



*BULGARIA
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR COOPERATION ON
ETHNIC AND INTEGRATION ISSUES*

*"ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA (2012- 2020)
AND THE DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015"*

*26 ISC DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015
19-20 June 2014, Podgoritca, Montenegro*



PRIORITY “EDUCATION”

- *The Ministry of Education and Science is the leading institution responsible for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy, defined under priority Education.*
- *In Bulgaria, access to education is free.*
- *Education of children and young people shall be carried out in a uniform cultural and educational environment, which establishes guarantees for protection and development of individual cultures and traditions within the framework of one common educational policy.*

PRIORITY "EDUCATION" - CHANGES

- ***In 2013, the Council of Ministers has adopted a Strategy for reduction of the share of early school leavers (2013 – 2020)***
- ***An amendment of Family Allowances Act and its Implementing Rules, in force from 01.09.2013 - the regular school and preparatory groups at kindergartens attendance – condition for the provision of monthly allowance for children***
- ***The number of early school leavers has dropped: from 6 680 in the 2009/2010 academic year to 2302 early school leavers in the 2011/2012 academic year and to 2122 early school leavers in 2012/2013 academic year.***

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND PREPARATION

Mandatory two year preparation for children before entering the first grade:

- *early socialization and the development of skills required for entry into the first grade; equal start of each child;*
- *increase the range of children, including Roma, in the system of pre-school education;*
- *support early childhood development and pre-school education;*
- *Bulgarian language training in a specialized methodology;*

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

Enrollment rate of children aged 3 to 6 years in pre-primary education - increased from 73% to 83.6% in recent years.

- *National Program "With care for each school student", module "Providing additional training for children from preparatory groups" .*

Secondary education

Initial stage of Primary education

Gradual introduction of all-day Organization of the School Day:

- essential tool to compensate the educational inequality and to prevent dropping out from the educational system; better adaptation to school life;
 - diverse opportunities for development through their inclusion in various activities;
 - individual approach to training and higher level of independence.
- *in the 2013/2014 academic year - the children from the 1st to the 4th class inclusive being already encompassed.*

Secondary education

National secondary education development programmes:

- The National Programme "School: territory of school students";
- The National Programme "No absences at school".

The Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities:

1000 children and students from ethnic minority groups -integrated into the educational system, 300 educational specialists - trained to work in a multicultural environment, 63 projects - for inclusion of Roma parents.

PRIORITY "EDUCATION"
Operational Program
„Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013“

“Enhancing the quality of education in the central schools by introducing all-day academic day scheduling”

For the academic year 2013/2014 under the project work 796 central schools. There are formed 4453 groups to all day organization of the educational process, as they are covered 103499 students.

- *Scheme BG05PO001-4.1.05 „Educational integration of children and students from the ethnic minorities“:*
 - *total number of concluded contracts -152;*
 - *total value of the contracts is 21,368,209 BGN;*
 - *total 11 441 Roma children are involved.*

EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program

EEAFM and NFM -10% of allocated funds to be used for Roma initiatives.

- *Program "Children and Youth at Risk" :*

- *building youth centers;*
- *services in early childhood education and training in kindergarten with a focus on the integration of socially disadvantaged children, including Roma ethnicity;*
- *scholarships for students;*

Training of Roma mediators, youth leaders and teachers in preschool institutions.

Thematic Fund „Reform Fund linked to Inclusion of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups” Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program

- *support of the integration of Roma children and women in the Bulgarian education and health system;*
- *funding of pre-school and school activities - encouraging the children to attend kindergartens and schools, organizing support classes, bilingual classes, developing social skills; counseling of parents whose children do not attend school regularly; improving the quality of education in kindergartens and schools located in major districts and rural areas frequented mostly by Roma children.*

Operational Programs 2014-2020

- *An investment priority "Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as Roma" under OP Human Resources Development (OPHRD) and OP Science and Education for Smart Growth (OPSESG)*
- *The implementation of the investment priorities will lead to achievement of the objectives of the National Strategy of Republic Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2012-2020, as well as of the objectives of regional strategies and municipal plans for Roma integration.*
- *Specific schemes, which can be applied for, eligible activities and the amount of the grant will be developed after the final approval of the OPs.*

Operational Program SESG 2014-2020

In the priority axis 3. Educational environment for social inclusion one of investment priorities is IP 2 „Socio-economic integration of marginalized groups such as Roma

Examples of activities :

- *Additional training in Bulgarian language for children and students for whom Bulgarian is not mother tongue;*
- *Increasing the capacity of educational specialists to work in a multicultural environment;*
- *Providing appropriate educational environment for the inclusion of children and pupils of Roma origin from a separate ethnic schools and kindergartens through gradual admission to kindergartens and schools outside Roma neighborhoods;*
- *Support for Roma families to train their children in kindergartens from the age of 3 with a view to their early socialization;*
- *Providing conditions and resources to cover school children from ethnic minorities in all day organization of the school day;*
- *Support for continuing education in upper secondary education and in higher education;*
- *Support for the development and preservation of the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities, including through the creation of conditions for learning in the mother tongue; Promoting intercultural education as an integral part of the process of modernization of the Bulgarian education system;*
- *Encourage the participation of parents in the educational process;*
- *Overcoming negative public attitudes based on ethnic origin and cultural identity.*

Operational program "HRD 2014-2020"

"Improve access to education"

- *preventing early school leaving; integration and re-integration in the education system for children and youth; improving access to educational services for early childhood development; adult literacy.*

"Development of local communities and overcome negative stereotypes"

- *planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives for social and economic integration of socially excluded people, groups and marginalized communities and community development; community activities to change practices that have a negative impact on social inclusion; support for the inclusion of target groups in the formation and implementation of national and local policies; initiatives to overcome the stereotypes; initiatives to promote the cultural identity of ethnic groups, incl. in the field of traditional activities and talents (arts and crafts).*

PRIORITY “HEALTH”

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

- creating better conditions and providing equal access to all citizens to health services, regardless of their sex, age, ethnicity or social status.
- improving health service provision of groups in unequal position.

The funds from the budget of the Ministry of Health - spent mainly on **precautionary examinations on the spot, awareness campaigns**, active using of the 23 **mobile medical care practices** received under the PHARE programme:

2 706 paediatric examinations and 905 immunisations of children with incomplete immunisation status;

968 precautionary examinations;

1 010 radiological screenings;

2 711 gynaecologic examinations;

1 041 mammography screenings;

1 507 ultrasonographic screenings;

1 510 laboratory analyses;

119 training courses, covering 1280 persons;

1034 lectures and - covered over 4435 persons;

94 campaigns - covered 3650 persons;

879 health information events;

20 889 health education materials- distributed.

PRIORITY “HEALTH”

- *Under the project "National Campaign for early diagnosis of cancer" financed under OP HRD are covered a total of 234 397 Roma.*
- *130 health mediators are working, appointed in 71 municipalities.*
- *7th National meeting, under project “Initiative for Health and Vaccination” - very **close cooperation** among the institutions, National Network of Health Mediators in Bulgaria, the National Society of General Practitioners, and the Bulgarian Society for Vaccination, patient organizations and with support of pharmaceutical companies.*

"Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS" Program

Component 5 Reducing vulnerability to HIV of people of Roma communities that are at greatest risk (aged 15-25 years) by increasing the range of the group with community-based prevention services and guidance :

- 10 NGOs performed activities in the following 10 regions: Burgas, Varna, Kyustendil, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Sliven, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Yambol;*
- Total number of clients reached by services during field work - 23 121;*
- Total number of contacts made to provide expanded services, including counseling, referral to hospitals and social institutions, accompanying for testing in KABKIS and other – 55 055;*
- Total number of persons tested for HIV and have learned their status – 6 987;*
- Total number of examinations for the diagnosis of STIs – 2 546;*
- Total number of participants in the sessions on health education and prevention of HIV / AIDS and STIs – 248;*
- Total number of people reached by the "Case management" – 961;*
- Total number of condoms distributed – 290 521;*
- Total number of distributed health education materials – 37 875;*

Program "Improving Tuberculosis (TB) Control

Component 5 "Expansion of the efficient care for prevention and control of tuberculosis in the Roma community" :

- 15 NGOs implemented activities in 15 regions as follows: Burgas, Varna, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Kyustendil, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Sliven, Sofia, Sofia - region, Montana, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Yambol;
- 19,382 individual customers are reached with services on early detection, prevention and diagnosis of tuberculosis;
- 9 939 persons were screened for risk of tuberculosis, of which, 2 093 *лица* persons have received medical examination (for early detection of tuberculosis);
- From those who have received medical examination - 69 are with active tuberculosis and 180 are with latent tuberculosis infection;
- All persons with active tuberculosis infection have been offered free-of-charge treatment with first line antitubercular drugs while the rest of the expenditures associated with the treatment including diagnostic procedures, medication and hospitalization are covered by the budget of the Ministry of Health;
- 937 persons at high risk - referred to and/or accompanied to hospitals;
- Total of 23 121 persons reached by services including education activities and individual counseling;
- More than 23 325 health education and information materials - distributed.

Priority "Health"

EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program

EEAFM and NFM -10% of allocated funds to be used for Roma initiatives

- *"Initiatives for Public Health" with a focus on specific challenges for the health of Roma;*
- *Scholarship Program for Roma students enrolled in medical or other programs related to health care.*

Thematic Fund „Reform Fund linked to Inclusion of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups" Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program

- *integrated services including basic elements of outpatient health care, prenatal and postpartum care and family planning;*
- *immunization campaigns for children, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV / AIDS;*
- *improvement of health culture and ensuring access to health information;*
- *potential partners - professional associations, GPs and hospitals.*

Priority “Health”
Operational program “HRD 2014-2020”

Improve access to social and health services:

- *improving the access to and delivery of quality health and social services, including integrated cross-sectoral services according to the specific needs of the target group;*
- *personalized advice and social health mediation of representatives of the target groups;*
- *raising awareness of social and health rights;*
- *promoting family planning and responsible parenthood;*
- *improve health awareness and more.*

Conclusions

- **Integrated approach** - integrated approach combining interventions for: improving access to employment; improving access to education; improving access to social and health services.
- **Good coordination and partnership** among all stakeholders, active cooperation with Roma NGO – National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues.
- **Strong and close control** of the implementation of the AP – Commission for the implementation of the NRIS at the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues.
- **Fully use of financial resources** as of the national budget and of the EU and other donors.

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION !***