

## **An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020**

### **Political and legal measures**

**Presentation of integrated packages of political and legal measures in the context of a broader social inclusion policy in accordance with the Council's conclusions of 19 May 2011 on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, as endorsed by the European Council of 23-24 June 2011**

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# I. Introduction

## 1. General

Austria welcomes the adoption of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 in the Council's conclusions of 19 May 2011, which were endorsed by the European Council at its meeting of 23-24 June 2011. These state that the Member States of the European Union must prepare or update national Roma inclusion strategies or integrated packages of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies by the end of 2011, taking into account their specific circumstances. Also, when designing, implementing and monitoring their National Reform Programmes in the context of Europe 2020 Strategy, they must consider the need to advance the social and economic inclusion of Roma.

Austrian Roma do not constitute a homogeneous group. They form a heterogeneous group which includes not only members of the indigenous Roma minority (ethnic Roma community) but also immigrant Roma from earlier periods and, occasionally, itinerant Roma, primarily from EU Member States. A characteristic feature of the group is the varying level of education, professional and social "roots" and consequently integration. In view of these specific circumstances, it would appear sensible for Austria to prepare integrated packages of policy measures within a broader social inclusion policy.

The Austrian legal and administrative system is focused on alleviating the impact of and eliminating social marginalisation, and therefore gives priority to tailored, needs-based packages of measures and policies which benefit what are generally acknowledged to be socially disadvantaged communities.

As well as giving priority to the implementation of an effective anti-discrimination policy, Austria has therefore set itself the objective (primarily in the four key areas identified by the European Commission: education, employment, housing and healthcare) of creating conditions for all disadvantaged groups which enable their sustainable integration into mainstream society with the help of an institutional framework which supports equal opportunities for all.

However, Austria is also aware that recognition of and respect for ethnic communities is also a key factor in the preservation of those communities, and that this respect must be communicated through policies and the media.

## **2. Description of the situation**

In Austria, the term Roma is used as an umbrella term which includes not only Roma but also Sinti and other ethnic groups.

The members of the (indigenous) Roma ethnic community, with their strong multiple identities (regional, Austrian, Roma identity and European identity), are generally well integrated into Austrian society. Most immigrant Roma, in addition to their Roma identity and varying degrees of a sense of belonging to Austria, identify strongly with their country of origin. No forms of explicit segregation by the state are known.

The members of the indigenous Roma ethnic community live mainly in the Province of Burgenland, although smaller groups of Roma can also be found in other provinces, e.g. in Vienna, in the north of Upper Austria, in parts of eastern Lower Austria and in central areas of Carinthia. Immigrant Roma primarily settle in major conurbations, particularly Vienna and, to very varying degrees, other provincial capitals or commercial centres.

Data on the ethnic origin of members of ethnic and other minorities is not collected in Austria for historical reasons, primarily on account of the genocide of Austrian Roma and Sinti during the Nazi era. The last census in 2001 therefore asked for information not on “mother tongue” but on “everyday language”. It should be noted that the last conventional census conducted in 2001 was the first to ask explicitly about the “Romani” language. The results should however not be regarded as representative: 6,273 people in Austria said that they spoke “Romani” in their day-to-day lives; 4,348 of these were Austrian nationals and a further 1,732 were born in Austria. This figure falls dramatically short of the roughly 50,000 Roma thought to be living in Austria. It implies that many Roma specified German or the language of their country of origin as their “everyday language”, either because they do not speak Romani or no longer speak Romani or because they didn’t want to identify themselves as Roma/Romnija. There is also reason to believe that immigrants from Romania ticked the “Romani” box (in error). Based on this information, it was not therefore possible to make a reliable evaluation based on sociographic and socio-economic characteristics. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 Roma belong to the indigenous ethnic community, i.e. Austrian citizens who do not have German as their mother tongue and who have their own culture, who have lived in parts of Austria for several generations. For the reasons specified above, there are no reliable statistics concerning the number of immigrant Roma and Sinti in Austria.

Future censuses will no longer collect data from a questionnaire completed by individual citizens but will rely on administrative and registration files, which already contain the relevant data. However, since the mother tongue is not recorded as an indication of ethnic origin, it is not possible to compare data in this way either. Should it be essential to obtain additional data, the Register Census Act [Registerzählungsgesetz] allows the relevant Federal minister to issue an ordinance permitting the collection of all or part of an individual’s mother tongue data.

Information on the Austrian immigration situation can be found in the up-to-date statistics, data and indicators relating to migration and integration contained in the Statistics Section of the 2011 Integration Report (population trends, language and education, work and professions, social issues and health, security and housing). The Integration Report, which was published in July 2011, gives an overview of recent integration measures, which should make a significant contribution towards preventing or remedying discrimination. The Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI)'s Annual Statistics on foreign nationals contain detailed information on the number and origin of foreign nationals living in Austria (see also Section II.10 on the Integration Policy).

### **3. Rights of minorities and protection from discrimination**

#### **Rights of minorities**

As Austrian nationals, members of ethnic communities have the same rights as any other Austrian citizen. In addition, however, there are a number of laws and regulations which contain specific provisions relating to "(indigenous) ethnic groups" and "linguistic minorities". The most important of these are: Article 8 of the Federal Constitutional Law (B-VG) (Federal Law Gazette (FLG) No. 1/1930, in the version FLG I No. 60/2011, Section V of Part III of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (State Law Gazette No. 489/1920), Article 7 of the Treaty of Vienna (FLG No. 152/1955; this relates however only to the Croatian and Slovenian linguistic minority) and the Ethnic Communities Act (FLG No. 396/1976, in the version FLG I No. 46/2011).

Article 8 (2) of the Constitutional Law states that the Republic (Federation, Provinces and Municipalities) must acknowledge its increased linguistic and cultural diversity, as manifested in its indigenous ethnic communities, and must respect, safeguard and support the existence and preservation of these communities. The Ethnic Communities Act stipulates that the Federation, without prejudice to general funding measures, must support measures and projects which serve to preserve and secure the existence of ethnic communities, their traditions and their characteristics and rights. For reasons of social cohesion, it is also crucial, particularly in areas where there is a high proportion of ethnic communities, that the Federation support intercultural projects which further the integration of ethnic communities.

Austria therefore supports the rich cultural activities of ethnic communities (e.g. general cultural events, theatrical performances, talks, all types of ethnic art and culture), and, to varying degrees, also ethnic community or bilingual child and youth support services, including sports. Support for academic activities relating to the history, language and culture of ethnic communities is another key element of ethnic communities funding. The following funding was provided to the Roma ethnic community in 2010:

## Ethnic communities funding for Roma ethnic community associations in 2009

Roma ethnic community	Funding in EUR
ROMANO CENTRO – Roma association (Vienna)	157 600 00
Verein Roma-Service [Roma-Service Association] (Burgenland)	112 000 00
ROMA (Association for Roma advancement) (Burgenland)	44 520 00
Kulturverein österreichischer Roma [Austrian Roma cultural association] – Documentation and information centre (Vienna)	43 000 00
Ketani – Association for Sinti and Roma (Upper Austria)	23 500 00
Diocese of Eisenstadt – Ethnic communities liaison unit (Burgenland)	900 00
<b>Total for all associations</b>	<b>385 020 00</b>

The Ethnic Communities Act also stipulates that ethnic community advisory councils should be set up within the Federal Chancellery to advise the Federal Government and the Federal Minister on ethnic community issues. These councils can also submit proposals for improving the status of ethnic groups and their members.

### The Federal Constitutional Act implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

In so far as they have not already been prohibited under Article 7 of the Federal Constitutional Law and Article 14 of the ECHR (see below), all forms of racial discrimination are prohibited in pursuance of the Federal Constitutional Act implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1973 (FLG No. 390/1973). Article 7 of the Federal Constitutional Law provides for the principle of equality, which forbids unfair discrimination in the law and in the enforcement thereof. This provision applies solely to Austrian citizens or, in the case of Community law, also to EU citizens. However, in accordance with the established case-law of the Austrian Constitutional Court, under the terms of the Federal Constitutional Act implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, it is forbidden to distinguish between foreigners for no objectively justifiable reason either in the law or in the enforcement thereof. Moreover, statutory provisions aimed at foreign nationals must be totally objective. The Government is also forbidden to act without rational basis and is subject to the principle of proportionality.

Article I of the Federal Constitutional Act implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination defines “racial discrimination” as “any distinction for the sole reason of race, colour of skin, descent or national or ethnic origin“. Moreover, Article 14 of the ECHR, which is enshrined in the Constitution, forbids, among other things, discrimination on the grounds of “race, colour, language, religion, [...] national or social origin, [...] association with a national minority“. On this basis, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has been adopted and is reviewed on an ongoing basis (see below).

In the field of administrative and civil law, transposition of the relevant EU directives<sup>1</sup> into national law has helped to reinforce Austria's own anti-discrimination legislation.

### (General) legislation and provisions governing equal treatment

Part II (Article 16 et seq) of the Equal Treatment Act (GIBG) (FLG I No. 66/2004 in the version FLG I No. 7/2011) provides for equality of treatment in the workplace without distinction on the grounds of ethnicity, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation (Anti-discrimination; Part II). Legislation with essentially the same content as these private sector regulations has also been adopted for the public sector (for civil servants working for the Federal Government, through the Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (B-GIBG) [Equal Treatment Act governing civil servants working for the Federal Government, FLG No. 100/1993 in the version FLG I No. 6/2011; for civil servants working for the Provinces or Municipalities, through corresponding Provincial laws). Part III of the Equal Treatment Act also forbids discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity in other areas, e.g. in the area of social protection, including social security and health services, welfare benefits, education and access to and supply of goods and services which are available to the public, including housing. This refers primarily to goods and services offered to the public (e.g. in shops, restaurants, bars, leisure facilities).

The term "ethnicity" is not defined in the Equal Treatment Act or the Equal Treatment Act governing civil servants working for the Federal Government but nobody disputes that, under the terms of the Racial Equality Directive and in accordance with international obligations, this expression is to be interpreted broadly. The term is not based on a biological relationship with a specific ethnic group but is to be understood in a far more cultural sense. Consequently, people who are perceived as "foreign" because they are different from the regional majority are protected against discrimination on the grounds of "ethnicity" (background legal documentation: [307 BlgNR 22. GP 14](#)).

Multiple discrimination, in other words discrimination on the basis of more than one characteristic, such as, for example, ethnic origin and gender, is subject to special protection which may result in increased levels of compensation (Article 12 (13) of the Equal Treatment Act).

Access to public places is protected by Art. III (1), subparagraph 3, of the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure acts (EGVG), which states that those who "subject persons to unjustified discrimination only for reasons of their race, colour of their skin, their national or ethnic origin, their religious belief or any disability of theirs or prevent such persons from

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<sup>1</sup> See in particular Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (the Racial Equality Directive, OJ L 180/22 of 19 July 2000) and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (the Anti-Discrimination Directive, OJ L 303/16 of 2 December 2000).

entering premises or from obtaining services available for general public use“ shall be guilty at minimum of an administrative offence (a fine of up to EUR 1090) and shall automatically be prosecuted.

#### Measures to combat racism and discrimination

Austria regards the fight against xenophobia and racism as a priority and is taking action at various levels to foster equal treatment and integration and to break down prejudice. The Government programme for the current legislative period (2008-2013) includes a proposal to tighten the law providing protection from discrimination.

Under general criminal law, racist, xenophobic or anti-semitic motivation may constitute an aggravating factor in pursuance of Article 33 (1), subparagraph 5, of the Penal Code (StGB). An ordinance of 23 January 2009 on the review of the reporting obligations of the public prosecutor's office (Reporting obligations ordinance), expressly stipulated that the public prosecutor's office must report all cases involving the aggravating factor specified in Article 33 (1), subparagraph 5, of the Penal Code to the Federal Ministry of Justice (BMJ). This will make it possible to analyse the trend in the number of racist offences in future.

In April 2010, the Federal Police Department in Vienna created a minorities liaison unit whose staff can be deployed throughout Austria. At the same time, the post of human rights officer was created at the Vienna Regional Police Command.

Not least with a view to implementing measures to counter racism and discrimination, a National Action Plan on Integration (NAP.I, see below 3), which also addresses anti-discrimination issues in depth, was drawn up in conjunction with civil society organisations. The integration process will be evaluated on an ongoing basis using scientifically developed integration indicators. In order to ensure that the National Action Plan on Integration is implemented by all stakeholders in a coordinated and standardised way, an integration advisory council was set up within the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which, in addition to representatives from Federal Government and the Provinces, also includes representatives from social partners and NGOs (Caritas, Diakonie, Hilfswerk, the Austrian Red Cross and Volkshilfe). The NGOs involved also represent the interests, amongst other things, of potential victims of discrimination, such as migrants. The council meets twice a year. In addition, at local level there are numerous integration advisory councils with different remits, from political representation of migrants' interests, through advising local councils and administrative agencies to special information services for migrants.

## **4. EU funds**

In the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 19 May 2011, the Member States were invited to ensure, where appropriate, that available EU funds were used in line with

national, regional and local Roma inclusion policies. In paragraph 25, the Member States were asked to identify necessary measures for improving access to and ensuring the effective use of EU funds for the social and economic inclusion of Roma, including, for example, modification of operational programmes, making greater use of technical assistance and improving the predictability of financing by increasing the duration of projects and maximising the uptake of funds. With regard to use of EU Structural Funds for Roma integration purposes, the following points should be noted:

- ▶ The ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) programmes do not explicitly designate any actions for marginalised social groups, although projects that benefit marginalised social groups (e.g. Roma) can, of course, be supported.
- ▶ The majority of the actions under the ESF (European Social Fund) are designed primarily for groups which are excluded from the labour market, which clearly includes disadvantaged minorities.
- ▶ According to the information available at this point, the structural funds should in future be focused on a small number of priority areas which are compatible with Europe 2020. Thus, in Member States like Austria, the ERDF should primarily be used for energy efficiency and renewable energies and to improve the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and innovation, and the ESF should be used to support employment and qualification measures, education and social inclusion and to combat poverty.
- ▶ Since the issue of the Roma in Austria was not regarded as serious in terms of numbers, so far, the relevant Federal authorities and the Provinces have not explicitly prioritised and not therefore allocated separate funding for projects aimed at improving the integration of Roma. However, as in the current period, it can be assumed that in future also the actions will be available without restriction to the respective target groups.

## II. ROMA integration measures

### 5. Focus: Education

#### Objectives

In the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 19 May 2011, the Member States were invited to guarantee access to quality education, including early childhood education and care, as well as primary, secondary and higher education, with particular reference to the

elimination of possible segregation at school, the prevention of early school leaving and ensuring successful transitions from school to employment.

Since education is an important factor in the social integration of Roma, particular attention is paid in Austria to measures that support the completion of the education process. The learning process will be optimised through the provision of support within the Austrian education system. Based on the experience gained so far, options for enhancing and increasing the use of the “Roma (teaching) assistant“ tool will also be investigated. Funding for additional learning support services offered by private Roma organisations will also continue.

In the context of the objectives of Europe 2020, additional models will be developed which, in the interests of equal opportunities, can offset the disadvantages of an unsupportive home environment and, as a result, create a positive attitude towards education as early as the pre-school stage.

An information campaign will be used to raise awareness of the key role that mediator training and mediator status play in ensuring the completion of the education process. Taking into account the particular nature of the circumstances involved, models demonstrating how civil society (e.g. retired teachers and highly trained Roma mediators) can be used in a supportive capacity from the pre-school stage right through to the higher education stage, so that Roma can complete a university education, will be developed.

In principle Austria avoids the implementation of segregation measures in the education sector. On account of linguistic differences, e.g. where several different languages are used in the teaching of ethnic groups, pupils may be taught in groups which are based on their origin. This is however offset by the sense of community which is promoted within the classroom itself, within the school as a whole or outside the school environment.

## Implementation

### Pre-school education

In 2008, following an agreement between the Federal Government and the Provinces (pursuant to Art. 15a of the Constitutional Law) “on the expansion of pre-school facilities, the introduction of compulsory early language support in pre-school institutions and the creation of a national pre-school education plan“, the “Early Support 1+1“ education model was introduced for all pre-school children. Children whose knowledge of German is inadequate are given support in pre-school institutions to enable them to cope with the level of German required of them, in accordance with standardised language skills models, on entering primary school.

Moreover, following the introduction of compulsory free half-day nursery education, since September 2010 children in their last year before starting compulsory education have been required to attend suitable pre-school institutions for at least 16-20 hours on at least four days a week in all Austrian Provinces. This half-day attendance is free of charge and eases the burden on families. As a result, all children should receive the best education available to them and the best start in life, irrespective of their socio-economic background.

In addition, in order to achieve this objective, early years teachers are being given initial and further training in the assessment of language skills and early years language support.

Examples of measures taken in the Provinces include: the provision of dedicated support measures in Viennese pre-school institutions for children with language support needs, which is aimed in particular at the educational needs of migrant children. Some nurseries in Vienna are also supporting non-German speaking children by employing early years teachers who speak their mother tongue. This maintains a connection with their cultural roots.

### School system

As far as the education system is concerned, it should be emphasised that, when a child enters the state education system in Austria, no account is taken of his or her citizenship or migration background. Article 4 (1) of the Schools Organisation Act (SchOG) (FLG No. 242/1962, in the version FLG No. 73/2011) expressly states that state schools are “open to all, irrespective of birth, gender, race, status, class, language or beliefs“. The selection of students on the basis of “language“, amongst other things, is only permitted for private schools in pursuance of Article 4 (3) of the Schools Organisation Act. Like compulsory schooling (which requires, amongst other things, that the child be permanently resident in Austria), the option of (voluntary) school attendance for temporary residents is also not dependent on criteria such as citizenship, ethnic origin or migration background (Article 1 (1) or Article 17 of the Compulsory Education Act of 1985, FLG No. 76, in the version FLG I No. 113/2006).

### Learning support programmes: general

For about 15 years now, given the importance of completing the education process for the socio-economic integration of Roma, a number of different Roma associations have been offering learning support programmes for Roma in Austria using the Government’s ethnic communities grants scheme. As a result of this support, there are now no longer any children in the indigenous Roma settlement area in the Province of Burgenland being educated in schools for children with special educational needs (see also the 2008 guidelines on language skills and special educational needs below).

In order to improve the educational achievements of Roma children in particular, the authorities have initiated a number of support measures. One such example in the Province of Burgenland is the “RomBus“, a kind of “mobile classroom“ which offers intensive learning support and schools-related advice in the vicinity of Roma houses and apartments (for more information see <http://www.roma-service.at/projekte.shtml>). A number of schools in Vienna are

offering school-based support, whereby the Roma association “Romano Centro” employs “school assistants” who liaise between teaching staff, Roma children and parents. Their job is to encourage and support Roma children in their learning, to help teachers deal with any problems of understanding that they may encounter and to help parents access the education system. These and other specific learning support programmes are described in detail below.

The current dropout rate in Austria for 18-24 year olds who have not gone beyond the compulsory education system and who are no longer attending training is 9.6% (in other words, considerably lower than the EU average of 17%). The dropout rate for migrants as a whole, on the other hand, is 29.8%, while the dropout rate for second and third generation migrants is around 15.6%. While on average girls are less likely to drop out of the education system early, in the case of migrants the percentage is higher. In this context it is crucial to determine how so-called “unsupportive” parents can be made to understand the value of educating girls, especially since it is difficult, if not impossible for schools to communicate with these parents (and not only because of language problems). Roma projects involving out-of-school learning support, which are funded by the Government’s ethnic communities grants scheme and which are designed to prevent children leaving school early and not completing their education, have proved to be very effective.

### Teaching language

Any pupil who on account of an insufficient knowledge of German, is unable to fully access what he or she is being taught is to be classified as having special needs (see Article 4 (1), (2) and (3) of the School Education Act, FLG No. 472/1986, in the version FLG I No. 73/2011). This will entitle the pupil to eleven hours a week of German language support classes for a maximum of two years (see Article 8e of the Schools Organisation Act), subject to a minimum of eight children taking part. Teaching takes place in parallel with or within ordinary lessons. Where it takes place in parallel, children from several different classes or schools can be combined into a single group. However, since not all students will have mastered German to mother tongue level on completion of their language support course, German as a second language lessons can also be offered to regular students.

In order to prevent language skills being used as a criterion for allocation to a particular type of school, in 2008, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK), in guidelines which were designed to help regional education authorities decide which children had special educational needs, emphasised that the simple fact of not being fully conversant with the language in which lessons were taught was on no account to be used as a criterion for determining special educational needs and, consequently, for allocating a child to a special school (see BMUKK Circular No. 19/2008 of 5 August 2008).

Pupils whose first language is not German are also increasingly attending vocational colleges. These pupils often have an inadequate knowledge of German, the language in which lessons are taught, which means that they do not pass Year 9 of their schooling. In order to prevent this from happening and to allow these students to achieve a higher level of education, since 2008 (initially until 2013), vocational colleges have offered German language support lessons for

students whose knowledge of the language is inadequate. This support is provided through the “Reducing the dropout rate by offering targeted support to migrants in Year 9 at vocational college“ project.

A second project, which has been running since 2010, aims to prevent students (mainly those whose first language is a language other than German) from leaving school early, through targeted revision and extra lessons and by ensuring that they have the basic skills required for successful completion of Year 1 (in particular the ability to read and write in German, basic numeracy skills etc.).

In the context of increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse groups of students, in the early 1990s “Intercultural Learning“ was introduced as a basic educational principle. This was designed to “contribute to better mutual understanding and better mutual respect, to identify common characteristics and to break down prejudice“. To help children and teachers tackle the issues of linguistic and cultural diversity in a way which is relevant to them, the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture launched a campaign known as “Interculturalism and Linguistic Diversity – an Opportunity!“. Further information on this can be found on the website <http://www.projekte-interkulturell.at/>.

### Education policy

Austria’s overall education policy (which is not aimed expressly at Roma) encompasses a number of Roma-specific activities. These include, in particular, teaching in Romani or funding Roma institutions that support children’s educational development, e.g. by offering early years language support, training nursery teachers or even providing afternoon or whole-day nursery sessions.

Major supranational activities and plans include the following: in 2009, the ministers of education, in the context of ET 2020 (strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training), defined five European benchmarks:

- 1.** Adult participation in lifelong learning: by 2020, an average of 15% of adults, especially those with a low level of education, should participate in lifelong learning.
- 2.** Low achievers in basic skills: by 2020, the share of low-achieving 15-year olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%.
- 3.** Early leavers from education and training: by 2020, the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%.
- 4.** Tertiary level attainment: by 2020, the share of 30-34 years olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40%.
- 5.** Early childhood education: by 2020, at least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.

In 2010, the European Council adopted the Europe 2020 strategy, which has education as one of its key objectives. This strategy aims to reduce the school dropout rate to less than 10% and to increase the percentage of 30-34 year olds achieving a university or equivalent qualification to at least 40%. The Member States have for the first time set national targets for these European key objectives, based on their own national circumstances. Austria intends to reduce the proportion of early leavers to 9.5% and to increase the percentage of people achieving a university or equivalent qualification to 38%.

### Holocaust education, remembrance and research

Under the auspices of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), which was set up in 1998 and in which Austria is represented as a Member Country, particular emphasis is placed on the implementation of national policies and programmes which support holocaust education and research and remembrance of the holocaust. The ITF has a Roma genocide subcommittee, which deals with research and education issues relating to the Nazis' persecution of Roma and Sinti and the historical analysis of this. The Roma genocide subcommittee was responsible, amongst other things, for the production by the Austrian historian Dr Gerhard Baumgartner of comprehensive, online materials in several languages on the genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the holocaust ("The fate of central European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust"). The project was managed and initiated by Austria and co-financed by the ITF and France, and involved experts from 12 ITF Member Countries.

### Post-secondary education

As far as post-secondary education is concerned, it should be noted that, as for other minorities, there are no separate statistics for Roma and Sinti. It is therefore not possible to determine how many Roma and Sinti or, for example, Carinthian Slovenes are studying at Austrian universities. This is fully intentional on the part of the legislative authorities, which distinguish only between Austrian nationals, EU nationals and third-country nationals. Roma and Sinti therefore have exactly the same rights and obligations as other students during their post-secondary education.

### Example: Vienna: specific support projects run by Vienna City Council's Municipal Department 17, Integration and Diversity

In close cooperation with a number of Roma associations, Vienna City Council's Municipal Department 17, Integration and Diversity, devised special measures to increase the attendance and raise the educational achievements of children of immigrant Roma, and, for several years now, has provided around EUR 200 000 worth of funding for these measures. One of the platforms supported by Municipal Department 17, which consists of six Roma associations, is working on developing and enhancing learning support services for children and on supporting and informing parents. The services provided to parents are also provided in Romani.

In conjunction with these associations, a learning support programme has been developed which meets the needs of both children and parents. The project is designed to help children and young people access their learning more effectively. Study and learning techniques will be discussed and parents will be encouraged to take a positive attitude to their children's schooling and education. At the heart of the project is the principle of cooperation and leading by example, each learning group being led by a teacher (Roma or non-Roma) and a Roma. The project's coordinators are themselves parents or young adults who act as role models and have an in-depth knowledge of and a positive attitude towards the Austrian education system. Their main task is the crucial one of working with parents (one-to-one meetings, information events for parents).

The target group is school children between 6 and 16 and their parents. The project runs for 36 weeks of each academic year, in each case two lots of two teaching units per group and per week. It takes place in various locations in Vienna. Since 2011 the project has been run by the Viennese adult education centres [Wiener Volkshochschulen] in conjunction with Roma associations.

#### Horizontal aspects (history, Roma everyday life, events)

In 2010, funding was granted for a film and book on Roma women who had survived the concentration camps. This would also include recipes for traditional Roma dishes. The link between history (persecution) and everyday life would be investigated. The Austrian government is funding the project.

Worthy of note also is an exhibition being held in the Regional Library of the Province of Lower Austria entitled "Roma Children - their Village and their Daily Lives in Pictures".

Funding was also provided for events run by ethnic group organisations, including Roma, with a view to promoting mutual understanding of ethnicity and the concept of majority and minority. E.g. plays, festivals, concerts, exhibitions and films dealing with specific ethnic issues. With regard to Roma, the workshops involving holocaust survivors which have been run in schools for several years now are of particular note.

#### Other association run activities (that have received funding)

##### *Learning support*

Romano Centro has been providing learning support services to Roma school children in Vienna since 1995. The primary target group for learning support is Roma school children attending compulsory schooling (primary schools, secondary schools, special learning centres, grammar school preparatory schools, cooperative middle schools). Learning support is provided individually in the children's homes, and can therefore be targeted specifically at their individual learning needs. In addition, the times and locations of the services are flexible.

Learning support should not be regarded simply as “extra help“ to rectify the poor performance of children in specific areas. It’s also about developing individual approaches and strategies for learning with the children (and their parents), in order to create or enhance the prerequisites for academic success. By working directly with families in their homes, an impact can be made on the child’s learning environment. As well as the knowledge itself, additional factors are learning and putting into practice ancillary skills which are crucial to academic success, such as reliability, self-motivation and personal organisation. The project was launched as a result of the realisation that many Roma children in Vienna were growing up in households that had a negative attitude towards education and were not receiving sufficient support from their families in the event of problems at school. 100 children currently benefit from the learning support programme. The learning support services are predominantly funded by the Government’s ethnic communities grants scheme, with parents paying a contribution and the remainder being funded by donations. The learning support assistants and the parents meet at Romano Centro to share their experiences several times over the academic year. During these meetings experts provide information on educational issues or further training.

In 1996 Romano Centro was awarded a prize for this project by the Vienna Integration Fund and the newspaper DER STANDARD "for the best integration project demonstrating everyday cooperation".

#### *Roma teaching assistants*

Since September 2000 Romano Centro has deployed Roma teaching assistants in 5 schools in Vienna which are attended by large numbers of Roma children. The Roma teaching assistants liaise between teachers, pupils and parents. They motivate and support children in the classroom, help teachers in the event of communication problems and try to help parents access the school environment. Thanks to their knowledge of the mother tongue, teaching assistants help the children to find their own identity and play a supportive role for parents, in that they understand the culture and traditions of the Roma. Romano Centro endeavours to review the programme on an ongoing basis. The project is funded by the Government.

Duties of Roma teaching assistants:

- ▶ To foster relationships between school and home and to liaise between teachers and Roma parents
- ▶ To inform, advise and support parents with regard to school and educational issues
- ▶ To act as a point of contact (in several languages) for Roma pupils and parents and for teachers in the event of problems experienced by or caused by Roma pupils
- ▶ To monitor learning outcomes in order to ensure the participation of Roma pupils
- ▶ To support Roma pupils in the classroom during lessons, primarily by communicating with them in their mother tongue

- ▶ To provide information on additional learning services or support options for Roma children
- ▶ To supply information on Roma culture and history for pupils and teachers

*Learning support provided by ROMA (Association for Roma Advancement), Oberwart (Burgenland)*

The Oberwart based association ROMA has been running an exemplary learning support programme for many years now. Oberwart is the focal point of the Burgenland Roma and is home to ROMA, the oldest Roma association in Austria.

In the afternoons, learning support assistants, who are Roma themselves, help a total of up to 30 children between the ages of 6 and 14 from Oberwart and the surrounding area with their homework and other school related tasks. The project also includes leisure-based learning: taking part in leisure activities with non-Roma children helps the children to mix and to break down prejudice. In addition, the learning support assistants act as an important link between parents and school. They advise parents, motivate children, inform teachers and, where necessary, act as a point of contact for the school leadership team, the educational psychology service, regional and provincial education authorities, youth organisations etc.

Thanks in part to these learning support services, there are currently no Roma children attending special schools in the Oberwart area. It should be noted also that Roma children are increasingly continuing further in their education and attending academic secondary schools or vocational schools.

*Roma-Service Association: RomBus and other projects (Province of Burgenland)*

Since 2005 the RomBus project has acted as a refuge, a source of information and a support facility for acute school and education-related problems and, therefore, as a source of support for Roma children with learning difficulties. However, the project also provides support for gifted and talented Roma children. The services provided under the project range from one-off liaison and information meetings involving schools, parents and children to mobile individual learning support over short or long periods. RomBus offers lessons in Romani, distributes publications in Romani and supplies information on Roma culture.

In conjunction with the ethnic groups liaison unit of the diocese of Eisenstadt, children and parents have a weekly lesson on the Romani language on its premises. Lectures, talks, discussions, language courses etc. are organised and held in schools and other institutions (further education colleges, adult education centres, universities etc.). The Roma-Service Association also issues the following publications: a quarterly bilingual newspaper, dROMa, in Romani/German, a children's bible, "Gott spricht zu seinen Kindern" [God speaks to his children], in Romani/German (10 volumes), Mri nevi Minimulti, a bi-monthly children's

magazine in Romani (in conjunction with the adult education centre for Burgenland Croats, Romani Union Slowenien). In addition, the radio programme "Roma sam" is broadcast once a week. The TV programme "Servus, Szia, Zdravo, Del tuha" is broadcast every two months in the languages spoken by ethnic communities in the Province of Burgenland. Staff working for the Roma-Service Association translate the news into Romani for "volksgruppen.orf.at".

A number of monuments to commemorate displaced and murdered Roma were erected at the request of a Roma Holocaust survivor from Oberpullendorf and this cooperation also resulted in the publication of the following books//DVDs: "Mri Historija" – the stories of 15 men and women. The book and DVD "Amari Historija" portray a moving picture of the history of Burgenland. Burgenland Croats, Burgenland Hungarians and German-speaking Burgenlanders, as well as members of the Roma ethnic community and Jews expelled from their homes during the Second World War, tell their stories.

Cultural events such as the annual Roma Butschu or Roma Advent help demonstrate the diversity of cultures in Burgenland and lead to greater cooperation with the population as a whole.

#### *Ketani Association for Sinti and Roma, Linz (Province of Upper Austria)*

The Ketani Association for Sinti and Roma, which represents the various interests of Sinti and Roma in the Province of Upper Austria and which has been working to improve the social, economic and legal status of Sinti and Roma for almost 13 years, is funded by the Integration Department of the Province of Upper Austria. In the various priority areas for integration in Upper Austria, such as, for example, youth, education and employment, Roma are not designated as a specific target group but, in their capacity as migrants, are to be regarded as a sub-target group of projects and measures which are designed to further integration.

## **6. Focus: Employment**

### **Objectives**

In the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 19 May 2011, the Member States were invited to enable access to employment, with particular reference to non-discriminatory access to the labour market, as well as active labour market policies, labour market programmes, adult education and vocational training, and support for self-employment. In this context, Austria will continue to monitor carefully the ability of the implementation measures described below to improve the socio-economic status of Roma.

## Implementation

### Structural Funds programmes in Austria:

In the current EU funding period Austria is implementing a total of 11 Structural Funds programmes: one ERDF programme and one ESF programme in the context of the EU's convergence objective (phasing-out programme for Burgenland) and eight regional ERDF programmes and one national ESF programme in the context of the EU's Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective. Austria also participates in European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes (seven bilateral programmes, three transnational programmes and three networking programmes). These programmes are in line with the EU objectives of regional competitiveness (Lisbon objective) and sustainability (Gothenburg objective).

Thematic and horizontal priorities of the Austrian Structural Funds programmes:

- ▶ Regional knowledge base and innovation (e.g. research and development, SME innovation)
- ▶ Employment growth and qualifications (e.g. facilitating access to the labour market, encouraging adaptability)
- ▶ Attractive regions and quality of locations (e.g. creating high-quality locations, improving international accessibility)
- ▶ Territorial cooperation (e.g. fostering a climate for learning and innovation in the regions, creating strong, cross-border regions)
- ▶ Governance as an implementation strategy (improving vertical and horizontal alignment, increasing and embedding knowhow)

However, the EU Structural Funds contribute to a relatively small extent (approx. 5-10%) to the funding of the (predominantly support) measures implemented to achieve these objectives. Administrative practicalities in particular are a determining factor when selecting the actions and projects to be co-financed with EU funds. Many relevant actions which are in line with EU objectives are therefore implemented in Austria without EU co-financing.

### Labour market related actions

Austrian labour market policy also supports migrants through targeted actions, by building on existing qualifications and, where necessary, additional qualifications can be obtained. The AMS (Austrian Public Employment Service) uses Diversity Management as a tool to promote

the importance of respect within a diverse social structure (gender, special needs, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion etc.). This includes, amongst other things, the recruitment of employees with a migration background and special training for staff.

*Specific measures to integrate Roma in the area of employment and access to the labour market*

THARA projects: the aim of these projects is to make it easier for Roma/Sinti to access the labour market and job related and vocational educational institutions. In addition, the professional opportunities for adult and young Roma/Sinti are increased through identity reinforcing careers advice, advice on training and social issues, “intercultural” coaching and vocational training (<http://www.volkshilfe.at/1235...2.html>).

The AMS advice centre for Roma in the Province of Burgenland is an additional service offered by AMS. The additional advice and support offered by the centre is designed to help eliminate the factors which make successful entry into training or employment difficult or which jeopardise the individual’s long-term prospects. In addition to the services offered by AMS, the following services are also offered: advice and information on career choices, perspectives on life and work, increasing self-confidence, how to deal with the authorities, help with looking for childcare, social security issues, encouragement with training/further training, support in the workplace or during training, public relations work.

The key “Investitionen in Menschen und Qualifikationen” [investment in people and qualifications] component of the strategy for the Danube area will focus, amongst other things, on combating poverty and social exclusion among marginalised groups in the Danube region, particularly the Roma communities, and on implementing the Roma Decade (2005-2015) actions and other actions which need to be implemented.

*General inclusion measures in the areas of employment and social inclusion:*

These are designed in such a way that they benefit all citizens and consequently also members of minorities; it can therefore be assumed that participants and purchasers include Romnja and Roma. Measures include the following:

- Introduction of means-tested minimum income scheme□
- Guaranteed training and industry-wide apprenticeships□
- Zukunft Jugend [Youth Future] initiative□
- Frauenschwerpunkt [focus on women] (Labour market package III)□

- Integration offensive (Labour market package III)□
- Measures to help integrate people with disabilities in the workplace□

All actions under the European Social Fund (ESF) for groups that are excluded from the labour market also include minorities. In order to avoid discrimination, data on ethnicity must not be collected, and participants often refuse to supply this information voluntarily because they have already been stigmatised or disadvantaged as a result or fear that they will be so. Consequently, it is not possible to say precisely how many members of a particular ethnic group have been involved in the actions. The AMS has a successful strategy for integrating individuals who are at a disadvantage on the labour market. Effective implementation of this strategy is ensured in part by the annual labour market objectives (e.g. employment for the long-term unemployed or those returning to work etc.) and in part by a range of different labour market tools (e.g. the support provided by advice centres, state-funded apprenticeships for young people, careers guidance and/or vocational skills courses, social integration enterprises [businesses that help to integrate the long-term unemployed within the workplace], vocational training to gain commercial experience, training and further training courses, including language courses and courses to prepare for secondary school examinations etc.). AMS offers information, advice, support and financial assistance etc. tailored to individual requirements.

## **7. Focus: Health**

### **Objectives**

In the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 19 May 2011, the Member States were invited to ensure access to quality healthcare, including preventive healthcare and health education.

Austria aims to achieve a positive attitude to the healthcare system and to develop an awareness of health issues among the general population. Consideration is also being given to how these objectives can be promoted to and accepted by members of the Roma community and other minorities.

## Implementation

### Inclusion in the healthcare system

Neither social security legislation nor medical legislation takes special account of the Roma minority. Where statutory requirements exist, equal access to healthcare services is in any case always assumed. The Government programme for 2008-2013 states that it is a key priority of current health policy to provide high-quality medical care for everyone living in Austria, irrespective of their income, age, origin, religion or gender. Any developments in the healthcare system must take patients' interests into account, i.e. publicly funded healthcare services (particularly dentistry, psychotherapy and vaccinations for children and adults) must be reviewed and adapted to patients' needs, whilst ensuring the necessary funding.

Moreover, the introduction of the means-tested minimum income scheme and the consequent inclusion in statutory health insurance schemes will ensure that access to the corresponding services is guaranteed (see below).

### Other integration measures

Austria's healthcare policy regards the overcoming of language barriers as an issue of major concern in the field of health promotion. Hospitals and clinics therefore provide information and advice in several different languages as well as interpreting services. The intercultural skills of healthcare professionals are being improved by raising awareness of these issues in training and further training courses, such as, for example, training courses and seminars at priority hospitals (e.g. Vienna General Hospital [AKH Wien]). Efforts are also being made to improve health literacy<sup>2</sup> and to promote psychosocial support services for migrants.

The following measures have already been successfully implemented:

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<sup>2</sup> The term "health literacy" in this context means "the ability of the individual to make decisions in daily life that have a positive impact on health. [...] Health literacy strengthens the freedom to arrange one's own affairs and make decisions about health issues and improves the ability to find, understand and put health information into practice." See Ilona Kickbusch, Health Literacy in: Public Health News 3-2006 at: [www.public-health.ch](http://www.public-health.ch).

- In order to tackle the problem of language barriers in hospitals in particular, mother tongue experts are increasingly being employed in the various healthcare disciplines.
- The pilot breast screening project in Vienna, which has been running since 2006 and which is funded by the Federal Health Agency [Bundesgesundheitsagentur], strives in particular to include socially disadvantaged women and migrants.
- The Federal Health Agency funds a seminar on the use of intercultural skills in intensive care units.
- Training courses for non-medical healthcare professionals generally train participants in the use of intercultural skills when dealing with people from different cultures (see, for example, the Ordinance of the Federal Ministry for Health, Family and Youth concerning Bachelor's degrees in general healthcare and nursing awarded by higher education establishments (FLG II No. 200/2008), which also includes graduates' social communication skills. Courses cover, for example, the consideration of cultural and religious factors when dealing with personal hygiene or the deceased etc.
- In order to break down language barriers, many brochures have been published in a range of different languages, e.g. a leaflet on breastfeeding, a leaflet on prescriptions and a leaflet on nutrition, all of which are available on the Ministry for Health's website <http://www.bmg.gv.at/>.

The following measures are currently being implemented:

- When publishing an information and consent form for school vaccinations, the corresponding form is also made available in other languages. Again, these forms are available on the Ministry for Health's website.
- In the field of paediatrics, working groups have been commissioned to develop specific health services for children. One of these working groups is focusing on equal opportunities in the healthcare sector.
- Also, steps are being taken at local level to provide medical services in hospitals and clinics and GP surgeries in several different languages. Thus, for example, in Vienna, a handbook has been produced for non-German speaking patients which contains the addresses of doctors, psychologists and psychotherapists in 15 different languages whom they can consult in their mother tongue.

### Means-tested minimum income scheme

In 2010/2011, the means-tested minimum income scheme (BMS) was introduced. This replaced and standardised the original social welfare scheme. The introduction of the means-tested minimum income scheme has standardised those who are eligible for benefits. Foreign nationals have been placed on an equal footing with Austrian citizens, in so far as this is required under international law. This parity applies, among others, to accepted refugees, those with subsidiary protection status, EU/EEA citizens and family members and people who have been living in Austria for at least five years. Following the introduction of the means-tested minimum income scheme, beneficiaries of the scheme who previously were not covered under a health insurance scheme are now included in the statutory health insurance scheme.

### Information on healthcare services and a healthy lifestyle

Also, in autumn 2011, a leaflet entitled “Gesund bleiben und mit Krankheiten umgehen“ [Staying healthy and knowing how to deal with illness] was published in several different languages. The leaflet was aimed at migrants. The German version of the leaflet was also printed alongside the respective foreign language. As well as providing information on the way the Austrian healthcare system works, the leaflet contains important tips on how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. It also contains the contact details of a large number of different sources of information and support. The leaflet can be downloaded from the Ministry for Health’s website at: [http://www.bmg.gv.at/home/Schwerpunkte/Praevention/Migrantinnen\\_Migranten/](http://www.bmg.gv.at/home/Schwerpunkte/Praevention/Migrantinnen_Migranten/).

### Training of healthcare professionals

The training specifications for some healthcare professions (e.g. the healthcare and nursing professions, paramedics) contain, amongst other things, the following training objective: “To adopt the guiding principle of respect for life, dignity and the basic rights of each individual, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, religion, colour, age, gender, language, political persuasion or social status, and to deal with the healthy, the disabled, the sick and the dying in a responsible, independent and humane way.“ All courses include units on professional ethics, which are based on the standards set by international professional associations, and attitudes to professional ethics are therefore discussed. In addition, the training specifications for healthcare degrees, for example, include skills profiles which cover, amongst other things, cultural and religious needs, lifestyles and values.

### After-effects of the Holocaust, psychotherapy (Ketani Association, Linz)

Seventy years after the traumatic events of the Nazi era, the after-effects are still evident in the medical conditions suffered by survivors and even subsequent generations. More than 90% of Roma and Sinti, some 600 000 people, were murdered by the Nazis on account of their ethnicity or social status.

The Ketani Association, in conjunction with the Jewish psychosocial centre ESRA, which, as a Jewish institution, has extensive experience of caring for Holocaust victims and their offspring, and the "Pro Mente Oberösterreich" mental health association, offers Holocaust victims from the Roma and Sinti minorities and their second and third generation offspring living in Upper Austria free psychotherapy and psychosocial support. In Vienna, they can approach ESRA directly for therapy. The aim of the therapy is to ease mental and physical suffering, to improve the person's state of mind and restore social contact, to provide support in the event of problems with personal relationships and, primarily, to help people come to terms with stressful events and experiences. The project is funded by the National Fund of the Republic of Austria, ESRA and Pro Mente Oberösterreich, an Upper Austrian health insurance provider, in association with the Ketani Association.

## **8. Focus: Housing**

### **Objectives**

In the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 19 May 2011, the Member States were invited to promote access to housing, with particular reference to social housing and the need to promote housing desegregation, and making full use of the financing that has recently become available in the context of the European Regional Development Fund.

In order to ensure equal access to housing, the effectiveness of existing measures in eliminating segregation on the Austrian housing market will be reviewed.

### **Implementation**

Equal access to housing:

As examples of equal access to housing, the situation in Vienna and Lower Austria will be described below.

The City of Vienna's eligibility guidelines for access to social housing, "Wiener Wohnen" [Living in Vienna] state that Austrian citizens, EU citizens, EEA citizens, Swiss and Norwegians, as of 1 January 2006, are on a par with third-country nationals who are long-term residents (transposition of Directive 2005/109/EC in the form of the Settlement and Residence Act [Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz] (NAG)) and Convention refugees. To be eligible for an apartment, all of these categories must have lived in Vienna as their main place of residence for two years. Equal access is therefore guaranteed for the Roma minority also.

In the Province of Lower Austria also, Roma, provided that they are Austrian citizens or the equivalent (essentially EU/EEA citizens and those who are eligible for asylum), have access to all the benefits offered by the Lower Austrian housing assistance authority. The rental of social housing is not dependent on citizenship.

In the event of discrimination, the parties involved can approach the relevant authorities and the courts in accordance with the equal treatment legislation referred to in Section I above.

#### Project to counter discrimination in the housing market

Equality in Housing: this project, which is run by Volkshilfe<sup>3</sup> and financed by the European Commission and the Austrian Government, is divided into three interconnected implementation modules: surveys, interlinked training and policy advice and public relations work. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.volkshilfe.at/1351,,2.html>.

#### Roma sites

The Ketani Association advises city councils and local authorities, offers help with setting up and designing sites in such a way that they can also be used by passing Roma and Sinti, and acts as a mediator in the event of a dispute. A number of Austrian local authorities are currently looking to provide facilities for passing Roma and Sinti, and the Ketani Association is working with local councillors in an advisory capacity. About a year ago, the "Ketani" travellers' site, the

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<sup>3</sup> The charitable organisation Volkshilfe was founded in 1947 as a non profit-making organisation. It has its roots in the labour movement and provides humanitarian aid both in Austria and abroad.

second site of its type in Austria (the first being the Roma/Sinti travellers' site in Braunau), was established on Lake Pichlingersee near Linz.

## **9. Research activities**

### **Exhibition project - the Adult Education Centre for Burgenland Roma**

Worthy of note in the field of research is the interview and exhibition project implemented by the Adult Education Centre for Burgenland Roma in 2010 (15 years after the bomb attempt on the Roma settlement in Oberwart), which was awarded a grant of 10 000 Euros. The aim of the project was to contribute to a better understanding of the lives of the Roma and to make a contribution to the further integration and consequent improvement in status of the Roma in our society.

### **The Austrian Romani project**

Academic research into the language and culture of the Roma at the University of Graz started back in the early 1990s. Originally restricted to the Province of Burgenland, the project now looks both at Romani as a minority European language and at the socio-cultural and socio-political situation of its speakers in a pan-European context. As well as its core linguistic activity of documenting the wide range of Romani languages as part of the Roma's cultural evolution, by putting the results of its research into practice, the Romani project (<http://romani.uni-graz.at/romani/index.de.shtml>) helps to preserve the Roma's culture and identity and therefore also to empower the Roma as a European "ethnic group". Codification and practical implementation involving the speaker also reduce the likelihood of the language being lost and the associated cultural assimilation, and, at the same time, help to raise awareness and, consequently, the capacity for socio-economic integration. The Romani project is academic research in the public interest.

The following activities took place within Austria and internationally as part of the Romani project:

## Codification and teaching of Romani<sup>4</sup>

When the Romani project was first launched, seminars were held on the theme *Roma Language and Culture*, during which literature and knowledge relating to the Roma and the Romani language were analysed jointly by lecturers and students. However, the most important factor in this initial phase was the active involvement of the research group in the various Burgenland Roma associations and participation in their events. The resulting trust formed the basis for the following successful collaboration, which is outlined in brief through the key outcomes. This collaboration was jeopardised for a short time following the murder of four Roma in February 1995, but was never seriously at risk:

- 1995: First publication, the alphabet primer *Amen Roman Pisin* 'Wir schreiben Roman' [We can write Romani];
- 1996: Grammar, glossary, texts and teaching materials;
- 1997: Extra-curricular language courses;
- 1998: Bilingual quarterly journal and children's magazine in Romani;
- 1999: Romani is first broadcast on the radio and taught in a school;
- 2000: Illustrated book of fairy-tales and bilingual text with CD.

Within a decade, the project has significantly changed the status of Burgenland Romani. Initially, Romani was hardly ever heard in public, rarely passed from one generation to the next and virtually never used. It was an oral "language" that was in danger of dying out, spoken by a marginalised group that was isolated even within the Roma themselves, and which, moreover, was often not valued even by those who spoke it. Not only as a result of this project but also as a result of general political developments, Romani is now the most prominent example of an officially recognised Austrian minority language and is now used in the media and taught in the classroom. In addition, Romani has become the primary source of identity not only for the few individuals who speak it well but also for the overwhelming majority of the Burgenland Roma.

## Codification of Lovara Romani

Following in the footsteps of the Romani Project, in 1996 the Romano Centro Association began codifying the Romani dialect of the Austrian Lovara. The initial results were obtained within about three years:

- 1999: Grammar, glossary and document collection;

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<sup>4</sup> The word the Burgenland Roma themselves use for their language is *Roman*; since high frequency substantivised adjectives are abbreviated at the end, *Romani* > *Roman*. Similarly, *Gadžikani* > *Gadžikan*, non-Roma language, the language of the respective majority population, in this case German.

2000: Illustrated fairy-tale;

2001: Bilingual text and CDs.

The Lovara Romani codification project failed to put the results of its research into practice in the same way as the Romani Project. However, a larger number of Lovara Romani texts were published in the *Romano Centro* magazine, and Lovara Romani was one of dialects used in the monthly radio programme of that name, which was broadcast between March 1997 and May 2000; Lovara Romani was, however, not taught in the classroom. The recordings not only documented part of the Roma's cultural development but also created a starting point that could be exploited by future generations.

### The Austrian Romani dialects

The work on Burgenland and Lovara Romani was primarily financed by the Federal Chancellery's ethnic communities grants scheme, and co-financed by the Austrian Ministry of Education and the EU. The Romani Project was also supported by the Province of Burgenland, and the Lovara Project by the Anniversary Fund of the Austrian National Bank.

With the help of the Government's ethnic communities grants scheme, in 1999 the Romani Project's activities were expanded to include a further four Romani dialects spoken in Austria: Arlije Romani, Gurbet Romani, Kalderaš Romani and Sinti Romani.

Since 1999, the Romani Project has concentrated on six dialects: Arlije Romani, Burgenland Romani, Gurbet Romani, Kalderaš Romani, Lovara Romani and Sinti Romani. It has focused on analysing the vocabulary and grammar of both existing texts and texts that have been compiled through research in the field. The results are published either as working reports or as part of a series or incorporated into international subprojects. An overview of the results that have been published gives rise to the following list. It should be noted that, here too, the first publications did not appear until about three years after the project was launched:

2003: Alphabet primer *Ramosaras Romanes* in Kalderaš Romani;

2003: Glossary of Kalderaš Romani;

2003: Bilingual text of all the Romani dialects spoken in Austria with CDs;

2004: Glossary of Arlije Romani;

2006: Bilingual text - Gurbet Romani;

2009: Bilingual text - Arlije Romani.

In mid-2009, the Romani Project was incorporated into the newly established plurilingualism research unit at the University of Graz's Centre for languages, plurilingualism and specialist teaching [*treffpunkt sprachen – Zentrum für Sprache, Plurilingualismus und Fachdidaktik*] (<http://www.kfunigraz.ac.at/treffpunktsprachen/>). At the same time, Romani activities specific to Austria were entrusted to the [*spi:k*] – *Sprache, Identität, Kultur* [Language, Identity and

Culture] association, which was affiliated to the research unit. The [spi:k] Association is the second arm of the Romani Project, after the Roma-Service Association. The international cooperation projects on Romani will continue to be implemented by the University of Graz within the framework of the plurilingualism research unit.

### International activities

The internationalisation of the Romani Project began in the mid-1990s with the initial presentations of results at academic conferences. This also resulted in the initial contacts with what has since become the Romani Project's closest cooperation partner, from which the ongoing international projects result:

- ROMBASE – *Didactically edited information on Roma*. This project, which was implemented as part of the Socrates programme between 2000 and 2003, produced multimedia web-based cultural documentation with an educational commentary (<http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/>).

As well as cooperation partners from the University of Prague, colleagues from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and from the phonogram archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences were also involved in the project. The Austrian activities were co-financed by the Federal Chancellery's ethnic communities grants scheme, while work in Slovenia was co-financed by the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office in Ljubljana.

Of the subsequent ROMBASE related activities, the next project is the most important and the most long lasting:

- FACTSHEETS – The production of informative materials on the history, culture, literature, music and language of the Roma (<http://romafacts.uni-graz.at/>) on behalf of and in cooperation with the Council of Europe's *Education of Roma Children* project (<http://www.coe.int/t/dq4/education/roma/>) is a direct consequence and continuation of the ROMBASE project. This flexible, transparent collection of materials is currently being developed further under the auspices of the [spi:k] project.

The Council of Europe (in this case the Language Policy Division) has also initiated the following project, which is still under way:

- QUALIROM – *Quality education for Romani in Europe*. This cooperation project, which is financed under the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme and co-financed by the Austrian Government's ethnic communities grants scheme and the Austrian Ministry of Education, consists of a pilot study on the Curriculum Framework for Romani (CFR) and the associated European Language Portfolio Models (ELPs, [http://www.coe.int/t/dq4/linguistic/-minorities\\_romani\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dq4/linguistic/-minorities_romani_en.asp)). The Framework and Portfolios were developed by the Council

of Europe's Language Policy Division with the active involvement of individuals who have since become responsible for the QUALIROM project, based on the example of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). Using the Framework Curriculum for Romani as a basis, the project

- ▶ develops teaching materials in different Romani dialects for primary and secondary schools, further education establishments and adult education centres;
- ▶ teaches trial lessons using these materials at all levels of the education system; and
- ▶ devises training and further training courses for prospective teachers of Romani.

With the University of Graz as coordinating partner, the Universities of Belgrade, Helsinki, Novi Sad and Prague are also actively involved in producing resources and in teaching trial lessons; the European Center for Modern Languages and the Bucharest-based *Centrul National de Cultura Romilor* are involved in an advisory capacity.

Like the FACTSHEETS and the work on QUALIROM, the following project is a work in progress:

- ROMLEX – The lexical database of Roman (<http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/>). This project is based on an initiative launched by Professor Yaron Matras of the University of Manchester in the year 2000. The structure and technology of this database were developed with the active involvement of Professor Peter Bakker of Aarhus University and Viktor Elšík of the University of Prague, on the basis of the electronic documentation from the lexical database of Romani dialects spoken in Austria, which had already been produced by the Romani Project in Graz prior to the year 2000. The initial phase and the subsequent phases up to 2008 were funded in roughly equal proportions by the Open Society Institute of Budapest and the Austrian Government's ethnic communities grants scheme. Since 2008, ROMLEX has been funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). In this phase, which runs until the end of 2012, ten of the most prominent Romani dialects will be harmonised against a basic vocabulary of 5 000 lexemes. The overall aims of ROMLEX are
  - ▶ to document the lexical diversity of Romani using as many target languages as possible; currently 27 Romani dialects and 16 target languages;
  - ▶ dialect-specific dictionaries;
  - ▶ an etymology-based Romani dictionary.

Over time, more search options will be available through the web interface, and information that already exists in the underlying electronic resource will become available. Although there is still room for improvement, ROMLEX is already the primary online resource for Romani vocabulary and is visited just as frequently as the online dictionaries of many national languages.

In addition to these cooperation projects, which are coordinated by the Austrian Romani Project, there are also other partnerships. Worthy of note in this context is the involvement in the creation of the *Romani Morpho-Syntax Database* and ROMIDENT. Both cooperation projects are coordinated by the Manchester Romani Project.

Austria's contribution to ROMIDENT (The role of language in the transnational formation of Romani identity) is to analyse the functional expansion of Romani in formal written domains, both the resulting change in the language and the associated lexical expansion.

These and other international cooperation projects and contacts subsequently resulted in the organisation of workshops and conferences, .e.g. the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Romani Linguistics 2002 and the Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society 2011, as well as national and international training and further training events, such as, for example, the Council of Europe's Pestalozzi seminars on Roma history, culture and language. The active involvement of Roma and Roma NGOs was sought on each occasion.

## 10. Integration policy

### National Action Plan for Integration

On 14 January 2010, in a decision of the Council of Ministers, the Austrian Federal Government approved a National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I). This Action Plan does not refer to the Roma ethnic group explicitly as a target group, but it is referred to indirectly in the NAP.I's "General Integration Guidelines", which state that "indigenous minorities must be taken into account in integration measures" (see also the links specified in the section entitled Description of the Situation on page 3 and below in the section entitled State Secretariat for Integration). The National Action Plan for Integration highlights in particular the importance of efforts to combat incitement, xenophobia and racism. Both the General Integration Guidelines and the specific action areas, Language and Education, Laws and Values and Intercultural Dialogue, set out measures to tackle racism and discrimination. The target groups of the National Action Plan for Integration are society as a whole, people with a migration background (Austrian citizens and foreign nationals) and indigenous minorities.

Under the action area Language and Education, particular attention is paid to the development of training and further training for teachers in the areas of "intercultural skills, multilingualism and basic skills for dealing with multilingual and culturally diverse classes". Particular importance is also attached to raising awareness of racism in Austrian schools. Thus, for example, measures are to be put in place in Austrian schools to counter prejudice, racism, discrimination and xenophobia and the associated intolerance.

Under the action area Laws and Values, amongst other things, legislation to counter racism will be used more frequently and communicated more effectively. Victims of racism and discrimination will be informed of their rights and corresponding appeal and legal protection options. In addition, awareness of other cultures will be promoted further within public authorities, particularly the police and the courts.

Under the action area Intercultural Dialogue, schools will act as a driving force against racism. The media also have a particular responsibility for intercultural dialogue, breaking down prejudice and representing minorities.

### **Example: Integration policy in Vienna**

For several years now the City of Vienna has been implementing a general integration oriented diversity policy, which regards the diversity of Vienna's population as an asset, without underestimating the challenges that such diversity brings. It implements numerous measures, considering in each case whether there is a need for the City Council itself to change and develop and asking to what extent the facilities and services provided by the City Council are accessible in equal measure by all Viennese citizens irrespective of their origin and are appropriate and tailored to individual requirements, and to what extent they need to be adapted to the needs, lives and social status of those with a migration background (integration oriented diversity management strategy). Implicit also is the objective of freedom from discrimination. The division of responsibilities for this new strategy was defined and the necessary structures were created in 2004. Diversity management is a cross-sectional task which involves all business divisions, departments and units. A department dedicated to this task (Municipal Department 17, Integration and Diversity) was however created which, as well as performing integration tasks in its capacity as a centre of excellence, also supports the City Council in developing this area still further. In recent years, a huge amount of effort has been invested in creating a more diversity oriented administration.

In previous years the following priorities in particular were set:

#### *StartWien immigrant coaching project*

At the heart of Vienna City Council's integration measures is the comprehensive startup package offered to new immigrants arriving in Vienna. Municipal Department 17 has been offering this startup package under the auspices of the StartWien [Start coaching] project since 1 October 2008. The coaching project StartWien is part of the City of Vienna's welcome package. It includes initial coaching in the mother tongue, talks in the mother tongue on the structure of the Austrian education and healthcare systems, the Viennese labour and housing markets, residency requirements and living together, an education/training booklet and

language vouchers. StartWien was developed and implemented in conjunction with Municipal Department 35 (Immigration, Citizenship and Registry Offices), the Migrant Advice Centre [Beratungszentrum für Migrant/innen], the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund [Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnenförderungsfonds], the Vienna Employment Service [Arbeitsmarktservice Wien], the Austrian chambers of commerce (WKO) and the Vienna Chamber of Labour [Arbeiterkammer Wien] <http://www.startwien.at/>.

### *Viennese Integration and Diversity Monitoring*

At the end of 2007, at the international Making Integration Measurable [Integration messbar machen] conference, Municipal Department 17 presented the concept of Viennese Integration and Diversity Monitoring. Together with national and international partners, the Department examined the issue of the measurability of integration and diversity from a number of different technical and institutional perspectives. Integration monitoring enables the ongoing observation of areas where integration is taking place and can be measured, such as, for example, education and training, access to the labour market, level of income and housing supply. It describes the social status quo of the Viennese population from an integration perspective using selective indicators. It provides a springboard for strategic developments in the City of Vienna's policies and organisation. Diversity monitoring analyses the progress that the City of Vienna has made in implementing its diversity policy. It evaluates the extent to which the administration has achieved its objectives in terms of adapting its services and personnel development and identifies any future development needs. This is based on the policy objectives and on the social needs that emerged from integration monitoring. On 9 April 2010, the results were presented to the public. The next monitoring statement, which will contain initial information on changes that have occurred over this period, is due to be published in the summer of 2012.

### *Diversity management at Vienna City Council*

Diversity management deals with the issue of how a city can approach the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of its population in such a way as to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from this diversity and how it can manage the challenges that this diversity brings more effectively. The City of Vienna, as service provider and employer, has set itself the following two main objectives:

- Equal quality of services for all Viennese citizens (use of diversity skills when providing services), optimisation of services so that all customers are reached.

- Equal opportunities and equal treatment when recruiting staff and equal development opportunities for staff working for Vienna City Council; increase in the percentage of staff with a migration background.

Municipal Department 17 advises other departments and units within Vienna City Council and helps them to develop targeted strategies for the implementation of diversity management. Its services include, for example, training courses and raising awareness of the issue (see <http://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/diversitaet/stadt.html>). Municipal Department 17 employees initiate, organise, lead and support groups of associations in a number of districts of Vienna. The interaction between the associations themselves and with other local institutions strengthens the associations and their members, allows information to be accessed and exchanged and offers and promotes the opportunity of getting actively involved in local events.

### Integration through sport

A large number of sports projects, which aim to integrate people from different backgrounds in the context of sport, are also being funded. This involves people from different countries of origin and with different ethnic origins taking part in organised sporting activities. These projects are open to all. Consequently, separate funding for individual ethnic groups is not currently being considered, as this would be incompatible with the principle of integration.

### State Secretariat for Integration

In recent months, there has been a change of strategy with regard to integration policy in Austria. Indeed, the Federal Government, in the Government programme for the 24th legislative period (2008-2013), had already announced (under the section on Internal Affairs) that it was to draw up a National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I) as the basis for a new, national integration strategy. The Department of the Interior was appointed as coordinator for this process (see above).

The State Secretariat for Integration is responsible in particular for the coordination of integration agendas and attaches great importance to this crucial task. Integration is one of the key challenges to be overcome in order to maintain a peaceful society and to ensure Austria's economic success. Detailed information on the NAP.I and on the Integration Report for 2011 can be found on the following pages :

[http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI\\_Asyilwesen/integration/start.aspx](http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Asyilwesen/integration/start.aspx).

## 11. National Monitoring

National monitoring will be implemented through the creation of a discussion platform which will involve representatives from public authorities and civil society associations, as well as academic experts and research scientists.

To support this platform, a website on national implementation of the EU framework for Roma integration up to 2020 will be created on the homepage of the Federal Chancellery ([www.bundestkanzleramt.at](http://www.bundestkanzleramt.at)).

## 12. National Contact Point

The National Contact Point is as follows:

Bundestkanzleramt [Austrian Federal Chancellery], Ballhausplatz 2, 1014 Vienna, Austria.  
Email: [v@bka.gv.at](mailto:v@bka.gv.at)

## III. Conclusions

Through this document Austria gives an overview of the current integrated packages of measures for the integration of Roma. The document was prepared with the help of the Federal and Provincial authorities, the Roma ethnic community advisory council [Volkgruppenbeirat für die Volksgruppe der Roma] and representatives from the countless Austrian associations which are dedicated to promoting the interests of Roma in Austria.

Austria is aware that in order to achieve the objective of the comprehensive integration of Roma by the year 2020, further surveys will have to be carried out and the measures described will have to be evaluated, refined and put into practice, particularly in the key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing identified in the Council conclusions on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

In the future also Austria will involve the civil society organisations dedicated to promoting the interests of Roma in Austria in the evaluation, refinement and implementation of these measures.