



GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA
NATIONAL AGENCY FOR ROMA

WORKING PAPER

Since 2001, the Roma have constituted the target of several public policies, as follows:

- I. The Romanian Government designed, in 2001, a specific **Strategy for the Improvement of the Situation of Roma, as a comprehensive approach to the problems of the Roma minority**. The Strategy is the result of collaboration between the governmental structures and Roma NGOs. The Strategy lays down a number of priorities, under the general objective of enhancing Roma participation in the economic, social, educational, cultural and political life of society. The overarching principles of the Strategy are the fight against discrimination and the gender perspective. The life span of the Strategy is 10 years (2001 – 2010). Since 2002, the implementation focused more intensely on five areas: education, health, employment, housing, administration and community development.
 - **A network of special institutions** was created with a view to implementing the Strategy. It includes the National Agency for Roma (created in 2004), the Working Group on Public Policies for Roma, the Ministerial Commissions for Roma, Roma County Offices and Local Roma Experts.
 - **County Offices for the Roma (CORs)** are subordinated to the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs (MAIA) and operate within each of the 42 Prefectures of Romania.
 - **The local councilors** are subordinated both the CORs and to the mayor's office and they are the main interface mediating between local authorities and the Roma in various local communities. There are more than 200 Roma local councilors.

II. The *National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Plan* 2002-2012 was adopted in 2002 and sets out a series of strategic objectives with the view to, inter alia, improve the situation of the Roma population. Chapter 14 of the Plan deals specifically with the reduction of poverty and social exclusion of Roma..

III. Decade of Roma Inclusion

Romania participates in the Initiative entitled “The Decade of Roma Inclusion” adopted in 2004, for the period 2005 – 2015, by eight Central and Eastern European countries with the support of the international community. It represents the first collaborative effort of this scope dedicated to the improvement of the Roma situation. The Decade is supported internationally by institutions such as the World Bank, the European Commission, the United Nations Development Program, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Council’s Development Bank. The representatives of Roma and their non-governmental organizations must participate in all implementation phases of the program. Main action areas are: education, health care, employment and housing. Also, there are cross-cut themes such as poverty, discrimination and gender issues.

Between July 1st, 2005 and June 30th, 2006, Romania, represented by the National Agency for Roma, held the Presidency of this Initiative.

EDUCATION

A number of measures and strategic programmes were put in place or continued by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, aiming at increasing the access to quality education of Roma children.

I. The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth organised and continued the following programmes that proved themselves efficient, starting with 1998:

- Creating, in the County School Inspectorates, special positions for inspectors on Roma education, responsible for the participation in education of Roma children, as well as for the teaching of Romani language. Out of the 42 inspectors, 26 are Roma;
- Providing annually special places in high-schools and arts and trades schools for Roma children. If, in 2002, 1350 places were allocated for Roma children, in 2007 there were more than 3000 special places;

- Providing annually special places in universities for Roma children that graduated high-school. If in the academic year 1998 -1999, 149 special places for Roma were offered in 8 universities, in 2007 there were 454 special places in 39 universities. Additionally, 200 places for training Roma people to become primary education teachers were allocated at the Open Distance Learning Department CREDIS of the Bucharest University, as a result of the partnership between the Bucharest University, UNICEF and the current PHARE Programmes “Access to education for disadvantaged groups” implemented by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. The Roma students will acquire also the competence to teach Romani language or/and Roma history and tradition;
- Financing, by county school inspectorates, of Roma language and history teachers positions (420 positions in September 2007). In 2006 - 2007 school year, a number of 25.000 pupils, out of 250.000 Roma pupils which have assumed their Roma identity, have chosen to study Romani language and literature and Roma history and traditions;
- The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth organises, annually, a Romani language national contest. 200 – 250 Roma children that excel at local, county and national level in this competition, are invited to participate in the summer camp for Romani language, culture and creation, annually financed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, at the seaside;
- Revising and developing the syllabus for Romani language (for first to fourth grades) and Roma history and traditions (for sixth and seventh grade) with Roma authors;
- Starting with September 2003, a class with tuition in Romani language has been established, at Măguri School – Lugoj, Timiș county (80 pupils in 2006/2007 school year);
- The government extended, from September 2003, the financing of a refreshment, also at preschool level, for all children - Roma and non-Roma, the programme started actually, in September 2001, for the primary education (following the intense actions taken by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth – Department for education in National Minorities Languages and by the civil community since October 1999, through a number of request formulated to the authorities);
- Starting with March 2004, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, in partnership with UNICEF and “Save the Children” organisation, has initiated a multi-annual national programme of training non-Roma teachers, that work in classes or kindergartens with Roma children, so that they become aware of the Roma pupil’s specific needs, inter-cultural problems etc. (ROMANIPEN training topic).

II. PHARE programmes developed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth regarding the access to education of disadvantaged groups, with a special focus on Roma.

The Ministry of Education Research and Youth (MoERY) considers that education is a key instrument for preventing social exclusion of disadvantaged groups, especially Roma. This could be achieved only through a thorough social inclusion of all categories of children and youngsters in the compulsory education system.

Having as main purpose to support the Ministry of Education Research and Youth's Strategy to put in practice the principle of equal chances in education, regardless of the individual characteristics – physical or mental impairments, cultural or socio-economic background, mother tongue, ethnic origin, geographically remote area of origin, the PHARE projects “Access to education for disadvantaged groups” (2001, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006) are part of the education policy reform. A total sum of 36.99 MEURO has been committed for these projects, as proof of the importance given by the ministry to solving this difficult issue.

PHARE Projects seek to address the issues of consolidation of a framework of service provision designed to enable the Roma to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of Romania. In that context, their goals (part of the EU social inclusion agenda) are, at a more general level, fighting social exclusion and marginalization, promoting and extending a mechanism for improving access to and quality of education for disadvantaged communities, safeguarding human rights.

The 2001 PHARE pilot project was developed in 10 counties and expanded in 12 new counties, during the 2003 PHARE project. Through the PHARE 2004 project, the institutional building component was put in place in the remaining 20 counties, out of which 14 participate in the grant scheme, developed through the 2005 PHARE project. The 2006 PHARE project will make a national evaluation, covering all counties, regarding the impact of the measures and good practices piloted and designed in previous PHARE projects (2001, 2003, 2004 and 2005).

The access to lifelong learning is also ensured by the training programmes that are delivered under those projects for the professionals working in the educational field: directors, inspectors, trainers, teachers, school mediators, teachers, students coming from targeted communities.

Good results and success stories related to PHARE projects “Access to education for disadvantaged groups” show us, since 2001 (starting point), that:

- approximately 850 teacher trainers from all 42 counties were trained on themes like inclusive education, active teaching methods, school based curricula development and implementation, second chance and remedial education programmes;
- the local training programmes have been developed in all counties and the Teacher Training Houses support it;
- approximately 4000 Roma pupils, youngsters and adults have been enrolled in the *Second chance programme* (for primary level and for lower secondary level);
- after school/remedial teaching programmes and intensive kindergarten programmes have been developed in 25 counties with a good participation and are currently developed in 11 new counties;
- subjects related to Roma culture are present in the newly designed curriculum for the Second Chance programmes and the Second Chance programme has been extended in all counties;
- approximately 381 school mediators have participated or are participating currently in the mediator training programme;
- 36 Resource Centers for Inclusive Education have been established in participating counties;
- approximately 300 participating schools and another 150 schools, currently selected, have developed and develop activities for parents participation in education;
- Counties participating in the project have financed works and procurement activities and approximately 300 schools from disadvantaged communities already ensure a friendly educational environment.

Other strengths of PHARE projects, marked as success stories, are:

- The development of the school mediators’ net and their role in increasing school enrolment and school participation of Roma children. Mediators act as an interface

between school and community, having an important role in increasing participation of Roma parents in the school life;

- The revision and development of the Second Chance programme, both for primary and lower secondary education. Targeting children and youngsters that dropped out of school, the programme represents a very flexible educational offer, giving the possibility of recognition of the competences acquired in informal settings, the implementation of a modular curriculum and a student centered approach. The lower secondary Second chance programme offers a unique combination (in the Romanian education system) of general and vocational education, ensuring for the graduates increased chances to find a job).

III. The Special Partnership with UNICEF Romania. The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth has organised starting with 2001 - in partnership and with co financing from UNICEF - the following programmes:

- *Producing educational materials for Roma language and history or which concern Roma children education* (a Romanian - Roma dictionary, tapes of Roma sayings and stories, three tapes of Roma history – in Romani, Romanian and Hungarian, a Roma history and tradition manual for the teachers of Romani language, a three-language illustrated vocabulary in Romani, Romanian and Hungarian for pre-school and first grade Roma pupils, a literacy manual in Romani language etc.);
- *Offering scholarships for young Roma that teach Romani language in schools, in order for them to be able – simultaneous with their educational activity in schools – to complete the 3 years long university training, to become accredited Romani language teachers, through Open Distance Learning at CREDIS Bucharest;*
- *Continuation of training, each summer, of 50 - 60 Roma students, in summer schools for Romani language and culture, so that they would be able to teach Romani language and Roma history in the educational system;*
- *Continuation of the ZEP programme (“educational priority areas”), initiated in Giurgiu County.*

IV. Permanent collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth with different nongovernmental and governmental organisations

The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth complemented the programmes developed by cooperating with several governmental or nongovernmental institutions, in order to improve the quality of education for Roma pupils. Among those we mention CEDU 2000+ (that developed Roma educational programmes in more than 300 schools), Romanian Centre for Roma Communities -CRCR Cluj Napoca (that excelled in producing books in Romani language or regarding Roma, assimilated as auxiliary educational materials), Save the Children, Intercultural Institute - Timișoara and HELP - Iași (that offered teacher training courses for non-Roma teachers working with Roma children), CARITAS - Satu Mare (that develops educational programmes in Satu Mare and Maramureș counties), “Cașavencu” Press Monitoring Agency and Romani CRISS as part of the programme “Steps to tolerance”, the Institute for Education Sciences, Project for Ethnic Relations - Târgu-Mureș, Bucharest University – CREDIS College, Council of Europe – Education Department, Centre de Ressources Tsiganes - Paris, Open Society Institute - Budapest etc.

- In 2007 the Ministry of Education adopted the Order **1540** which prohibits any form of segregation in the pre-university education system. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education, approved the Methodology for preventing and eliminating school segregation of Roma children. Furthermore, the Ministry issued an internal regulation outlining that schools and school inspectors must take action to identify and eliminate any segregation practices.

Measures already taken:

1. Dissemination and information of the school inspectorates and schools:
 - Written information transmitted by MoERY to the County school inspectorates regarding the adoption of the order
 - Posting the order on the ministry’s website
 - Training provided for inspectors, headmasters and teachers regarding possible segregation situations, the educational benefit of desegregation, possible difficulties and the ways to get over them
 - involvement of representative stakeholders in communities in the information process regarding segregation/desegregation, mediation actions (where needed)

- involving the trained school mediators, who are mostly representative of Roma Community, in the communication between the local authorities/ educational authorities and the Roma community and in the process of school desegregation
- establishing local and county support groups, including representatives of educational and local authorities, of parents, local community and other stakeholders, with the aim of discussing all the issues related to education of children coming from disadvantaged communities, including segregation and finding solutions to the problems, including necessary resources

2. Evaluation of the existing situation:

- Written request from MoERY to the County school inspectorates to make an assessment of the segregation situation and to elaborate an action plan for desegregation design
- Reports from the counties sent to the MoERY, assessing the segregation situation and presenting the desegregation plans

3. Monitoring plan

- Monitoring visits in all the counties involved in the PHARE 2005 programme Access to education for disadvantaged groups, by teams including ministry representatives and technical assistance members
- Monitoring report of the TA regarding the desegregation component of the PHARE project

B. Measures that will be taken in the future

1. Continuing monitoring activities of the desegregation component of the PHARE 2005 programme Access to education for disadvantaged groups, by the TA members and the representatives of the ministry
2. Monitoring activities of the desegregation process established by the county school inspectorates
3. Cooperation with NGO's in the monitoring of the segregation situation, including whistle blowing

The desegregation process is a long and difficult one, but there is the necessary political will to enforce the Order 1540/19.07.2007

- ***Social Inclusion Project (SIP)***

Social Inclusion Project seeks to improve the living conditions and to increase the social inclusion of Roma in four prioritised areas, inclusively education. SIP is financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and correspondingly co-financed by the Romanian Government For example, the component regarding Inclusive Early Childhood Education Program is financed with 6 mil euros and it is targeting 120 of Roma communities that were selected in which kindergartens would be built or rehabilitated in order to ensure a good quality early education for Romani children.

- As the result of the implementation of the IDF GRANT designed for sustaining the development of the institutional capacity for the development of a Roma social inclusion programmes such as preparation of draft policies in the four prioritized areas, a draft policy in education would be finalized recently.

- The Protocol of collaboration between OSI Roma Health Program, Roma Education Fund and NAR was signed last month in order to offer scholarships to 60 Roma students that are applying for Medical Schools at academic and secondary school.

- In April 2008 NAR obtained the funding from **European Social Fund** for two projects regarding the improvement of education of Roma pupils and adults

1. Education of Romani children- the way to a guaranteed employment

It is a trans-national project which it would be implemented during 2008-2011 by NAR in partnership with Roma Education Fund, Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, Resources Centre for Roma Communities and Pakiv Association from Romania.

The main objective of this project is to increase the level of education of Romani children in the rural and urban area for developing human resources, which later will participate on the flexible

and modern labour market as the result of the improved quality of education and reduction of the school abandon.

Specifically, the expected results of the project are the following:

- Equal access to education of 1200 Roma pupils from VII and VIII grade which are most exposed to the early abandon of school. The result will be achieved by offering additional education preparation for passing the national tests.
- 600 Roma students from grade VII will continue their studies in the secondary stage as the result of the mentorship, personnel development, orientation and guidance activities
- Retention of 750 Roma students in the 9th grade in the secondary school by facilitating their adaptation to the new educational environment.
- Preparation of 450 students of Arts and Crafts School to gain access to labour market throughout scholarships programs for excellence in studies.
- Preparation of 2400 Roma adults who early abandoned school to benefit of programs such as “Second Chance” which have as aim to support Roma adults to gain access to labour market by ensuring them basic education.

2. School a chance for everyone

The project proposes several measures to prevent the early abandon of school of vulnerable groups in 20 counties of Romania. This trans-national project would be implemented in partnership with International Association Step by Step and also Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, the Centre for Education and Personal Development- Step by Step and Agency for Community Development “Together”. The activities implemented during 2008-2011 would contribute:

- To improve participation of Roma children, poor and disabled children at primary and secondary level.
- To diminish school abandon
- To realise a collaboration and networking mechanisms among the actors implicated in educational issues

EMPLOYMENT

The Roma population has a very high level of poverty, in 2003 being 3 times higher than the nationwide average. A significant part of the Roma communities (74.3%) has a wide range of social disabilities: poor education, lack of qualification, a history of lack of

participation in the formal economy, a big number of children, lack of dwelling space, lack of ownership over the land for those living in the rural area, deficit in qualification and experience on the labour market.

A very big number of the Roma (according to estimates about 50.000 persons) do not have identity papers and that is reflected in exclusion from social rights: social assistance, social insurance, and legal employment.

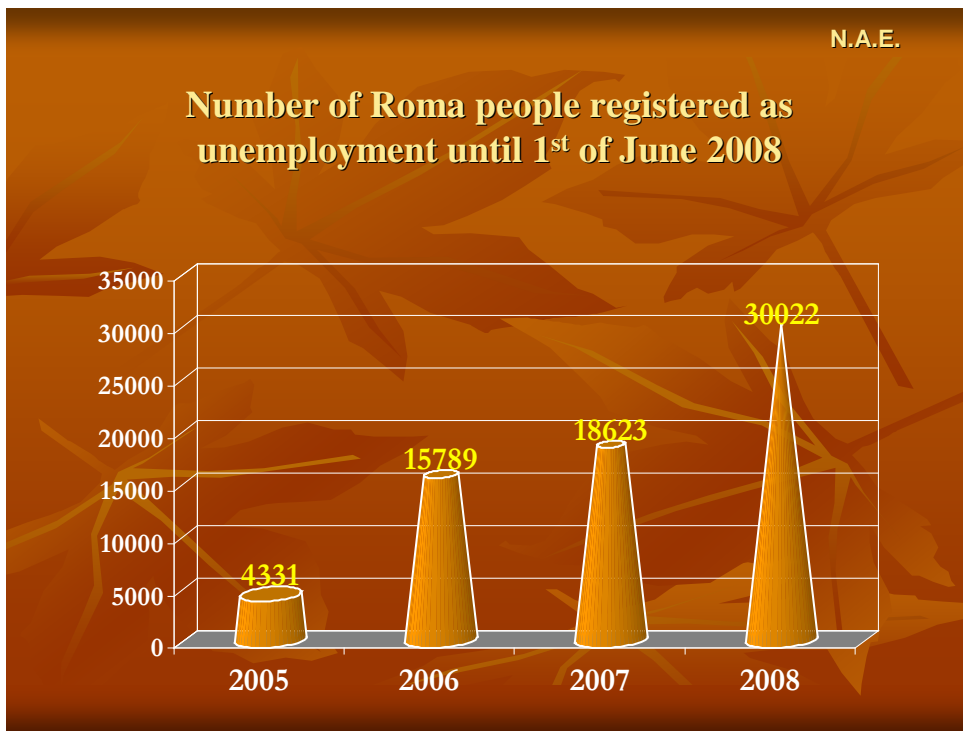
In 2002 only 122,573 persons out of the 535,140 declared Roma (that is only 22.9% of the total) are included among the active population and from among them only 71.5% being among the employed population, the remaining of almost 28.5% being unemployed in search for a job. About 41% of them work in agriculture (of which one third are women) and 31% are unqualified workers.

As active measures of 2001, NAE included the ethnic Roma persons as a target group, in the annual plan of action for increasing the level of employment:

- *Labour Caravans*

Starting with 2003, **job markets** have been organized each year for **Roma ethnics**. Besides the objective to create adequate conditions for employers to satisfy their employment needs and to facilitate the employment of Roma ethnics, these job markets offered the opportunity to campaign the fact that Roma ethnics are interested in work so that the employers would come to accept them as future employees. Also, Roma ethnics had the possibility to discuss with representatives of economic agents and find out which are the requirements for getting a job. Following the organization of job markets, the number of Roma ethnic employed was as follows: 1523 in 2003; 2257 in 2004; 1129 in 2005; 1,116 in 2006 and 1,187 in 2007.

From 2006 – 1st of June 2008

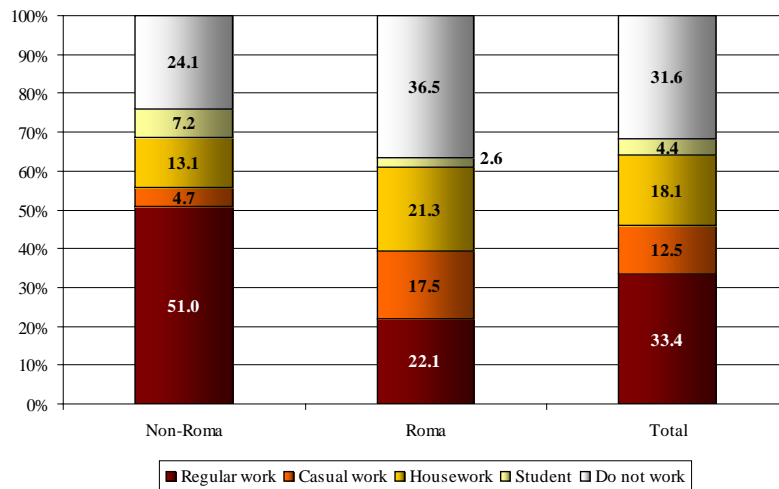


Ethnic Inequalities in Economic Activity¹

If we analyze employment positions of Roma and non-Roma population, we can see differences in the structure of different kind of activities (see Chart). While there is a very wide difference in having regular work (more than half of non-Roma has this kind of employment, less than a quarter of Roma has such, so the difference is more than double), the situation is a little bit more balanced when we analyze data about those do not work (24.1 versus 36.5 percent). Casual work is much more frequent among Roma (almost four times higher rate of Roma have casual work than non-Roma), and housework is also more typical, but the difference is not as strong. There are a relatively small rate of students as we analyzed just those older than 18, but among non-Roma student's rate is almost three times bigger than among Roma adults.

¹ Research Report -Come Closer – Inclusion and Exclusion of Roma in Present-Day Romanian Society'- Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception- RO 2004/016-772.01.01.01

Economical activity by ethnicity (respondents between 18-59 years, percent)



In March 2008, NAR successfully applied for three employment projects to European Social Fund, projects that are targeting the increasing of Roma participation on the labour market.

1. The participation of vulnerable groups to the social economy

This project would be implemented during 2008-2011 by NAR in collaboration with 8 partners², namely several governmental bodies and NGOs which have expertise on the situation of vulnerable groups. The main goal of the project is the empowerment of the vulnerable groups to be included on the labor market by developing their professional, vocational and entrepreneurial skills.

The target groups of this project are the following vulnerable groups:

- 9800 of Roma people which suffer social exclusion from all social services, such as education, health care and housing
- 7000 detained people or who recently were/would be released from detention
- 1200 drug addictive people who are following recovery treatments.
- 1000 women who suffered domestic violence
- 1000 young people which left the institutional system for child protection

² National Anti-Drugs Agency, National Agency for Family Protection, National Administration of Penitentiaries, The Foundation of Penal Justice Reform, Association of Romanian Group for Defending Human Rights, Association Towards Europe Targoviste, Foundation for Social Development of Roma- Ramses and Transcena Association.

2. Together in the labour market

This is a pilot project to be implemented over a two-year period (2008-2010) in eight locations throughout Romania (one in each of the eight regions) with the wider objective of enlarge it to other municipalities during the 2010-2013 period. The project focuses on the Roma community and more specifically on the working-age Roma community (16-64 years) and young people between 14 and 16 years at the final stages of compulsory secondary education. Work will be carried out in the fields of education and employment with the **overarching objective of promoting the incorporation of Roma persons into the labor market through access to wage and salary employment.**

The project's target group is **6670-** the working-age Romanian Roma population (16-64 years) and young people between 14 and 16 years at the final stages of compulsory secondary education. The demographic structure of the Romanian Roma population shows a group which is predominately young (estimated mean age of 24) meaning that actions will be designed to target specific groups such as young people, the long-term unemployed and immigrants returning to Romania, always bearing the gender perspective in mind in the form of specific actions for Roma women.

The design of the project, its methodological approach and management style is based on the ACCEDER project, a best practices model developed in Spain beginning in the year 2000 within the framework of the ESF.

Generally speaking, the Roma population does not take advantage of mainstream training or vocational resources or employment services either due to mistrust, the lack of sensitivity and adaptation of the services themselves or simply because they are unfamiliar with the mechanisms available to help them find gainful employment.

According to the National Plan for Occupation Action 2006, the employment on Roma has made progress during the last years, but is necessary an individualized approach for good results.

3. For a better life

The main objective is to increase the participation of vulnerable groups on the labour market and to promote the social inclusion of Roma by developing the structures and specific activities of the social economy by means of Regional Centres of Human Resources for Social Economy. This project would be implemented during 2008-2011 in partnership with Fondazione Brodolini and Conform S.R.L. from Italy and National Organization for Disabled People from Romania

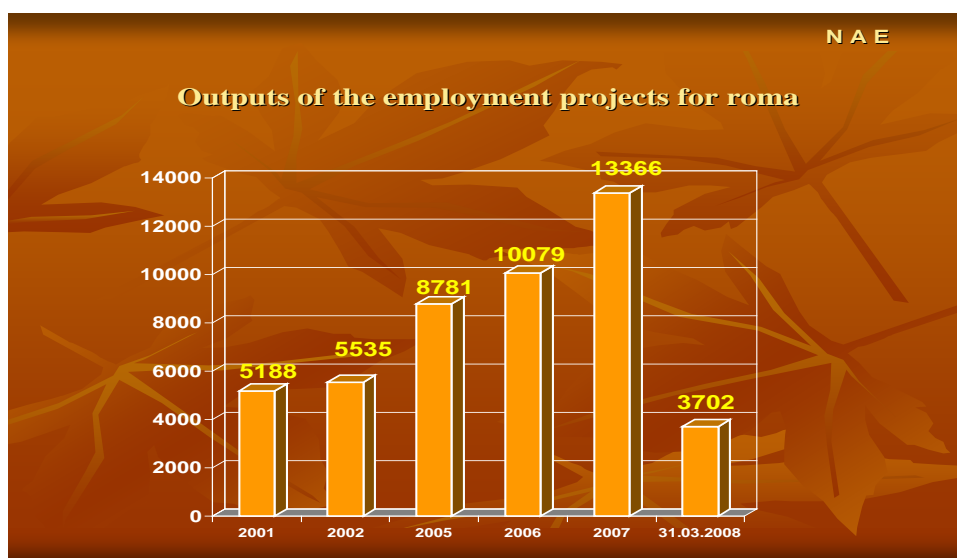
The project would target the professional and personal development of vulnerable groups throughout vocational training in order to facilitate their insertion on the labour market. At the same time their self-esteem would be enhanced as the result of mentorship actions.

The target groups are 1000 of Roma people, 800 persons with minimum income and 200 disabled people. Moreover, 50% of the target groups are representing women and 15% people between 55-64 years old.

THE INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH AND MAINSTREAMING APPROACH

During the last 2 years (2006-2007) most of the Phare Programs focused on preparation for grants schemes promoting Social Inclusion Measures like: *“Support for the MoLSSF, NAE and Final Beneficiaries for the previous preparation of the HRD schemes promoting Social Inclusion Measures” -with NAR partnership:*

- Mainstreaming approach: Grant scheme for social inclusion for vocational training (60% for Roma segment)
- Basic catalogue for promoters of projects (Roma NGO’s from all 8 regions) published and registered in National Social Observer.



In elaboration of Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013 Romania, since 2005 until the beginning of 2007, NAR was the consultant for Management Authority regarding the Roma population.

The following specific objectives will contribute to the achievement of the overall objective:

- Promoting and supporting job creation in structures of social economy
- Increasing the qualification level of persons belonging to vulnerable groups;

- □ Improving the level of skills and competences of professionals in the field of social inclusion.

HEALTH:

- Within the National Health Programme, the Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with the NGOs, established **a system of Roma health mediators**, as an interface between providers of medical and social services and the community, in order to improve the health status of the population, especially for persons with low socio-economic status, without medical insurance and those living in rural areas uncovered by family practitioners.
- The number of Roma health mediators has increased as follows: from 67 mediators in 2002 to 308 mediators in 2006, respectively from 160 community nurses in 2002 to **805 in 2006**.
- In 2006, this part of the National Health Programme, coordinated by the Ministry of Public Health, evolved into a separate programme named „Actions for health”, with an estimated increase of 300% in the number of communities where these two types of community health workers activate. The programme also registered an estimated number of 2000 community medical nurses employed for the whole country and an estimated number of 400 Roma health Mediators
- Between 12th and 13th November 2007 at the first National Conference of Health Mediators there were discussed the role of health mediators in monitoring cases of discrimination in hospitals, such segregation of Romani women in hospitals, and methods of institutional intervention in cases of discrimination in health area. In February 2008, the second meeting of National Conference of Health Mediators had as main theme the Impact of Public Policies in the Health Area on Roma Communities.

HOUSING

- NAR already finalized the draft on the inclusive public policy on housing. This draft was presented during a meeting with Mr. Laszlo Borbely, the Minister of Housing.

- During 2007 National Agency for Roma initiated partnerships with institutions and NGO's regarding community development programmes in 8 following communities: **Cetatea de Balta**, Alba Iulia county , **Brăhăsești**, Galati county, **Pitesti**, Arges county, **Cuza Voda**, Constanta county, **Nistru**, Tautii Magherus, Maramures county, **Chitila** district from Bucharest, **Sector 4** from Bucharest and **Lipscani** area from Sector 1, Bucharest. Thus, on 12th July 2007 NAR hold a press conference for launching the 8 community development programmes regarding the improvement of infrastructure, such as housing, drinking water and sewage system, electricity and gas access.

- In February 2008 NAR signed the Framework Agreement on Housing with the Ministry of Housing in order to implement draft on the inclusive public policy on housing. According to this agreement on short term NAR and the ministry will implement from 2008 a pilot project which has as objective to build social houses for Roma people in 16 localities from 8 regions of Romania.

- Within SIP there were selected 48 Roma communities and other 40 will be selected in order to develop and improve their infrastructure (roads, electricity, sewage and drinking water system). (11,7 mil Euros)

POLICE

- Since 2006, The Ministry of Interior has introduced the positive practice of **allocating special seats for Roma ethics** at the entrance exams for the Police Academy and Police Schools. In 2007, 45 seats were allocated (11 were for the Police Academy). In 2008 a number of 41 seats are to be allocated. Information campaigns were launched for the purpose of familiarizing Roma communities with the existence of this opportunity, and to encourage Roma individuals to pursue their candidacy for these places.

- A total number of **1604 police officers were trained** in the last two years in the framework of different projects in areas such as the observance of human rights, resolution of conflicts, prevention of discrimination, management of intercultural diversity, intercultural communication.

- At present, there are **71 persons of Roma ethnicity employed in the structures of the Ministry of Interior** – 45 men (11 officers and 34 agents) and 13 women (3 officers and 10 agents).

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

1. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

- **National Council for Combating Discrimination** was created in 2001 as a specialized body of the central public administration empowered to guarantee and supervise the implementation of the principle of equality and non-discrimination among citizens.
 - The Council is an autonomous public institution, with legal personality, under parliamentary control. It carries out its activity without any restriction or influence coming from other public institutions or authorities. Its annual report is debated and approved by the Parliament.
 - NCCD is an instrument designed specifically to fight all forms of discrimination. Through its specific functions and competence, the Council is the first institution of this kind in Central and Eastern Europe.
 - The Council is responsible for the enforcement and observance of anti-discrimination legislation. NCCD is qualified to investigate, establish and sanction cases of discrimination.

At the same time, the Council elaborates and applies public policies in the field of non-discrimination. In 2007, the Council adopted the *National Strategy for Implementing Measures on Preventing and Combating Discrimination (2007-2013)*. The Strategy establishes guidelines in the field of preventing and combating discrimination, with the aim to develop an inclusive and intercultural society

- NCCD *receives and reviews petitions and complaints* regarding violations of the legal provisions concerning the principle of equality and non-discrimination from individuals and groups of persons, NGOs active in human rights protection, other legal entities and public institutions. The Steering Board of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, exercising its decision-making role, analyses the petitions and complaints received, and adopts, by decisions, the appropriate measures, following investigations carried out by the specialized staff of the NCCD (the Inspection Team).

➤ Once the decision has been adopted, the Steering Board establishes the *sanction*, which can be a notice or the payment of a fine. The Steering Board also decides on the specific amount of money to be paid by a natural person or by a legal entity, for perpetrating a discriminatory act. The amount to be paid varies from 400 to 4000 lei (RON), in cases of discrimination against a person, or from 600 to 8000 lei (RON), in cases of discrimination against a group of persons or a community. It is possible to appeal against the sanctions applied by NCCD for committing a discriminatory act, under the procedure provided for by the common law.

Statistics:

➤ **Between 2002 and 2007**, a total of **2610 complaints** was filed with the Council, a significant share of them involving discrimination based on ethnicity (Roma). Other more frequent discriminatory criteria are social status, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, age, disability.

➤ In the period 2002-2007, the complaints involving discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity (against the Roma minority) represent a percent of about 25% in 2002 out of a total of 143 complaints, 14% in 2003 out of 473 complaints, 13% in 2004 out of 353 complaints, 24% in 2005 out of 382 complaints, 16% in 2006 out of 432 and 10% in 2007 out of 836 complaints.

The number of complaints registered a continuously increasing trend which indicates better awareness of the population of the existence of available remedies and protection against forms of discrimination

➤ Stop Prejudice against Roma, (S.P.E.R)- campaign funded by PHARE program and implemented between 2007-2008 by General Secretary of Government and NAR. In May 2008 the campaign was awarded with the best ex competition social campaign by Civil Society Gala.

➤ In the period 2008-2009 the DOSTA campaign would be implemented by NAR. This campaign would be implemented with the collaboration of Council of Europe.

➤ The Romanian National Television launched in 2007 a *two-year Program dedicated to the promotion of the Roma culture*, symbols and traditions and combating prejudices towards the members of this ethnic group.

- The Government allocates every year a special budgetary fund for interethnic projects and programs aimed at combating intolerance. Several awareness projects on Roma, as well as on all other minorities have been financed and supported through this mechanism run by the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations.

2. GENDER

- In 2006 National Agency for Roma organised the campaign *With us, Among Us, About Us, Women*. The aim was to improve the participation of Romani women to medical facilities in order to make their medical tests and have a general evaluation of their health situation. The campaign took place in 10 Roma communities and participated more than 430 Romani women from which 368 made their medical tests.
- Between 16th -18th March 2008 took place the first national event organized by Romanian governmental institution for Romani women, namely *National Conference of Romani Women*. At this event more than 80 Romani women participated. They were from various fields of activity and of different age. Throughout this event NAR created an open forum for Romani women to analyze the impact of the existent public policies and additional programs developed and implemented in the area of gender equality and within the National Strategy for Improving the Situation of Roma adopted by G.D. 520/2004 and Roma Decade, instruments that have an important impact of Romani women situation.

3. YOUTH

- The conference was the first national event concerning Romani Youth organised by institutions in Romania, namely National Agency for Roma and National Authority for Young People and took place at Hotel Mara, Sinaia, Romania on 18th -20th March 2008. This event represented the effort of the Romanian Government through the National Agency for Roma to promote and implement the subsidiarity principle and right of every citizen, inclusive Romani youth, to take part in the decision making process at national, regional and local levels.