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**ON THE ROAD TO MATURITY:  
EVALUATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
DESEGREGATION PROJECTS IN BULGARIA**

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# Assessment of the School Desegregation Projects in Bulgaria

- Study commissioned by the Roma Education Fund in 2007.
- Implemented by a team of sociologists and educationalists managed by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

# Conclusions (draft report):

- The school desegregation process in Bulgaria progresses sustainably spearheaded mainly by the commitment and enthusiasm of the Romani grassroots organisations which manage the separate projects.
- In 2002, the school desegregation process in six cities included 1,263 Romani children, in 2005 – 2,124, and in 2006 the number of the children increased to 2,204. The number of projects has also increased, including the two biggest Bulgarian cities Sofia and Plovdiv, which are home to tens of thousands of Roma.
- Throughout the years, the school desegregation projects have been sustainable; the Romani organisations accumulated experience; the methods for attracting and retaining Romani children to integrated schools developed and diversified. Different models for realising school desegregation emerged which are applicable to the variety of cultural and demographic conditions of Roma in Bulgaria.

# Conclusions

- Although still not at the level required by a comprehensive implementation of the school desegregation throughout the country and not expeditiously, the Bulgarian state maintains its commitment to carry out school desegregation and expands its actions in this direction.
- The most important step in the last two years has been the establishment of the Centre for Educational Integration of Children from Ethnic Minorities, which not only develops the government policy in the area of desegregation but also provides financial support for implementing in practice this policy.
- As a whole, local authorities also maintain and expand their commitments to desegregated Roma education. Incidents of unsympathetic or hostile attitude towards this process are more sporadic and isolated acts than a general practice at local level.