

The Greek Roma issue

Spatial and social exclusion and integration policies

Host Country Report

Introduction

The social exclusion of the ROMA in Greece constitutes an existing and **acute issue of social inequality**, which involves a large and socially weak population, with the main element being **social isolation** as a cause for and at the same time result of the lack of an established home, **consequently** leading to spatial isolation and homelessness, inadequate citizenship procedures, absolute poverty, total exclusion from the labour market, lack of access to health and social protection systems, high functional illiteracy levels and educational exclusion, as well as separation from local communities.

The social exclusion of the Roma involves homelessness and spatial isolation, as well as their exclusion from **basic social goods**, which is also part of the separate dimensions of the problem, and particularly the lack of access to fundamental social rights:

- in the Urban environment and housing;
- in Education and Vocational Training;
- in Health, Social Protection and Social Welfare;
- in Employment and Social Insurance.

The overwhelming majority of Greek Roma people live on the edges of the Greek cities of the 21st century, in a state of absolute marginalization, to which they have been led - mainly over the last few decades - by the country's development model. This model, through its process of urbanization of Greek society, has levelled cultural diversity and assimilated cultural and social pluralism, creating new social relations and balances. The growth of the Greek cities forces the Romany communities to relocate continually, as land uses change, land values increase continually, and the Roma are driven out of their homes which - for the most part, of course - were on public or privately owned land.

In these circumstances, the already impoverished Roma community becomes poorer still, losing its ability to generate the necessary income for survival, while often finding itself compelled to settle closer to the Greek cities, which are developing as centres of economic growth and offer opportunities for secondary employment. However, the development of the urban centres, expanding the cities and paving the way for new exploitation of the land (particularly through the mechanism of «antiparochi» - the sale of land to property developers in exchange for a share in the new development) forces the "Roma" into less and less satisfactory homes on the periphery of Greek cities, in areas which bear the scars of environmental and urban decay and neglect.

It is above all locations outside the city plan, industrial zones, areas of unauthorized and anarchic construction, areas where land is degraded and depreciated in various ways, which attract socially excluded "Roma" groups to set up their encampments, creating enclaves of poverty and social exclusion, but above all creating the conditions for increased social decline. These areas

around the Greek cities are characterized by what is usually a total lack of the most basic infrastructures - both technical (water supply, sewers, transport, etc.) and social (schools, medical and social services, etc.).

1. Recording of the existing situation of the Roma population in Greece on the basis of the national research of 2008

1.1 Brief presentation of the current situation in the sectors of housing and infrastructure

In regard to housing conditions, there is a variety of housing situations that are related to: the type of residence (conventional house or makeshift construction) and its quality, its extent of incorporation into the residential web, the permanence and characteristics of the residential site.

As a population group, a large percentage of the Roma experiences terrible housing conditions; this is not a result of choice but a result of complex processes that exclude them from access to territorial incorporation and establishment.

The **greatest concentrations** of established Roma populations are found in **regions of major urban centres, as well as rural regions that present the most employment opportunities.**

The **greatest population concentrations** (over 1,000 families) appear in four regions (**Eastern Macedonia – Thrace, Thessaly, Western Greece and Central Macedonia**). Based on a rough estimate of population sizes, the total population in discrete and recognizable residences comes to approximately 15,000 families or 65,000 persons; in other words there has been an 8-10% increase, given that the corresponding estimate for the year 1998 was 60,000 persons (see Annex Table).

The neighbourhoods that are included in the urban web and are exclusively or mainly populated by Roma populations and attract approximately half the established families are the most frequently recorded type of residence (approximately 28% of the total). Pure settlements in permanent sites account for approximately 20% of the total, mixed settlements for 23%, while residences dispersed through the urban web account for 14.5% of residences recorded.

In the areas where the Roma reside there are major problems of physical planning that determining the future prospects of territorial incorporation into the urban web. These could be issues such as: ownership problems, and major insufficiencies of technical infrastructure and services. The situation and living conditions of Greek Roma have not significantly improved when compared to the past and a large percentage of the population appears to still be subject to bad housing conditions, not by choice but due to complex processes that exclude them from access to basic social goods.

In Greece, 8 types of Roma settlements have been recorded:

1. **Pure** settlements at permanent sites, dominated by makeshift 'shells' for permanent or seasonal use;
2. **Pure settlements at sites that move** within the limits of a broader region, which are used permanently or seasonally;
3. **Mixed settlements** consisting of an approximately equal combination of houses and makeshift constructs, usually for permanent use;
4. **Neighbourhoods** dominated by houses for permanent use, usually in deteriorated districts of the urban web;
5. **Conventional residences** or apartments interspersed throughout the urban web;
6. **Prefab hamlets** these are new settlements consisting wholly or partly of small prefabricated houses that were ceded by the Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning & the Environment within the framework of the Integrated Action Plan;
7. **Organised construction**; this concerns only one case, that of the housing hamlet at Sofades, which was constructed by the Workers' Housing Organisation in order to house Roma residents of Sofades who owned residences in the old reservation;
8. **Mixed prefab reservations**; these are vestigial types of residential hamlets, where small prefabricated houses are mixed with houses or makeshift constructions (sheds, huts, etc.).

Neighbourhoods contain almost half of the established families (49%) and 60% of seasonal families, based on relevant estimates.

Mixed reservations contain approximately 25% of established families, a percentage that rises to 33% if mixed prefab reservations and 28% of seasonal ones are added.

Pure reservations at a permanent site contain 9% of the estimated number of established families and 6% of seasonal ones.

Interspersed residences throughout the urban web are estimated to contain approximately 7% of established families, while each of the remaining types contains less than 1% of the estimated number of established families. This disparity of distribution is due to the wide range of sizes of residential districts.

Problems of physical planning and property ownership

The problems most frequently encountered in regard to establishment areas are the following:

- They are located at sites that are unsuitable for residential use.
- They are located at sites that are too remote or cut off from the urban web; they are located at sites outside the town plan.
- They occupy plots that belong to public or municipal agencies, to private citizen third parties, etc.

Problems of technical infrastructure and services

Major problems are encountered in the following sectors: *Layout of internal road network - Water supply - Sewerage - Power supply - Municipal lighting - Fixed telephony network - Waste disposal.*

1.2 Social parameters

1. Issues of Urban and Municipal state of affairs:

Greek Roma are included in the administrative system to a significant extent, since, in their overwhelming majority, they have realized the need for sorting out their birth/marriage/death registration and municipal register data.

- The overwhelming majority, over 97%, have been entered both into the register books and in the municipal registers of Municipalities, meaning that they have the Greek nationality and have adapted to Greek administrative system; there is also good cooperation with the various municipal authorities.
- They have comprehended their obligation to acquire identity cards.
- In regard to marriage, a large percentage of the Roma maintain the tradition and custom of having gypsy weddings, which, however, are not officially recognized by the Greek state.
- Roma men military status is 'fluid', since fewer than half of the men that should serve in the army enlist for their military service.

2. Employment

The picture that emerges from the survey is one of exclusion from the formal labour market and of entrapment for the majority of the Roma in an informal "grey market" without financially viable prospects. The emerging reality is one of economic poverty and exclusion from the ever-accelerating developments in the labour market.

Essentially, these are conditions of a fragile labour status characterized by all the features of insecure labour and that are, in essence, an intermediate state between Employment and Unemployment. They are more pertinent to the concept of "Livelihood" than to that of labour. Illiteracy and exclusion from education and, therefore, from the Vocational and Technical Education system, have a clear impact on the labour status of the Roma, which mostly appears as a long struggle for survival and a constant recycling of ineffective labour choices rather than as a stable labour framework.

Roma employment linearly follows their low education level: there is a complete absence (or appearing in infinitesimal percentages) of vocations corresponding to higher educational levels (professional, administrative, specialized technical vocations). However, it is also important that there are no noteworthy percentages in categories of vocations that do not require particular scientific or technical knowledge, but an elementary professional training, such as Employees in the service provision sectors, Waiters, Hairdressers, Salespersons at stores, car mechanics, etc.

Nevertheless, it is noted that the market "provides" a role for the Roma, as certain vocations, such as recycling work, itinerant traders and junkmen, are practised almost exclusively by the Roma, while in other vocations, such as land workers, the percentage of Roma workers is significant.

3. *Household income*

The exclusion from the labour market has chain reactions in all aspects of Roma life, since, on the one hand, it restricts the income generation capability to very low levels and, on the other, it enhances exclusion from the social body and leads to marginalization. The relationship between Roma women and the labour market remains very low, if not non-existent, without great variation during the 2000-2008 period.

The income of most Roma is not steady, as it mainly depends on their labour, which is seasonal. Many households are dependent on the seasonal employment of one family member and on welfare benefits that they are entitled to as families with many children and citizens of no financial means. In general terms, Roma income is low and, as a result, the overwhelming majority of households have an income that is much lower than the poverty line.

4. *Health – Hygiene*

The health problems faced by the Roma population are directly linked with their conditions of living and labour and their educational level. Despite the fact that the majority of the Roma are employed, very few of them are insured, which means that they do not have access to medical treatment rights emerging from employment.

The use of Welfare booklets provides elementary health services that do not cover their needs. The lack of epidemiological studies for the specific reference group does not provide Services with data for the development of a specialized policy concerning the health of the Roma.

The study showed that 10% of the Roma face serious health problems and seek out treatment mainly at hospitals. Results show that there is great need for information concerning preventive medicine. In regard to prevention, 1 in 2 adults state that they have had all necessary vaccinations, as is the case for 3 in 4 children, while 3 in 10 children have not been issued with a health booklet. Furthermore, half of the Roma population state that they are smokers.

Only 1 in 10 people state that they include fresh food and vegetables in their daily diet, while fish is rarely served at the family table. Even rarer is food that requires refrigeration. Apart from lack of electricity, most families do not have any running water within their residential districts.

In the case of women, 4 out of 10 admit that they know about the Pap test, but almost all the women that have taken the test state that they have only taken it once. Furthermore, 1 in 2 women know about mammography but only 1 in 4 has taken the test only once. 80% of women do not use any method of contraception. Moreover, 1 in 4 women were not monitored at all during their pregnancy and 3 in 10 Roma women breastfed their children until the 6th month. What is most noteworthy is that 1 in 10 women state that at least one of their children died; most of these infants died before they completed their 10th month of life. This indicates low life expectancy and high infant and child mortality due to poor health.

5. Access to Social Services

To a great extent, the Roma use basic Welfare services due to their insurance coverage as paupers and benefit beneficiaries.

The Socio-medical Centre, as a newly established institution of multilateral social support for the Roma, is apparently being used by a significant number of households, with 55.4% making use of its services. In regard to Local Authority Services that address the general population, these are less utilized by the Roma in the region (services such as Centres for the Open Protection of the Elderly [KAPI], day nurseries, help at home). An exception can be found in the Citizen Service Centres; these have been visited at least once by 51.8% of household members of the sample.

Finally, one in 10 surveyed households has used the advice and education programmes and the Mobile Prevention Unit that carry out activities at Roma settlements.

In cases where no use is made of such services, the main reasons given are lack of information (39.5%), poor treatment by employees (29.7%), bureaucracy (20.3%) and distance from residences (6.2%). From the answers given by survey participants, it emerges that there is intense prejudice against the Roma by the employees of State / Municipal services; this is based on stereotypes and creates a gap between potential Roma beneficiaries and such Services.

6. *Education*

The way in which the Roma are forced to survive is incompatible with the institution of education, which is why a large percentage of the Roma are completely illiterate. The removal of children from school is often combined with the start of moves for trade fairs, agricultural labour and itinerant trade. Thus, education is extremely vulnerable to external factors, such as movement, financial problems that lead to child labour, distance from school, phenomena of racism at school, lack of suitable and permanent residences, etc. Obstacles are also existing attitudes and perceptions regarding education and especially for girls.

As in institution, schools are part of what the Roma consider as a hostile environment. Schooling can even be considered as yet another form of coercion, the quality and prospects of which leave them unsatisfied. Many parents and communities are also justifiably resistant, as they consider schools to be hostile against their culture and dignity (Roma parents fear for possible instances of their children suffering traumatic and humiliating experiences at school). However, it does not emerge from anywhere that the Roma do not attend school in order to preserve their particular cultural identity.

The majority of Greek Roma (and particularly in the case of older generations) are effectively or functionally illiterate. According to the data, 54.7% did not attend school at all and 33.4% only finished certain grades of Primary School; 7% finished Primary School, 3.4% attended certain junior secondary school classes, 0.5% graduated from junior secondary school, while approximately 1% attended certain secondary school classes.

Among school age children, it appears that non-attendance is a phenomenon that progressively decreases from generation to generation. Nevertheless, their participation in education does not appear to be adequate so as to enhance and improve their vocational mobility and status.

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Recently, the Greek State implemented educational programmes especially for Roma pupils, leading to an increase in attendance, which becomes very limited after Christmas and in the spring. Most pupils above 12 years of age leave school in order to work, so as to supplement their family income.

2. Evaluation of actions of the Integrated Action Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2000-2007 and its results

2.1 AXIS 1: Infrastructure

Goal Setting: Interventions within the framework of the I.A.P. – Inflows – Resources made available, a critical evaluation

The budgeted cost for the infrastructure axis was €176 million, over a period of eight years, resulting in implementation that requires an annual funding average of €22 million. From 2002 to 2007, the amount of €62,190,176 was approved in order to finance actions, 52% of which has been deposited to the corresponding Municipalities (€32,340,686.00). During this period, the main source of financing is the Public Investment Programme, while 6.3% of the total amount (€3,928,690.00) comes from the Central Independent Resources (KAP) of Local Authority Agencies, which were a supplementary funding source until 2003.

The progress of funding over time shows that, until 2004, annual funding was greatly lacking as compared to the amount necessary, a fact that is expected at the initial stage of a programme that, by inference, mostly focuses on studies, the resolution of institutional issues, etc. However, after the first two years (2000-2001), the percentage of absorption of approved funds was very high.

Furthermore, the provision of small prefabricated houses should be mentioned. During the 1997-2007 period and according to data of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, these amounted to 1,814 in total, of which 1,763 were prefabricated houses, 40 were halls and 11 served for the establishment of medical-social centres that are not included in the amounts reported above.

- a. Land acquisition: The total amount for purchasing land represented approximately 7.9% of the total sum of amounts approved and 7.1% of the orders for the infrastructure axis. Part of the land acquired concerned the creation of social infrastructure and public areas.
- b. Studies: On the basis of data of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, only 4 studies have received funding.
- c. Infrastructure projects: Funding for infrastructure projects covered approximately 52% of resources approved or 55% of disbursements in the infrastructure axis for the 2002-2007 period, i.e. it was the main sector of intervention, given that there was no residential construction.
- d. Other interventions: Included in this category concerned are the creation of infrastructure welcoming social and support services. Funding for this category covered almost 40% of funding approved and almost 38% of orders.
- e. Cession of prefabricated houses: The cession of prefabricated houses, although proposed as a temporary solution, seems to have replaced any other form of permanent residence - at least until the activation of the loan policy - and it is a much-debated issue.

General evaluation of the impact of actions implemented on the basis of the goals and directions of the I.A.P.

Problems were identified in the operational planning and organisation of implementation processes and specifically:

- Absence of commitment of necessary funding resources; this led to under-financing of the OPD from national resources in relation to estimated implementation time;
- Absence of utilization of community resource; this is also connected to the lack of readiness of final beneficiaries (Local Authority Agencies) to respond to the requirements for the study, planning, programming, monitoring and implementation of actions;
- Absence of clear criteria for selecting, constantly monitoring and controlling actions and, in general, absence of institutional establishment of the OPD;
- Absence of independent resources and an implementation agency.

Housing Loans

Interventions mentioned above included the **provision of favourable housing loans** as an alternative form of housing aid that is recommended for **households that have already been included in the residential web** in rented homes or privately owned 'shells'.

The currently valid institutional framework was defined by Joint Ministerial Decision by the Ministers of the Interior, Public Administration & Decentralisation and Economy & Finance "Redefinition and complementation of the current terms for the provision of housing loans to Greek Roma who reside at the country's settlements, in tents, huts or other constructions that do not meet minimum requirements for permanent residences". Based on this decision, the number of loans came to 9,000, while each loan amount could reach €60,000. Loans addressed *Greek Roma who reside at the country's settlements in tents, huts or other constructions that do not meet minimum requirements for permanent residences*. Although the intention of the State was clear, in regard to the housing characteristics that were the goal of this policy, this intention did not translate into a criterion for the selection of beneficiaries.

Finally, a requirement for receiving a loan was the sorting out of beneficiaries' civil and municipal status, as well as their tax status, since it was necessary for them to be entered into a municipal register, submit a certificate of family status, copies of police identity cards (Joint Ministerial Decision 2006), a tax statement, etc. This requirement, which is common for all types of loans, seems to have provided, in this case, a powerful incentive for the Roma to sort out related pending issues, a fact that comprises a positive "collateral" effect. In contrast to the limited implementation of the OPD, the loan mechanism has provided visible results to the Roma population. Correspondingly, it seems to have become established as the only funding mechanism that could ensure permanent residence. This fact has created expectations that could not have been imagined nor had been designed to address. In such a case, the total number of loans foreseen was completely inadequate.

2.2 AXIS 2

MEASURE 1: Employment

Goal setting: “the planning and implementation of a sustainable and developing policy with long-term, medium-term and immediate goals, within the framework of a broader policy of inclusion of this social group in the labour market”.

Within the framework of Measure 1, the following were planned: a) Initial Training; b) Training; c) Encouragement of Employment; d) Accompanying Support Services; e) Information and Awareness Raising; f) Integrated Programmes.

Action budget Funded by ESF and ERDF

Total funding for Actions 1 and 3 amounted to €13.1 million. The majority of action financing concerned the realization of Integrated Interventions by the Ministry of Employment, while the remaining amount was distributed to the interventions of the Regional Operational Programmes.

For the Entrepreneurship Enhancement Programme, the budget available came to €5 million. The Integrated Action Plan provided for the provision of €66 million for the implementation of actions for the promotion of Employment. To date, €18.11 million has been provided directly and €60.00 million was provided indirectly through actions addressing socially vulnerable groups, a major part of which were Roma members.

MEASURE 2: Education

Goal setting: “the inclusion and safeguarding of uninterrupted education of Roma children within the official education system”.

Specific goals included:

- Inclusion of support structures for Roma children in the mainstream education system, the production of teaching material and the enrichment of the syllabus;
- Reduction of illiteracy among Roma adults and acquisition of basic skills at a Pan-Hellenic level;
- Prevention and combating of social exclusion through literacy and the acquisition of social skills, the inclusion and safeguarding of uninterrupted education of Roma children within the official education system, support of families of Roma children for the enrolment and support of their children in school education;
- Raising the awareness of local community members who coexist with the Roma in order to prevent or address conflict and in order to enhance social bonds, and the raising of awareness in order to mitigate mutual prejudice and achieve social cohesion.

Interventions realised

In 1996, the Ministry of National Education & Religious Affairs began implementing policies to address the educational needs of groups of a particular social, cultural or religious identity, as well as pupils who originate from socio-cultural environments that are vulnerable to educational exclusion, such as the Roma.

Specifically, in Cross-Cultural Education schools, programmes for corresponding classes were implemented after having been adapted to the particular social, cultural or educational needs of their pupils. At the same time, the education of Roma children was facilitated through the use of a special education card, also known as a “mobile pupil card”, with which Roma children could be accepted at any school without undergoing the typical transfer process, in cases where families move suddenly. Furthermore, starting in 2002, the Ministry of Economy & Finance, in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education & Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Labour & Social Insurance, issued “Income aid for families with children of mandatory education age and low income”.

The most important intervention comprises the “Roma Children Education” and “Roma Children Inclusion in School” Programmes, which were implemented by the Universities of Ioannina and Thessaly. The actions of the programme concerned the support of pupils for the continuation of their schooling, the operation of short-term courses to bridge learning ‘gaps’, the improvement and reproduction of educational and learning material, the training of teachers and the development of a website.

Contracting Agency	Type of Intervention	Budget
EPEAEK I	“ROMA CHILDREN EDUCATION” PROGRAMME 1997 TO 2000	1,150,286.13
EPEAEK II	“ROMA CHILDREN INCLUSION IN SCHOOL” PROGRAMME 8/3/2002 TO 30/6/2004	5,800,000.00
EPEAEK II	“ROMA CHILDREN INCLUSION IN SCHOOL” PROGRAMME 20/3/2006 TO 31/12/2007	5,307,351.00
TOTAL APPROVED FUNDING		12,257,637.1

* EPEAEK: Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training co-funded by ESF

MEASURE 3: Health – Welfare Services

Goal setting: “The social, medical and welfare protection of Roma citizens through a group of systemized actions”.

Interventions realised

The most important categories of actions implemented are the following:
Socio-medical Centres - Mobile prevention units - Programmes for vaccinations, health education, prevention, social intervention - Epidemiological survey – Information, Awareness-raising programmes for the Roma community and the broader community.

General Evaluation of Action Impact

Socio-medical Centres (IAK)

From the data available, it emerges that the operation of 33 Socio-medical Centres was approved. Of these, 9 operate in Eastern Macedonia & Thrace, 7 in Thessaly, 3 in Western Greece, 8 in Sterea Ellada, 1 in Crete, 2 in Central Macedonia and 1 in the Ionian Islands. Overall, results from the operation of IAK are deemed satisfactory, despite inadequacies and problems identified.

Mobile Prevention Units – Programmes for Vaccination, Health Education, Prevention, Social Intervention

The mobile unit of the General Hospital of Komotini and the mobile gynaecology unit of the Hospital of Ioannina were in operation. The mobile units are utilized when there is need of vaccination at reservations. Apart from the vaccination programmes, which preceded satisfactorily, the remaining actions were not adequately developed. There were few health education and prevention programmes.

An overall assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions realized within the framework of the Health Services Measure shows that the actions contributed to a small degree of effectiveness to the achievement of the goals set in the Integrated Action Plan.

MEASURE 4: Culture Services

Goal Setting: “to protect, promote and highlight the Roma cultural heritage and to related it to the culture of mainstream society”.

Basic actions to achieve the basic goal were: Educational Workshops of Creative Occupation - Research Programmes - Music Libraries

Interventions realised

1. Cultural workshops (music, drama, fine arts);
2. Photographic recording of the life of the Roma, from 1840 to date;
3. Culture Houses;
4. Cultural Events and theatre-museum visits.

Action Budgets

Financing funds available for realizing culture actions come to the amount of 685,000.00 Euro. Given that the funding planned in the context of the Integrated Action Programme came to 16,140,860.00 Euro, it is apparent that absorption of resources was quite low (in regards to the amount approved of, in the region of 5% of the initial budget). Finally, the total funding for cultural events and visits realized through national resources came to 88,041.06 Euro for organising

cultural events and to 49,000.00 Euro for holding theatre and museum visits for members of the Roma community.

General Evaluation of Action Impact

Interventions realized did not touch in depth the issue of cultural identity and its positive expression. Dealing with the issue through the prevailing action of providing prefabricated constructions to be used as Culture Houses and Cultural Cafes was not based on an integrated approach and was not sufficient to achieve the goals set in this sector, which included the creation of permanent institutions for promoting Roma Cultural Identity and for highlighting it in the Cultural structures of Local Society.

MEASURE 5: Sports Services

Goal Setting: “to include Roma members in sports activities a the local and national level, to support Roma participation in mass sports programmes and athletic events”.

Basic actions for achieving the basic goal were:

Pure and mixed mass sports programmes - Local, regional, national and international sports events - Awareness raising, Information, Promotion - Link to competitive sports - Providing opportunities for entering the vocation of football referee - Providing scholarships to pupil athletes from the Roma community

Action Budget

Financing funds available for realizing actions in the sports sector, and, specifically, for athletic/sports programmes came to the amount of 757,738.00 Euro. Taking into account that the funding planned in the context of the Integrated Action Programme came to 2,934,700.00 Euro, it is apparent that absorption of resources was quite low, since the total amount approved was around 25% of the initial budget.

General Evaluation of Action Impact

The operation of the various Roma groups for sports was a positive action, which, however, should have been included in the context of specific planning, something that was not clear.

3. The proposed long term strategy for the social inclusion of Greek Roma and the model for a multi-sectorial action plan for integrated territorial and social policies – developing an action plan for immediate interventions

Strategic planning framework and implementation conditions methodological principles of strategic planning

The social exclusion of the Roma people is defined as the lack of access to inelastic social rights and goods. This situation creates a state of abject poverty, which leads the Roma communities to what may appear to be criminal behaviour but is in reality a turning inward and a keeping of their distance from the majority community, as a strategy of defence and survival.

Specifically, we define inelastic social rights as the right of access to:

- Freedom of settlement – residence – housing;
- Civil status giving the individual full citizenship;
- Health, social policy and welfare;
- Education and vocational training;
- Employment and social insurance.

The model for the integrated management of the social inclusion of the Roma community in Greece

The central, strategic, long-term objective, with which all individual policies must converge, is the removal of the barriers constituting social exclusion and the creation of the right conditions for social integration.

An objective of this kind is supported and realized through three other **general targets** which constitute the three basic axes of the planning:

- Providing and guaranteeing somewhere to live;
- Development of a complex of social support structures;
- Social dialogue and reaching of consensus with participation of Roma community.

The pattern above is set out in the following table, which represents, in concise form, the **holistic approach** to the question of planning and management of the issue of the social integration of the Roma community.

Model for the integrated management of social inclusion: formulation of objectives

<u>CENTRAL OBJECTIVE (LEVEL I)</u>			
Eliminating social exclusion and creating the right conditions for the social integration of the Roma community			
<u>GENERAL OBJECTIVES (LEVEL II)</u>			
Resolving housing problem		Development of social support services	Process of social dialogue and consensus – Briefing of social partners
	↓		↓
<u>MORE PRECISE DEFINITION OF OBJECTIVES (LEVELS III, IV ... X)</u>			
Alternative models of social housing		Creation of intermediate support structure	Active involvement of Roma community - Confidence building
	↓		↓
Statutory framework for housing support policies		Planning of social support programmes	Self-organisation – Development of involvement
	↓		↓
- Identification of locations Installation - Funding model		Promotion among public social policy institutions	Participation in decision-taking process

4. Administrative and organisational setup: developing an effective coordination and management structure for the implementation of the new integrated programme

Mechanisms and framework for implementation of the strategy – Institutions for coordination and management

The implementation of plans of this kind requires definition of the structure for taking decisions and the creation of a mechanism for management and administration, with clear definition of roles and three levels of responsibility.

a) The **political level** of responsibility, b) the **civil service level** of responsibility c) the level of responsibility of the collective body for **democratic planning**.

The political level of responsibility as centre of reference and decision-taking

The workings of such a grouping can be described on three levels:

- a) Council of Ministers or Deputy Ministers and Ministerial General Secretaries
- b) Assembly of General Secretaries of the Regions, with heads of public organisations, mainly involved in policies on housing, employment and health.
- c) Local government bodies

Cross-sector political cooperation, decentralized dissemination, social audit through level of responsibility of the collective body for democratic planning.

The level of responsibility of democratic planning is ensured through the workings of a broadly based collective representative body, with the participation of the **social partners** in the process of planning and taking strategic decisions, through the operation of the body along the lines of a **Monitoring Committee** in which the following will be represented:

The independent authorities, the social partners, representatives of the Roma community, NGO's

The civil service/management mechanism; the necessity for the autonomous administrative centre: management autonomy making best use of the potential of the new National Strategic Reference Framework structures

The civil service mechanism will need to have managerial autonomy, structure and operation, as well as managerial competence to bring together the individual policies into a single operational plan, allowing unified management of resources from different sources (purely European, co-funded by the EU Structural Funds, national, regional and prefectural).

This civil service mechanism, which will be a permanent operating structure, will be supported by a Joint Ministerial Civil Service Committee.

It is recommended that a Specialist Team be set up at the responsibility of the civil service mechanism,

One possible structure might involve organisation into civil service units, specifically:

Planning and Documentation Unit - Management and Monitoring Unit - Audit Unit - Publicity Unit

The need to ensure speed, flexibility, prioritizing of needs and objectives can be met only through the existence within the system of a **decentralized regional network**. The Regional Committees, which will ensure the Panhellenic nature of the interventions, will be subject in terms of the political level (Assembly of General Secretaries of Regions) to the political reference centre, while in respect of the civil service level they will be subject to the coordinating responsibility of the civil service mechanism.

5. The Operational Action Plan

The further development of the **Model for the Integrated Management of the Social Inclusion of the Roma Community** will involve formulation of the basic planning principles on three levels:

Thematic Planning

It should be noted that the main thematic fields are regarded as being the 5 dimensions of the social exclusion of the Roma community, as described above, but they also cover other areas directly or indirectly related to the development of social equality and participation.

The formulation of the thematic strategy and corresponding action plans will be the task of the civil service mechanism to be set up, in cooperation with the planning and policy implementation bodies competent in each area. The formulation of action plans represents the thematic specialization of policy in each area.

The model of spatial integrated intervention

The social exclusion of the Roma community is a social phenomenon generated and reproduced in spatial terms – in both physical and social space. In this sense any integration policy must be implemented locally, under the umbrella of a standard national plan. The planning and implementation of interventions must take place on a **spatial level of reference**, ensuring relevance to local conditions, taking into account special local features, incorporating any degree of social integration already achieved as the result of earlier interventions and recognizing the attitude of the local community to the prospect of spatial integration and social inclusion of the Roma community on the local level.

The model for the mechanism of dissemination and implementation of policy

The attainment of the general and specific objectives, as described above, the dissemination of policy on the national level and the conversion of policy into results measurable in terms of quantity and quality, both short term and long term, will depend on the local interventions which the local authorities are in a position to implement through the **Local Intervention Plans**.

The Local Intervention Plans and their basic components

These plans represent a fundamental tool for the implementation of national strategy and involve **integrated intervention programmes** at a specific location and within a specified time period. They will be multi-sector programmes within a specific spatial area where Roma are living in conditions of social exclusion and will involve – depending on needs – simultaneous intervention, through partnerships and participation by the local community and the Roma themselves, to tackle several aspects of exclusion through standardized actions.

The plans are **tools for integrated planning** and implementation of support programmes for the Roma community, offering narrower definition of national strategy for social inclusion on the spatial level, through **simultaneous** response to all aspects of the social exclusion of the Roma and in the context of local communities.

The basic components of the tool are as follows:

Spatial approach - Multi-sector approach - Partnership action - Institutional promotion - Standardization of planning and implementation - Planning through participation - Bottom-up approach and social consensus.

The Local Intervention Plans and the phases in their implementation

The implementation of a plan is divided into two phases, the **phase of preparation and planning** and the **phase of implementation**.

THE FIRST PHASE:

Diagnosis of the needs of the Roma population of the area;
Setting up of the partnership grouping;
Engagement of local community and attainment of consensus;
Inclusion of Roma in planning and implementation;
Strengthening the adequacy of the leading agency;
Design of basic intervention plan;
Administrative and planning maturing of the plan.

THE SECOND PHASE This is the implementation phase of the plan and involves actions in 3 directions:

1. Housing support policy;
2. Social support policy;
3. Strengthening social cohesion on the local level.

METHODS AND CONDITIONS FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The development of a new national strategy and the implementation of a policy of social inclusion on a decentralized and national scale must be informed by common procedures in respect of basic methodological and technical conditions, as well as a **shared perception** of the factors in local policy.

Basic actions – conditions for ensuring the above include:

Unification and systematization of expertise; Dissemination of good practices and identification of negative practices; Development of methodological models – standardization – tools; Recording – codification of legal-statutory framework. Human resources: development of institutions of ongoing training.

INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSION – SOCIAL DIALOGUE – SOCIAL AWARENESS-RAISING – SOCIAL CONSENSUS

The social exclusion of the Roma population can be tackled only if it is seen as a problem of society's institutions – those institutions which plan and create social products and distribute indirect social wealth.

For the interventions to succeed, horizontal support actions will also need to be initiated, such as: DEVELOPMENT OF A FORUM FOR DIALOGUE - NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR SOCIAL AWARENESS-RAISING - HIGHLIGHTING AND PROMOTION OF POSITIVE ROMA MODELS

THE SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF THE STRATEGY: The Action Plan of a multi-sector character - Detailed Action Plans for each sector

The overall strategic approach

The multi-sector Action Plan involves actions for all aspects of the individual and social life of the Greek Roma, functioning in synergy with each other and with other policies and interventions relating to the combating of exclusion.

The strategic approach of the Multi-Sector Plan focuses on creation of the right conditions for improving the living conditions of the Greek Roma population and promoting their social integration.

The interventions of the Action Plan are developed by thematic priority in specific sectors, which play a decisive role in promoting social inclusion and social cohesion. In all thematic areas what underlies the actions as a shared perception is statutory promotion, in other words the inclusion of the individual policies and interventions in the statutory framework of public functions as a decision for social integration in the long term. Within the key axes there are measures and interventions which intersect and complement one another. Their synergy is a basic tool and essential safety valve for a comprehensive approach to the problems experienced by the Greek Roma population. The most significant thematic priorities in each area are as follows:

PRIORITY AXIS 1: HOUSING AND BASIC INFRASTRUCTURES

The basic goal of the Axis in question is the planning of an integrated policy for social housing and the implementation of a package of housing support measures which will ensure, in the medium term, the permanent settlement and organic integration of Gypsies into local communities through models of sustainable housing.

It is intended that the housing interventions should be realized in the context of a broader policy of spatial and social integration, the central element being the acquisition of a permanent home and as a consequence the organic integration of the population in local communities, with the guarantee of inelastic technical infrastructures and access to the social amenities of the areas where the Roma communities are settled.

Proposed Measures

1. Development of a statutory-legal framework for production and allocation of social housing;
2. Land use planning for inclusion of areas into urban and residential plans – Recording of existing residential patterns and compilation of land register;
3. Acquisition of land;
4. Provision of loans to purchase individual homes Subsidized loans: for the repair and improvement of existing homes, for the purchase or construction of new homes, for the purchase and/or allocation of land;
5. Design of locations / infrastructures for group habitation;
6. Infrastructure networks – Design of surrounding spaces.

PRIORITY AXIS 2: HEALTH

Intervention in the health sector will need to be a process functioning on many levels, which will target the individual, family and social levels. This process will be ensured through three axes:

1. **Prevention of the factors** affecting individual health and collective health;
2. **Management of impact** sound management of pharmaceutical education, medical care, nursing and treatment;
3. **Tackling** the damage caused (treatment and medical support in general).

Proposed Measures

- Public health interventions in relation to housing conditions;
- Preventive medical programmes;
- Health education programmes (such as family planning, individual and family hygiene, etc.);
- Information – Awareness-Raising – Briefing;
- Implementation of existing legislation and mechanisms for provision of health services;

- Development of intermediate support structures as an evolution of community medical centres;
- Mobile mental health, primary care and public health promotion units.

PRIORITY AXIS 3: EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The general objective of the Axis is a multi-level intervention for the improvement, in quantity and quality, of employment of the Gypsy population. The quantitative improvement of employment is defined as an increase in employment and parallel decrease in unemployment of the particular group, while qualitative improvement is defined as an improvement in vocational qualifications, improvement of the position of Gypsies in the allocation of labour, strengthening their capacity to engage in business activity and legitimization of their exercise of an occupation.

Proposed Measures

1. Support for existing business activity by Gypsies.
 - Legitimization of existing business activity;
 - Support for existing business activity;
 - Support for public or private enterprises allowing development of local networking of economic content in areas responding to the capacities of the target group.
2. Support for the setting up of new businesses.
3. Support for paid employment.
4. Local Action Plans.
 - Coordination of local employment resources;
 - Upgrading of human resources through provision of counselling services in areas of employment and entrepreneurship, psycho-social support for development of social skills and vocational training;
 - Promotion of the unemployed into active employment policies through subsidies for new jobs, new entrepreneurs, places in training schemes and subsidies for social economy businesses.
5. Integrated Interventions for Acquisition/Upgrading of Qualifications and Integration into the Labour Market.
6. Increased access to national insurance system.

PRIORITY AXIS 4: EDUCATION

The central aspiration involving the education of Gypsies is the integration of their children into the reality of school life, in order to reduce the drop-out and failure rate and to broaden their educational experience into all levels of the system, increasing their levels of social, cultural and functional literacy.

In the case of adults, the objective is to reduce illiteracy while increasing functional literacy in the areas of reading, writing and numeracy.

Proposed Measures

- Planning, implementation and evaluation of a contemporary educational programme for integration of Gypsies into school life;
- Pre-School Education Programmes;
- Operation of Second-Chance Schools for young people aged 18 – 30 years old, drop outs from ages 12 –18 or children that never went to school 9-12 years old, as well as Adult Education Centres;
- Scholarship Programmes for Integration and Successful Completion of Studies in secondary and tertiary education;
- Synergy and combination with other actions and measures, the main objective being to reduce the fragmentation and provisional nature of individual measures and actions.

PRIORITY AXIS 5: SOCIAL WELFARE

The general objective of the Axis is – through the development, expansion and improvement of social welfare services for Gypsies – to help citizens of Gypsy descent to emerge from extreme conditions of abject poverty and social exclusion, achieving social integration and facilitating access to social goods.

Proposed Measures

- Strengthening (creation, upgrading, modernization) of child care units;
- Strengthening of Home Help units;
- Programmes of advisory support for individuals or families in issues of daily life (family relations, work, insurance, rights, health);
- Development of a network of social protection services to meet the needs of families, women and children. The network will promote cooperation among different services;
- Development of services to regularize citizenship status of Gypsies.

PRIORITY AXIS 6: CULTURE

A new strategy for social inclusion must see the element of unique cultural identity as a positive factor and must recognize in practice the right to cultural difference. As part of policy for social integration, this process is ensured through two axes:

1. Support for highlighting the cultural expression of the Gypsy identity.
2. Encouraging the Gypsy population to participate in and have contact with other forms of cultural expression.

Proposed Measures

- Support for cultural and sporting activity structures;
- Roma language, oral tradition and communication: historical journey of a language to extinction;
- Events to showcase and encourage acceptance of the Gypsy cultural identity as an element in the wealth of the Greek cultural heritage;
- Cultural activity programmes. Arts centres for Gypsy communities;
- Inclusion of Gypsies in 'Cultural Outlet' municipal cultural centres;
- Sport and social involvement;
- School cultural activities and equal participation of Gypsy children.

PRIORITY AXIS 7: PUBLICITY / AWARENESS-RAISING / NETWORKING

The proposed interventions relate to actions designed to create the right social conditions for the successful implementation and outcome of the measures for social inclusion of the Gypsy population, as well as acceptance of these interventions by local communities.

Proposed Measures

- Setting up and operation of a forum for dialogue, as an ongoing institution for support and promotion of the national strategy;
- Recording-codification-processing of legislation and the statutory framework more generally;
- Raising institutional awareness – Human resources at all levels: institutions-mechanisms for ongoing education;
- Networking-partnership-cooperation of social partners;
- Dissemination of expertise and highlighting of good practices;
- Generation and implementation of local publicity and awareness-raising plans;
- Planning of national campaign to raise social awareness;
- Individual Responsibility and empowerment in the Roma community.

Conclusions and suggestions

The new social ROMA integration strategy of Greece **aims at developing a uniform and coherent multi-sectoral policy for the simultaneous management of the factors leading to the social exclusion of the Roma people at the spatial level and specifically:**

- the development of sustainable social housing policies;
- the development of long-term social support measures.

Based on this approach, **the separate dimensions** constitute **different aspects of the same problem**. The social ROMA integration strategy of Greece aims at taking simultaneous action to eliminate the causes that block access.

The different dimensions require different policies defined by synergy and internal cohesion, for which **specific strategic goals** should be set, and the structural sum of these goals shall serve

the general strategic goal which is to “**eliminate the circumstances of social exclusion and create the conditions for social integration**”.

Within the above framework we need to respond to the following challenges:

- **Immediate Relief** for those living in sub-human conditions (short term intervention);
- **Development of Integrated local Plans** according to the social inclusion pathway process which will encompass actions and policies that respond to current needs are realistic, take into account the diversity of exclusion problems / types and in addition create the circumstances for substantial changes from one generation to the next in the effort to achieve equity. (long term intervention).

Therefore we propose to attempt to design, as simulation cases, three different Local Integrated Action Plans that respond to the overarching strategic goal and operate within an institutional mechanism for the management, implementation, coordination and monitoring of the programme.

These cases could be:

1. A settlement close to a developed urban centre;
2. A settlement with major problems regarding infrastructure and social services (totally excluded types of settlements close to a city dump or situated far away and from a town or city);
3. A settlement facing major issues of delinquency and drug trafficking among other issues of deprivation and exclusion.