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1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR ROMA INCLUSION

- *Please describe (if any) changes in 2014 in the participation of Roma in decision-making processes/arrangements and public administration structures.*

During 2014 there had been no significant change in participation of Roma in decision-making processes or in public administration structures. The participation of Roma in the decision-making processes at the state level remained primarily through the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Roma Communities (hereinafter "USVRK"). The Government of the Slovak Republic appointed the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities (hereinafter "the Plenipotentiary") by his Statute as a government advisory body in order to perform tasks aimed at addressing issues of Roma communities and to implement systemic measures to improve their position and integration into society. From October 2012 the position of the Plenipotentiary is held by Peter Pollák, who is of Roma origin.

Since 2004 USVRK has gradually built up 6 regional offices, which operate in regions with the highest concentration of Roma communities. USVRK has been also designated as a National Contact Point for the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and as a National Coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

USVRK as a part of its communication and cooperation policy supports the inclusion of Roma into political system, particularly in the area of local governments. Before the elections to the local governments USVRK was holding consultation with the candidates of Roma origin about the programs they planned to implement to improve the situation of marginalized Roma communities. USVRK afterwards supported successful candidates in the form of consultations and recommendations. In November 2014 USVRK organized educational training for newly elected Roma mayors. Support in education of mayors of Roma origin in the form of special educational programs was provided also by several universities and NGOs.

While in the 2010 elections to the local governments, total of 28 mayors who declared their belonging to the Roma national minority were elected, in the 2014 elections, it was estimated that 33 Roma mayors and almost 400 Roma members of municipal parliaments were elected to the local governments.

During the election to European Parliament in May 2014, none of the Roma candidates was elected.



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- *Please describe how and to what extent you have been cooperating with Roma civil society organizations, including the Decade Focal Point in your country, regarding the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of your Decade Action Plan or National Roma Integration Strategy.*

Systematic cooperation with NGOs is carried out at central as well as at regional level. Representatives of USVRK and the Plenipotentiary himself regularly meet with representatives of Roma NGOs. At the local level, the cooperation is taking place also through regional offices of USVRK located in Prešov, Spišská Nová Ves, Banská Bystrica, Rimavská Sobota, Košice and Nitra.

USVRK uses supporting platforms in the form of working groups to strengthen the dialogue with local and regional authorities as well as with Roma civil society. During 2013 and 2014, the representatives of Roma NGOs had participated particularly in working groups meetings for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the EU Funds for Roma Inclusion and the implementation of the ex-ante conditionality. Working Group of the Plenipotentiary for EU funds in the programming period 2014 - 2020 aimed to assist in the preparation of programming documents on inclusion of marginalized Roma communities (hereinafter "MRC") for the programming period 2014-2020. The members of the working group were representatives of non-governmental organizations, local governments and ministries. Main goal of the working group was to provide expertise in preparation of concrete and effective measures in the new programming period and ensure that interventions carried out by the ministries would directly address areas with the greatest concentration of separated and segregated communities and at the same time create the optimum conditions for increasing participation of Roma NGOs in the new programming period.

Representatives of Roma civil society have been participating also on the process of the revision of the Strategy for Roma inclusion up to 2020 as part of working groups for particular action plans. This process of revision is implemented by USVRK since 4th quarter of 2014 and will finish on 31st October 2015, when the revised document will be submitted to the Government.

- *Please describe briefly the process of monitoring and evaluation of policies targeted towards Roma. How do you measure the impact of these policies (through field visits, surveys, independent evaluations etc.)?*

The monitoring system, respectively the determination of methods and mechanisms to evaluate the impact of the Roma integration, is one of the five criteria of the ex-ante



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conditionality for the framework of the national Roma integration strategies. The level of the achieved progress of the integration of the Roma through the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma inclusion up to 2020 (hereinafter “Strategy”) can only be measured on the basis of a sophisticated system of qualitative and quantitative indicators, including monitoring procedures. Since the Strategy contains only a basic framework of measurable indicators, the criterion in question is under the ex-ante conditionality fulfilled only partially. Therefore USVRK in the early 2013 decided to create a proposal of a monitoring scheme consulted with the representatives of NGOs and The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The structure of this scheme has three levels:

- **Technically-administrative:** an output is the monitoring report on the implementation of measures defined in the Strategy, presented annually to the Government of the Slovak Republic. USVRK implemented an assessment of the state of the implementation of specific actions/activities in the monitoring period in cooperation with relevant ministries responsible for the implementation of measures. Relevant ministries itemize a list of actions implemented in the monitoring period, the amount of financial resources and the description of activities with a timeframe for their implementation. Depending on the nature of the action, also the size of the target group is quantified.

Monitoring report on the implementation of the Strategy for years 2012 and 2013 was a subject of the inter-ministerial commenting procedure from 5th February to 11th February 2014. Following the evaluation of the inter-ministerial commenting procedure the report was presented to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic for authorization in order to be submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic. Monitoring report on the implementation of the Strategy for 2014 is currently (as of May 2015) being prepared for inner-department commenting procedure.

- **Qualitative:** defines the development of a guidance document for the process of monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the national strategy for Roma integration until 30.6.2015. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of measures on the Roma integration process is part of the investments planned in the Operational Programme Human Resources for the programming period 2014-2020. Cross-cutting measure in question, which includes comprehensive data collection on the MRC through the quantitative research, qualitative surveys and research projects, will be implemented in the form of a 7-year long national project by USVRK.
- **External evaluation of the Strategy:** is a complementary part of the guidance document, which will set the financial allocation and the frequency of the external evaluation of the Strategy. The external evaluation is implemented through NGOs. The frequency is determined by the Government Resolution no. 1/2012 on the Strategy for the integration of Roma up to 2020, while the next evaluation in accordance with the approved change of the date to perform the task is set on 30th June 2017.



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The first external evaluation was carried out through two NGOs - Slovak Governance Institute (SGI) and Škola dokorán n.o. (School wide open) within the Call for provision of grants to support of social and cultural needs and solutions for extremely disadvantageous situation of Roma community, within the competence of Ministry of Interior. Evaluation incorporated four standard evaluation criteria based on the standards for development evaluation of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) - relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Evaluation matrix created by those criteria will be further used in processes of evaluation and monitoring of the Strategy.

The results of the external evaluation also confirmed the need for revision of the Strategy.

The revision of the strategic goals and the creation of action plans in the area of education, employment, housing and health, including three cross-cutting areas i.e. non-discrimination, financial inclusion and targeting of majority population, is implemented by the USVRK since 4th quarter of 2014. This process is planned to be carried out till 31st October 2015, when the document will be submitted to the Government. A part of this initiative is creation of the above-mentioned guidance document for the process of monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the national strategy.

Besides, USVRK as a National Contact Point for the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies takes part in the FRA Working Party on Roma integration indicators. The focus of this working group is development of indicator framework on Roma integration in the framework of the Fundamental Rights Charter and in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

USVRK internally monitors the implementation of Roma integration policies also through regional structures i.e. six regional offices operating in Prešov, Spišská Nová Ves, Banská Bystrica, Rimavská Sobota, Košice and Nitra.

- *What is the total amount and percentage of the 2014 national budget dedicated to the implementation of the Decade Action Plan or National Roma Integration Strategy in your country?*

In 2014, total of 5,486,681.24 € had been allocated from the state budget for all projects with direct support of horizontal priority MRC (hereinafter referred to as “HP MRC”) under the Operational Programme Education (OP Edu), Operational Programme Health (OP H), Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion (OP EaSI), Operational Programme Environment (OP Env), Operational Programme Competitiveness and Economic Growth (OP CaEG) and Regional Operational Programme (ROP).

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Table with allocations for all projects with direct support of horizontal priority MRC (hereinafter referred to as “HP MRC”) including projects from approved Local Strategies of Comprehensive Approach (LSoCA) from the state budget in 2014 under operational programs:

All projects with direct support of HP MRC	
Operational Programme	Financial allocation from state budget in 2014 (€)
OP Edu	2 383 924,30
OP H	3 775,54
OP EaSI	1 644 221,74
OP Env	125 961,66
ROP	1 038 185,15
OP CaEG	290 612,85
Total	5 486 681,24

Table with allocations for projects from approved LSoCA with direct support of HP MRC from the state budget in 2014 under operational programs:

Projects from approved LSoCA – direct support of HP MRC	
Operational Programme	Financial allocation from state budget in 2014 (€)
OP Edu	990 589,40
OP H	12 243,31
OP EaSI	514 698,23
OP Env	180 277,29
ROP	282 942,00
OP CaEG	507 053,66
Total	2 487 803,89

Within the **Call for application no I. ÚSVRK 2014 for provision of grants to support of social and cultural needs and solutions for extremely disadvantaged situation of Roma community** within the competence of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, budgetary resources in the total amount of 620,000 € were provided to secure financial arrangements for the implementation of the Strategy with the support of following areas:

Area of support – support of education and tutoring – 428,000 €

- Maintenance, reparation, reconstruction and project documentation of kindergartens and primary schools, material equipment and interior retrofitting of kindergartens and primary schools;
- Support of missionary work in marginalized Roma communities.



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Area of support – support of establishment and activity of community centres through subjects of subsidies – 120,500 €

- Maintenance, reparation, reconstruction of community centres, project documentation, material equipment and interior retrofitting of community centres.

Area of support – support of employment, employability and placing on the labor market- 39,500 €

- Acquisition of technologies, technical equipment and breeding animals for creation of new jobs.

Area of support – support of the settlement of property ownership of dwellings and land on which the dwellings are located or purchase of land designated by municipality for construction of new dwellings - 11,000 €

- Support of the settlement of property ownership of land on which the dwellings of marginalized Roma communities are located.

Area of support – provision of technical infrastructure in settlements with marginalized Roma communities, reparation and reconstruction of housing and social housing, project documentation for the flats of lower standard, interior retrofitting and fuel depots for the flats of lower standard – 21,000 €

- Preparation of project documentation for the flats of lower standard.

- *What kinds of funding sources (local, national and international) are considered for the implementation of the Decade National Action Plan/National Roma Integration Strategy in 2015?*

Table with financial allocations (EU funds + national budget) for projects with direct support of HP MRC (including projects from approved LSoCA) for 2015 under operational programs:

All projects with direct support of HP MRC	
Operational Programme	Financial allocation (EU funds + national budget) for 2015 (€)
OP Edu	27 418 774,29
OP H	5 306 305,19
OP EaSI	101 153 004,16
OP Env	8 779 710,03
ROP	41 563 986,05
OP CaEG	16 117 635,80
Total	187 156 454,47



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Table with financial allocations (EU funds + national budget) for projects from approved LSoCA with direct support of HP MRC for 2015 under operational programs:

Only projects from approved LSoCA – direct support of HP MRC	
Operational Programme	Financial allocation (EU funds + national budget) for 2015 (€)
OP Edu	8 082 036,41
OP H	2 315 364,71
OP EaSI	18 168 484,16
OP Env	8 358 562,47
ROP	19 861 109,63
OP CaEG	14 445 186,65
Total	71 230 744,03

Within the **Call for application for provision of grants to support of social and cultural needs and solutions for extremely disadvantaged situation of Roma community for 2015**, in the competence of Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, budgetary resources in total amount of 640,000 € are planned to be provided for projects in following areas:

Area of support – support of establishment and activity of community centres through subjects of subsidies

- Support of establishment of new community centres.

Area of support – provision of technical infrastructure in settlements with marginalized Roma communities, reparation and reconstruction of housing and social housing, project documentation for the flats of lower standard, interior retrofitting and fuel depots for the flats of lower standard

- Promoting access to drinking and utility water in the environment of separated and segregated marginalized Roma communities with an emphasis on low-cost measures;
- Support of the construction and completion of the technical infrastructure in settlements with marginalized Roma communities – local communications (roads) in MRC;
- Support of the completion of basic technical infrastructure - construction of new public sewers and sewer connections in settlements of marginalized Roma communities;
- Support for projects aimed at deratization, disinfection and disinfestation in settlements of marginalized Roma communities.

Area of support – support of education and tutoring

- Support of missionary work in marginalized Roma communities;
- Support for secondary schools providing education particularly to students from marginalized Roma communities.



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2. EDUCATION

- *Please list any mainstream and targeted policy measures that were designed and implemented at national or local level to support Roma education in 2014 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plan/National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable). Please include measures such as: improving early childhood education and care, reducing early school leaving, encouraging Roma participation in secondary and tertiary education, desegregation measures, inclusive education, teacher training etc.*
- *Please describe to the extent possible the impact of the measures your government implemented in 2014 (including quantitative and descriptive data). For the purpose of peer to peer learning, kindly consider to include also measures with negative impact on Roma inclusion and explain the process to minimize such negative impact.*

MRK 1 - national project “By education of the teaching staff towards inclusion of marginalized Roma communities“

The project is implemented by Methodical-Pedagogical Centre, a centrally managed organization of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “ME SR”), since October 2011. The most important outputs of the project are: analysis of educational needs of teaching staff and professional staff; 8 programmes of continuous education for teachers and professional staff; development of teaching sources and educational programmes; all-day educational system. All day educational system permits effective development of MRC pupils out of education process including free-time care and provides with a possibility to supplement general education under specific educational programmes for pupils who have not completed primary school. During the school year 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, national project was realized in 200 primary schools that were attended by at least 20 % of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Altogether 512 teaching assistants, of whom 400 with the support of the national project, were working in schools involved in the project. Project will finish in the end of June 2015.

MRK 2 - national project “Inclusive Model for Pre-primary Education”

National project „Inclusive model of education at pre-primary stage of school system“ (Operational Programme Education, priority axis 3) was put into practice in February 2013. The project is aimed at improving educational level of children coming from MRC via tuition provided by teaching and professional staff and development of necessary competences of pupils for their entrance in primary schools. The project is implemented by Methodical-Pedagogical Centre, while USVRK acts as a key partner. The project is intended for kindergarten in Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice region,



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which educate pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Main activities of this project are: training of teaching staff to obtain professional skills needed for work with children from MRC and an introduction of inclusive education in kindergartens.

As part of this project 110 working positions of assistants of teacher have been created. Activity of assistants of teacher in kindergarten is an essential tool in overcoming barriers associated with education of children from MRC as the majority of the assistants are of Roma origin. The institute of the assistant of teacher was previously implemented only in primary schools. Based on more requests from multiclass kindergartens that educate children from marginalized Roma communities, 49 positions were additionally created in September 2014. Altogether 159 assistants of teacher were working as a part of this project in 2014. The implementation of the project will finish on 30th November 2015.

Pre-Primary Education – “Early Childhood Investment – Support of Social Innovation and Integration of Roma”

From January 2013 to the end of 2014, USVRK in collaboration with the Institute for Good Governance, the Roma Education Fund and the World Bank, carried out the project “Early Childhood Investment – Support of Social Innovation and Integration of Roma”. Project was financially supported by the European Commission, programme Progress (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. The project aimed to promote quality of childcare services, involvement of mothers in pre-school preparation of their children, reduce language barriers between pupils, parents and educational institution, improve cooperation of teachers and parents, develop cognitive abilities of mothers and children, make a change in the approach in education of children in segregated communities, create a support network of Roma mothers in communities and raise awareness of the Roma community about the importance of education.

The project involved 7 facilitators, 315 Roma mothers and 525 children aged 0-6 years in 21 locations in Slovakia. Seven facilitators of project, in addition to the targeted site, were active in 28 other municipalities in order to improve the cooperation between families and educational institutions. Activities are being evaluated by World Bank experts under the aegis of J - PAL.

Building of new schools (construction of modular primary schools)

In 2013, USVRK, Ministry of Interior in cooperation with ME SR and Ministry of Finances of the Slovak Republic (MF SR) started with the building of 5 new modular (container) primary schools in municipalities with a two-shift-operation in schools - Jarovnice, Stráne pod Tatrami, Križová Ves, Podhorany and Kecerovce - in order to ensure the equal access to education. The municipalities provided land, project documentation, infrastructure, construction of foundations, etc. and the state granted 200,000 € for the construction of one module school and 20,000 € for the class equipment (benches, chairs, black-boards, etc.).



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This successful experience in the construction of modular schools served as a pilot project for municipalities and in 2014 the support of MF SR made it possible to guarantee 3,000,000 € for building of other schools.

Construction of modular schools took place or is planned to take place in municipalities: Chminianske Jakobovany, Podhorany, Jarovnice, Kecerovce, Jurské, Stará Ľubovňa - Podsadek, Gemerská Ves, Muránska Dlhá Lúka, Stráne pod Tatrami, Žehra and Krížová Ves. Programme of modular schools is implemented also in municipalities without MRC due to the lack of capacities for educational process as in Dunajská Lužná, Miloslavove and Chorvátsky Grob.

Inclusive Model for Pre-primary Education - national Project of Inclusive Education – PRINED

National project of inclusive education - PRINED aims to promote an inclusive environment in kindergartens and primary schools with the creation of inclusive teams and their training to acquire professional competencies needed to meet and develop specific educational needs of pupils coming from MRC. The project is aimed at preventing excessive enrolment of children from MRC, particularly children diagnosed with mild mental disability type-A, into special educational system and through acceleration programs aimed at stimulating Roma children tries to improve the education process while working with them. The project builds on ongoing projects of Methodical-Pedagogical Centre – MRK1 and MRK2.

Inclusive model of education should create better opportunities for students from MRC to successfully complete primary education and to continue education on next school levels. Inclusive education is an education at mainstream schools, while the emphasis is put on the pulling down of barriers that prevent equal access of children to education. The essence of inclusive education is respect for individual abilities and needs of children and it enables children who would otherwise be educated e.g. in special schools to attend mainstream primary schools.

An important contribution of this project is the creation of inclusive teams made up of teaching staff and specialists (special educator, psychologist, social educator, teacher assistant) who work with children not only in schools but also in the field. Through an all-day educational process as a tool of inclusion, the project promotes effective development of students from MRC also outside the classroom, including leisure-time care and closer collaboration with family and community of Roma pupils.

Project is implemented in the period 04/2014-11/2015 in 100 elementary schools and 50 kindergartens.

Subsidy scheme of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of Slovak republic for Roma Communities for 2014

Within the Call for application no. I. ÚSVRK 2014 for provision of grants to support of social and cultural needs and solutions for extremely disadvantageous situation of Roma community within the competence of Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, USVRK



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supported six projects aimed at promotion of extracurricular activities as a part of the support for missionary work in marginalized Roma communities in the amount of 10,000 €

Within the priority 1.6. of the grant programme **Culture of National Minorities** of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic – 24 projects supporting leisure time activities (workshops, cultural and educational camps, experiential learning forms of leisure activities, practice of theater performances with children and youth and their presentation) were supported with total amount of 57,400 €

Allocation from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the 2014-2020 period

USVRK was actively involved in the preparation of the new programming period 2014-2020. The key and source documents for the creation, commenting, resp. designing of the inclusive measures / investments in the area of Roma inclusion were the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020 with Revised National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015 for years 2011 - 2015, the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States and the Country-Specific Recommendations concerning the integration of Roma.

USVRK as an advisory body of the Government had used to the maximum extent the membership in working groups for individual OPs. Result of this preparatory process was an approval of the multifund **Operational Programme Human Resources** with two priority axes specifically aimed at promoting the integration of Roma. The OP was accepted by the Slovak Government with the Government Resolution n. 229/2014 on 14th May 2014 and approved by European Commission later that year (December 2014).

The priority axis ***Integration of marginalized Roma communities*** funded by the ESF under the investment priority *Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities, such as the Roma*, includes measures focused particularly on the area of education, employment and health, totaling 139 million € from the EU funds.

Within the second priority axis that directly promotes the integration of Roma - ***Technical facilities in municipalities with presence of marginalized Roma communities*** - the financial resources from ERDF in the amount of 243,662,462 € from the EU funds are aimed at improving the housing conditions of the population of MRC, improving their access to the social infrastructure, quality education and care in the early childhood through the investment in the pre-school facilities. These measures are included in the investment priority *Providing support for physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas*. The second investment priority *Providing support for social enterprises* includes interventions aimed at increasing employment in the municipalities with the presence of MRC. These measures will be implemented by the IBMA / Ministry of Interior.

The basic objective of the interventions defined in the priority axis *Integration of MRC* and the priority axis *Technical facilities in municipalities with presence of MRC* is to provide an integrated and comprehensive approach primarily for 150 villages / towns, listed in the



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updated *Atlas of Roma communities 2013* that manifest the highest degree of socio- economic underdevelopment, respectively segregation.

In the priority axis *Integration of marginalized Roma communities*, the specific objective for the area of education “*Enhancing the educational level of members of marginalized communities, including, without limitation, the Roma, at all levels of education with an emphasis on pre-primary education*” will be fulfilled through following activities:

- Supporting programmes focused on improving co-operation between educational institutions and parents of Roma children (e.g. through programs aimed at the activation of parents of MRC through teacher education programmes aimed at creating co-operation with parents of Roma children, etc.),
- Systematic support for the participation of children from the environment of the MRC in preprimary education (for example, through activities of teacher assistants, targeted programmes of community centres and field social work, programmes oriented on improving the co-operation of preschool facilities and parents of Roma children, training of pedagogical staff, supporting school attendance of children by ensuring accessibility e.g. by operating a school bus, by providing didactic packages for preschool facilities, and by covering other indirect financial costs connected to the participation of children from low-income families on pre-school education etc.),
- Systematic support of training- educational activities and leisure activities for children from MRC with emphasis on networking between majority and minority (e.g. via support of individual integration and activities of teachers’ assistants, via support of multicultural education and community centres programmes, etc.),
- Systematic provision of tutoring and mentoring support for pupils from MRC with emphasis on successful completion of primary schools and smooth transition to secondary schools,
- Effective financial assistance for elementary and secondary school students from MRC environment and provision of mentoring and tutoring support (e.g. in the form of scholarships for secondary school students),
- Activities aimed at prevention and elimination of segregation at schools and in classrooms (e.g. by support and consulting services at schools, by creating positions of social workers, or by support of creation and implementation of local action plans for inclusive education, etc.),
- Support of a monitoring system evaluating the efficiency of instruments of policies and their impact on MRC.

These measures should result in increased awareness and improved co-operation of parents with educational facilities; higher number of children from MRC attending pre-school facilities; increased inclusiveness of the education system; reduction of the early school dropout rate among children and youth from marginalized Roma communities; and increased proportion of Roma students with education at the level of ISCED 3A, ISCED 3B, ISCED 3C, ISCED 4.



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Within the priority axis *Technical facilities in municipalities with presence of MRC*, the specific objective for the area of education “*Improving access to quality education, including education and care in early childhood*” will consist of:

- Support for the construction of new pre-school facilities in municipalities with the presence of MRC,
- Support for the refurbishment of pre-school facilities in communities with the presence of MRC with an emphasis on capacity expansion.

These measures should create conditions for the full participation of children from MRC in pre-primary education and lead to extended capacity of the network of kindergartens through refurbishment and modernization of school buildings and their equipment, including construction of kindergartens in municipalities with the presence of MRC.

Additional relevant investment priorities of this OP in the area of education, which include the Roma as one of the main target groups, are on the level of the **priority axis Education**:

- Reduction and prevention of the early school dropouts and support for access to quality pre-school, elementary and secondary education including formal, informal and common methods of education with a view to re-inclusion into education and training through selected activities defined within the specific objective *Increasing inclusivity and equal access to quality education and improving results and competences of children and students*.
- Improving the labour market relevance in the area of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to employment, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, also through mechanisms for skills anticipation, modification of curriculums and establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship through selected activities under the specific objective *Improving the quality of vocational education and training while reflecting the labour market needs*.
- Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education to increase participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups, through selected activities under the specific objective *Increase the quality of tertiary education and development of human resources in the area of research and development with a view to establishing a link between tertiary education and the needs of the labour market*.

These measures will be implemented through IBMA / Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.



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3. EMPLOYMENT

- *Please list any mainstream and targeted policy measures that were designed and implemented to support Roma employment in 2014 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plan or the National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable). Please include measures such as: tailored job search assistance, first work experience programs, targeted activation measures, measures supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship, measures promoting employment of qualified Roma civil servants, eliminating barriers, including discrimination, to entering the labor market, etc.*
- *Please describe to the extent possible the impact of measures your government implemented in 2014 (including quantitative and descriptive data). For the purpose of peer to peer learning, kindly consider to include also measures with negative impact on Roma inclusion and explain the process to minimize such negative impact.*

National project “**Field Social Work in Communities**” has been implemented since January 2012 and continued also through 2014. From the total allocation of 30 million € in the end of 2014 - 16.5 million € were spent. The NP aims at municipalities with presence of MRC. Up to December 2014 - 281 municipalities joined the project. That is 31 more than planned (250). Number of the municipalities in 2015 will rise to 58 and the number of regional coordinator will increase from 20 to 22.

On 29th June 2012 an unexpected termination of the national project "Standardization of services and expanding of the network of community centers for marginalized Roma communities" (Financial allocation – 17,976,206.90 €) took place. In the beginning of 2014 Social Development Fund (SDF) started again with the implementation of the **National Project Community Centers** (NP KC) (financial allocation 17,173,522.80 €, time of implementation: January 2014 - November 2015) but the merging of SDF and Social Implementation Agency and the formation of a new organization - Implementing Agency for the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion (IA ZaSI), as well as problems related to the search for experts for the issue of community centers and community work, led to the postponement of selection procedures and another delay in the implementation of the activities. Due to the above mentioned, activities in existing community centers supported by NP KC began in November 2014, while support of new community centers within the national project started in December 2014. Altogether 14 operators of community centers were contracted and 73 applications had been received up to 1st December 2014.

USVRK in collaboration with the Social Development Fund (from 1st April 2014 - IA ZaSI) was actively involved in the preparation of the Call *OP ZaSI-FSR-2012/2.1.1/02* (total allocation of 4.7 million €). USVRK contributed with 6.5 million € from the allocation reserved for the HP MRC. These funds were among other projects used to fund activity of **civil patrols in marginalized Roma communities (RCP)**.



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USVRK proactively prepared methodological guide for local governments entitled "Roma civil patrols in marginalized Roma communities", which aimed to help municipalities in their efforts to involve local Roma into cooperation with municipal police, to support local activism, community development, reduction of committing antisocial acts and maintain public order in areas with marginalized Roma communities.

RCP also actively contribute to eliminate longtime unemployment of MRC as members of RCP are selected from the jobseekers that are recipients of benefits in material need and are registered by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Allocation from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the 2014-2020 period

As a part of the mainstream measures in the priority axis *Social inclusion*, the specific objective "*Increased participation of most disadvantaged and endangered persons in the society, including the labour market*" will be fulfilled through different activities, such as:

- Supporting the streamlining of the existing and introducing new tools to increase the activity of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion,
- Supporting the professionalization of social work and other professional activities in a natural environment, open environment, alternate environment and at the community level, for example field social work and community centres,
- Support of a complex and holistic approach to solving situations of persons with multiple disadvantages for the purposes of their success at the labour market and for their social inclusion,
- Supporting the participation of disadvantaged groups and their representative organizations in the preparation, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of relevant policies,
- Support of integration of persons most endangered by poverty and/or social exclusion to the labour market using entities created in the framework of social innovations,
- Support of introduction of social aspects in public procurement.

Field social worker projects and Community centres projects will be implemented under this specific objective, with the exception of 150 identified municipalities within the priority *Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities, such as the Roma*.

These measures will be implemented through IBMA / Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

Expected results of these measures is: increased activity of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion for their better integration into the labour market; better chances at the labour market for disadvantaged unemployed by improving access to housing; and improved access to quality services to ensure the necessary conditions in order to meet basic needs.



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In the priority axis *Integration of marginalized Roma communities* of the operational programme Human resources for the programming period 2014-2020, specific objective for the area of employment “*Increasing financial literacy, employability and employment of marginalized communities, especially the Roma*” will be fulfilled through following activities:

- Support of the systematic provision of social services and assistance to municipalities with the presence of MRC, aimed at increasing the employability of people living in MRC (i.e. field social workers, community workers in health education),
- Support of the existence and operation of community centres in municipalities with the presence of MRC,
- Promoting programmes of financial literacy, debt management and saving as a tool to facilitate entry to open labour market, to raise awareness in financial services, micro credit and savings programmes, including supporting activities and supporting the development of micro-finance programmes, taking into account support for micro-entrepreneurs and micro-social enterprises,
- Supporting individual approach in providing employment services with a primary focus on client and labour market needs, and supporting instruments and intermediate labour market for people from MRC (e.g. through supported-employment agencies or other organizations active in the field of employment),
- Supporting career counselling for people of MRC provided in an individualized client-oriented form,
- Work with employers and temporary balancing measures, such as employment of the Roma in state and public services at local and national level,
- Support of a monitoring system evaluating the efficiency of instruments of policies and their impact on MRC

These interventions should increase the availability of employment services in the MRC environment; increase the dissemination of information to the population of MRC oriented on the area of financial consultancy (enhancing the financial literacy of the MRC population); and enhance the employability of the MRC population.

Within the second priority axis *Technical facilities in municipalities with presence of marginalized Roma communities*, the second investment priority, which aims at *Providing support for social enterprises* includes interventions intended to increase employment in the municipalities with the presence of MRC.

This specific objective “*Increasing the employment of MRC in social economy entities in areas with the presence of MRC*” will be fulfilled by following activities:

- Supporting the purchase of equipment, technology and licenses necessary for the implementation of the approved business plan of a social economy entity with an emphasis on the use of microloans,
- Supporting micro-financial instruments,
- Supporting the reconstruction and construction of premises for social economy entities.

In the programming period 2014-2020 the Ministry of Interior of the SR/ USVRK aims to support at least 100 social economy entities focused on the creation of new jobs.



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These measures should result in increased number of job opportunities for MRC and increased rate of innovation in the business environment in municipalities with the presence of MRC.

Social aspect in public procurement

Along with fulfilling the objectives for which they are intended, public funds may also bring other positive externalities. These include the contribution to increase employment and employability of people in long-term unemployment (including Roma) through the ERDF funds intended for the provision of infrastructure projects. In projects aimed at regeneration of settlements, social infrastructure and housing support, funded through *Priority Axis Technical facilities in municipalities with presence of marginalized Roma communities*, Contract Performance Clause will be compulsorily required in publicly procured construction work, which defines the extent of involvement of people in long-term unemployment (including Roma) in the supply of the work procured. In order to implement the conditions set out in the clauses, it will be necessary to create efficient partnerships between construction companies (contract suppliers) and organizations working with MRC in the area of social development (mostly NGOs), which will provide for selection and day to day work with people in long-term unemployment involved in the performance of contracts. Implementation of the instrument may result in the establishment of long-term and effective inter-sectorial partnerships, the existence of which can have a major impact in raising the level of education and employment of MRC.



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4. HOUSING

- *Please list any mainstream or targeted policy measures that were designed and implemented to support housing for Roma (or housing of marginalized people, including Roma) in 2014 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plan and the National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable). Please include measures such as: eliminating spatial segregation and promoting desegregation, promoting non-discriminatory access to social housing, etc.*
- *Please describe to the extent possible the impact of measures your government implemented in 2014 (including quantitative and descriptive data). For the purpose of peer to peer learning, kindly consider to include also measures with negative impact on Roma inclusion and explain the process to minimize such negative impact.*

As part of the implementing mechanism of the pilot approach of support of housing infrastructure from EU structural funds, which was approved by the Government Resolution no. 526/2012 of 3rd October 2012, USVRK intensively cooperated with the Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme (ROP). Through the call for applications for grants within the ROP in the area of support 4.1b - **The construction of rental houses for marginalized groups** (call opened from 17th December 2013 to 5th May 2014) with the reserved allocation of 7 million € for construction of 180 housing units of the common standard build in the broader centre of municipalities, two projects in the total amount of 1,136,150.67 € were supported.

In accordance with the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration up to 2020, a priority of USVRK in housing policy is to tackle the **legalization of land** under dwellings of inhabitants of Roma communities. In this respect, there was an ongoing process of preparation of the **New Construction Act** in 2014, which planned to use legal instruments to enable **systematic legalization of dwellings** with reparation of ownership of the land on which the dwellings are built.

For the purpose of targeted support for local governments to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of marginalized Roma communities with regard to the housing, USVRK in 2014 under its subsidy scheme - Call for application no. I. ÚSVRK 2014 for provision of grants to support of social and cultural needs and solutions for extremely disadvantageous situation of Roma community within the competence of Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic extended the support framework in the area of housing of by the following activities:

- a) Support of the construction of new municipal rental apartments in residential buildings and family houses in municipalities with Roma settlements, with the involvement of marginalized Roma Communities in the construction (in the form of aid and self-aid).
(Supported with the amount of 15,000 €.)



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- b) Support for the settlement of property ownership of land on which the dwellings of MRC are located. Supported expenditure was on:
- measuring and stabilization of circuit boundaries of land on which the dwellings of MRC are located;
 - measuring of the actual state of land on which the dwellings of MRC are located;
 - technical documentation of elementary land consolidation;
 - urban/ planning study.
- (Supported with the amount of 11,000 €.)
- c) Project documentation for the apartments of lower standard in order to support the construction of housing of lower-standard.
- (Supported with the amount of 6,000 €.)

Besides, USVRK in 2014 supported project of preparation for the settlement of lands in marginalized Roma communities in the village Krásnohorské Podhradie in the amount of 30,000 €. Part of this pilot project was an activity of working group, which consisted of the representatives of USVRK, Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic, State Forests of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Land Fund.

Allocation from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the 2014-2020 period

Within the priority axis *Integration of marginalized Roma communities* of the operational programme Human resources for the programming period 2014-2020, which will be financed by the ESF, part of the measures consists of interventions aimed at improving the standards of the hygiene of housing, such as:

- Supporting programmes aimed at achieving a higher standard of hygiene in marginalized Roma settlements and at systematic reduction of the number of illegal dwellings characterized by extremely low level of hygiene standards, also by the provision of technical assistance to municipalities with the presence of MRC aimed at the settlement of title to land.

The assistance will be provided as a part of the “Take away” package to 150 municipalities that are listed in the updated Atlas of Roma communities 2013 and manifest the highest degree of socio- economic underdevelopment, respectively segregation.

These interventions should lead to improved hygiene of living in MRC by the settlement of land.

Within the priority axis *Technical equipment in municipalities with the presence of MRC*, which receives funding from ERDF funds, specific objective “*Growth in the number of the Roma households with access to improved housing conditions*” will be fulfilled through following activities:



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- Supporting leap housing programmes within social mobility and integration of MRC inhabitants (construction and reconstruction of dwellings),
- Support for micro credit programmes aimed at promoting self-build housing projects,
- Promoting access to drinking and utility water in separated and segregated MRC with emphasis on low cost measures, such as drilling and digging wells,
- Supporting construction of utilities in MRC environments,
- Supporting the completion of basic technical infrastructure (sewers, paved roads, roads),
- Creation or completion of a system for sorting and removing communal waste (purchase of waste bins, containers, building of waste collection stations),
- Clearance works in illegal waste tips, including elimination of the adverse impacts of illegal tips.

These interventions should lead to improved conditions for social integration of people from MRC through a functional system of transitional housing; introduction of a financial mechanism supporting self-build housing projects (micro-loans); improved quality of housing in the MRC environment through infrastructure, access to drinking water and utility water, construction of access roads and communal waste collection.



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5. HEALTH

- *Please list any mainstream and targeted policy measures that were designed and implemented to support the improvement of health care services for the Roma population in 2014 with a special focus on the goals and implementation of the Decade National Action Plan/National Roma Integration Strategy (if applicable). Please include measures such as: ensuring equal access to quality healthcare, ensuring basic social security coverage and comprehensive health services to Roma, preventive measures such as medical check-ups, prenatal and postnatal care and family planning, targeted health awareness campaigns, etc.*
- *Please describe to the extent possible the impact of measures your government implemented in 2014 (including quantitative and descriptive data). For the purpose of peer to peer learning, kindly consider to include also measures with negative impact on Roma inclusion and explain the process to minimize such negative impact.*

Program of health promotion of disadvantaged communities in Slovakia was realized since 2009 through community workers in the area of health education. Their task was to provide mediation between inhabitants of segregated and separated Roma settlements and medical personnel and to spread elementary health education and information in Roma communities. This program, planned to continue through 2015, was stopped in 2012, when Slovak government adopted austerity measures that led to lack of financial resources for realization of the program.

In 2012, the **Platform for health promotion of disadvantaged communities**, which consisted of representatives of the Association for culture, education and communication, USVRK, Association of community centres of Slovakia, Association of field health assistants, Open Society foundation, Office of the WHO in Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Union insurance company and GlaxoSmithKline, was established. Outcome of their working group negotiations that took place in 2012 and 2013 was a start of the nationwide project "Healthy Communities".

Project **Healthy Communities** is realized from October 2013. During the first 9 months, the project was financed from the subsidy scheme of USVRK by the call for provision of the grants to support of social and cultural needs and solutions for extremely disadvantageous situation of Roma community within the competence of Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, and with financial support of MF SR and ME SR in the total amount of 1,086,909 €. In 2013, the project was divided into two phases. The first phase consisted of the training of coordinators of assistants and assistants of health education through an accredited training program of the ME SR, provided by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication. The second phase consisted of field activities of assistants of health education in 108 locations, while employing altogether 120 persons. From the January 2014 to September 2014, the number of localities increased together with the number of assistants of health education and their coordinators to total of 160 persons. From July to September 2014, the project was financially supported by Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour,



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Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic by the allocation in total amount of 399 804 eur. From the 1st October 2014 to 31st December 2015, the project is financed from the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion from the programming period 2007-2013, with allocation of 3,289,256 € The projects plans to employ 288 people till the end of 2015 (264 assistants of health education and 24 coordinators of the assistants).

The aim of the project is to promote the access of community to health care, provide information on prevention, to support the increase of responsibilities of members of MRC for their own health and to cooperate in the exchange of information between them. Assistants perform education focused on eating habits, hygiene of eating, alcohol prevention, substance abuse, prevention of infectious and parasitic diseases, or explain the need for preventive medical examinations and compulsory vaccination. They establish collaboration with healthcare professionals, doctors and specialists, such as gynaecologists and obstetricians, dentists and many others. They as well accompany residents of MRC during medical visits, to help them overcome language barriers and provide them with emotional, psychological and social support. Assistants of health care also cooperate with schools to raise awareness among children and youth in the area of personal hygiene, reproductive health and prevention of substance abuse.

Expected impact of the project:

- Improved relations between marginalized Roma communities and health care providers
- Improved communication between MRC and health care staff
- Elimination of mistrust to the health system
- Elimination of barriers to access to health care and establishment of new channels of communication
- Increased level of health awareness and responsibility for their own health
- Improved level of personal and communal hygiene
- Improved and more efficient use of available health services
- Increase of the overall number of completed preventive health examinations
- Reduction of the number of infectious disease
- Increase of the number of women who regularly attend antenatal consultation
- Increased awareness of the compulsory vaccination of children and its benefits / expected reactions and harmless side effects
- Increase participation on the compulsory vaccination of children
- Increased number of children vaccinated against hepatitis A
- Improved communication with the relevant operational centers of emergency medical services
- Reduced number of unjustified trips and abuse of emergency medical services
- Improved information on self- medications and use of this kind of medicaments.

Allocation from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the 2014-2020 period

On the level of the priority axis *Integration of marginalized Roma communities* of the operational programme Human resources for the programming period 2014-2020, part of



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the measures are aimed at promoting access to health care and public health, including preventive care, health education and increased hygiene standards of living.

To fulfill this specific objective, following interventions are planned:

- Supporting a systematic provision of services and assistance through the programme of community workers in the area of health education in municipalities with the presence of separated and segregated MRC
- Supporting the programs of health education of inhabitants of segregated and separated Roma settlements and locations, focusing on areas such as: personal hygiene and care for own health, education to parenthood, protection of sexual and reproduction health, care for children, prevention of contagious diseases, manipulation with food, protection of environment, prevention of injuries and accidents, etc.
- Supporting programmes to ensure minimum standards of hygiene in communities with the presence of MRC,
- Supporting programmes aimed at achieving a higher standard of hygiene in marginalized Roma settlements and at systematic reduction of the number of illegal dwellings characterized by extremely low level of hygiene standards, also by the provision of technical assistance to municipalities with the presence of MRC aimed at the settlement of title to land,
- Support of a monitoring system evaluating the efficiency of instruments of policies and their impact on MRC.

These interventions should lead to increased availability of health care services; increased level of awareness of the MRC population in health care and prevention through awareness programmes, information activities and campaigns; and improved hygiene of living in MRC by the settlement of land.

The second national project, included in the Take away package and focusing on the program of health education and prevention in municipalities with presence of MRC (150 municipalities with the highest segregation index), will be implemented by the Ministry of Health Care of the Slovak Republic.

Concept of measures within the priority axis ***Technical equipment in municipalities with the presence of MRC***, which receives funding from ERDF funds, presents a broad spectrum of investments that will allow residents of MRC to ensure access to drinking and utility water.



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6. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

- *Please list any measures that were designed to support the fight against Roma discrimination and racism. Please describe to the extent possible the impact of these measures (including quantitative and descriptive data).*

The preparation process of the **National Strategy for Human Rights Protection and Promotion in Slovakia** started in 2011 and continued also through 2014. USVRK participated in the process with the preparation of the part concerning *rights of the persons at risk of poverty*. Actively involved in a preparation was the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality as well as representatives of civil society. In December 2013 and January 2014, USVRK in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic conducted six workshops that took place in the regions most affected by unemployment (Banská Bystrica, Košice, Prešov). Concluding nationwide workshop with a presentation of the final material was held in February 2014 in Bratislava. This material was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic in April 2014 and finally adopted by the Slovak Government on 18th February 2015 as the first strategic policy document in the field of human rights, adopted in the era of the independent existence of the Slovak Republic.

Within the sub-program 2 of the grant programme **Culture of National Minorities** of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic titled Promotion of upbringing and education towards the rights of national minorities, projects aimed at promoting education of children and youth in the area of rights of national minorities were supported. Altogether 6 projects totaling 13,500 € were supported in 2014. They were focused primarily on educational activities, discussions, workshops and the creation of publications in the field of minority rights.

Subprogram 3 of this grant programme covers provision for projects aimed at promoting inter-ethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding between persons belonging to the majority society and the members of national minorities and ethnic groups. Supported projects aimed at: promoting mutual understanding and rapprochement between ethnic groups, between majority and national minorities, as well as between national minorities themselves; identifying and discovering common cultural, artistic and scientific values and traditions; uncovering and exploring of family, local and regional history, traditions, important people and monuments in ethnically mixed environment; support of respect, understanding and tolerance towards minority languages and cultures and its inclusion into the system of education, as well as mass media; and promoting exchange programs, visits, joint training events, scientific and artistic competitions for children and young people from different ethnic and linguistic groups. Within this sub-program, projects that engaged at least two minorities were supported. In total, in the area of inter-ethnic and



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multicultural activities - 229,755 € were allocated. Altogether 51 projects which included the Roma national minority were supported in the total amount of 157,755 €

Subsidy programme of the Government Office - Culture of National Minorities in 2014 also financially supported issuing of the journal of USVRK called "**Romane nevipena**" with the amount of 30,000 €. In 2014 total of 10 thematic issues were published. Aim of the journal was to raise awareness of municipalities and assisting professions (e.g. teacher's assistant, social field worker, community worker, assistant of the health education, officer specialist, etc.) that are participating in projects aimed at improving the situation of Roma communities in Slovakia. The journal was distributed through the regional offices of USVRK to police forces, municipal authorities (mainly those included in the Atlas of Roma Communities in 2013), higher territorial units and community centers, and also to teacher's assistant, social field workers and representatives of NGOs.

USVRK in 2014 initiated and supported activities, which were focused on raising awareness and education of the general population with the aim to contribute to unbiased learning about Roma.

- USVRK organized an event "Amaro Džives - Our Day", held on 8th April 2014 in Prešov on the occasion of International Roma Day. The Gala event was broadcasted live by the Radio and Television of Slovakia. During the event, the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities, Mr. Peter Pollak, awarded personalities that had contributed to the improvement of socio-economic situation of Roma in Slovakia and relations between Roma and the majority population with the award "Romipen".
- USVRK was also an organizer of an event called "Poraimos" to mark the Memorial Day of the Roma Holocaust, which was also recorded and broadcasted by the Radio and Television of Slovakia on 2nd August 2014.
- USVRK financially supported production of a documentary film "V útvar". The aim of the documentary is to remind the general public the suffering of Roma in Slovakia during World War II, as well as present their lives in the course of historical development up to present-days. Documentary was premiered and broadcasted also on 2nd August 2014 by the Radio and Television of Slovakia.
- USVRK in cooperation with the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) was an enunciator of the 6th year of Roma Spirit. This project is focused on the presentation of positive benefits for Roma and appreciation of the active efforts of individuals and organizations to improve the living conditions of Roma and integrate the Roma minority fully and with dignity. The gala was broadcasted by the Radio and Television of Slovakia on 12th July 2014.

Department of Criminology of the Police Academy in Bratislava in cooperation with USVRK organized a **workshop for students of the Police Academy** (18th November 2014). USVRK reported on the implementation of projects and measures in cooperation with other partners to help to improve the situation of marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia. They provided information on the history of Roma, status and scope of the tasks of the civil patrols in marginalized Roma communities and police officers - specialists working in areas



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with MRC, the need to implement inclusive education for children from Roma communities and the establishment of all-day educational system.

To limit racially motivated violence against Roma, Government of SR supports national prevention programs. Project of police specialists for the work with Roma communities is implemented since 2005. One of the basic objectives of the project **Specialist officers for the work with communities** is to manage mutual relations between police forces and Roma community, to improve these relations, increase the protection of public order and reduce criminality. Activities of police specialists are carried out particularly in the following areas: coordination and direction of activities of the Police Force in relation to the Roma community in the scope of particular police stations, providing the first contact of police with residents; collaboration with field social workers and community centers which provide support to MRC; cooperation with local authorities and local governments; cooperation with representatives of MRC at the local level; and cooperation in the selection of suitable candidates - members of Roma national minority into the Police Force. In the end of 2014 - 233 specialist officers for work with communities were working in localities inhabited by Roma.

Intention of USVRK is to interconnect the various helping professions in localities with the presence of MRC as the complex solving of the situation in Roma communities requires active cooperation between teacher assistants, field social workers, community workers, assistant of health education and of police specialist in the locality.

Allocation from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the 2014-2020 period

Within the priority axis **Social inclusion** of the operational programme Human resources for the programming period 2014-2020, the specific objective "*Prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination*" will be fulfilled also through following activities:

- Supporting and promoting the implementation of inclusive policies for members of the MRC (for example, public appraisal and acknowledgment of villages and towns for the introduction and development of policies contributing to the elimination of prejudices and stereotypes and which contribute to social exclusion; supporting and promoting positive examples in general government organizations for other employers by hiring disadvantaged job seekers),
- Support of sensibility-building and educational activities aimed at reduction and prevention of discrimination for employers, with accent on SMEs,
- Training of first contact staff (employees of offices, social services facilities, etc.) in the area of preventing and combating all forms of discrimination (trade associations, enterprises, especially SMEs),
- Support of activities aimed at elimination of negative stereotypes of the majority and sensitivity building in the majority in relation to the Roma, spreading of ideas of tolerance, acceptance of difference, and improvement of opinions of young people on disadvantaged groups of inhabitants,



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- Activities aimed at improving information about the prevention of all forms of discrimination and the ways of protection against discrimination,
- Supporting the education and dissemination of knowledge of the general government staff about all groups of the population who are or could be at risk of any form of discrimination, supporting the professional behaviour of the general government staff through training and education,
- Supporting the development of policy of equality on a nationwide level and support of exchange of good practice, support of diversity focusing on entrepreneurship,
- Support of institutional development of specialized consulting services serving in the combat against all forms of discrimination, including legal consulting in the field of discrimination at the labour market,
- Support of employers and institutions when preventing discrimination, introducing diversity management and related education, including the application of temporary balancing measures,
- Support of co-operation of social partners with the professionals in drafting, creation, and implementation of anti-discriminatory policies.

These measures should improve mechanisms of prevention, elimination of all forms of discrimination and application of temporary equalisation measures; improve the mechanisms for the prevention of the multiple discrimination of Roma; and improve information about the prevention of all forms of discrimination and the ways of protection against discrimination.

- *Please list any measures that were designed to support gender equality between Roma women and men. Please describe to the extent possible the impact of these measures (including quantitative and descriptive data).*

The Strategy for Roma inclusion up to 2020 in line with European policy also integrates anti-discrimination principles, in particular Directive 2000/43 EC. The global objective of the Strategy in the area D.2.6. includes task to focus on the elimination of multiple discrimination against women and reducing gender inequalities in private and public life of marginalized Roma communities and to promote the economic independence of Roma women through education, and gender equality through the cooperation with NGOs dealing with gender equality. The action plan of the strategy for the area D.2.6 after the agreement with the Government Office of SR was not processed, so this fact was therefore not included in the Government Resolution no. 1 of 11th January 2013, as these tasks were supposed to be embodied in the National Strategy for Human Rights Protection and Promotion in Slovakia. USVRK actively participated from 2011 on the preparation of this strategy, acted as the body responsible for part of the preparation of the strategy as well as within the wider process of its preparation such as in the Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality. Under the priority of the strategy no.V - *System measures for the prevention and removal of barriers to achieving real equality and a dignified life for all population groups*, task V.1."Strengthening the implementation of the existing program documents for vulnerable and marginalized groups and individuals and the creation of new



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program documents", and task V.2. "Strengthening the effective prevention and elimination of all forms of violence, particularly violence against women and children" were defined.

USVRK in order to promote gender equality and easing of multiple disadvantages and discrimination of Roma women and girls, particularly from the environment of marginalized Roma communities, provided support through financial interventions - subsidy from the government budget, which contributed to improve access to health care. One of the important instruments that raises health awareness and improves access to health care services is the aforementioned project "Healthy Communities".

In the area of protection of women against sexual exploitation USVRK participated in the work of the commissions, subcommissions, expert groups (e.g. in the area of combating trafficking in human beings - multidisciplinary working group on the prevention of human trafficking) as well as advisory bodies of the Government of the Slovak Republic. For example within relevant Strategies of crime prevention, concepts of fight against extremism, Action Plan to prevent all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other expressions of intolerance, etc.

Within the cooperation with the Division of Crime Prevention of the Office of the Minister of the Interior, USVRK participated in the development of guidelines to identify victims of trafficking in Roma communities. The purpose of this guide was to strengthen preventive activities to increase awareness of this vulnerable group, through the work of helping professions employed in the environment of Roma communities in order to improve identification of victims of trafficking in marginalized Roma communities and participation in the **Program of Support and protection for victims of human trafficking**.

Under the program named „Prevention of and fight against crime“ European Commission adopted a proposal of project entitled „**Strengthening of Joint Measures for the Prevention of Forced Labour of Roma Communities and the Development of Referral Mechanism**“ Duration of the project was January 2013 - December 2014. The main ideological purpose of the project proposal was to strengthen and build existing national reference mechanism, provide the most vulnerable groups of population, especially marginalized Roma communities with targeted prevention against exploitation mainly for forced labour and other forms of exploitation. Individual project activities were directed to create new tools of targeted prevention or their extended implementation on horizontal level by inclusion of new subjects and sharing experience on national and international levels as well. Wide-spectrum nature of project activities stems from the need to reduce vulnerability of potential victims coming from Roma communities by means of a film and other promotional materials distributed not only in the territory of the Slovak Republic but also in Great Britain which, based on the current experience of the Slovak Republic, has been assessed as the most frequent destination of victims of trafficking in human beings. As the second objective in the field of prevention, precautionary guide for employers in different job sectors was created in order to increase employers' awareness of trafficking in human being.



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The result of cooperation between the Information Centre to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention with the Division of Crime Prevention of the Office of the Minister of the Interior within this project was training of 286 officers specialists for work with Roma communities, field social workers, employees of the office of labor, social affairs and family, employees of labor inspectorates, NGOs as well as the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities in the area of human trafficking which took place in February – June 2014. The project was completed by the two-day conference attended by experts from Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Latvia, Belgium and Hungary.



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005-2015

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7. THE DECADE IN A REVIEW

Approaching the end of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 initiative, we would appreciate your reflection on its overall implementation in your country. Therefore, please kindly consider to list up to five principal achievements and five shortcomings in the design and implementation of the Decade National Action Plans/National Roma Integration Strategies.

Such achievements and shortcomings might include policy design, policy implementation, budgeting, specific institutionalized practices, monitoring and evaluation processes, cooperation with key stakeholders. Please be as specific as possible.

Positives:

- The principal instrument for the implementation of integration policies towards the Roma in Slovakia is the **Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the integration of Roma up to 2020**, which was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic by the Resolution no. 1/2012 on 11th January 2012, and had appointed the **Revised National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015** revised for the years 2011 to 2015 as an action plan of the Strategy for the areas of education, employment, health and housing. Strategy responds to the need to address the challenges of social inclusion of Roma communities and follows the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions recognized as the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. The main aim of the Strategy is to stop the segregation of Roma communities, achieve a significant positive turnover in the social and economic integration of Roma communities, non-discrimination and changes in attitudes of the majority population towards the Roma minority through measures, inclusive policies and legal standards at all levels of government and public administration in the Slovak Republic in the period 2012 – 2020.
- Due to the **participation of all relevant partners** – state administrative bodies, municipalities, NGO's, Roma civil society in the process of revision, most of the measures of the **Action Plan reflected on actual needs and problems of MRC**.
- On the international level, USVRK acts as a National Contact Point for the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 as well as a National Coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. On the national level, USVRK in cooperation with relevant state and public institutions performs tasks aimed at addressing Roma communities and implements systemic



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measures to improve the situation of Roma. USVRK was also appointed to act as a coordinator of horizontal priority marginalized Roma communities (hereafter „HP MRC“) - one of four horizontal priorities set in the National Strategic Reference Framework for the period 2007-2013 (hereinafter „NSRF“) aimed at effective use of structural funds for the integration of MRC. This **coordinating and managing position on both - international and national level** – provides USVRK with **broader overview and better insight in the implementation processes**. This experience was used in the process of the preparation the new programming period 2014 - 2020 for the use of European structural and investments funds.

- **NSRF within the HP MRC aimed at strengthening public policies in the area of inclusion of marginalized Roma communities.** The main objective of HP MRC was to increase the employment and education level of MRC and to improve their living conditions. To fulfill this objective, concrete measures were defined so that they take into account in accordance with government policies of SR four priority areas: education, employment, health, housing and three inter-related topics: poverty, discrimination and gender equality. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the interventions from structural funds focused on solutions of problems of MRC, two tools for the implementation of measures were set up as a direct form of support of HP MRC:
 - a) comprehensive approach through 6 operational programmes - Regional OP, OP Employment and Social Inclusion, OP Education, OP Environment, OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth, and OP Health Care. For the implementation of the comprehensive approach within 6 OPs , the allocation of 200 mil. EUR was set.
 - b) individual projects (demand-oriented), which can be applied in all OPs.

Negatives:

- USVRK was **lacking adequate financial resources and personnel capacities** for successful and effective implementation of measures of the Strategy.
- Lack of financial resources also impacted the area of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy as it led to **insufficient periodicity of the external monitoring of the Strategy**.
- External evaluation of the Strategy from 2014 revealed several **shortcomings**, mostly **in the area of monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy and its actualisation**. Too broad definition of the objectives of the Strategy and the insufficient definition of indicators of measures negatively impacted the process of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy and made it impossible to accurately measure the real progress of implementation.
- Although USVRK acts as a coordinator and advisory body for the area of Roma inclusion on national and international level, the office has **limited competencies** in relation to other bodies of state and public administration (municipalities), which are responsible for the implementation of measures of the Strategy.