote offices in the villages with compact Roma population.

#### **1.2.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt in the area of employment**

Most of the representatives of the Roma ethnic group drop out after registration because they fail to comply with their obligations for one or another reason. Low educational level and lack of qualification impede their employment at the primary labour market. That is why the main alternative for the employment of persons of Roma origin is their inclusion in programmes and measures, funded by the state budget or by the European Social Fund.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011 and impact of measures**

##### The Municipality Of Sliven

Programs with the participation of the Municipality of Sliven:

Programme "Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS" of the Ministry of Health. An agreement between the Municipality of Sliven and the Ministry of Health has been signed;

"Center for Hygiene" was opened - the work is directed primarily to the inhabitants of the "Nadezhda" district and is carried out by "Doctors of the World" - France in partnership with the Municipality of Sliven;

6 health mediators have been appointed – their main function is to support the Roma people.

It is planned to:

Start a three-year project "Improving the access to family planning services for disadvantaged women from Sliven" with the participation of the Municipality of Sliven, "Doctors of the World" – France and the National Family Planning Association. The project aims to provide a free access to family planning services to more than 600 women from the vulnerable groups;

Implementation of other programs and projects in accordance with the national policies and local priorities.

#### The Municipality Of Kotel

In 2012, a health mediator was appointed. In 2013, another healthmediator was appointed in the village of Gradets- the largestvillage withconcentratedRoma population.

Regularprophylactic examinations:

0to 1-year old –once a month

1to 2-year old –once a year

7 to 18-year old - twice a year

Consultationswith specialists are regularly carried out.

#### The Municipality Of Nova Zagora

• In 2011, there were examinationsby a specialistpediatrician- a total number of 3500childrenwere examined, 3200of them were childrenfrom vulnerablecommunities;

In 2011,the municipalityheldan emergencyimmunizationcampaignagainst poliomyelitis. It coveredchildrenaged between 13months and7 yearswithincomplete immunizationstatus orwith no evidence ofimmunizations.Witha mobileimmunizationunit other people wererecoveredwithimmunizations too;

In November2012, in relation tothe National Cervical CancerPrevention Programme, a campaignwas carried outin threeschoolsin the town ofNova Zagora,aiming toinformparents of12-year-olds about the benefitsof vaccines.In the schoolin the "6<sup>th</sup>" district (where 100% of the pupils belong tothe vulnerablesocial groups)31 girls were vaccinated.

Joint activities of the Municipality ofNova Zagora and the civil sector partners:

- Reduction of childmortality:early registrationof pregnant young women,monitoring duringpregnancy and timelyhospitalization ofthe young women in child-birthand reduction ofadolescent pregnancies;

• Improving the health careforinfantsandpreschool children:

- Timelyregistration ofnewborns and childrenby a GP;

- Increasingthe immunizationcoverageofnewborns and childrenup to 7years in accordance with theNational Immunization Schedule;

- Improvedawareness on the topic ofhealthy nutrition ofinfants and littlechildren;

- Regularprophylactic examinationsforeach agegroup.

• Improvingpreventiveactivitiesamong the populationofvulnerable communities:

- Increasing the coverageof the populationofvulnerable communities liable to immunizationin accordance with the NationalImmunization Schedule;

-A more completecoverage with prophylactic examinations of the populationofvulnerable communities;

- Preventionand control of HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmittedinfectionsamong vulnerable communities.

Improving the access to healthservices:

- Bringing thepractices ofprimary andspecialized caretothe areaspopulated predominantly bypeopleof vulnerablecommunities;

- Trainingand consulting the mediators;



- Increasing health knowledge and awareness of ethnic communities – how to protect against the most common diseases.

### Regional Health Inspection – Sliven

Preventive measures taken in relation to the Roma integration:

Lectures and discussions with adolescents and young people and their parents - how they should prevent unwanted and early pregnancy, about the dangers of early pregnancy for both the mother and the baby and about the dangers of early marriages;

Lectures and talks with young mothers on the importance of immunizations and motivating them to immunize their children regularly;

Lectures, discussions, films delivered to students from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and young people who dropped out of school, about the specificity of puberty and the sexually transmitted diseases;

Broadcasting a video about the importance of immunizations;

Campaigns to immunize children with incomplete immunization status;

Carrying out awareness campaigns on the importance of medical examinations among the Roma population;

Carrying out screening with mobile units provided by the Ministry of Health - pediatric, gynaecological and fluorographic;

Immunizations with a mobile unit provided by the Ministry of Health of children with no evidence of immunizations;

Organizing and carrying out awareness campaigns - how to protect against the most common infectious and non-infectious diseases;

Carrying out an inquiry and analysis of the Roma attitudes to medical services and the importance of prophylactic examinations on health.

Carrying out tests for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis Band C;

Carrying out a study in order to map and determine the amount of HIV-vulnerable groups of minority origin, mainly from the large Roma districts in Sliven and Nova Zagora;

Discussions and lectures on the dangers of the most common risk factors - smoking, alcohol abuse, drug use, hypertension and the benefits of the healthy lifestyle;

As a result of these measures:

There were 29 lectures and discussions with 475 participants, 1 study among 100 participants, 11 information leaflets - 8874 pieces. 3851 materials were handed out;

1796 individuals were tested for AIDS; 1097 persons were tested for syphilis, 25 of them were positive; 386 persons were tested for hepatitis B, 33 of them were positive; 740 were tested for hepatitis C, 13 of them were positive;

2394 people of the vulnerable groups were covered by mapping;

With mobile units the following activities were carried out: immunization of 896 children; prophylactic gynaecological examinations of 1976 women, as 226 diseases were diagnosed; pediatric examinations of 2135 children, as 225 diseases were diagnosed; fluorographic studies of 1922 individuals, as 326 diseases were diagnosed.

Plans for 2014-2020:

Carrying out information campaigns among Roma population in order to increase awareness of various health problems;

Preparation and distribution of informational and educational material on health issues among the Roma community;

Prophylactic examinations and immunizations using mobile units provided by the Ministry of Health;

Testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis Band C.

### The “Roma Health” Foundation

A Health and Social Care Center, administered by the “Roma Health” Foundation, operates in “Nadezhda” district in Sliven. It is within the “Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS” Programme, funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Ministry of Health. In the center 5 employees of Roma origin were educated and marked a rapid

personal growth. The range of services provided by the center has been enlarged - administrative, health and social services, motivation for active job search, courses for personal development of young people, low-threshold services for pregnant women and young mothers without health insurance, accompanying people to social and health institutions, telephone assistance and mediation, etc.

The accents in the plans of the Foundation are:

Establishment and functioning of a municipal programme for reduction of the negative social effects of early pregnancies and abandonment of 0 to 3-year old children;

Establishment and functioning of Community Councils whose efforts must be directed to achieve zero number of unvaccinated children in those districts in Sliven and other municipalities that have a population over 1000 people and that are inhabited by Roma people;

Capacity building and community work for the prevention and control of HIV through counseling services and referring people for anonymous and free testing for HIV and sexually transmitted infections;

Training, field work, social and health centers in the Roma community, mobile medical units;

Provision of a minimum package of health services for those people who lack health insurance - free or low-threshold services.

#### **1.3.4. Good practices in the area of health and their impact.**

According to data by the health experts, providing services in kindergartens and schools in the region, the children and pupils with a complete immune status are over 90%. This is due to the obligation of the headmaster to admit children and pupils with a complete set of medical records, and in particular, information on their immunization status, as well as the binding of regular immunizations with social assistance. The fact is that in the region 100% of the children and pupils from vulnerable communities, who attend kindergartens and schools, have regular immunizations.

There was a significant progress and positive results in improving the quality of health services for disadvantaged Roma with the appointment of mediators.

At the beginning of August 2013 a health campaign was held in the Roma districts in Kotel and Gradets with the participation of students in medicine of Roma origin.

The development of the Health and Social Care Center in "Nadezhda" district in Sliven and enlarging the range of free and low-threshold services for the residents of "Nadezhda" district, which is inhabited by 100% of Roma people gave positive results.

On the topics "The importance of immunizations" and "The importance of medical examinations" a shot video was shot and released on DVD and broadcasted on the local television.

The provision of mobile units to make examinations and immunizations of disadvantaged people of ethnic minorities makes it possible to cover people with no health insurance rights - this leads to early detection of some diseases and immunization of children within complete immunization status.

#### **1.3.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt in the area of health**

The outbreak of measles in the Roma district "Nadezhda" in Sliven in the winter of 2009/2010 proved the need to unite the efforts for the improvement of the immunization coverage of children, as well as to raise the health education of the Roma people.

Due to the diverse and global problems among the population in the districts, inhabited by Roma people, there is inefficiency in the provision of a separate or single service without combining health, social, employment, housing and legal services.

### **1.4. Housing**

#### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

##### The Municipality Of Sliven

The existing technical infrastructure was improved and new one was developed in the districts with compact Roma population;

Reconstructed and upgraded social infrastructure using funds from the budget of the Municipality of Sliven.

##### The Municipality Of Kotel

In 2011, in order to improve the living conditions of the Roma districts concrete pavement on a

street in the "Iztok" district in Kotel (№154-163) was made.

In 2013:

- Construction of concrete pavement on a street in the "Iztok" district (№ 21- №45);
- Construction of concrete pavement on a street in the "Iztok" district (№ 169- №175);
- Reconstruction of a street in Gradets—a village with compact Roma population.

#### The Municipality Of Nova Zagora

In the municipality of Nova Zagora the Roma population lives predominantly in the rural areas and in the "6<sup>th</sup>" district in the town of Nova Zagora. Since 2011 there have been 9 sales of municipal properties to citizens from minority origin, of which 8 - in the "6<sup>th</sup>" district.

For the town of Nova Zagora, which includes the "6<sup>th</sup>" district, a cadastral map and registers were approved. The existing [Detailed Spatial Development Plan](#) of the "6<sup>th</sup>" district was approved in 1988.

Under the project "Renovated and modernized urban environment in Nova Zagora", funded under the Operational Programme "Regional Development" the streets "Cherno More" (roadway, asphalt, sidewalks, paving slabs, curbs) and "Uchilishtna" (the same) were reconstructed;

- Construction of water supply network - the streets "Roza" and "Lilia";
- Overhaul of streets in the "6<sup>th</sup>" district - pavement and sidewalks;
- Emergency cleaning of gully №29 in the "6<sup>th</sup>" district.

#### The Municipality Of Tvarditsa

A project, under which more than 100 properties near the Roma district were put in the town-planning regulation and were then sold by tender to those who wanted to build houses, was implemented.

### **1.4. Anti-discrimination**

#### **1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011 and impact of measures**

##### The Regional Directorate Of The Ministry Of Interior /Rdmoi/

In the structural units of the RDMoI- Sliven training on topics related to human rights, police ethics and minority issues were held. Over 10 specific topics aiming to improve the policemen's qualification on how to work in multicultural environment were presented;

Employees of the RDMoI-Sliven took part in a seminar under a project of the General Directorate "Guard Police" - "European police and respect for human rights". It was funded by the Specific Programme of the European Commission "Preventing and combating crime". The project started on 01.09.2011 with the participation of foreign partners from the Criminal Police of Baden-Württemberg. The Commission for protection against discrimination and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee were the Bulgarian partners;

To achieve greater efficiency of the police work, police officers of Roma origin were appointed in the areas of compact Roma population;

Preventive activities of the RDMoI- Sliven against the spread of drugs in the districts with predominantly Roma or mixed population:

In connection with the Roma integration strategy of the region of Sliven /2012 - 2020/ the activities of the police are directed to an active presence of inspectors from the Child Pedagogic Room in schools with predominantly Roma pupils under programmes such as "The policeman at school". Topics such as drugs and their influence are discussed. Various sports and other activities aiming to build confidence in the police among the pupils are initiated by the inspectors of the Child Pedagogic Room;

Within the meetings of the Municipal Council on Drugs different measures are identified as they are directed to: prevention activities in schools, particularly in the schools with Roma pupils; security of school buildings; surveillance to prevent the spread of drugs in schools; activities of the school boards regarding the prevention of smoking and drug use.

##### Commission for Protection against Discrimination – Sliven /Cpad/

According to the Protection against Discrimination Law a case in the field of prevention

of discrimination can be open after a complaint by the victim himself or after a signal by a non-governmental organization.

For the period 2011 - 2013, in the Regional office of the CPaD – Sliven there were only 4 complaints of discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin.

Since 2011 the number of people seeking advice in the Regional office of the CPaD – Sliven in the reception rooms, opened in the municipalities, on the occasion of unequal treatment, based on ethnicity, is 68. In most of these cases, however, no official complaints were made due to various reasons.

Preventive activities among citizens - since 2011 the regional representative of the CPaD – Sliven has participated in a number of meetings and trainings of people from the Roma community in Sliven, Kotel, Nova Zagora, Tvarditsa and Shivachevo;

The participation in a number of public events in order to clarify the functions and powers of the CPaD, as well as the steps for initiating proceedings also belongs to the preventive activities of the regional representative of the CPaD – Sliven;

Reception rooms were opened in the municipalities with compact Roma population, and presentation meetings were also held within community groups, which were attended by the representatives of the Roma ethnic group such as pensioners, disabled people, parents of children with disabilities;

The project "Schools without discrimination" was implemented in partnership with the Danish Institute for Human Rights, as problems of all ethnic groups, including the Roma, were involved; Under the project "Equality - a way to progress", funded by the "Progress" Programme, a large-scale study of textbooks was made. It was examined whether there was presence of discriminatory texts, leading to unequal treatment of children of different ethnic groups.

The accents in the plans of the regional representative of the CPaD – Sliven are:

To hold periodic independent studies in the field of education, employment, health and access to services;

State policy in the field of internships for young Roma in the public administration;

To activate the prevention measures in the field of tolerance through systematic training;

To organize reception rooms of the CPaD – Sliven in municipalities with Roma population;

To carry out national media campaigns dedicated to speech of hatred.

**Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of anti-discrimination and supremacy of law and their impact.**

Prevention activities among citizens have their significant effect. In this respect, the presentation meetings and participation in a number of events in different institutions, schools, NGOs, etc., aiming to explain the functions and powers of the CPaD and the steps for initiating proceedings give positive results. The reception rooms in municipalities with Roma population as well as the presentation meetings with community groups also have a preventive role.

**Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt in the area of anti-discrimination and supremacy of law**

The social and economic integration of Roma is a two-way process that requires changing of the attitudes of most of the people, but also changing of the attitudes of the members of the Roma communities. The supremacy of law should be the leading principle in the implementation of integration policies. For the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria the cooperation between all institutions, which are directly involved, the representatives of NGOs and the Roma community is essential.

## **22. SMOLYAN REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **i. Steps taken since 2011 year to the present moment:**

- Inclusion of the children from Roma families in the education environment of the region Smolyan;
- Introduction of all-day organization of the school day until the 4<sup>th</sup> class including;

- Preparation of the children from minority ethnic groups (3-6 years old) for future participation in the educational process, through organization of additional activities in the kindergarten, for children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.
- Activities aimed at preserving and developing of the cultural identity of the children and students from minority ethnic groups and their peers in the integration multicultural environment;
- Organization of information campaigns for raising the awareness of roma parents about the benefits of preschool education;
- Literacy for adult Roma people;
- Providing of continuing vocational training for persons over 16 years;
- Additional qualification for teachers, principals and other pedagogical professionals for working in a multicultural environment.

**c. Planned activities and measured for the period 2014-2020 years:**

- Development of standards in civil, intercultural, and health education;
- Introduction of full-time education up to 7 class;
- Extension of the child number in the free elective lessons “Mother tongue”;
- Creation of model for monitoring and evaluation;
- Actualization of the measures on prevention on prevention of school dropout.

The children and the students with Roma origin are integrated in the kindergarten and in the school on the territory of region Smolyan and they take participation in the project activities and national programmes where the concrete schools realize.

**d. Best practices:**

- All children and students with Roma origin are educated and integrated in the kindergartens and schools on the territory of region Smolyan. There are not special Roma classes, schools and kindergartens. It is achieved a tolerance for Roma children.
- The percentage of dropouts Roma students is extremely low. Children with special educational needs of Roma origin are taught in integrated schools and kindergartens of the region.

**e. Conclusions and recommendations:**

- The early inclusion of children in kindergartens leads to acquisition of social experience and learn the Bulgarian language, which will lead to successful adaptation to school.

**1.2. Employment**

**1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

- Main objective is „Improving the access of the Roma people and the other vulnerable ethnical groups to the labour market and increasing their employment”;
- There are taken steps for motivation of the unemployed Roma people for active searching of job and professional orientation;
- During the period 2011-2013 it has provided employment to 138 Roma by LBD "Smolyan" in the region (in this region only Smolyan Municipality has Roma people and they are 301 persons, at the age 20 - 69 years are 154 persons);
- Inclusion of Roma people in the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment", OP "Human Resources Development" - a schema "New Choice-development and realization".
- Training of officers of the Direction “Labour Bureau” – Smolyan for acquiring of specific skills for working with Roma population and other ethnical minorities.

**1.1 Planned activities and measures for the period 2014-2020 year:**

- Organization of trainings for unemployed persons:
  - a) motivation for active job searching;
  - б) professional orientation;
  - в) professional qualification within the annual training programmes of the National Action Plan on Employment (NAPE) and other plans;
- Encouraging the employment through programs and measures under the Act for promoting the employment within the annual training programs under the National Action Plan for Employment (NAPE) and other plans;

**1.2 Best practices:**

- Ensuring an access to the labour market through training and retraining of long-term unemployed people and providing opportunities for employment.

### 1.3 Conclusions and recommendations:

- Motivation of inactive people for registration in the “Labour Bureau” Direction and their involvement in programs for employment;

## 1.3. Health

### 1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011

**For Objective 1, p.3** Limitation of the incidents of infectious, parasitic and sexually transmitted diseases and also diseases which can be prevented by vaccination;

- Realization of campaign in Roma neighborhoods of Smolyan town and Devin town for emergency immunization of children with incomplete immunization status against poliomyelitis.

**r. 5** Ensuring of better healthcare and better quality of life for people with chronic illness and disabilities:

- Ensuring of possibilities for Roma people from Devin town for free echographic and laboratory medical researches in mobile doctor rooms.

- Carrying out free medical researches of 65 Roma persons from Smolyan town and Devin town for tuberculosis and hepatitis B for early detection of these diseases.

**Objective 2 p.2** Informing the patients about their rights and obligations and different kinds of medical services:

- Conduct of information campaigns among Roma population in Devin town.

**Objective 3 p.1** Increasing health awareness to prevent the most common diseases, maintaining personal and household hygiene, reproductive health:

- Conducting of 15 discourses and presentation of 14 video clips among children, students and their parents from Smolyan town and Devin town. Dissemination of information materials.

**p. 2** Informing the people about the importance of the immunizations and motivating them for regularly doing of immunizations, according to the National immunization calendar:

- Realization of training between 14 mothers and their children in neighborhood Zabral of Devin town.

- Realization of 42 individual meetings with mothers from Smolyan town and Devin town for promoting observation the immunization calendar of Republic of Bulgaria.

**p. 3** Using various means for providing of health information to persons belonging to ethnic minorities.

- Using of mass media for reaching to this population. Publication of 2 articles, 4 TV and 6 radio broadcasts.

- There are prepared 5 types information materials adapted to this group.

### 1.1 Planned activities and measures for the period 2014-2020 year:

- Overcome and termination the negative trends in the health of persons belonging to ethnic minorities and to create conditions for its improvement;

- Ensuring equal access to health services for people from ethnic minorities;

- Increasing health literacy and insuring access to health information.

### 1.2 Best practices:

- Establishment extracurricular activities for health education of Roma children.

### 1.3 Conclusions and recommendations:

- To carry out preventive health care and prevention of risks among this target population;

- To research their needs and their acute need of health mediator.

## 1.4. Anti-discrimination

### 1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011

- Training of police officials from the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior – Smolyan for applying of problem-oriented approach in multi-ethnic communities - mainly Roma;

- Realized activities for applying the model “Police close to society”, the police officers identify the problems of public order and security in local Roma communities and take measures for their solution. During the period it was identified a problem with the traffic safety along the street "Osvobozhdenie" in Devin town. This street serves homes inhabited by Roma;

- Carried out initiatives and measures aimed at children in marginalized environments, like "Children's Police Academy" and "Months Against The Violence" and others;
- Police officers carry out daily preventive talks with members of the Roma communities; periodic and regular visit the Roma neighborhoods, for a better understanding of the problems of the Roma people and their timely resolution.
- Realization of obvious surveillance of persons of Roma ethnicity, committed a crime, realized talks with them and encouraging them to work that will provide the necessary funds for their normal livelihood.
- Carrying out preventive meeting between the police officers and Roma people, served a term of imprisonment to influence over them and support their integration into society.

**Planned activities and measures for the period 2014-2020:**

- For implementation of the National Action Plan of the initiative “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 ” it is planned also training of the police officers on human rights and minority issues.
- In the thematic plans for specialized preparation within the professional trainings in the workplace are planned and discussed different issues within two hours a month;
- Ensuring of good public order during realization of planned activities under the Strategy of other institutions and organizations.
- Realization of activities, aiming at better literacy of the Roma minority groups in the application of the model “Police close to society”.
- Carrying out preventive meetings between the police officers and Roma people, served a term of imprisonment to influence over them and support their integration into society.

**Best practices:**

- Officers of Regional Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior – Devin town together with representatives of Devin Municipality, region Smolyan in May 2013 year, after work meeting with the leaders of the Roma population in Devin town had organized cleaning of residential area with Roma.

1.1 Conclusions and recommendations:

- Applying of the approach “zero tolerance” in ascertaining anti-social acts committed by members of the Roma minority, which protects them against the sense of impunity, promote self control and sense of retention.
- Avoidance of double standards and discrimination against Roma minority. Objectives - to increase their confidence in the police authorities and the Roma people promptly to report for arising and developing problems in their society, instead trying to solve their problems, often at the cost of making offenses.

In the period since 2011 to the present moment in the Regional Office, "National Construction Control" - Smolyan are not formed cases for illegal construction carried out by Roma on the territory of region Smolyan.

Please take into account that during the last population census in 2011 in Smolyan only 448 persons identified themselves as Roma, which is only about 0.4% of the population of the region, other 7 Municipalities have no representatives from this ethnical group.

**23. SOFIA REGION**

**1 - Policy Measures**

**1.1. Education**

**1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the municipalities of Sofia region is guaranteed the right to equal access to quality education and culture for children and students , creating conditions for the preservation of Roma identity Providing of an appropriate educational environment for enrolling through a phased intake in kindergarten.

Childcare places for children of all parents willing are provided.In 2013 near the Roma neighborhood in BOTEVGRAD was opened a new kindergarten for 100 children.Botevgrad school provides a good base and favorable conditions of the educational process in the school " Vasil Levski " - Botevgrad.

Continues to optimize the collaboration of school management in municipal administration , parents, members of the local committee to combat delinquency of minors and department "Child Protection " to ensure compulsory education for children from 6 to 16 years old. Activities aimed at preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities and their peers in a multicultural environment integration:

- Creating clubs of interest, forming groups in an elective class / EPA / in culture , folklore and traditions of different ethnic groups , dance ensembles , arts , traditional crafts , surveys of children and students related to their cultural identity;
- Identification of the main factors leading to non-appearance and early school leaving, developing a methodology for monitoring local;
- Involve parents of children and students from ethnic minorities in school boards or community councils

The financial means in the context of delegated budgets, saving hours of self-study at day organization of the school day priority schools with a majority percentage of Roma students for their active engagement in the learning process. It is provided buses to transport children to schools. Assistance to students of Roma origin.

#### **1.1.10. Impact of measures**

Beneficial, ongoing process of integration of the Roma minority in the community of Sofia region.

#### **1.1.9. Plans for 2014-2020**

In the next period after 2014 the municipalities will focus on the specific measures set out in the Municipal Development Plans . They will work to engage students in full-time education in various forms of extra-curricular activities. Two schools in Svoge - School " Ivan Vazov " and school " Dr. Petar Beron" are partners in the project " Etnolyubets " schedule for CCD "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities" , launched in October 2013 . The project envisages the inclusion of ethnic minority children in extracurricular activities, training of teachers and parents. Since the beginning of 2014 in the city of Svoge will operate and CSC / Community Support Centre / for children and families.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact.**

Pravets Municipality: Involvement of parents of Roma children to education by: - motivating parents to introduce their children to kindergartens and schools; - establishing additional forms better guidance to parents and prospective students; - ensuring a smooth introduction of children in preparatory groups at school; - creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding between members of different ethnic groups; - ensuring transparency, broad awareness and dialogue with all actors involved in the educational process.

Municipality of Slivnitsa: Good practice, which gave a positive result in PGT «N.Y. Vaptsarov" is the inclusion of students in extracurricular activities where they interact in small mixed groups. So students pay more attention to personal qualities, know in other conditions they feel comfortable with, which is then transferred to the classroom.

#### **1.1.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education.**

From the summary of the data for the municipalities of Sofia region, we could say that since 2011 there has been an approach to involve the parents of students from the Roma minority in the educational process in order to prevent the removal of these high school students.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Municipalities applied under OP "HRD" project "New Choice - development and realization", "Regional Program" NP "Employment support" NP "New employment Opportunities" NP "Employment" program. etc.

### **1.2.8. Impact of measures**



Increased percentage of employed Roma in the municipalities.

#### **1.2.9.Plans for 2014-2020**

Implementation of a continuous programmes of training and employment by incorporating unemployed Roma.

#### **1.2.10.Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of employment.**

The inclusion of long-term unemployed Roma in the implementation of various projects and programs leads to a change in their attitude towards employment.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.8.Steps taken since 2011**

-prevention activities among the Roma population - screening and early diagnosis of tuberculosis, cancer, cardiovascular and hereditary diseases; - conduct free medical examinations and diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections;

- carrying out laboratory tests and more inclusion of a mediator between the community and health workers.

- Active assistance of the mediator 's efforts GP for coverage of pregnant women to the fourth month of pregnancy by HM and increasing cooperation between institutions.

#### **1.3.9.Impact of measures**

Health of the minorities is good. There is no feeling of segregation of Roma groups in the area concerning healthcare.

#### **1.3.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of healthcare and their impact.**

Conducting interviews with adolescents and young people and their parents on how to prevent unwanted and early pregnancy. Improving preventive activities among the Roma population. Stimulating the creation of extra-curricular forms of health education for Roma children - clubs, sport clubs and more. Informing members of the Roma community about their health insurance rights and obligations and their rights as patients.

#### **1.3.5 Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.**

The activities of the responsible institutions and NGOs are focused on identifying children without a family doctor and explain to parents the importance of their registration. Development and implementation of programs for prevention of various diseases. / Infectious diseases, cancer, chronic and more.

### **1.4.Housing**

#### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Improving housing conditions, including the adjacent technical infrastructure.Improving the living conditions in Roma neighbourhoods. Development of a municipal program to improve living conditions in places of compact Roma population.

#### **1.4.2. Impact of measures**

Providing housing for members of the Roma minority.

#### **1.4.3 Plans for 2014-2020**

The process of providing housing for Roma will continue, including through funding projects to European funds and programs for the next programming period.

#### **1.1.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

Municipality of Botevgrad - built houses in Botevgard -10 houses, Village Novachene - 4 houses, Litakovo - 3 houses. They accommodate most needy young Roma families. The municipality has set aside city land and approved investment project for construction of a residential unit for helpless young Roma families and continues to look for opportunities to

provide funds needed for its construction. Has been made for sanitation and repair of water mains in Roma settlements and villages Botewgrad Litakovo and Novachene.

## **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

### **1.5.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In the municipality of Kostinbrod and Svoge are created a committees to monitor and inclusion of ethnic minorities and actions of intervention among the Roma population. In other municipalities in the region there is a policy of strengthening the understanding of different cultures dialogue and non-discrimination.

Municipality of Etropole - Representatives of the local Commission against Anti-social Behaviour of Infants together with the community moderators of the centre in Etropole and representatives of the Department of Child Protection to the Social Assistance Directorate organized meetings with students from 5-8 grades, discussing the interethnic tolerance as well as the recognition and respect of the differences between people. Football matches and dodge ball competitions with students from all schools in the municipality were held, too. A regional safety traffic competition for students from 3-4 grades was organized, in which children from the Roma community took active part being.

### **1.5.13. Impact of measures**

No reports case of true discrimination by municipalities of Sofia region.

## **2. Funding**

### **2.1. Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

#### **2.1.10. EU funds**

Etropole - About 350 000 BGN for creating jobs and projects in the field of education have been attracted from the European funds during the period.

#### **2.1.11. national funds**

Svoge Municipality - 85 000 BGN for an upcoming project. No information from other municipalities in the region.

Etropole Municipality - 15 000 BGN for financing of projects in the sphere of education and culture have been attracted during the period.

#### **2.1.12. other sources**

## **24. STARA ZAGORA REGION**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

In RIE - Stara Zagora an Action Plan is developed for implementation of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2012-2014. All schools in Stara Zagora district, which educate Roma children, have developed a complex of measures to reduce absenteeism of students and the number of early dropouts. During the current school year 5626 people are totally covered, 80% of those were born in 2007 and 2008, subject to the compulsory school age. RIE - Stara Zagora, in conjunction with schools, local authorities and Social Assistance Directorate of district work for the reintegration of children of compulsory school age. There have been meetings with mayors, with the result that outlines specific steps for gathering and keeping children and pupils in educational establishments. During the current school year are opened 8 new groups in pre-primary education, where Roma children are trained. Gradually it was introduced a day organization of the school day from the first to seventh grade, which was introduced simultaneously in 43 central schools involved in the project "Improving the quality of education in central schools by introducing full-day organization of the educational process." In all elementary, primary and secondary education schools was introduced a full-time education for students from the first to fourth grade inclusive. To increase the level of student performance in general education for children from preparatory classes and pupils in primary and lower

secondary education is organized further work on National Programme "Caring for each student." Schools and kindergartens from Stara Zagora, Kazanlak, Chirpan, Galabovo and Maglizh, working on various projects related to the integration of Roma financed from EU funds. The Stara Zagora Municipality is working on the project **"Together Forward"**. The project duration is 15 months, and it included 248 children, students, parents and teachers. Kazanlak Municipality is working on the project **"A good education now - good opportunities in the future"** the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", a scheme for providing grants: BG051PO001-4.1.05 "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities". The project started in May 2013 as its main activities will be implemented in the school year 2013-2014. Partners of the municipality are kindergarten "Mir", the village of Buzovgrad and Central kindergarten "Alen Mak", the village of Razhena.

According to the information from RIE - Stara Zagora, during the past school year, 157 Roma students are admitted to schools in the central part of Stara Zagora. Experts have carried out a thematic review "Conducting additional work for students who entered the first grade without a certificate of completion pre-school classes" according to inspectorate's plan for control and methodical work.

It has been found that it is working in the following projects:

1. Project under OP HRD "Improving the quality of education in the central school by introducing full-day organization of the educational process" - 12 afternoon classes from first to six grades;
2. Project under OP HRD "A chance for children with special educational needs to quality education" - work with 6 students;
3. Project under the national program "No free hour";
4. NP project "Care for every student" Module 2 - 3 groups, Module 3 - 3 groups;
5. Project "Preventing and reducing dropout of Roma high school students" at the "Amalipe" Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Veliko Tarnovo.

## **1.2. Health**

### **1.2.1.Steps taken since 2011**

Stara Zagora District has a well-developed network; specialized care is concentrated mainly in large cities. For all settlements is provided primary medical care.

RHI Stara Zagora has received grant two mobile clinics - gynecological and pediatric. With mobile units were conducted screening / research uninsured persons of Roma origin and those ones with limited access to health facilities in the settlements in the Stara Zagora.

After carrying out the procedure for the selection of a contractor, RHI-Stara Zagora signed a contract with two hospitals to conduct screening. These activities are implemented in the period September - October, 2013. As a consequence following results were achieved:

- over 500 prophylactic medical checks of children in Nikolaevo and Maglizh municipalities and "Lozenets" residential neighborhood in the city of Stara Zagora;
- over 500 preventive gynecological examinations of women from the municipalities Maglizh, Chirpan, and Radnevo, and "Lozenets" residential neighborhood in the city of Stara Zagora.

At present examination results are processed. On their base there will be an analysis drawing appropriate conclusions and take concrete actions. With the assistance of the health mediators, RHI currently is gone a search for Roma children, unfulfilled their right to choose a GP by information from NHIF and the maternity ward of the Hospital for active treatment. Found such persons are covered in the Immunization Office of RHI.

**RHI participate in emergency vaccination campaigns to cover Roma children with incomplete immunization status by years as follows:**

In 2013, RHI has participated in the implementation of an immunization campaign against measles in persons at risk aged of 15 years. In July, mobile teams of RHI, mediators and GPs covered **534 children** without evidence or without vaccination or immunization against measles by almost 90% of the Roma community:

- „Lozenets” Stara Zagora – 42 children;
- Kazanlak and Kazanlak region – 267 children;
- The town of Chirpan and Chirpan region – 164 children.

**Capacity building and community work for the prevention and control of HIV through counseling services and referral for anonymous and free testing for HIV infection and sexually transmitted.**

Fieldwork among the Roma community, including consultation and research with rapid tests: In 2013 are covered on a voluntary basis - 127 Roma in settlements as follows:

- 21.06.2013 – Radnevo, in front of town hall;
- 18.09.2013 – the town of Gurkovo, Roma center;
- 19.09. 2013 – the village of Panicharevo;

From 02.09-05.09.2013 eight teams of RHI Stara Zagora have made rapid tests in: in the Maglizh of 34 persons, village of Tulovo - 8 people, village of Yagoda - 7 people, village of Shanovo - 6, village of Zimnitsa - 27, and village of Vetren and the village of Dabovo - 11 persons.

**Activities aimed at improving the control of tuberculosis among Roma**

RHI works in constant communication and coordination with partners program "Control of tuberculosis in Bulgaria" with "Samaryani", NGO "World without borders", as well as all other institutions seeking to carry out the tasks under the program.

RHI examines the practices in GPs on their actions in terms of patient contact and tuberculosis, as well as checks of GP in terms of immuno-prophylaxis - compliance Immunization Schedule, manner of immunizations action in hiperergichni samples Mantoux.

In 2013, RHI Stara Zagora, together with "World without Borders" has conducted a major campaign to double-cover contact / 58 / persons suffering from tuberculosis in the Roma neighborhood of the town of Chirpan, in order to limit tuberculosis infection. The campaign includes:

- going monitoring of the process, to cure the sick;
- Monitoring of contact persons in infectious outbreaks;
- Conduct periodic surveys of Mantoux test, with SHATPPD (Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment of Patients with Pneumo Diseases);
- Seeking assistance of Chirpan Municipality and "Social Assistance"
- Providing material support provided by the "Prevention and early detection and treatment of tuberculosis in Bulgaria /food vouchers to patients, covering travel costs for dispensary observation in the district town/;
- Meetings with GPs;
- Conduct health education talks with people from the Roma neighborhood.

### **1.3. Employment**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

The total number of registered unemployed persons who identified themselves as members of the Roma ethnic group in the Employment Bureau of Stara Zagora to 09.30.2013 is 2871. Of these, 821 persons were youths under 29 years old /28.6% /, and 578 were over 50 years, and long-term unemployed 1067 /37%/. The proportion of people without qualifications is 86.4%. 74.6% of registered persons with primary or lower education. The group of self-identified as Roma registered in the Department of Employment Bureau, 1484 persons are women and 1387 are men.

In terms of education, all 2871 people registered at Stara Zagora Employment Bureau, 2142 persons are with primary or lower education. This creates barriers for finding them work.

Through the employment offices for the period 01.01.2012-30.09.2013, 943 persons were included in programs and employment measures under the Employment Promotion - 374 in 2012 and 569 in 2013. Persons involved in the work of the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" are 259.

The primary labor market in 2012, 139 persons started to work, and in 2013 - 307 persons.

### Stara Zagora Municipality- 2013

- Art.52, para.1 of the Law on Employment Promotion - 1 person - 2298 BGN;
- National Program "From Social Assistance to Employment" – 21 persons - 14355 BGN;
- National Program "Assistants for People with Disabilities" - 15 persons – 31780 BGN;
- Beautiful Bulgaria Project -7 persons;
- OP "HRD" scheme- "Support for Employment" - 85 persons – 34400 BGN;
- OP "HRD" scheme- „First job” - 1 person - 5400 BGN.

### Opan Municipality - 2013

- National Program "From Social Assistance to Employment" - 5 persons – 4420 BGN.

### Radnevo Municipality- 2013

- National Program "From Social Assistance to Employment" - 56 persons – 23577 BGN;
- National Program "Assistants for People with Disabilities" – 2 persons – 4101 BGN;
- NP "Activating inactive persons" – 1 persons – 3449 BGN;
- NP "New Employment Opportunities" – 1 person – 483 BGN;
- Regional program – 16 persons – 11168 BGN;
- Art.52, para.2 of Law on Employment Promotion – 1 persons – 20 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme- "Development“-10 persons – 39882 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme - „Employment Support“- 10 persons – 20588 BGN.

### Galabovo Municipality - 2013

- National Program " From Social Assistance to Employment " – 5 persons – 1568 BGN;
- National Program "Assistants for People with Disabilities" – 1 person – 2051 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development“- 5 persons – 7905 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Support for Employment“- 6 persons – 28823 BGN;
- Regional program – 1 person – 2256 BGN;

### Chirpan Municipality -2013

- Included persons in programs and employment measures are 30 people:
- NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – funds paid 36120 BGN;
- „Personal assistance” – 11520 BGN;
- Under Art. 36 Para1 - 2196 BGN;

Included persons in schemes OP "HRD" are 5 persons:

- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 9408 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Support for Employment” – 5376 BGN.

### Bratya Daskalovi Municipality- 2013

Included persons in programs and employment measures are 35 people:

- NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – funds paid 40320 BGN;
- „Personal assistance” – 12096 BGN.;

Persons included in the schemes under OP "HRD" are 4 people:

- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 9408 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Support for Employment” – 2696 BGN.

### Kazanlak Municipality - 2013

Included persons in programs and employment measures are 133 people:

- NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – 128 persons - 166028 BGN;
- Regional programs – 5 person – 11040 BGN;

Included persons in schemes under OP "HRD" – 52 /35 от 2012/.

- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 35 persons - 94250 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Support for Employment” – 17 persons - 75582 BGN.

### Maglish Municipality - 2013

Included persons in programs and employment measures:

- NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – 18 persons - 25208 BGN;

Included persons in schemes under OP "HRD" – 26 /14 от 2012/:

- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 14 persons - 56546 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Support for Employment” – 12 persons - 53352 BGN.

### Pavel Banya Municipality - 2013

- Included persons in programs and employment measures are 20 persons - NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – 20 persons - 20547 BGN.
- Included persons in schemes under OP "HRD" – 17 /12 от 2012/:
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 12 persons - 14002 BGN;
- OP "HRD" under the scheme „Support for Employment” – 5 persons - 22230 BGN.

Gurkovo Municipality - 2013

- Included persons in programs and employment measures are 3 people - NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – 3 persons - 6576 BGN.
- Included persons in schemes under OP "HRD" – 7 /2012/; OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 7 persons - 23562 BGN.

Nikolaevo Municipality - 2013

Included persons in programs and employment measures are 59 people:

- NP „From Social Assistance to Employment” – 49 persons - 63288 BGN;
- Regional programs – 10 persons – 22080 BGN.

Included persons in schemes under OP "HRD" – 11 /2012/; OP "HRD" under the scheme „Development” – 11 persons - 49366 BGN.

In connection with the implementation of the National Program "Activating inactive persons" component "Working with inactive people" in the Labour Office Directorates (LOD) of Stara Zagora District have appointed three Roma mediators - respectively Stara Zagora LOD, Kazanlak LOD, and Radnevo LOD.

Municipalities	Number of unemployment Roma		Unemployed young Roma aged up to 29		Unemployment Roma women		Over 50 years of age		Long-term unemployed	
	2012	30.09.2013	2012	30.09.2013	2012		2012	30.09.2013	2012	30.09.2013
<b>Stara Zagora Region</b>	<b>3830</b>	<b>2871</b>	<b>1188</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>2066</b>	<b>1484</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>1067</b>
Stara Zagora	633	533	221	101	353	328	123	167	101	85
Opan	16	36	5	8	12	22	3	9	0	0
Galabovo	52	59	9	16	34	32	9	9	23	25
Kazanlak	789	314	220	81	436	162	190	73	215	118
Maglizh	876	499	277	144	458	251	181	108	232	134
Pavel Banya	407	217	131	70	216	104	92	29	162	85
Gurkovo	87	31	26	6	54	16	26	10	16	6
Nikolaevo	248	175	91	67	125	92	31	12	103	92
Radnevo	216	211	63	67	128	113	39	38	79	75
Chirpan	227	319	75	113	129	166	33	39	148	198
Bratya Daskalovi	279	477	70	148	121	198	54	84	63	249

Municipalities	With primary and lower education		Unskilled		Number included in employment in PEM and Employment Measures)		Number included in employment in OP "HRD"		Number of jobs in the PLM (Project Labour Market)	
	2012	30.09.2013	2012	30.09.2013	2012		2012	30.09.2013	2012	30.09.2013
<b>Stara Zagora Region</b>	<b>3251</b>	<b>2142</b>	<b>3533</b>	<b>2481</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>307</b>
Stara Zagora	550	537	517	443	1	44	13	86	22	73
Opan	16	32	14	13	0	5	1	0	0	3
Galabovo	51	58	48	53	4	7	11	0	2	0
Kazanlak	782	309	776	305	118	133	35	17	8	38
Maglizh	846	462	839	457	23	18	14	12	0	2
Pavel Banya	403	212	397	208	38	20	12	5	3	4
Gurkovo	84	29	81	26	10	3	7	0	0	0
Nikolaevo	240	168	239	166	24	59	11	0	0	1
Radnevo	209	207	199	180	14	76	10	10	3	10
Chirpan	36	48	189	267	10	30	3	5	49	90
Bratya Daskalovi	34	80	234	363	12	35	3	4	52	86

With regard to limitation the number of abandoned children from the Roma community and prevent institutionalization as part of the Regional Strategy for Integration of Roma in Stara Zagora were achieved the results as follows:

- Children placed in specialized institutions – 52 children placed in 2013;
- Children in families of relatives - 173 children;
- Children placed in foster families - 30 children.

For the first nine months of the year on the territory of Stara Zagora monthly benefits are derived from 3116 Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin in accordance with Article 9 of the Implementation of the Law on Social Assistance (ILSA).

Among the social and economic problems are the following:

- separation of Roma neighborhoods or in rural areas - the existence of areas in the area in which the Roma population living under deplorable living conditions;
- raising children in poor living conditions, reduced hygiene, insufficient living space;
- significant proportion of parents of children of Roma origin are very low level of education or illiteracy, which greatly impedes their realization in the labor market;
- in many families, education is not accepted as a value, the right of the child and the possibility of its successful social adaptation and implementation in future;
- majority of Roma children, especially girls, drop out of school due to lack of support and encouragement from parents;
- economic emigration. Very large shares of Roma families live abroad. The problem is even more serious in incomplete families with only one parent - the parent where the child actually left without a legal guardian and necessary measures of protection as they are output outside the family /placement with relatives and host families or in institutions and services, residential type/;
- it is very common pimping, prostitution and begging, often as a source of income;
- respect the traditions of Roma ethnicity as a result of which led to early marriages and childbearing in a very young age, which increases the risk of abandonment;
- refusal to enter into marriage and fathering of children from their biological fathers;
- failure of parents without good reason to care for their children. And understanding that the state is obliged to provide them with assistance;
- lack of health insurance, which hampers access to medical facilities;
- having children as a source of income;
- poor living conditions, poor sanitation, limited access to medical care and are prerequisites for the birth and abandonment of children with disabilities and the high percentage of children certified by Employment Medical Commission (EMC) and others.

Currently it is producing a legal framework that does not allow discriminatory attitudes towards people with disability of Roma origin. Problems of people with disability of Roma origin are:

№	Problem	Consequences
1.	Early "marriage"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Abandonment of children in care, including children born with disabilities</li> <li>✓ Irresponsibility to the health of children - early disability</li> <li>✓ Irresponsibility to the care of children and their education, lack of family planning</li> <li>✓ It is obtained pattern of dependence on cash social assistance to those parents - no education, profession, are not competitive in the labour market</li> </ul>



2.	Low health literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ chronic especially acute respiratory disease among children, resulting in their early debilitating and reduced performance at a later stage</li> <li>✓ early onset of sexual life</li> <li>✓ getting Pregnant childhood and irresponsible behavior during pregnancy</li> </ul>
3.	High percentage of illiterate people or people with lower education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ restrict/Unavailability of access to vocational education</li> <li>✓ restrict/Unable to retraining or further training</li> <li>✓ short duration of employment</li> </ul>
4.	Low civic culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ difficulty communicating with institutions</li> <li>✓ difficulty in conducting its affairs</li> </ul>
5.	High unemployment / lack of professional qualification /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ generations of unemployed are created, living on welfare and not competitive in the labour market</li> </ul>
6.	Illegal construction of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ a large percentage of them are unhygienic and are a prerequisite for higher morbidity among children and adults - especially lung diseases</li> <li>✓ in an address to keep dozens of families - difficult opening, the more they know you usually only Gypsy names</li> <li>✓ difficulty official correspondence - especially with regard to reimbursement for Medical Devices, Aids, Appliances and Devices (MDAAD)</li> </ul>
7.	Impunity for the violation of social norms - a major factor limiting the integration of Roma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ impunity irresponsible parenting</li> <li>✓ illegal construction - do not pay taxes and are a major drain on the state budget</li> <li>✓ do not pay for the water they consume indiscriminately</li> <li>✓ illegal felling of trees to expand the space for illegal construction or heating, the use of which is also no element of saving</li> <li>✓ migration for begging, stealing</li> <li>✓ a purely consumerist model of behavior - looking only rights</li> </ul>

## 1.4. Housing

### 1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011

In some municipalities in the territory of Stara Zagora will adopt general urban plans. In the municipal development plans for the new programming period 2014-2020 provides further gradual establishment of adequate infrastructure in the Roma neighborhoods- water supply, sanitation, development of the road network, which will help bring the living conditions of Roma with those of the rest of the population in the municipalities.

Activities under this priority during the reporting period aimed urbanization of Roma settlements in Roma neighborhoods. In some municipalities are repaired streets, sidewalks and sewers spent. Plots are separate for purchase by families in need to build homes.

### **Priority Culture And Media**

Conservation and promotion of Roma culture and intercultural communication of the various ethnic groups living in the territory of Stara Zagora are the main focus of the activities carried out on priority culture and media. Celebration of International Roma Day on April 8 and "Bango Vasil" - Roma New Year (4.01) is organized annually. "Roma folklore" taught in school (such as an Optional Subject- OS) in the district.

### **1.4. Anti-discrimination**

Under this priority are undertaken towards improving the competence and qualifications of police officers to effectively work in multicultural environment with focus - the Roma community. Trainings were carried out with young Roma, together with the Local Commission for Combating Antisocial Behavior of Minor and Juvenile (LCCABMJ) on crime prevention, enforcement of laws and activities of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. Employees of Roma origin are appointed in some of the municipalities to implement more effective regulations of public order.

## **25. TARGOVISHTE REGION**

### **1 – Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1 Steps taken since 2011**

Targovishte Municipality works actively with the local kinder gardens, educational establishments, NGOs and Targovishte United Children's Complex on implementation of Regional Strategy for Integration of Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin 2012-2014.

All pupils and students, including those of Roma origin, participate in the events listed in the School Sports Calendar.

Targovishte NGO Club Association, in partnership with the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Education School-Targovishte implement Project „Hand-in-Hand”, having organized 2 training modules for school teachers and assistant teachers. Additionally, children are being assisted in mastering Bulgarian language. Counseling is being provided to Roma parents in order to change their attitude toward educational needs of their children. A special room has been equipped at the school's premises in order to conduct intercultural dialogue. In Popovo municipality: preparations for capturing of a kids and students in educational areas, Ensuring of resources out of the budget of a parents in difficult finance condition for action of first medicine researches for a acceptance in daycare, Ensuring by donation shoes, clothes and others. So that is an all saw a problem, mostly in unemployed and more than a 1-2 kids in family, Appointment by a letters for a legislation and responsibility of the parents for ensuring for presence of the kids in daycares and schools, Group acting with head office “social helping” section ”protection of the child” “Children's room pedagogue” at “PD –Popovo”, MKBPPMN, Ensuring of free breakfast.

##### **1.1.2 Impact of measures**

Under Project “Education Quality Improvement in Central Schools Through Introduction of the Daylong Organization of Educational Process” 42 Half-Boarding Groups in 9 schools and 1 game room have been established. Freely chosen subject groups studying Roma folklore were set up in three schools.

Under Project “SUCCESS” 26 club formations for extra-curriculum children activities, actively involving Roma school children have been established.

During the School Year 2012/2013 activities under Measure “Without Non-Attendance” under National Programme “At School without Non-Attendance” of the Ministry of Education have been implemented at Father Paissii Primary School in Podgoritsa village. Activities included preparation of the Map for Identification of Students in Risk of Early School Leaving; a number of events aimed at keeping Roma children at school through providing free school aids, training appliances, sweet suits and snickers for children in need; organisation of Contest “Class with the Highest Attendance Rate”.

- Targovishte District Education Inspectorate is implementing together with 3 local schools the Project “Together, Jointly, by Common Effort”, with the aim to enhance motivation among the Roma parents - 17 pedagogues have been included in training for work in intercultural environment under Project “Qualification of Pedagogues” initiated by the Ministry of Education.

- Over 10 educative meetings with Roma parents in 5 municipal settlements have been conducted under a project, implemented by Association “NGO Club”. 5 freely chosen subject groups on ethnic folklore have been established. 60 supplementary training courses in Bulgarian language have been conducted mostly with Roma pupils and students. An extra room for social and intercultural communication has been renovated and equipped with 3 computers, tables, chairs, multimedia projector and digital camera. 40 pieces of national Roma dresses have been prepared and over 40 pieces didactic games and materials purchased. Escalation of qualification of the teachers for a multicultural work – 48 teachers are skilled. Play in developing and handling of projects for educational integration of the kids and the students – 1 project.

#### **1.1.3. Plans for 2014-2020:**

Each year - since 2010/2011 up to now programmes for prevention of early school leaving by Roma children are being developed at the Primary School in Golyamo Novo village and further submitted to the Centre for Interethnic Tolerance and Dialogue (CITD) in Veliko Turnovo. Annual plans for implementation of the Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnical Minorities are being developed and approved on regular basis.

#### **1.1.4. Relevant good practices in the area of education and their impact**

During the School Year 2012/2013 on the initiative of teachers from the primary School in Golyamo Novo village undergraduate volunteers have been invited by CITD Amalipe to assist fifth-grade students in organising of their extra-curriculum time. Guided by representative of the ministry of Education, the volunteers will conduct activities on the elementary and junior high school level to facilitate the Roma children’s introduction to the Bulgarian language environment - extra-curriculum occupation using games and other attractive methods of assisted socialisation and integration with the fifth-grade students.

Developed project “Mother, Father welcome to at school” attachments:

#### **1.1.5. Lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of education**

Measures, that would positively impact the integration process are those addressing directly and simultaneously teachers, children and parents.

It is necessary to allocate national budget means and specific instruments for encouraging development and implementation of local integration policies. Project-based funding does not support integration process development, because it is incidental.

There are good practices introduced in the field of education, mainly in its extra-curriculum forms and out-of-school activities. Experience has been shared on various levels, but as a whole the educational system is highly ethnocentric and as such it does not create preconditions needed for efficient integration. It is therefore necessary to use the experience

gathered in combination with a differentiated care for the targeted groups in order to ensure a really equal access to education.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **1.2.1. Steps taken since 2011**

In pursuance of the goals and objectives set down in the Action Plan of Targovishte Municipality, Directorate “Employment Department” (DED) Targovishte works on the employment-related issues in order to ensure equal access to all employment provision services for all persons of Roma origin defining themselves as Roma people, on voluntary principal as follows:

- Motivation for active job searching – 178 persons;
- Covered by professional guidance – 107 persons;

For the period under review, 2 Roma mediators have been employed in the Directorate within Activation of Inactive Persons National Programme to help attract discouraged Roma people to DED for registration and subsequent reception of various services in order to create jobs for the targeted groups. At this stage, since 09.09.2013, a psychologist has been employed by DED within the above said programme, to provide individual and group counseling to Roma job seekers of all age groups.

### **1.2.2. Impact of measures**

- Employed people – 360 persons, among them: 193 persons employed under programmes and 8 persons employed within Encouraging Measures supported by the national budget or through OPDHR, and 159 persons from the primary labour market;
- Ensured participation in 3 youth employment exchanges and in 1 specialised labour exchange for construction and agriculture ;
- Inclusion in vocational training providing subsequent employment – 17 persons; As a result achieved by the activities of the Roma mediators 124 Roma people have been involved with DEDB, with 22 of them having been employed.

### **1.2.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

DED proceed with activities to implement the Action Plan of Targovishte Municipality for integration of Bulgarian citizens of Roma origin for 2012-2014.

- Increasing the opportunities for training and how to employ unemployed Roma;
- Inclusion of the local Roma population in the implementation of infrastructure projects, public works, landscaping and playgrounds;
- Promoting economic initiative among minority communities to develop business and production through participation in projects and training enterprising members of the Roma community.

Inclusion in training for professional qualification and employment in programs, seasonal employment and more, representatives of the Roma community.

Roma access to the labor market and to various tools and initiatives for self-employment.

- Stimulating local employers, via different incentives to hire workers/ personnel from Roma community.
- Creating a policy for stimulating the hiring of highly qualified/educated Roma.
- Development of projects under the Operational Programmes, which provide temporary employment.
- Projects under Operative Programmes and National Programmes do not ensure permanent employment for the Roma. Different measures should be south to open new work places.
- To encourage entrepreneurship.
- To be recognized skills acquired in extracurricular environment.

### **1.3. Health**

#### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011:**

Targovishte Municipality has implemented activities aimed at improving health literacy of Roma people living in the municipality. With that end in view, in 2012 a Roma health mediator has been appointed by the municipal Health Care Unit to work jointly with the local health professionals at the local schools and kinder gardens to help overcome the gap between the Roma and Non-Roma population in terms of access to the health care services in Targovishte municipality. Particular stress has been laid on improving health literacy of young Roma mothers and Roma school children. For that purpose we have secured an individual working place for the health mediator at Targovishte Nikola Vaptsarov 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary School. Our health mediator also collaborates with the biggest local NGO - Association NGO Club Targovishte. Together they participate in the Programme "Enhancing the National Tuberculosis Control Programme in Bulgaria", aimed at carrying out field work and motivating people from the target tuberculosis treatment groups, as well as at co-operation and partnerships with hospitals, health education and health care providers.

#### **1.3.2. Impact of measures**

- To reduce child mortality rate, active assistance is being provided by health mediators to general practitioners in the municipality, aimed at consulting expectant mothers up to 4<sup>th</sup> month of their pregnancy, consultancies with obstetricians and gynecologists - 4 consulted pregnant Roma women;

- With the purpose of reducing teen pregnancy, two lectures on unwanted pregnancy prevention for teens and their parents, as well as two consultancies on sexual and reproductive health in the local neighbourhoods populated by Roma people and schools attended by Roma children have been delivered;

- The health mediators organised 10 meetings with parents of children without general practitioner care, to improve the pre-school health care for children. Two talks were given to young mothers about the importance of immunisation. Preventive medical check-ups were conducted with 50 Roma children at Nikola Vaptsarov 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary School premises;

- 4 clarification meetings to explain the risk of dangerous diseases were held among the local Roma population;

4 youths from the local Roma community have been trained and employed as field work assistants within Association NGO Club Targovishte ; 728 inquiries, 273 studies have been conducted; 77 Roma people have been assisted in receiving medical examination and treatment at the local hospital.

#### **1.3.3. Plans for 2014-2020 :**

Health Care Unit at Targovishte Municipality, in co-operation with the local NGOs , proceed with their activities, aimed at implementing Targovishte Municipality's Action Plan for Integration of Bulgarian Citizens of Roma Origin 2012-2014 г. A plan beyond the period above is still to be prepared. Increase of hygiene and health culture between minorities, by organization of activities at schools and villages with the majority of minority population; staffing of some medical practices ( under outpatient care ) and specialist doctors in some specialties in the hospital; limiting the number of people without health insurance and their dropping out of the health insurance system; training of mediators and active mediation by them between health workers and the Romacommunity;

#### **1.3.4. Relevant good practices in the field of health care**

In 2011 and 2012 the volunteers with Targovishte NGO Club, in collaboration with Targovishte District Health Inspectorate (DHI) held events on December 1<sup>st</sup> distributing information fliers, condoms and other materials pertaining to HIV prevention.

Health lectures held in the municipality of Omurtag of employees RHI Targovishte In 2012, the team of the department " PBPZ" at RHI - Targovishte conducted several trainings

on various topics in health care in kindergartens and schools in the municipality Omurtag. " Food Hygiene ", "I know what to eat !", "Diet", "Tale of bones and Mrs. Osteoporosis" Diseases STDs ", " HIV / AIDS - what is the risk ", " risky sexual behavior" " Diseases STDs", "HIV / AIDS - what is the risk", " risky sexual behavior" "Smoking and Health", "Types of dependence caused by drugs", " legal and illegal drugs," " Alcohol and Alcoholism", " Physical and psychological dependence on alcohol". " Diseases STDs ", " HIV / AIDS - what is the risk ", " risky sexual behavior".

**1.3.5. Please briefly describe one or two relevant lessons learnt leading to policy review in the field of healthcare.**

Providing health mediators in Roma communities. Organizing campaigns for the prevention of various diseases. Organization of different information events and trainings to promote health awareness of Roma. Efforts in this area should've been pointed towards providing information to Roma parents about health risks that may affect their children. The work in the sphere of child healthcare should continue, focusing on newborn care and normal child developing.

**1.4. Housing**

**1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011:**

There are 274 municipal flats available for social housing in Tragovishte municipality. Roma families occupy 148. Association NGO Club Targovishte participate in the Housing Improvement for Families at Risk Programme and in the Low Income Families Programme in partnership with the Habitat Foundation. As a result, interest-free loans have been offered to the target groups for the housing improvement purpose. The municipality Omurtag has existing regulation plans for all settlements where Roma live. Assess the need to improve the status of Roma neighborhoods and villages with Roma population in terms of technical infrastructure.

**1.4.2. Impact of measures**

In 2012 a whole of 60 loans to a total value of BGN 36 000 have been provided, whereof 80% to Roma families. Since 2013, 43 loans to a total value of BGN 29 000, whereof 70% offered to Roma families, have been provided. The joint Worthy Home Project in partnership with the Habitat Foundation have been launched in early September 2013 with the aim of establishing a coalition to combat bad housing conditions for Roma people. Upgrade of housing conditions of the villages and neighborhoods with compact roman population pointing the ensure of modern housing environment.

**1.4.3. Plans for 2014-2020 г.**

Targovishte Municipality and the Association NGO Club Targovishte proceed with implementation of Targovishte Municipality's Action Plan for Integration of Bulgarian Citizens of Roma origin 2012-2014 г.

Due to the loan repayment related problems on the part of the Roma residents in Malcho Malchev Neighbourhood in Targovishte (with only a few exceptions) Association NGO Club Targovishte has presently suspended any further collaboration with the Roma families there. A plan beyond the period above is still to be prepared..

**1.4.4. Please briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the area of housing and their impact.**

Building of gardens and alley networks, green areas, gardens for kids in village areas. Development of a municipal housing program for socially disadvantaged Roma population; Building or upgrading alleys, lawns and playgrounds. Removing all of the non- regulated buildings in Roma populated areas.

## **1.5. Antidiscrimination**

### **1.5.1. Measures taken since 2011:**

Targovishte Regional Police Department work jointly with Targovishte Municipality on implementation of Targovishte Municipality's Action Plan for Integration of Bulgarian Citizens of Roma Origin.

To improve administrative capacity in all Police Department units in order to ensure observation of minority rights, a trimester training course for the whole Regional Police Department staff and a bimonthly training for the District Police staff have been conducted.

Joint training sessions have been organised jointly with the Association NGO Club Targovishte, in order to improve work efficiency in multiethnic and multicultural environment in terms of observation of the human rights standards.

Preventive activities have been organised by the staff of the local Children's Pedagogical Chamber with participation of the local NGOs in educational establishments, in the Prevention Centre and in the Centre for Work with Children in order to prevent and combat acts of violence among children.

In order to raise awareness and intolerance toward any manifestation of discrimination and intolerance between the local communities, an explanatory and information campaign on Roma integration is being carried out in cooperation with the local NGO Club.

**Anti-discrimination** Learning and explanation of roman population with the laws of regulation № 1 of council of municipality. Lessons connected with human rights and Children's protection law in schools. Preventive and together work of the Police and Municipality against violation of laws (violation of law, arc. Consumption and others) in the places with mixed population. Expand of activity of council of municipality for a fight with antisocial things. From minor to major age by let them in society of ambassadors of NGO's and volunteers.

### **1.5.2. Impact of measures:**

- 91 police officers have been trained in human rights and in solving of minority issues.
- 6 training events have been held jointly with the local NGO Club in order to improve work efficiency in multiethnic and multicultural environment in terms of observing the human rights standards.
- 12 lectures have been held by the local Children's Pedagogical Chamber and NGOs in educational establishments, in the Prevention Centre and in the Centre for work with children.
- 12 explanatory and information campaigns have been carried out jointly with the local NGOs in order to support the Roma integration.
- Human rights guarantee in protection of public order, resistance of non tolerant and ethnic discrimination.
- Guarantee the rights of citizens, with a focus on women and children, protection of public order, prevention and combating intolerance and hate speech
- Celebrating 17<sup>th</sup> of January as a day of religious tolerance has had positive effect on communication and relations between Roma and non-Roma citizens.

### **1.5.3. Plans for 2014-2020**

Officers of the Regional Directorate for Home Affairs proceed with the work on the Targovishte Municipality's Action Plan toward implementation of the Regional Strategy for Integration of the Bulgarian Citizens of Roma Origin and of other socially disadvantaged population groups, living under conditions similar to those of the Roma people for 2012-2014. A plan beyond the period above is still to be prepared. Expand of activity of council of municipality for a fight with antisocial things. From minor to major age by let them in society of ambassadors of NGO's and volunteers.

Improving the efficiency of the police officers in multicultural environment in compliance with the standards of human rights.

- Training on human rights and the rights of the child in school;
- Interpretative information campaigns to raise awareness and intolerance of discrimination .
- To establish community centre that helps and gives information to risk groups, endangered of discrimination and segregation.
- Organizing talks explaining the rights of women and children and social protection.

**1.5.4** Including Roma citizens in cultural life of the community has positive effect on their integration in society. Prejudices towards Roma, ingrained in our society can't be overcome in just few years. Non-discrimination policy must be constant and purposeful, in order to achieve desired effect.

## **2. Funding**

Activities implemented in the 5 Policy Measures above have been implemented using various funding sources such as project funding and financing through the government-delegated budgets.

### **2.1 Estimate of funds spent on measures in the frame of the national Roma integration strategy since 2011**

**2.1.1.** EU funds, education, employment, health, housing. Complete funding activities in these fields. Most of the half programs of Labor Office are financed by Operational Programme "Developing of Human Resources"

**2.1.2.** national funds, education, employment, health, housing. - "Social protection" fund finances the establishing of food banks. AMALIPE finances project for preventing early school leaving

**2.1.3.** other sources {municipal budget} \ education, employment, health, housing.

### **2.2. Estimate for the budget of planned measures in the context of the national Roma integration strategy for the period 2014-2020**

**2.2.1.** EU funds - education, employment, health, housing. - Employment projects under Operational Programmes. Social services projects, financed by European Social Fund

**2.2.2.** national funds, education, employment, health, housing. - Continuing activities with the participation of "Social protection" fund. Securing employment under National Programmes of the Employment Agency. Applying for a project of the Ministry of Health to appoint a health mediator.

**2.2.3.** other sources {municipal budget} education, employment, health, housing. - Participation in projects of Nongovernmental organizations for establishment of community center. Realization of the project "Social Inclusion" project funded by the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Participation in projects under the Operational Programmes of the European Union. Participation in projects of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Participation in projects of Nongovernmental organizations.

### **2.3 Please, briefly describe one or two most relevant good practices in the funding area.**

It is essential that the cooperation of all directly involved institutions, representatives of NGOs and the Roma community.

**2.4. Please describe how lessons learnt from the current programming period will be taken forward?** We will try to ensure sustainability for the next programming period with all the good practices that we have implemented so far

## **26. HASKOVO REGIONAL**

### **1 - Policy Measures**

#### **1.1. Education**

##### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**



Dimitrovgrad: In community Dimitrovgrad is implementing the "In kindergarten and school - a journey to explore, cooperation and cohesion" on Operational Programme Human Resources Development" BG 051PO001-4.1.05-0167 with leading partner Dimitrovgrad and partner school "Vasil Levski" and Kindergarten "Lilia". The project aims to assist in the successful educational and social integration and the future realization of children and students from ethnic minorities. Activities include various clubs of interest - music, art, folk dances, folk music of ethnic groups, young chef, my native land, we are part of nature and parent clubs. Expected results of the project are to improved educational environment, increased motivation of students from ethnic groups and to better organize the free time of the students.

Topolovgrad : In School "St. Cyril and Methodius "- the village Oreshnik was carried a Project" Drink from the spring" according to Contract № BS-33.9-17/31.10.2011 under Priority 3" Promoting intercultural perspective as an integral part of the educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the process of modernization of the Bulgarian educational system " worth 6,200 (BGN). The Project lasts for 8 months, and includes 45 students from Roma provenance, 80 parents and 3 teachers. On Project at the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities following results were achieved: The Contacts "pupil – school" are intensive. The school helps students to build work experience in difficult times. Students collaborate together. They work as a team ,and the guideline is vision cooperation and sociality, rather than competition and isolation. Learning process is active. Students talk about what they are learning, write about it, about their experiences and apply it in their daily lives. Feedback is quick. Students need appropriate feedback. The time management is effective. Expectations are high and they are important for all students. Individuality is respected. Students have different learning styles and knowledge. The results are maximized so that all students achieve their potential for learning.

## **1.2. Employment**

### **Steps taken since 2011**

Dimitrovgrad : A good practice in the field of employment is the existing social enterprise (SE) to SUPTS, which operates in two directions - "tailoring" and "repair of household appliances." Both fields employ persons at risk - people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and single parents. Social enterprise providing them with training, sheltered employment, selection and monitoring of implemented activities, social services and employment mediation (if willing and able to go into the private sector). Currently, the social enterprise employing 15 people. For all workers in the enterprise the opportunity to work in a team is an extremely valuable work ,that gives them a reason to come out of their homes every day and go socialize with different people, the vast majority of users are now able to carry out independent work in some cases outside the enterprise and take responsibility for it. And the financial results of their work makes them more independent, useful for themselves, family and society.

Lubimec : Increasing the employability and skills of unemployed Roma in year 2013

Total 34 persons from minority backgrounds covered in 2013:

- 24 persons for program "From social assistance to employment" (employment program);
- 4 persons for program "Employment support program";
- 5 persons employed by firms.

## **1.3. Health**

### **1.3.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Dimitrovgrad : Dimitrovgrad in conjunction with the "National Network of mediators" performing work on the project of "European partnership program in the community of GlaxoSmithKline - Improving the health status of Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe" Together for Better Health - About us ,from us. " For this purpose in March 2013 is appointed a health mediator that serves ethnic Roma in Dimitrovgrad . The aim of the program is to enhance the health status of Roma communities on the local base. In his work the health mediator hold consultations to resolve health and social cases, provides health information in order to increase the sensitivity to health issues , assist GPs and RHI to carry out immunizations , screening and others. Furthermore, the health mediator keep in touch with representatives of institutions and assist with activities that improving the health literacy of the Roma community.

Topolovgrad: Hospital care, "SBALVB-Topolovgrad" - Ltd is the only health facility for inpatient care in the municipality. The market for medical services is only within the municipality Topolovgrad. The hospital is structured under the law of "Health Establishments Act " as a specialized hospital for active treatment. The hospital revealed a 1 clinical unit with 20 beds. The hospital has lots of clinical laboratory and office for diagnosis imaging.

In 2012, were found outbreaks of tuberculosis among the Roma population in Topolovgrad and corrective measures are taken by the health authorities. In the same year research were conducted among the Roma in Topolovgrad on the following programs: "Prevention and Control of HIV AIDS" and "Prevention of tuberculosis in Bulgaria Roma", implemented by the "Tolerance and mutual assistance.

1. Interviews are conducted with adolescents and their parents for family planning and health education (AIDS) and diseases STDs; implementation of programs for prevention of drug use).

2. Early formation of social and health education among the Roma population to avoid the risk of drug addiction, prostitution, people trafficking and other, through information campaigns among children.

#### **1.4. Housing**

##### **1.4.1. Steps taken since 2011**

Dimitrovgrad : In the plan of the municipality for improve the housing conditions of Roma is set to build social housing. For this purpose, is provided establishment of the Centre for temporary accommodation ,in witch planning of the work has started. Currently Municipal Administration develops architectural design for the reconstruction of a building suitable for a center for temporary accommodation, located in a neighborhood with compact Roma population. If the future funding is possible, the center should be built. This will provide temporary accommodation services for people with disabilities, which includes and Roma.

Topolovgrad: The majority of Roma live in Topolovgrad, their homes are mostly located in the southwest and the northeast area of the city. In the majority people live in poverty, the houses are one-story, often several families that have two or three children living in the same house. Topolovgrad municipality has 61 units. of public housing, as in 20 of them are placed Roma families. At that time most tenants are irregular and have very low income, which is a big problem for collecting the rentals payable.

#### **1.5. Anti-discrimination**

Dimitrovgrad: Perform monthly checks by mobile groups of regional police department (RPD), department "ZD" and local commissions in order to prevent children from falling into the street and control of the observance of public order. Introducing pupils in the first grade with their local inspector and inspector children pedagogical room, witch explaining them the role of the police for assistance and protection.

Lubimec: Training on “Human Rights” and the “Rights of the children” in school, work on projects, “Police near the society”, “Children's Police Academy”.

## **27. SHUMEN**

### **1.1. Education**

1.1.1. Measures for the period after 2011.

- Full coverage of Roma children in schools, reducing the number of dropouts to the levels of dropouts from the majority. For this purpose a series of measures and mechanisms are undertaken for working with the parents of these children.
- Improving the quality of education in segregated kindergartens and schools in the large Roma and rural areas with predominantly Roma children. Involving parents in school life through collaborative events, and educating of the illiterate. Raising the classification of teachers working with Roma children.
- Prevention of school dropouts and taking measures to support acquisition of literacy of the illiterate Roma adults. Inclusion of children and students from ethnic minorities in extra-curricular and out of school activities, courses, choosing an optional (voluntary) subject, sports clubs.
- Implementation of educational mediator in the system of preparatory class for better communication with parents and convincing them to regularly visit the lessons.
- Application of various forms and programs for children with difficulties and deficits in learning who have dropped out from school. The aim is their reintegration.
- Further training of pedagogical specialists to work in multicultural environment is achieved through short-term training courses conducted by RIE - Shumen and the project "Qualification of Pedagogical Specialists" under OP "Human Resources Development" implemented by the Ministry of Education.

1.1.2. Provide concrete results of the implemented measures

- Trained 41 pedagogical specialists to work in a multicultural environment.
- More than 400 Roma children are included in different program.

1.1.3. Action Plan for 2014-2020 - in the process of preparation.

#### **1.1.4. Please share briefly 1-2 good practices in education.**

Most of the municipalities have implemented projects under OP "Human Resources Development" under "Educational Integration of Children and Pupils of Ethnic Minorities". The main objectives of the projects are supporting the equal access to education and integration of children from ethnic minorities, as well as work with their parents to involve them in the education of their children. As a result of the projects, the number of Roma children covered by the education process have been increased.

Most municipalities have implemented projects with a focus on inclusion, and prevention of early school leaving of Roma children.

- For the period 2011-2012, on the territory of the city of Novi Pazar, a project has been implemented "Integration of Children and Pupils of Roma Origin through Participation in Extracurricular Activities", which lead to the increase of Roma children covered by the educational process and greater involvement of parents in school life.
- In 2013, in two schools in Shumen Municipality - Vith school "Enjo Markovski" and "Tr. Simeonov" school, predominantly of Roma children are working under the NP "At School without Absence," measure "No Free Time" and NP "We Care for Every Pupil", measure

"Providing Additional Training of Students in Lower Secondary Education to Raise the Level of Achievement in General Education".

Specific measurable results of the activities could not be given, as there is no tool with which to determine the ethnicity of unemployed persons.

## **1.2. Employment**

The economic crisis has hit the economy of the region of Shumen, and affected the entire population of the region, and especially severe the Roma population. Currently, a major part of them are unemployed. The number of the unemployed Roma that are not registered in the Labor Office is huge and they are not actively seeking work. Most Roma have not acquired professional qualification degree (although they have the respective professional skills) that disrupts their employment.

To overcome the severe problems in employment among the Roma targeted measures were taken such as:

- Ensuring access of Roma to the labor market and to various tools and initiatives for self-employment. Training and retraining of unemployed Roma as well as of employed Roma in accordance with occupations in demand in the labor market. Motivation of inactive persons to register with the Labour Offices and their inclusion in employment programs. Vocational guidance, training low-skilled workers and raising the skills for job search.
- Promoting employment through training of unemployed for key competences Professional Qualification of Roma: measures will be taken to include a larger number of Roma in vocational training programs and acquisition of degrees.
- Activation of long-term unemployed and economically inactive persons by promoting labor mediation. Roma employment agents are hired in the Labour Directorates in the region.
- For the implementation of these measures, the municipalities of Shumen Region and the Shumen Region Administration is actively involved in the programs of MLSP and in projects under the OP "Human Resources Development" - "New Choice", "Employment Support" "Return to Work" , "Development" and others.

1.2.2. The share of Roma women in the structure of unemployment is higher than the group of Roma men. Job placement of persons without education and training in most cases is only possible through subsidized jobs. These are mainly persons of Roma origin. Mothers with children under 3 years of age, and people with disabilities find employment difficult, especially if they are of Roma origin. There is a trend of increasing the residence time of the unemployed in the labor market. The level of education is a factor in layoffs, faster exempt are those with lower levels of education. The deepening of the financial and economic crisis, and the restructuring of the economy, impacts the scope and structure of unemployment.

Municipalities in the region of Shumen work actively for the development and implementation of regional programs and projects. Eliminating the problems caused by poverty and unemployment and social exclusion is a strategic objective in the development of the region.

Develop and implement projects to create conditions for the provision of career development and employment to some of the most affected social groups of unemployed persons through job creation. A real prerequisite is being created for the recovery of the working habits of the unemployed Roma with low or not demanded by labor market vocational training and shortage of key competencies, social motivation of individuals, including unemployed with

low education. Their labor activity, social security in the short term related to health and social insurance of employed persons is increasing.

**1.2.4.** A mediator is appointed in the Labour Office in the city of Novi Pazar, whose activity is related to specific work with the Roma community to motivate to work. As a result of the mediator's activities, 193 persons are registered and 87 are included in different programs. The regional administration in Shumen hired 15 unemployed under the program "Employment Support" and 4 are of Roma origin. They helped in the repair of state owned buildings.

### **1.3. Health**

Currently, extremely negative trends are observed related to the health of the Roma people: high morbidity rate, high mortality rate, low life expectancy and uninsured for health care persons. These problems are exacerbated by the difficult access to quality health services, as well as exclusion from the health insurance system of many Roma.

To overcome these negative trends in the municipalities of Shumen Region the following measures were taken:

- Ensuring access to health services for disadvantaged individuals and expansion and intensification of the activity.
- Preventive measures for maternal and child health. Reproductive health of people without health insurance. Monitoring compliance with the recommendations and instructions from the medical examinations.
- Providing families with young children at risk access to health and early childhood development; discovery and visits to pregnant women among Roma families.
- Ensuring equal access to health services for people with disabilities from the ethnic minorities. Covering groups of the Roma community in prevention programs, preventive immunization, fight with TB, HIV / AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, early sexual initiation, participation in immunization campaigns among families at risk, close links with GPs.
- Specialists in family-counseling centers in Veliki Preslav, Shumen, Novi Pazar, Shumen Municipal Health Center and the Social Services in Shumen work with children and young Roma on topics such as health education, talent development, social communication and others.
- At least three times per annum mobile medical units for free and anonymous testing for HIV, tuberculosis and other are organized.
- Health mediators are appointed who work individually with each person who does not have a GP, and assist the administration and logistics for integration of such persons into the existing medical practice.
- Voluntary teams are organized weekly performing outreach activities and training - part of the terms of reference of the program "Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS" at the local level.
- Special emphasis is placed on ongoing care for pregnant women and mothers with small children. The health mediators and the institutions involved, with the active support of UNICEF, perform daily monitoring and social and medical support to the defined target group.

In the Family Counseling Centers in the area the following activities are implemented:

- assistance in submission of documents and attendance at an appearance before the LEDC children and adults and enrollment in hospitals;
- program "Healthy Child" to improve health education of pregnant women;
- future mothers are covered to build motherhood skills and prepare for childbirth;
- counseling of pregnant women and mothers with young children and others: pregnant women and mothers with young children and others.

As a result of the activities of the mobile units for the last year 3300 people from risk communities are mapped, of which 1800 persons potential users of services rated at risk.

**1.3.4.** During the operation of the Family Counseling Center (FCC) in the city of Novi Pazar, 97 women were included in the program of "Family Planning." Contracts were signed with two gynecologists, one of them has outlets in the village of Pet Mogili, Municipality Nikola Kozlevo, the village of Todor Ikonov, municipality Kaolinovo, the city of Kaspichan and the city of Novi Pazar, while the other is working in the city of Novi Pazar. The field work of the Center allows for identification of the groups at risk in the community, mostly in marginalized communities, which gives priority to FCC to build a trust relationship with the population and leads to the inclusion of women at risk in the program. All are examined free-of-charge by a doctor gynecologist, a large part of them are bought drugs for treatment, and after that more than half of the women were placed vaginal spirals.

Examined 331 women by a gynecologist in 2012;

Examined 141 pregnant women by FCC;

Examined 77 women to place vaginal spiral;

Lung examination of 230 persons by a mobile medical unit;

HIV / AIDS examination of 155 persons by a mobile medical unit;

Visit of mobile medical units on the territory of Novi Pazar municipality:  
gynecologists, lung examination /TB/, HIV/AIDS and other.

**1.3.5.** Reconsidering the health measures: It is necessary when planning any social intervention to include persons from the target group itself and the implementation of specific measures to be done with the consent and approval of the community leaders. Guiding principle for organized medical check-ups is the personal example of local leaders - when a person with a social impact in the community takes over the health intervention, he has been followed by his circle.

#### **1.4. Housing**

1.4.1. Living conditions and infrastructure in the Roma districts in the region of Shumen are satisfactory.

- Municipalities try to repair the streets in Roma districts with their available budgets.
- A project of Municipality of Novi Pazar has been approved to complete the sewerage network and to build WWTP in Novi Pazar. The envisaged activities will be implemented in Roma districts as well.
- Disadvantaged families are placed in public housing, but there is no evidence of their ethnic origin, as during the application process information for self-identification by ethnicity is not required.

1.4.2. The majority of Roma have their own homes.

#### **1.5. Non-discrimination**

- Effective implementation of policies for Roma integration to achieve equality, decent living and full participation in public life.
- Overcoming cultural barriers in communication and all forms of discriminatory attitudes. Celebrating together all holidays regardless of ethnicity and nationality.
- Validation of tolerant interethnic relations through all forms, incl. sports. setting-up of football teams from different ethnicities.

1.5.2. Provide concrete results of the measures taken

1.5.3. Action Plan for 2014-2020

### **1. Funding**

2.1. Please provide a statement of funds utilized by the projects after 2011 with a focus on Roma, and specify:

2.1.1. From EU funds

- Municipality of Kaspichan - OPHRD to the amount of BGN 157 905. Out of which, BGN 21 690 are used for the training of 43 teachers for work in a multicultural environment aiming at improving the quality of education of children, equal access to education and work in the newly established interactive units for higher motivation for personal development and better methods for educational integration.
- Municipality of Novi Pazar - OPHRD "Renovation and Reconstruction of Part of the Educational Infrastructure in the Municipality of Novi Pazar and its Transformation into an Attractive Center for Education and Training" worth BGN 5 598 440.16. A fully renovated and refurbished buildings welcomed pupils for the new 2012-2013 school year in "N.Y. Vaptzarov" school in the city of Novi Pazar and "Hristo Botev" school in the village of Pamukchin with a concentration of large number of ethnic groups. Renovation of six kindergartens in the city of Novi Pazar and the village of Pamukchin.
- Municipality of Novi Pazar - OPHRD to the Ministry of Education ""Together we Can Do Wonders" under "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities" worth BGN 237 771.93.
- Beauty in being Different Unity in Diversity" - a project of secondary school "St.St. Cyril and Methodius" in the city of Smiadovo in partnership with the Municipality of Smiadovo. Value of the project BGN 11 000. Partner of the "Amalipe" foundation in the project "Reducing Dropout of Roma Children"

2.1.2. From national funds

- CEICSEM - project of Municipality of Novi Pazar worth BGN 14 601. 74.
- CEICSEM - project "Together We are Better", 2011, BGN 19 687, Program "Integration of Children and Students from Minority Groups"

## **28. YAMBOL REGION**

### **1.1 Education**

#### **1.1.1. Steps taken since 2011**

1. Guaranteeing the rights for equal access to quality education for children and students of Roma background in ethnically mixed schools and kindergartens.
2. Preventing the dropping out of the education system of children and students from compulsory pre-school age.
3. Improving the quality of education in the kindergartens and in the pre-school training groups in rural areas with high proportion of children of Roma background.

#### **1.1.2 Concrete results of measures**

1. The schools and kindergartens on the territory of Yambol receive information regarding opportunities for additional funding for activities through participation in national and European programs and projects and are provided with funding in order to support the education and upbringing of children and students.

In the municipality of "Tundzha" will be launched a project under OP "HRD" municipality "Tundzha", scheme "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities", during which 23 workshops for working with children will be organized and trainings with teaching staff to work in multiethnic environment will be implemented.

In the municipality of Yambol reliefs are provided (partial fee or exemption from its payment) upon payment of monthly fees for visiting kindergartens in the municipality of Yambol.

2. In 2012 and 2013 in Tundzha Municipality 2 new groups for all day pre-school education are revealed, one in Kindergarten "Radost" Boyadzhik, municipality "Tundzha" and one in kindergarten "Chickweed" Skalitsa village, municipality "Tundzha " and one crèche group in kindergarten in Tenevo village, municipality " Tundzha "by all day kindergarten was transformed into kindergarten.

In the municipality of Bolyarovo free and cheaper meals are provided - national programs of the Ministry of Education and Science. The municipality provides meals in mess rooms and cheaper food.

In the municipality of Elhovo transportation costs for students over the age of 16 within the municipality shall be borne by the municipal budget.

On Tundzha's territory three schools are working on a "Program to reduce dropout of Roma children in school," which is supported by the Center "Amalipe."

3. In Tundzha Municipality 12 workgroups will be formed with children from 3 to 4 years old and 10 groups for additional activities with children of Roma ethnic background of 5 years old and 6 years old to increase their readiness for school.

In Yambol Municipality to the parents are explained the obligations to ensure the presence of their children in kindergartens and schools for the time that they are subject to mandatory pre-school and compulsory education.

On Yambol's territory during the academic 2012/2013 year, the schools work on these programs:

- Reducing dropout of Roma children in school
- Integration of children and students from ethnic minorities in the education system
- Collecting and keeping of students under 16 years old of Roma ethnic background and building an effective system of interaction with the socio-cultural environment.

All municipalities on Yambol's territory are working on national programs and projects concerning the integration and adaptation of children and students of Roma ethnic background.

#### **1.1.3 Plan for 2014-2020**

- Full coverage and keeping of Roma children in school
- Increasing the number of Roma youths, who study in secondary schools and universities
- Raising the educational level and skills of adult Romas
- Continuation process to provide a supportive and attractive environment in integrated schools and kindergartens
- Inclusion in school board of ethnic Romas in the development of the school policies
- Bolyarovo Municipality will also require schools to develop their own school integration programs containing specific measures in key areas.

#### **1.1.4 Please, briefly describe 1-2 good practices in the field of education and their impact Effective forms of working with students during school year:**

- Conducting lectures and discussions on topics related to intercultural education - traditions, customs and festivals of different ethnic groups
- Encouraging Roma children to participate in contests, Olympiads and competitions
- Prevention of Roma students dropping out of school

#### **1.1.5 Please, briefly describe 1-2 lessons learned that have led to a revision of the measures in the field of education**

Successfully implemented is the program to reduce dropout of Roma children of school and the program for inclusion of Roma parents to the educational process and enhancing their participation in school life.

It was found that during the academic 2013/2013 as a result of relieves in paying monthly fees for visiting kindergartens in the Yambol municipality and Tundzha municipality there were no children to leave childcare institutions.



## **Measures which could have a negative impact on Roma and how such negative effects can be minimized.**

- Insufficient use of the new technologies in the learning process.
- Ignoring the need for individual and differentiated approach when working with bilingual children and their parents.

## **1.2 Employment**

### **1.2.1 Measures taken since 2011**

1. Improving Roma access to the labor market and increasing the share of employment among them.

2. Organization of training courses for an active job-seekers of Roma origin

### **1.2.2 Provide concrete results of measures**

All municipalities in the province of Yambol apply for and work in programs and employment measures related to employment.

Provides an employment for Roma in programs and employment measures as part of the persons are included on the National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" and take up employment in the primary market.

The People are included in literacy courses and courses for professional qualification acquisition.

The unemployed of Roma origin are included in vocational training courses and literacy courses to enhance employability.

In the period from 2011. far 781 people have started work and 402 of them are included in subsidized employment.

### **1.2.3 Plan for 2014-2020**

- Increasing the competitiveness of Roma in the labor market through the development and implementation of projects for training and retraining of Roma
- Activation and involvement of labor market inactive and discouraged persons
- Encouraging the including of Roma in programs to develop their own business, to providing consulting services to develop their own business, etc.

### **1.2.4 Please, briefly describe 1-2 good practices in employment and their impact**

- The projects for providing social services - the "Personal Assistant" and "Housekeeper" are successfully implemented In the municipality of Elhovo. Some of the people that receive social services and those involved in the implementation of the projects are of Roma origin.
- Successful is the implementation of the project "I have a family" that supports the de-institutionalization of children, by creating and implementing a sustainable model for the development of substitute family care for children placed in specialized institutions and children at risk of abandonment. Residents are 3 Roma children.

### **1.2.5 Please, briefly describe 1-2 lessons learned that have led to a revision of the measures in the field of employment**

Creating restrictions in participation in employment programs in consecutive years, leading to a lack of motivation for seeking permanent employment outside the scope of the Temporary employment program.

## **1.3 Health**

### **1.3.1 Measures taken since 2011**

1. Ensuring equal access, providing to basic coverage of health insurance and health services for Roma, preventive measures and ensuring regulars preventive examinations

2. Developing the mediation, the volunteering and the various forms of work for and in the community (social health centers, etc.)

### **1.3.2 Provide concrete results of measures**

In 2011, mammographic examinations were performed on 509 women from the Roma minority from Yambol region, and during 2012 - 529, with granted by the Ministry of Health a mobile mammography unit.

In 2012, in Yambol are committed examinations and immunizations to persons of Roma origin with mobile pediatric offices.

Together with students and professors from the Medical College of Stara Zagora, Yambol Cardiological center and health mediators are made measurement of blood glucose and blood pressure of 74 Roma.

In July 2013 was performed a complementary immunization campaign against measles of not covered children from 13 months to 15 years in the field. 135 children are covered with a vaccine Prioriks in the five municipalities of the district.

2. In 2011, actively supported by the Roma coordinator of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion" were presented a total of 39 lectures on various topics and covered 639 persons. With allocated financial funds from 1200 lv. the program are printed and distributed leaflets, immunization cards and chemicals.

Health discussions were held among the Roma community involving persons under 18, 291 and over 18 - 331. Common are health education materials on various topics, and condoms are provided with funds awarded under the program.

In 2012, exports amounted to 35 health lectures in the Roma community and covered 652 Roma issues "Contraception and prevention of AIDS", "benefits of condom", "Sexual transmission of infections." Are distributed health education materials and condoms.

In 2012 have readed a lecture on "Prevention of osteoporosis" to persons of Roma origin.

During the campaign, "Interviewed for 4 symptoms of tuberculosis" are covered 170 people with instructions why is necessary and where they can have a test. Were conducted awareness activities on the importance of preventive examinations and covered a total of 355 persons. Exported 4 lectures on "Tuberculosis - epidemiology" of 96 persons of Roma origin.

### **1.3.3. Plan 2014-2020**

- Improving preventive activities among the Roma population.
- Increasing the health knowledge and awareness of the Roma population.
- Determining the health mediator for contact with the Roma community

### **1.3.4 Please, briefly describe the 1-2 good practices in health and their impact**

Perform a free mammographic preventive examination to women of Roma background without health insurance, screening of bone density of the Association "Women without Osteoporosis", conducting to free medical examinations within the National Program "Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS," of the Ministry of Health, free examinations for tuberculosis and free screening tests for thyroid disease.

### **1.3.5 Please, briefly describe the 1-2 lessons learned that have led to a revision of the measures in the field of health**

**Measures that could have a negative impact on Roma and how such negative consequences are minimized.**

Among older Roma observed low culture a reluctance to be informed and they refuse a medical visit. The most of them don't have a GPs , that's why they can't to conduct preventive examination and do not take enough care of their health.

## **1.4 Hoising**

### **1.4.1 Measures taken since 2011 until now**

1. Done is not a reconstruction of the educational infrastructure into the kindergartens in villages: Boyadzhik, Bezmer, Kukorevo. Have been carried out the planned repairs into the kindergartens in villages: Roza, Chargan and Pobeda.

2. Roma communities are living in separate neighborhoods. The neighborhoods are located in the regulation of the settlements. Municipality Bolyarovo has at 10 flats and 22 residential buildings. In 12 of them are accommodated Roma families. Municipality Yambol has at 71 municipal housing, but all of them are occupied.

#### **1.4.2 Provide concrete results of measures**

1. The objects of educational infrastructure have improved after performing the reconstruction and planned repairs.

2. For the village Zavoy is worked out and proceed MAF detailed plan - a plan for regulation and building up of land with ID 30096.500.1 / PI 031058 by KBC / for housing and involvement in the regulation of settlement.

3. The municipality is suitable for housing construction properties - a total of 6 fields in the villages: Boyadzhik, Drazhevo, Kukorevo, Hadjidimitrovo with capacity for building of a 10 family houses with a total of 20 social housing. The terrains are available on the grid, water supply, transport infrastructure and objects for public service.

4. Yambol municipality has implemented several projects related to the improvement of living conditions in the neighborhood of Roma population in the city, including completion and rehabilitation of the technical infrastructure / 8 streets in the neighborhood / repair and reconstruction of sports facilities near neighborhood.

5. The population of Roma in Elhovo inhabits relatively urbanized housing, worth the standard elements - water and electricity.

#### **1.4.3 Plan for 2014-2020**

- Improvement of existing and development of new technical and social infrastructure - project "Reconstruction of internal water supply network - Bolyarovo"
- Increasing the energy efficiency of housing.
- Yambol Municipality continues to maintain the repaired and built sites and facilities after completing of the projects
- Creating of mechanisms and institutional procedures for dealing with issues relating to property and to settle the legal status of Roma's housing, i.e. stimulation of Roma families to legalize their homes.
- Development of new, modification of existing DSP and developing new regulation plans to introduce in regulation of Roma settlements in accordance with the Action Plan of the National Programme for Improving the Living Conditions of Roma in Bulgaria.

#### **1.4.4 Please, briefly describe the 1-2 good practices in living conditions and their impact**

Application of the municipalities for projects to improving the living conditions in neighborhoods with Roma population leads to improved living conditions, including and the related infrastructure.

#### **1.4.5 Please, briefly describe the 1-2 good practices in living conditions and their impact**

The Realization of projects of the municipalities in the area of infrastructure, are leading to improved living conditions of the Roma and stimulating in them a positive attitude and concern for protection and preservation of the built.

### **1.5 Antidiscrimination**

#### **1.5.1 Measures taken since 2011 until now**

1. Measures shall be taken when working with the public in accordance with the laws of the State - the protection of public order and the prevention of intolerance towards minorities.

2. Inclusion in it annual plan activities for the prevention of the discrimination leading to numerous acts of aggression and violence among adolescents.

3. Organizing events and conducting discussions in the schools

#### **1.5.2 Provide concrete results of measures**

1. To Yambol Municipality operates Sector for prevention and public order (SPOOR), which, together with the officers of the police station - Yambol and municipal police working together to protect public order and guarantee the rights of citizens in neighborhoods with predominantly Roma population in the city.

LCCJD Department and "Child Protection" in "Social Assistance" organize a socially - preventive health care for children in need of social protection and a normal development.

2. Local committees to combat with public nuisance of minors and juveniles each year include in its annual plan activities for the prevention of discrimination leading to numerous acts of aggression and violence among adolescents.

3. The Municipality organized sports tournaments, games, contests and competitions as a way to combat aggression and efficient way to unite, and the elimination of discrimination among young people and adolescents in the municipality.

Jointly with the school managements are implemented activities in and out of school to reduce the possibility of children's to falling in hazardous environments.

### **1.5.3 Plan for 2014-2020**

- Fulfill the objectives in the Municipal Programme for the prevention of violence among children.

- Implementation of activities in accordance with The national program for the prevention of discrimination, violence and aggression among adolescents.

- Implementation of the goals set by the municipal programs for child protection

In the municipality of Elhovo, Boliarovo, Straldzha, Yambol and Tundzha LCCJD Department and "Child Protection" in the "Social Assistance" organize a socially prevention activities for children in need of social protection and normal development.

## **2. Financing**

**2.1 Please, provide a reference for the absorption of the projects in 2011 with focus on Roma, specifying which are they:**

### **2.1.1. From European funds**

#### Municipality Boliarovo

"Reconstruction and renovation of the building of the school Dr. Petar Beron, through the introduction of energy efficiency measures" BG161PO001/4.1-03-0031 - Cost of the project 1 151 010,56 lv. 172 ,651,58 lv. municipal financing 15%, implementation period 27.02.2012g. to 27.12.2014g.

"Give me your hand now, because tomorrow may be too late" BG051PO001-4.1.05-0197. Cost of the project 107 000 lv., implementation period 2012-2014g.

Project "Children, our love and concern". The project idea was developed by the program "Empowering the Powerless in times of crisis" supported by the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe and the Extraordinary Fund at the Institute "Open Society"- city Sofia. Cost of the project 7 000 lv.

#### Yambol Municipality

Scheme "Development" / Operational programme "Human Resources Development"/ 2011g. – 159 689 lv., 2012g. -183 886 lv., until august 2013g. - 138 398 lv.

Scheme "Employment support"/ Operational programme "Human Resources Development"/ 2013g.- 46 638 lv.

#### Elhovo Municipality

"Education for all - a path to a better future" in partnership with the foundation EKIP, accomplished with the financial support of Operational programme "Human Resources Development", financed by the European Social Fund 2007 - 2013 year;

BG 2005/017-335.01.03 " Construction and repair of energy saving effect of the building of the school "Sv. Paisii Hilendarski" Elhovo " Scheme for providing grant financial aid: "Improvement of the status and integration of disadvantaged ethnic position minorities with a special focus on Roma";

"Let's give a hand", competitive process 33.7-2010 Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities with financial support from Roma Education Fund – Budapest

Straldzha Municipality - CBC projects – 408 561 lv.

Tundzha Municipality

OP "HRD" scheme "Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities" project cost 206 958 42 lv.

"Day care center for adults" 18 + "- an alternative to overcoming social exclusion in rural areas" OPHRD - 127 686.57 lv.

### **2.1.2. From national funding**

Municipality Boliarovo

"Support for a decent life"- Project cost 47,664 Levs, implementation period 08.10.2010 - 03.2014,

"Mutual assistance in the community" - Project value 245,040.74 lev, period of performance 15 months - from 23.11.2012 to 23.02.2014,

Project "Social Dining" funded by the "Social Protection". Eat 40 persons, including 35 Roma. The project was launched in 2009 and continues to this Torques with 2.50 lev per day for food.

NP of Education - project "Improving the quality of education in central schools by introducing all-day organization of the educational process." Is performed in two schools in the municipality. So far spent 42,514 in lev Stefan Karadjovo and 84,794 in lev Municipality.

Yambol Municipality

"From Social Assistance to Employment": 2011. - 38166 lv.; 2012г. – 6 908 lv.; of sept.2013г. – 60 012 lv.

Regional employment: 2011. - 50,194 lv., 2012. - 42 176 lv.

Social service "Public Kitchen" / funding "Social protection" MLSP / 2011. - 25,285 lv., 2012. - 26,195 lv., to the end of September 2013. - 27 764 lv.

Straldzha Municipality - 457 957lv.

Tundzha Municipality

Project "School communities - a model of socialization and educational integration in small towns countryside", funded by the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities and Education Fund - 39 430 lv.

### **2.1.3. From other sources**

Municipality Boliarovo

Municipal funding for 2011, 2012 and 2013 amounted to 8150 lv. for textbooks, and clothing for children and students at the beginning of each school year.

Yambol Municipality

COMMUNITY CENTER - Yambol, to integrated delivery of social services to children and families at risk / project funding for social inclusion of MLSP by World Bank /: 2011 and 2012 - 1,143,604 lv.

Straldzha Municipality – 9880lv.

Tundzha Municipality - The "Desired Spaces" - a complex model of an integrated approach to the implementation of effective policies for children and families in rural areas in rural,

financed by loans № 7612 BG from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, according to a signed agreement № RD 09 - 87 of 05.07.2011

The approved total project budget is 854,398 lv., as the services are worth 504,398 lv., works are 180,000 lv., and furniture and equipment -170,000 lv.

2.2 An estimate of the budget for the planned measures in the context of implementation of the Strategy for Integration of Roma 2014-2020. Please, note for any of the key (or other):

2.2.1 From European funds - Education / externally funded projects /

2.2.2 From national funding - health / 5 HMs funded as delegated state activities /

2.2.3 From other sources- integrated services for children and families at risk / Social Inclusion Project /

**2.3 Please, briefly describe the 1-2 good practices in financing and their impact**

The introduction of community work through the activities of educational mentors in the schools of the municipality "Tundzha" project "School communities - a model of socialization and educational integration in small towns countryside", funded by the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic minorities and the Roma Education Fund

**2.4 Please, briefly describe the 1-2 lessons learned that have led to a revision of the measures in the field of financing**

Education, employment and urbanization of the living environment should be top priorities in local integration policies.