



Slovenia

Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma

A Study of National Policies

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Summary

In the Republic of Slovenia, the Roma community is a minority community recognised by the Constitution and granted special protection by law. It does not, however, have the status of a national minority. When evaluating the situation of Roma in Slovenia, one should have their small number in both absolute and relative terms in mind. According to the 2002 Population Census, there were 3,246 Roma, or less than 0.2% of the total population of Slovenia. According to unofficial estimations, the number of Roma was up to 3-4 times that high.

From a legal point of view, the Roma community in Slovenia is positively discriminated, which means that it enjoys some special rights unavailable to the rest of the population. Regulation adopted in recent years provides an adequate framework for promoting the social inclusion of Roma. The 2007 Roma Community Act systematically regulates the responsibility of state- and local community bodies regarding the exercising of special rights of the Roma community, and provides for the organisation of the Roma community at the national and local levels as well as for financing. The Act is aimed at improving their situation in the education system, raising their education level, formulating a suitable scholarship policy, integrating Roma into the labour market, preserving and developing the Roma language, supporting cultural activities, resolving spatial planning issues concerning Roma settlements and provision of a better housing. Concrete measures are part of the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015.

The majority of Roma living in Slovenia have poor education or none at all, are mainly without employment, live in poor housing conditions and are consequently severely materially deprived. In spite of all focused programmes and their partial impacts, the social inclusion of Roma will largely depend particularly on their education and employment, both of which continue to be strongly influenced by the Romani tradition and culture. The active employment policy is not giving satisfactory results.

The Strategy for Education of Roma, adopted in 2004 and supplemented in 2011 has been a significant step in identifying the main obstacles to the integration of Romani children into education and a number of important policies and measures aimed at improving the situation. The progress is evident in the elementary education in particular, while inclusion of Roma children into pre-school educational programmes remains the priority task in near future.

Decent housing seems to be the basic condition for Roma inclusion in educational processes and the labour market, as well as for their social integration in general. The starting point is legalisation of Roma settlements as a legal condition for the construction of basic infrastructure and improvement of dwellings.

In spite of continuous improvements, in the last decade in particular, there still remains a lot to be done in the field of a substantial and effective implementation of the rights of the Roma community in Slovenia. Although political participation of Roma has improved in recent years, the Roma community is currently an object of policies and measures rather than an active partner in formulating the measures and the one who takes responsibility for its own future.

1. The situation of Roma in Slovenia

1.1 Roma population in Slovenia

According to the historical data, Roma were living at the territory of today's Republic of Slovenia already in the 15th century. Since the 17th century they have also been mentioned in various registers (Register of Births, Register of Deaths, Register of Marriages, etc.).¹ Even though these Roma had used to be nomads or semi-nomads, today we can firmly speak of the regions (Prekmurje in the NE of Slovenia, and the Dolenjska, Bela krajina and Posavje regions² in the SE Slovenia) where they settled indefinitely after the Second World War and live in their traditional way (ONM; Crepaldi et al. 2008: p. 8). In the post-Second World War period, a significant number of members of Romani communities, in particular those now living in urban areas, moved to Slovenia from poorer areas in the south of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (AI 2006: 55). Most of them live in the city of Maribor (NE Slovenia) and its surroundings (CVŽU). Referring to Roma in the Prekmurje region and the census data on migration, Josipovič and Repolusk (2003: p. 136) state that – no longer being nomadic – the Roma are substantially less mobile than the rest of the population. Furthermore, the migration is of a distinctly regional character. The mobility of those Roma who did not declare themselves as such ethnically is similar to that of the majority population in the region.

„Historical background and other circumstances make for major differences within the Roma community in Slovenia, reflected in different traditions, specific ways of life, degree of socialisation and integration into the environment“ (GRS 2010a). It is assessed that the situation of Roma living in the north-eastern part of Slovenia is significantly better than that of the Roma in the south-eastern part (ONM).

The population census data do not distinguish between Roma residing in Slovenia permanently and those residing only temporarily. In the 2002 census,³ 3,246 persons claimed to belong to the Roma community, which was 0.17% of the total population of Slovenia⁴ (GRS 2010; ONM). Unofficial estimates (by Centres of Social Work, municipalities and NGOs) of the number of Roma living in Slovenia are between 6,400 and 10,000 (even 12,000, including the so-called “non-autochthonous” or non-indigenous Roma)⁵ (GRS 2010; ONM; AI 2006; Josipovič and Repolusk 2003:

¹ Research shows that the Roma currently living in Slovenia came from three different directions: the ancestors of the Roma living in Prekmurje came to this region across the Hungarian territory, the Dolenjska group of Roma came across the Croatian territory, and small groups of Sinti came to Gorenjska from the North across the Austrian territory (ONM).

² Quite often the term “Dolenjska region” is used for all SE regions.

³ For previous censuses see Table A1 in Annex 1.

⁴ See Table A2 in Annex 1 for breakdown by sex and age.

⁵ „There can be many reasons for not declaring oneself as Romany:

- Some of the more integrated Romany no longer wish to equate themselves with the Romany identity;
- some Romany evade accurate official ethnic identification because they link potential problems in finding employment, inclusion in society, etc., with this status;
- this non-declaration is obviously influenced by the still negative attitude toward Romany among the majority population;
- language and cultural heterogeneity among the various groups of Romany make a broader identification with the Romany identity more difficult;
- some of the children of hetero-ethnic (i. e. »ethnically-mixed«) families no longer declare themselves as Romany“ (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: 133).

p. 131; CVŽU). About 85 per cent of (declared) Roma living in Slovenia were born in this country (see Table A3 in Annex 1). About 12 per cent were born in Serbia and Montenegro, and 3 per cent were born in the territory of other parts of the former SFR Yugoslavia.

There are two versions of the Romani language spoken in Slovenia: one is mainly spoken in the Prekmurje region and the other in the Dolenjska region⁶ (AI 2006: p. 56). In 1991, Romani was mother tongue of 2,752 (0.14 per cent) persons at the territory of Slovenia and of 3,834 (0.20 per cent) persons in 2002 (SORS 2002).⁷ In 2002, Romani was mother tongue of 80 per cent of the Roma in Slovenia, Slovenian of 10 per cent, Albanian of 6 per cent, and Bosnian of 1 per cent (SORS 2002).⁸ About 40 per cent of Roma whose mother tongue was Romani spoke only that language in their households, and 9 per cent spoke only Slovenian (SORS 2002).⁹ For 1,630 persons in Slovenia, Romani was the only language spoken in their household (SORS 2002).¹⁰ Half of Roma in Slovenia speak only one language in their household: 35 per cent speak Romani and 15 per cent Slovenian (SORS 2002).¹¹

The ageing index (see Table A4 in Annex 1) reflects a huge difference in life expectancy between the total population of Slovenia and (declared) Roma. While the number of the total population aged 65 years and over almost equals the number of population aged 0-14 years, there are 6 elderly Roma per 100 young Roma (or 1 elderly Roma per 16 young Roma). Higher levels of age-specific mortality among the Roma are due to poorer housing conditions, health care, education, and social situation in general (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 136). In the Prekmurje region, the Roma "are still a young population, although their birth rate is decreasing and there are increasingly fewer families with large numbers of children. Compared with Slovene families, Romany families have on average only 6% more children and the difference between young couples is even smaller" (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 136).

In 2002, out of 3,246 Roma, 51 per cent were Catholics (as were 58 per cent of the total population of Slovenia), 2 per cent Orthodox (as in the total population), 0.2 per cent were other Christian, 27 per cent belonged to Islam (as did 2 per cent of the total population), 9 per cent were believers who did not belong to any religion, and 3 per cent were unbelievers (others did not declare their religion) (SORS 2002).¹² As a rule, the autochthonous¹³ Roma belong to the same religion as the majority

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- „Among the geographical factors of the ethnic non-declaration among the Romany, we can suggest primarily two phenomena:
 - permanent settlement in one place lasting several generations that resulted in a higher level of social and economic integration (and also assimilation) with the majority population, which is also reflected in the morphological fusion of the once strictly separate Romany part of a settlement with the rest of the village; these groups of Romany rarely or generally do not communicate with other Romany groups (...);
 - a more mobile part of the Romany live today more dispersed in the wider urbanized hinterland of cities, often in hetero-ethnic households; the transference of the Romany ethnic identity and consciousness to younger generations is rare in these circumstances" (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 135).

⁶ The Dolenjska Romani belongs to the Turkish language group, and the Prekmurje Romani to the Vlah/Vlak and Carpathian groups (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: 130).

⁷ Available at: http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=9 (accessed 13 June 2011).

⁸ Available at: http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=58 (accessed 13 June 2011).

⁹ Available at: http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=60 (accessed 13 June 2011).

¹⁰ Available at: http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=56 (accessed 13 June 2011).

¹¹ Available at: http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=59 (accessed 13 June 2011).

¹² Available at: http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=57 (accessed 13 June 2011).

¹³ Slovenian legislation does not contain a clear definition of an "autochthonous Roma". However, the Slovenian Constitutional Court ((Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia), Decision in case no. U-I-416/98, 22 March

population, i.e. Roman Catholic, while non-autochthonous Roma mostly belong to Islam. Religion is very important for Roma, but they have adapted it to their way of living and they understand it in their own way (CVŽU).

1.2 Geographic distribution of Roma in Slovenia

Over 40 per cent of Roma live in the Prekmurje region (NE Slovenia), about one third in the Dolenjska region (SE Slovenia), Sinti (accounting for several percentages) at different locations, and the rest live in urban centres (Zupančič 2007: p. 220). Small Sinti communities¹⁴ are located in the Gorenjska region, in northern Slovenia,¹⁵ and can also be found in western Goričko (the northern part of Prekmurje), in several places in the Koroška region, and in the Celje region. Most of the autochthonous Roma live in the south-east of Slovenia (Dolenjska and Bela krajina regions, but also in Posavje) and in the north-east Prekmurje near the border with Hungary (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 130).

Only small numbers of Roma families live together with the majority population (mainly in Prekmurje) (ONM). Most Roma continue to live in settlements that are isolated from the rest of the population or at the outskirts of inhabited areas. According to the analysis of the Expert Group to Deal with Territorial Issues Related to Roma Settlements,¹⁶ there are 105 "pure" Roma settlements in Slovenia (more than half of them in the Prekmurje region) and about 20 to 25 smaller settlements with a considerable share of Roma population (17 in Prekmurje and 8 Sinti settlements in the Gorenjska region). In total, it is estimated that there are around 130 Roma settlements, with approximately nine thousand inhabitants (GRS 2010a; Zupančič 2007: p. 220). Settlements with several hundred inhabitants are rare (Zupančič 2007: p. 223).

Roma also live in major cities such as Ljubljana,¹⁷ Maribor, Velenje and Celje (GRS 2010; ONM; AI 2006: p. 56). These are mostly Roma who migrated from other parts of the former SFR Yugoslavia in the last 35 years and, most recently, also refugees and asylum seekers from that same geographical area (Zupančič 2007: 220). Due to migration and marriages between Roma from various settlements, one cannot any longer speak of a clear territorial division between individual groups (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 131).

2001) accepted that, in those cases where Romani settlements were present on a certain territory "for centuries", their inhabitants should be considered "autochthonous Roma" (AI 2006: 59; AI 2011b: p. 7).

¹⁴ Sinti (about 200 persons - EUMC 2006: 39) are usually not treated independently but rather together with other Romani groups (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 130).

¹⁵ The term "German Gypsies" has been applied to them because they came to Gorenjska from Austria (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 130).

¹⁶ In December 2006, the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning appointed an expert group to deal with territorial issues related to Roma settlements. By means of a questionnaire sent by the Ministry of Public Administration to all municipalities and administrative units with Roma communities, the expert group gathered and updated data on Roma settlements and collected information on various aspects of the housing situation of the Roma in Slovenia. In many cases the provided information was incomplete or false, but it was nevertheless possible to obtain a relatively good picture of the present status of Roma settlements and the relevant territorial problems (GRS 2010a).

¹⁷ In the 2002 Population Census, 218 persons (111 men and 107 women) living in the capital city of Ljubljana declared themselves as Roma, which was about 0.08 per cent of the total population of Ljubljana (Komac and Medvešek 2005: Tables 3 and 68). Almost half of them (107) were born in Slovenia, 49 in Yugoslavia and 32 in Macedonia (Komac and Medvešek 2005: Table 7). For 192 persons (0.07 per cent of the population of Ljubljana), Romani was the mother tongue (Komac and Medvešek 2005: Table 26).

1.3 Poverty and social exclusion situation of Roma

1.3.1 *Relative income poverty and deprivation*

The Roma population faces a higher risk of social exclusion and poverty than the rest of the population of Slovenia. "There are no detailed records on the number of Roma living in poverty or on other key socio-economic indicators, since data in these records are not entered in relation to ethnic origin" (AI 2011b: 7). The relative income poverty is to a great extent due to high unemployment rates (EC 2010a). Although there are no quantitative data available for the Roma community in Slovenia, a very high degree of their material deprivation is evident on site. The problems of Roma are often complex and need to be tackled by a mix of policy measures (including the education-, employment-, housing-, social care- and health care policies (MoLFSA 2008).

1.3.2 *Education*

Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive data on the education of Roma available. From partial information one can conclude that the educational structure of Roma is extremely poor (GRS 2010a). The Roma adults in Slovenia have rarely completed elementary¹⁸ education and are often illiterate or semi-illiterate (MES 2004: p. 8).¹⁹

In the school year 2010/2011 in Slovenia, over 75 per cent of all children of the proper age were enrolled in pre-school day-care programmes (Ložar 2011). Unfortunately, attendance rates of the Roma children are much lower. The major reason may be the tradition of upbringing children at home. It is also true that the Romani mothers have problems with bringing their children to pre-school day-care centres that are located far from their settlements. Namely, the transport of schoolchildren is financed by the municipalities, while the transport of pre-school children is not. Another reason might be child allowances: since 2003 these have been 20 per cent higher for pre-school children who are not included in subsidized pre-school day-care programmes (Kump and Stropnik 2009: p. 28).

Research conducted in the mid-2000s showed that engaging children in pre-school programmes positively influenced the regularity of their attendance of elementary school and their development (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 4). However, since the attendance of pre-school programmes by Roma children is still irregular, these children have not done more progress in elementary school than other Roma children (p. 24). "Roma parents believe that six-year olds are too young to attend primary school and they simply don't send them to school" (p. 12). There are regional variations in school attendance. In the school year 2007/2008, 70 per cent of Roma pupils attended school regularly in Prekmurje, compared to 39 per cent in Dolenjska (EUMC 2006: pp. 40 and 45; AI 2006: p. 63-64). Measures were taken to improve attendance rates, »such as summons or reports to competent authorities on the failure of Roma parents to comply with the obligation for compulsory education. In 2004, in an effort to improve school participation rates, the government introduced a measure linking social assistance to regular school attendance, which reportedly has had good results« (EUMC 2006: p. 86). As to our knowledge, this measure is now used only exceptionally.

¹⁸ Throughout the report the term "elementary" school/education is used for obligatory education at the primary and lower secondary level. However, in the texts written about Slovenia in English, one will, as a rule, find the term "primary" school/education, which is a literal translation of the Slovenian term.

¹⁹ For the educational structure of Roma living in the capital city of Ljubljana in 2002 see Table A5 in Annex 1.

Also due to low attendance of pre-school programmes, the lack of knowledge of the Slovenian language is the main obstacle for the Roma children's integration and progress in elementary education. This is also their parents' view: at school, children often do not understand what the teacher is talking about (AI 2006: pp. 71-72).²⁰ Approximately 30 per cent of the Roma children who reach school age are estimated to have a very limited command of the Slovenian language (AI 2006: p. 71).

The share of Roma children who successfully progress in the educational vertical is much lower than that of the rest of the Slovenia's population. Actually, a high proportion of children conclude their education with the 5th or 6th grade of the 9-year elementary school (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 5; Žagar et al., 2006: p. 8; EUMC 2006: pp. 39-40). Drop-out rates are particularly high among Roma girls (EC 2010a). In the Dolenjska region the majority of Roma children, especially girls, leave elementary school after having attended it for nine years, without necessarily having completed elementary education (MES 2004: p. 8; AI 2006: p. 64; AI 2011b: p. 7).²¹

Evaluation of the results of the 2004 Strategy for Education of Roma has shown minimum, if any, progress in the educational achievements of the Roma children until 2010. Even the cases of aggravation of the situation in recent years were reported. The main findings are:

- The Roma children are frequently absent from school;
- Roma children have a poor command of the Slovenian language;
- Due to continuous failure of Roma children to achieve minimum standards, the difference between them and the non-Roma children (who attend school regularly) increases;
- A great gap in knowledge increases the feeling of non-success with the Roma children;
- The drop-off is greatest at the middle of elementary education, when teaching by one teacher in one single classroom changes to teaching by subject teachers;
- Roma children enjoy a low stimulation to learn by their parents who do not present them knowledge as a value and a way to increase their living standard (MES 2011a: pp. 11-12; CVŽU).

The number of Roma children enrolled in elementary schools has been slowly increasing in the last decade. In the school year 2009/2010 their number was 1,807 (Kump and Stropnik 2009: p. 29). There are still relatively many Roma children attending elementary schools with an adapted curriculum (8.8 per cent in the school year 2004/2005, compared to a relatively constant national average of around 1.2 per cent), the reasons for which have been reconsidered (Peace Institute 2004: p. 31; EUMC 2006: p. 58). This may be the consequence of an abuse of the category of children with special needs. Namely, the pupils with very low educational attainment due to poor command of the Slovenian language or the specific features of the Romani culture do not belong to

²⁰ Interestingly, the research has shown that that Roma parents did not want the Romani language to be part of the elementary school curriculum (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 4). The researchers assumed it to be the consequence of a high motivation for learning Slovenian (the language of social promotion) and a fear that the use of Romani language might hinder their children's mobility (p. 19).

²¹ In one of the elementary schools visited by researchers, in 25 years only one Roma child completed elementary education. At another site, in 25 years, only three Roma children continued education at the secondary level (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 5).

this category (MES 2011a: p. 24; AI 2006: p. 66). “Negative stereotypes and expectations about the potential of educational achievement of Roma also appear to be factors in the over-representation of Romani children in Slovenian special schools” (AI 2006: pp. 66-67). A further problem is that children attending such schools have little chance of continuing their education in mainstream secondary schools.

According to the Open Society Institute data base, in 2008 only 40 Roma were enrolled in secondary education in Slovenia, and only 5 were enrolled in tertiary education (OSI).

1.3.3 *Employment*

Irregular participation in education results in illiteracy and lacking skills and qualifications for the labour market (EC 2010a). The professional structure of Roma in employment is poor. Professions demanding low skills are prevailing (for the city of Ljubljana, see Komac and Medvešek 2005: Table 92). This greatly reduces their options to obtain employment or to remain employed (GRS 2010a). Owing to a lack of elementary qualifications, functional illiteracy, social exclusion in general, as well as employer prejudices due to stereotypes, the employment of Roma people is much weaker than that of the majority population in Slovenia. “Regular employment of the Roma is rare; irregular forms of work are prevailing” (MoLFSA 2007: p. 60; Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 138).

Only 2 per cent of Roma are employed (most frequently through public works; and, usually, there is no transition into regular employment) and approximately 98 per cent are unemployed and receiving social assistance from the state. Many are engaged in grey economy (collecting scrap, gathering herbs and wild berries, etc.). Social assistance, too, acts as a disincentive for employment in spite of strict conditions for obtaining and retaining the cash benefit (regular visits to the Employment Office, active employment seeking, etc.). The total of social benefits frequently exceeds the amount that the Roma could earn in the labour market (ONM; MES 2004: p. 43).

“In September 2009, there were 2,193 Roma registered at the Employment Service of Slovenia, which is 2.5% of all registered unemployed persons in Slovenia. The numbers of unemployed Roma are an estimate, as only those who wish to be in the records are included” (GRS 2010a). Since certain kinds of social benefits to which Slovenian citizens are entitled by law are only granted to registered unemployed persons, a large proportion of Roma are registered with the Employment Service only to be eligible for social benefits, and are just formally pretending to seek work (GRS 2010a and 2010b).

Their extremely low educational level is the main reason for high unemployment among the Roma (CVŽU). In the early 2000s, 98.2 per cent of unemployed Roma in Dolenjska had not completed elementary education, and 90 per cent in Prekmurje, compared to the national average of 4 per cent (GRS 2010a; EUMC 2006: p. 39). Each year, the number of unemployed Roma grows, in both absolute and relative terms.

1.3.4 *Health*

The 2000 data indicate that the share of Roma children vaccinated against all diseases was drastically below the Slovenian average (GRS 2010a).

The study "Risk factors for non-communicable diseases in adult Roma community members", conducted by the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota in 2007, showed a higher occurrence of chronic diseases in this population, insufficient participation in prevention programmes and a greater share of individuals with risk factors for non-communicable diseases in comparison with the majority population. The same study confirmed that a low education level, high unemployment rate, poor social and economic situation,²² insufficient participation in health prevention programmes and a presence of chronic diseases contribute to health inequalities in the Roma community compared to the rest of the population (GRS 2010a).²³

The health workers identify ever more alcohol-, drugs- and pills addiction and psychological problems, like nervousness and depression. However, it is stressed, all this does not apply to Roma living in the city of Maribor, for whom Islam (with its rules to be applied in the everyday living) and care for family are the highest values (Žagar 2006).

1.3.5 *Housing and environment*

Most of the Roma in Slovenia live isolated in settlements or slums in rural areas (AI 2011a: p. 291; AI 2011b: p. 4). The Expert Group for Solving Spatial Issues in Roma Settlements reported in 2007 that two thirds of Roma settlements were physically separated from non-Roma settlements (Zupančič 2007: p. 220). In many cases, Roma have no legal residence, as many settlements are totally illegal, built on somebody else's land.²⁴ Due to that, the Roma lack security of tenure. Only a quarter of Roma settlements have the conditions in place for a relatively rapid integration, construction of infrastructure and property legalisation. Approximately a third of settlements have realistic possibilities to develop in the medium-term at their present locations after the necessary formalities are carried out (change of land use, to begin with). Another third will face considerable difficulties related to their possible legalisation. For one in ten settlements, relocation to another place seems to be the only, or at least the optimum, solution (GRS 2010a).

Very often, Roma housing areas have poor access to public services and lack (adequate) access to public utilities such as water, electricity or gas. This was also stressed in the 2011 Amnesty International report (AI 2011a: p. 291).²⁵ On the other hand, nearly 100 per cent of the total

²² „Many of the dwellings Amnesty International visited were damp and difficult to keep warm in winter since they are poorly insulated“ (AI 2011b: 15).

²³ A paediatrician from Novo mesto municipality told Amnesty International that children from the Roma settlement without water and electricity fall sick far more often than others. „In particular they are prone to diarrhoea and rotavirus due to poor conditions of hygiene, and bronchitis due to excessive smoke caused from smoking and also from using stoves without chimneys inside the dwellings for heating and cooking“ (AI 2011b: p. 17).

²⁴ »Most Roma settlements are located on state-owned land, but some are also located on privately owned land. The majority of these settlements have been established in an irregular manner on land that is not classified for residential use, but rather for agricultural or industrial use« (AI 2011b: p. 13). »In the Prekmurje region, in 18 out of 38 settlements Romani communities own most of the land and part of the land in one settlement. In six other settlements the state or municipality owns the land, and in only two settlements was the land privately owned. In contrast, in Dolenjska, only in five out of 57 settlements did Romani communities own most of the land and part of the land in 13 settlements. The municipality or state owns the land of 14 settlements and the land of 25 settlements was under private ownership« (AI 2011b: p. 71).

²⁵ »In May, the UN Expert on Human Rights, Water and Sanitation concluded upon her visit to Slovenia that at least 21 Roma settlements did not have access to water and warned of the devastating consequences for these communities« (AI 2011a: 291).

population of Slovenia have access to safe drinking water and 92 per cent are connected to the public water supply system (AI 2011b: p. 41).

1.4 The extent and nature of discrimination experienced by Roma

1.4.1 Education²⁶

Amnesty International has identified the following obstacles to education of Roma children:

- availability (of adequately trained teachers speaking Romani language and acquainted with the Romani culture),
- accessibility (arising from a poor socio-economic situation, distances between settlements and schools, lack of basic infrastructure, lack of adequate clothing, insufficient financial resources to meet costs associated with education, racism and discrimination),
- acceptability (of full integration of Roma in schools; negative stereotypes), and
- adaptability (linguistic barriers that make it significantly more difficult for those Roma pupils with only a very basic knowledge of the Slovenian language to integrate in the schools) (AI 2006: pp. 65-73).

The survey carried out in 2005 in the south-east of Slovenia on a sample of 774 Roma aged 15-45 years²⁷ showed that 80 per cent of the respondents had not completed elementary education and more than 90 per cent were unemployed. 40 per cent expressed their wish to be included in vocational training programmes, but anticipated hindrances and difficulties (GRS 2010; Žagar). Almost one fourth of the respondents said that they had not had difficulties concerning inclusion in vocational programmes, one fifth of the respondents considered that they had all the skills they needed, and one fourth said that they lacked time for learning or training. Other answers (given by almost one fifth of the respondents) indicated impediments to learning, which may be sorted into three distinct groups: situational impediments, institutional impediments and dispositional impediments. Situational impediments are mostly: transport to school, care for other children, unsupportive environment, moonlighting (undeclared work), lack of money, poor health condition, moving from place to place and household chores. Institutional impediments are: lack of adequate premises in Roma settlements, illiteracy, poor command of the Slovenian language, lack of information, poor infrastructure in Roma settlements (no electricity or water), women's role in the family, linking education to unemployment, and poor trust in institutions. Dispositional impediments are: low self-image, learning difficulties, knowledge not considered a positive value, aimlessness, fatalism, perception of one's age, comparison with role models, and being laughed at by other Roma (GRS 2010a).

According to Amnesty International, „protests by non-Romani parents against the full integration of Roma in schools are indicative of racism and discrimination against Roma in the non-Romani population, including pupils at schools and their families. Negative stereotyping by teachers results in

²⁶ See also Section 1.3.2

²⁷ An extensive survey on educational and professional interests of active Roma population aged between 15 and 45 years and living in Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, Posavje, Kočevsko and Grosupeljsko regions was conducted in the framework of the project "Vocational information and counselling to Roma" (GRS 2010; Žagar).

low expectations of Romani children and other discriminatory attitudes and behaviour" (AI 2006: pp. 69-70). In their view, this may be, to a great extent, due to the failure to include Romani culture and traditions in school curricula. Activities organized by pre-school day-care centres and elementary schools appear to depend on the initiative of individual centres/schools or teachers, and are often limited to the playing and singing of Romani songs/music and activities organised around the International Roma Day. "The strategies adopted to include Romani children in education have so far mostly been based on assimilation, rather than on multicultural integration" (AI 2006: p. 70).

1.4.2 *Employment*²⁸

The research project on "Vocational information and counselling to Roma" showed that most of the Roma are uneducated, unemployed, and not motivated for learning and actively contribute to the solving of their bad social status. They only wanted to receive social benefits (CVŽU). A third of the interviewees in the project blamed their lack of education for their unemployment, a third said that the reason was them being Roma, and only a third blamed their inactivity, lack of adequate jobs, health problems or age (see Žagar).

According to information provided by Employment Services and Centres for Social Work in the regions where unemployed Roma are registered, some employers are reluctant to hire Roma (GRS 2010a). There are cases of hidden discrimination in the labour market, like not giving a job to the Roma with an argument that "the candidate does not meet the employer's expectations" (Rudaš).

1.4.3 *Housing and environment*

Roma families faced discrimination when trying to buy property (AI 2011a: p. 291).²⁹ The cases of landlords refusing to rent to Roma have been reported to the Ombudsman (AI 2011b: p. 19). According to Amnesty International "widespread discrimination often prevents Romani families from buying or renting housing in other areas. There are a number of documented cases in which other communities have blocked attempts to locate Romani families in the areas that they reside in or prevented private sales of properties to Roma. In most municipalities Romani families face particular barriers in accessing the few existing options for non-profit rented housing. These barriers include lack of information, biased attitudes and discriminatory criteria for allocation"³⁰ (AI 2011b: p. 4).

According to Amnesty International, the Slovenian Government "has failed to address the insecurity of tenure of Roma living on socially owned property when these properties were transferred to municipalities in the post-independence period or returned to private owners during the

²⁸ See also Section 1.3.3

²⁹ Amnesty International reports on the owner who confirmed that he had decided not to sell to a Roma because he thought the neighbours would not be pleased if he brought a Romani family into their neighbourhood. The neighbours reportedly collected signatures for a petition calling on the owner not to sell to Roma. Municipal officials, too, confirmed the cases of discrimination against Roma who tried to buy property outside the Roma settlements. The arguments quoted looked like this: among the local population the Roma are known for stealing and people are afraid to have them as neighbours; also their way of living is different – from hygiene to weapon issues (AI 2011b: 19).

³⁰ The municipalities "can decide which groups and criteria they prioritize for allocation of housing, even if this excludes the most disadvantaged groups such as the Roma" (AI 2011b: p. 21). And "Amnesty International found out that none of the municipalities in the south-eastern region with Romani population are providing any housing units" (AI 2011b: p. 21). Also, "a high percentage of Romani individuals interviewed by Amnesty International did not appear to be aware of the possibility of applying for non-profit rented housing at their municipality" (AI 2011b: p. 22).

denationalisation process. It failed to confer a minimum degree of security of tenure on Romani communities, in particular protections against forced evictions, regularize their situation or provide them with alternatives in terms of resettlement” (AI 2011b: p. 4). In our view, it is a simplified explanation of an extraordinary complex and sensitive issue. The governments (national and local) cannot be the only subjects to blame for this failure. What Amnesty International would consider right and fair, is a considerable positive discrimination of the Roma.³¹ It seems that the majority local population does not find the Roma (considering their behaviour) as the ones deserving it. There is also a view that the culture of living is not a value for Roma. In a way, they expect somebody else to take care of living conditions in their homes and settlements (CVŽU).

The absence of comprehensive measures, ad-hoc development and a lack of investment funds have resulted in sub-standard construction of Romani dwellings,³² poor public utilities and continuous problems with people living in their neighbourhood. Most Roma live in conditions “that are far below any minimum living standard (...) in haphazard dwellings such as shanties, containers, trailers and the like” (GRS 2010a). According to the Governmental Office for National Minorities, 39 per cent of Roma lived in brick houses (half of them without necessary permits), and 12 per cent in apartment blocks in the mid-2000s (AI 2006; Website for Roma Councillors). There are also Roma settlements similar to those of the majority population, inhabited by Roma who are employed and have a decent standard of living. This is the result of co-operation between the Roma and local communities, and (Zupančič 2007: 223).

Roma settlements were not given enough attention in the past, and have thus developed in an unorganised and uncontrolled way. The main issues identified by the Expert Group to Deal with Territorial Issues Related to Roma Settlements are:

- “Public utility facilities are inadequate, poor or even non-existent;
- Living space is restricted, as settlements have very limited possibilities for growth;
- Adequate space is lacking for the performance of certain forms of economic activity.” (GRS 2010a).

“Under Slovenian law, citizens can only obtain access to services if they own or hold other legal claims over the land on which they live, along with requisite planning permission. Although a number of municipalities have waived these requirements for informal Roma settlements, some, particularly those in southeast Slovenia, have failed to take adequate measures” to provide essential services, like water and sanitation (AI 2011b: p. 4). Due to illegal construction, some communities lack sanitation, running water,³³ sewerage³⁴ or waste removal services, while others are reported as

³¹ They call on the authorities of Slovenia »to prioritise Romani communities living in informal settlements and other disadvantaged groups in all housing policies and programmes, including schemes for non-profit housing and - housing subsidies« (AI 2011b: 6). There are some more recommendations that include positive discrimination (p.63).

³² “Many Romani families live in one or two room houses in extremely overcrowded conditions” (AI 2007c: 14).

³³ “The negative implications of lack of access to water and sanitation are evident in Roma settlements without access to water. Many Roma told Amnesty International that their children do not go to school because they are ashamed of not being able to wash and are teased by the other school children about their smell. Similarly, adults complained they face difficulties in finding work, as they have no opportunity to maintain minimum standards of hygiene” (AI 2011b: p. 44).

³⁴ “Some communities are forced to collect water from petrol stations, cemeteries and polluted streams. Amnesty International found that some people are only able to collect 10–20 litres a day for drinking, bathing and cooking –

having no electricity. According to the survey conducted in the mid-2000s, 8 per cent of settlements in the Prekmurje region were without water supply, and as many as 32 per cent in the Dolenjska region. In the latter, 42 per cent of settlements were without electric power supply (Zupančič 2007: p. 227).³⁵ Due to lack of access to safe drinking water, people in Roma settlements also turn to use unsafe water resources, which causes health problems (AI 2011b: p. 45). The 'autochthonous' Roma – most of them living in isolated and unregulated settlements – have a less favourable access to public amenities than urban 'non-autochthonous' Roma.

According to the survey conducted in the mid-2000s and quoted by FRA (2009: p. 68), 51 per cent of Roma households have access to power supply and 75 per cent have running water (FRA 2009: p. 68). Housing conditions are particularly bad for Roma in the south-east of Slovenia. A third of them do not have access to drinking water, electricity and sanitation.

In certain Roma settlements the greatest problem is communal and other waste; besides, only few Roma settlements are linked to sewage systems. Sewage is a major problem as it pollutes the local environment and is a health hazard to both the residents and the neighbouring population (it is a frequent cause for local confrontation) (Zupančič 2007: pp. 226-227; GRS 2010a).

Most Roma settlements have adequate road access, but many are kilometres away from the nearest bus station (AI 2011b: p. 13), which is a great disadvantage for children and women in particular. Most Roma settlements were established in the vicinity of existing roads. Ad-hoc auxiliary traffic areas were constructed. Unarranged traffic areas within the settlements are more problematic. Because of dense land take (dense construction), these traffic areas are too narrow, and are additionally burdened by deposits of secondary material (Zupančič 2007: p. 226; GRS 2010a).

Such living conditions are the source of many other problems faced by the Roma community. They negatively impact the Roma's education,³⁶ professional qualifications, information, access to health and social services, access to the labour market and participation in various facets of public life (GRS 2010a; AI 2011b: p. 4).

1.4.4 *Discrimination in general*

In Slovenia, the Roma community is the one most exposed to discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin (GRS 2010a). Only exceptionally the Roma include themselves into the life of the society and they do not trust in institutions. In general, neither Roma nor the local majority population are interested in close contacts and cooperation. The Roma find it hard to integrate into the society while the majority population does not show any understanding for the Roma culture. Differences in their value systems are the main reason for non-understanding between them (CVŽU). "Only a small number of Roma live with the majority population (mostly in Prekmurje) and have attained a satisfactory level of socialisation and satisfactory integration" within the society (GRS 2010a). Generally, Roma are not well accepted in the south-east of Slovenia, particularly in the areas where they are not an autochthonous population. The native population feels threatened by the vicinity of

below the minimum recommended even in humanitarian emergencies. Very few of the settlements are connected to the public sewage system" (AI 2011b: p. 4).

³⁵ Detailed information by Roma settlements, based on the 2004 data, is available at the website for Roma councillors (http://www.inv.si/romsvet/dobro_je_vedeti5c7e.html?p=4, accessed 16 June 2011).

³⁶ »Children's education is affected when they lack appropriate space and other conditions for doing homework (AI 2011b: p. 16).

(mostly illegal) Roma settlements. Occasionally there are tensions that are widely covered by the Slovenian media. Provocations come from both sides. Those native people who dislike Roma support the activities of the Regional Civil Initiative for Solving the Roma Issue. Through this civil initiative, in 2011 the local people opposed the legalisation and spreading of a Roma settlement (having been in place there for 60 years) and expressed their concern over social benefits received by Roma (Rajšek 2011). Their view is that most of the Roma prefer receiving social assistance over working while, at the same time, driving expensive cars and being involved in criminal acts.

According to the 2011 Amnesty International report, in 2010 the “cases of verbal and physical intimidation and hate speech against Roma were common in local communities and they remained largely unaddressed by the relevant authorities. Remedies to challenge the discriminatory practices were inadequate and often unavailable” (AI 2011a: 291). For instance, in January 2010 a municipality in south-east Slovenia forbid the burial of a deceased Roma woman at the municipal graveyard. When the funeral was arranged in another municipality, more than a hundred local people gathered to prevent it (Miklič 2010a). Amnesty International (AI 2010) reported on the discrimination of Roma by the Red Cross staff who denied Roma an access to the stocks of food and clothing. As a rule, the humanitarian aid to Roma is delivered to their settlements only, which is the case of discrimination on an ethnical ground.

Speaking of an increasing discrimination against Roma, particularly evident at the local level, Jožek Horvat, president of the Roma Union of Slovenia, stated that discrimination is also occurring within the Roma community itself (HRO 2006).

1.5 The main data gaps

Like in most other countries, also in Slovenia the lack of data on the socio-economic situation of Roma is a serious obstacle for evidence-based policy making and effective action (EC 2010a: p. 22). In compliance with the legislation on the protection of personal data, ministries and other government bodies may not keep special records of persons based on national or ethnic affiliation, so the only numbers available are those gathered in official population censuses under the auspices of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. It is not likely for Roma to be interviewed in the framework of other regular statistical surveys conducted on population samples. Most of the data collected through projects are either out of date or incomplete.

Here are two examples of missing data:

1. The number of Roma children attending pre-school day-care is not known because neither kindergartens nor the Ministry of Education and Sport are supposed to collect data on children's ethnic affiliation (Kump and Stropnik 2009: p. 28).
2. “There are no detailed records on the number of unemployed Roma, since data in these records are not entered in relation to ethnic origin. Estimates can only be based on typical Roma surnames or when persons are known to the surveyor, but such data are of course distorted” (GRS 2010a).

2. Assessment of existing policy and governance framework

2.1 The overall policy framework and governance arrangements for addressing Roma poverty and exclusion

In the Republic of Slovenia the Roma community does not have the status of a national minority; rather, it is recognised as a minority community with particular ethnic and cultural characteristics (its own language, culture and history) that may be preserved in accordance with constitutional provisions, taking into consideration the needs that the community expressly puts forward (GRS 2010; ONM). The legal basis for current regulation and positive discrimination of Roma is provided in Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia which stipulates: “The status and special rights of the Roma Community living in Slovenia shall be regulated by law” (ONM).

The Roma Community Act,³⁷ adopted unanimously by the National Assembly in March 2007, represented a giant step forward in the realisation of Article 65 of the Slovenian Constitution. It created a normative framework for improvement of the status of Roma community in Slovenia by regulating the competences of national authorities and authorities of local communities concerning the implementation of special rights of the Roma community,³⁸ the organisation of the Roma community at the national and local levels, and financing of these activities. The Act is aimed at improving the situation of Roma in the educational system, raising their educational level, formulating a suitable scholarship policy, integrating Roma into the labour market, preserving and developing the Roma language, supporting cultural activities, resolving spatial planning issues concerning Roma settlements and providing better housing conditions. The protection of special rights and positive discrimination of the Roma community is also incorporated in various programmes, strategies and resolutions, and is currently being implemented through fourteen sector-specific acts (see the list in Annex 2). Statutes of twenty municipalities also provide special rights to the Roma ethnic communities that traditionally reside in the Republic of Slovenia (ONM).

In compliance with Article 6 of The Roma Community Act (2007), the National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010–2015 (GRS 2010a) was adopted in March 2010. It covers those areas where measures for improving the status of Roma and effective implementation of the Roma community rights are necessary (these measures are presented by areas in Section 2.2 of this report). The basic strategic goals of the National Programme of Measures for Roma are:

- “1. Improving the living conditions of the Roma community and arranging Roma settlements in an orderly manner;
2. Improving the educational structure of Roma community members and increasing attendance of Roma children in pre-school educational programmes and compulsory educational

³⁷ According to the website for Roma councillors (<http://www.inv.si/romsvet/zakonodaja25757.html?p=11>, accessed 16 June 2011), Slovenia was the first EU country to adopt the act on Roma community.

³⁸ These special rights are in the fields of education, employment, health and social care, culture, territorial management and environment protection, information and participation in public matters that concern members of the Roma community, as well as implementation of regulation and special programmes and measures adopted by national authorities and local communities (GRS 2010a).

programmes, as well as increasing the inclusion of young and adult Roma in further educational processes in compliance with the principle of life-long learning;

3. Increasing employment and decreasing unemployment rates of members of the Roma community;
4. Improving healthcare for members of the Roma community, in particular of women and children;
5. Preserving and developing cultural, informational and editing activities of the Roma community, and endeavouring to preserve and develop different variations of the Roma language;
6. Raising awareness of the majority population of the existence, culture, customs and traditions of the Roma community, and raising awareness of the minority population on their rights and obligations as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia” (GRS 2010a).

The National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a) is a most welcome strategic document. However, the Programme was rightly criticised for being too general in its goals and measures (see, for instance, AI 2010). There are no quantitative targets set for reducing poverty and social exclusion of Roma. On the one hand, if the targets are not quantified, the achievements cannot be monitored and evaluated, and there is no basis for revisions that may be necessary. It is true, on the other hand, that, given the absence of reliable socio-economic data by ethnic origin, neither the current situation nor the targets can be properly quantified (see also Section 1.5 of this report).

Within six month from the adoption of the National Programme of Measures, i.e. by September 2010, the national and local authorities were obliged to adopt detailed sectorial programmes and measures, and provide for the necessary funds in their financial plans. However, due to a number of reasons, difficulties in collecting the relevant data being the most important one, there has been a delay in this process (NARS 2011).

There are some other relevant strategic documents that are important for the Roma Community in Slovenia. The Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016 (MoLFSA, 2006) stresses the need for special care of Roma children. The basic goals are to achieve an improvement in their social position, to ensure their social inclusion, as well as to include all of them into regular health examinations and ensure that they receive the usual vaccinations. The need for preservation of the Romani language and culture is explicitly stated as well. The National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010 includes a section on the activities concerning topical issues for Roma (MoLFSA 2008: pp. 18-19). In June 2009, the Common Basic Principles for Roma inclusion – to be taken into account when drawing up or implementing relevant policies – had been agreed in the European Council. Slovenia had implemented the key principles by spring 2010 already (EC 2010a: p. 13).

The autochthonous Roma are included in the management of public affairs at the local level. According to the 2002 revisions of the Local Self-Government Act, in twenty municipalities where they have been present throughout history, members of the Roma community enjoy a special right to elect a representative to the Municipal Council, to be exercised in local elections. All these municipalities now have a Roma councillor (EC 2010b: p. 46). Other municipalities not listed in the Act may also decide to include such representation in their Councils. Special working bodies were established in those twenty municipalities to monitor the status of the Roma community (MoLFSA

2008: p. 19). The Roma Community Act (2007) defines the composition and tasks of this working body. Other municipalities may also set up such special working body.

The Roma Union of Slovenia is an umbrella organisation for Roma associations that represents them in a dialogue with national authorities. It is also increasingly active in directing and coordinating the activities of Roma associations and it organises mass meetings of Roma and other cultural events every year. It receives funds from the Government Office for National Minorities. The Forum of Roma Councillors was established in 2002 as a working body within the Roma Union of Slovenia, linking Roma councillors and municipalities in which Roma are represented (ONM). In 2007, the Council of the Roma Community of the Republic of Slovenia was established, consisting of 14 representatives of the Roma Union of Slovenia and 7 Roma Municipal Councillors.³⁹

In the period 2002-2006 the Office for National Minorities provided funds for the training and educational programmes for those Roma representatives who participated in elections to the Municipal Councils and were actually elected, as well as for Roma activists (GRS 2010a). The training of Roma Community representatives in the Municipality Councils (Roma Councillors), associations and other organisations (Roma activists) is also foreseen in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a).

2.2 The main strengths and weaknesses of existing policies and programmes promoting Roma integration

There is a mix of targeted and wider programmes for Roma in Slovenia. For the coordination of the Roma Community's special rights, the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a) was adopted. "Slovenia coordinates its Roma policies through the Government Office for National Minorities and the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community" (EC 2010a: p. 8).

2.2.1 *Income (tax and welfare policies)*

There are no specific tax or benefit provisions for Roma, but as citizens of Slovenia they are nevertheless recipients of relatively high social benefits. This is due to the fact that most of them earn no (registered) income and that they have many children. For most of the Roma families, social benefits are the only (registered) source of income (MES 2004: p. 43).

Centres for Social Work organise activities aimed at integrating Roma into the life of the community, self-help and solving their particular social problems (Stropnik et al., 2003).

2.2.2 *Education*

In 2004, the Strategy for Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia was adopted by the Expert Council for General Education, defining premises, principles, goals and basic solutions for effective

³⁹ The Forum of Roma Councillors is not satisfied with that, arguing that the interests of all Roma are not represented. The Slovenian Government does not intend to interfere and leaves the issue to be solved by the Roma themselves (Miklič 2011).

inclusion of Roma in education at all levels. The following activities have been carried out by the beginning of 2010:

- An optional subject entitled “Roma culture” was approved in 2007 and it was introduced in one elementary school;
- Professional standards for a Roma assistant and a Roma coordinator were adopted;
- Programmes addressing intercultural co-existence have been prepared (by the Roma Union of Slovenia) and implemented annually;
- Educational texts (books) in Romani were published;
- Quite a number of symposia on an enhanced inclusion of Roma children into education and training system were carried out;
- Training seminars for teachers are being carried out every year;
- A network was set up that includes all schools with Roma children in order to promote exchange of experience and good practice (GRS 2010; MES 2011a: p. 18).

Following its evaluation, a supplement to the 2004 Strategy was adopted in February 2011 in order to enable a more successful inclusion of Roma children into the educational system, from pre-school to the university and post-graduate education (MES 2011a: p. 3) In drafting it, a number of acts and other documents important for the Roma community that were adopted in the period 2005-2010 were also taken into account.

Measures have been taken to broaden the educational opportunities of Roma children by positively discriminating in their favour in both pre-school education and care and elementary education. Pre-school Roma children are included in approximately 40 day-care centres, mostly in Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Posavje, Bela Krajina and Štajerska. There are three distinct forms of their inclusion: most Roma children are integrated in regular (mixed) groups, some are included in separate Roma groups, and there is a unit of a pre-school day-care centre with Roma children only⁴⁰ (GRS 2010a). The number of children per pre-school class is smaller if the group includes Roma children (Kindergarten Act 1996, Article 14). The children/professional staff ratio is more favourable. Transport with an accompanying person is organised if the day-care centre is not near the Roma settlement (GRS 2010b). According to the Kindergarten Act (1996, Article 54), the state budget provides funds for higher costs and investments in Roma classes.

In December 2002, a Supplement to the pre-school day-care centres' curriculum for work with Roma children was adopted by the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Education (2002). It stresses the principles of equal opportunities, respect of differences between children, multiculturalism and cooperation with parents, as well as the need to support Roma children in their effort to express themselves either verbally or through music, dance and socialising (Peace Institute 2004: p. 14).

⁴⁰ This unit was established in the Prekmurje region at the outskirts of the Roma settlement Pušča near Murska Sobota as early as 1962. As a matter of fact, there are now some non-Roma children attending a pre-school programme in this unit (NARS 2011).

One of the key goals of the Strategy for Education of the Roma in Slovenia is inclusion of Roma children in pre-school educational programmes at least two years before the beginning of elementary school, i.e. at the age of 4 at the latest. The idea behind this early inclusion is enhancing Romani and Slovenian language skills and socialisation of Roma children (GRS 2010a). Taking account of the finding that pre-school education in Romani settlements contributes to the children's higher competences, the 2011 Supplement to the 2004 Strategy for Education of Roma suggests that a planned and systematic construction of premises and the establishment of specific pre-school programmes in the Romani settlements should be considered (MES 2011a: p. 13).

In Slovenia, parent fees for pre-school day care strongly depend on the family financial situation. Families on social assistance are exempt from paying fees altogether (*Pravilnik o plačilih ... 1996*). From September 2008, the programmes are free of charge for the second and any subsequent child from the same family if there are two or more children simultaneously attending pre-school day care; parents pay only for the older/oldest child, and namely the rate for one lower income bracket. All this means that (at least) the majority of Roma families pay very little, if anything at all, so the financial aspect is not an obstacle for attendance. It is important to stress that in the day-care centres, apart for care and education, children also benefit from four healthy meals a day (warm breakfast and lunch, and morning and afternoon snack).

Elementary schools that educate Roma children receive additional funds from the Ministry of Education and Sport for individual or group work with Roma children. Smaller classes are allowed (no more than 21 pupils if three Roma children are integrated in a regular class) and additional finances are granted to school cafeterias (to cover the full cost of lunches for half of the Roma pupils). Textbooks are provided through school textbook funds and special activities and school excursions are financed for the Roma pupils. The Ministry has been additionally providing funds for research on a more effective inclusion of Roma children into the educational system, the methods for standardisation of the Roma language to serve as the basis for teaching, etc. (GRS 2010 and 2010b; MES 2011a: p. 19; Peace Institute 2004: pp. 27-28).

Starting with the school year 2003/2004, there are no school classes with Roma pupils only (MES 2011a: p. 21; AI 2006: p. 68; EUMC 2006: p. 57). Research among teachers, school executives and Roma assistants has shown that the greatest advantages of integrated classes for Roma pupils are a quicker acquisition of the Slovenian language and the development of working habits. There is also a positive impact on the Roma children's self-esteem (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 22).

The 2004 Strategy for Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia provides for the post of a Roma assistant as an important measure for raising the attendance and school achievements of Roma children. The role of a Roma assistant is to help children overcome emotional and linguistic impediments prior to inclusion in a pre-school programme or school, and to act as a liaison between a pre-school day-care centre or school and the Roma community (GRS 2010a). This project has been coordinated by the Roma Union of Slovenia (it started in the framework of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in the period 2004-2007, was prolonged till 2011, and then again for three more years) and implemented together with the Ministry of Education and Sport. It is also foreseen by the National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010–2015 (GRS 2010a and 2010b).⁴¹

⁴¹ See details in Annex 3.

The evaluation conducted at the sample of elementary schools proved an improvement in the educational achievements of the Roma children due to the work of Roma assistants. The number of justified and unjustified absences has decreased substantially, the participation of Roma pupils in extracurricular activities has become more intense, communication between the schools and the parents of the Roma children has improved, etc. (MoLFSA 2007: pp. 67-68; GRS 2010b; Association of Roma of Slovenia 2011). According to Lük, Brejc and Vonta (2005: p. 4), an evident progress of multiculturalism and bilingualism in classrooms can also be attributed to the Roma assistants' engagement in helping both children and teachers in a classroom. School executives have reported an extraordinary contribution of Roma assistants to successful work in classrooms regardless of their low education (p. 15).⁴²

The Strategy for Education of the Roma in Slovenia (2004) "provides for a number of activities aimed at supporting the idea that education is something valuable and creates possibilities for development of the Roma culture within educational institutions. Learning about both cultures will contribute to better mutual understanding and help remove stereotypes" (GRS 2010a). This idea is embodied in the National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010-2015 as the measure "creating conditions for developing confidence in schools, learning about Roma culture and removing prejudices". The goals to be attained under this measure include the development of new didactic material and equipment for teaching Roma culture, Roma language standardisation, and learning about Roma culture in schools (inclusion in curricula, school projects, etc.). The two measures for achieving these goals are:

- Raising the quality of education provided to Roma children (developing suitable didactic strategies and approaches, continuous training of teachers and exchange of good practices), and
- establishment of a "support for learning" network, in particular for secondary school Roma students (by successful Roma students, teachers and NGOs) (GRS 2010a).

Most of the Roma have modest educational aspirations, which is to a great extent due to their traditional way of life (MoLFSA 2007: p. 60) and, for females, the traditional values that imply having children very early. All in all, a lot of effort has been devoted to the inclusion of the Roma children into elementary education in Slovenia, and it was rather successful. This cannot be said for the education of Roma students at the secondary level, although ever more Roma are continuing education. A small number of Roma are included in tertiary education and first Roma students are graduating from the university (NARS 2011).

The Ministry of Education and Sport also finances some programmes of adult Roma education in the municipalities where the Roma live. The subjects taught include, for instance, functional and computer education, preservation of Roma traditions, customs and professions, and housework skills (ONM). Within the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL the development partnership »Roma Employment Centre« drafted the Strategy for Adult Roma Education in the SE Region of Slovenia (Gašperšič 2007).

Some more cases of good practice are presented in Annex 4.

⁴² It is, however, interesting that the Roma assistants "had not always been accepted by Roma parents. One of the Roma assistants even received threatening letters from Roma people, telling her to leave school; another lost her life in a bomb attack at her house in Roma settlement" (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 16).

2.2.3 Employment

An improvement in the labour market situation of Roma can only result from their better education and training, and some positive changes can already be seen in younger generations (GRS 2010a). Employability is one of the most important issues in the social integration of Roma, not only as a prerequisite for ensuring basic living conditions, but also as an essential condition for improving their overall socio-economic status (GRS 2010a). The key issue is "how to integrate Roma people into social and economic spheres of their own free will and based on their own interests, as well as how to provide conditions for equal integration at the social and professional level" (MoLFSA 2007: p. 60).

The number of unemployed Roma has neither considerably increased during the current crises, nor has it decreased as a result of active labour market policies. Due to their low educational structure, the Roma represent one of the specific structural labour market problems (GRS 2010b). Nevertheless, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs evaluates that there have been many positive developments regarding employment of Roma in the last few years, "like an increase in the number of employment programmes and public works programmes set up exclusively for the Roma (programmes entitled "Roma for Roma") and an increased participation of Roma in the drafting of such development programmes (GRS 2010a and 2010b). The employment programmes targeted at the unemployed Roma population in recent years include:

- The Roma and unemployment in Pomurje;
- Equal employment opportunities for the Roma – a challenge for us all;
- Project "Development of models for education and training of the Roma in view of increasing their long-term employability";
- Phare Programmes for the Roma;
- Under the community initiative EQUAL, two development partnerships were financed: the Roma Employment Centre and the Roma Educational and Information Centre;
- Cross-border social partnership MEDIATOR – Interreg programme IIIA;
- Active employment policy programmes which included particular employment programmes for the Roma;
- National programme of public works (GRS 2010a).

"Active employment policy programmes implemented by the Employment Service enable Roma, on an equal footing with other unemployed persons, to train and acquire skills necessary for work;⁴³ however, the difficulty resides in finding employers willing to employ them, either regularly or temporarily. Most members of the Roma community are included in programmes of institutional training and formal education (in particular, programmes to complete elementary school) and in public work programmes. These are either local or national programmes implemented in local environments and aimed at activating the unemployed, increasing their social inclusion and providing them with new skills and working abilities. Under public works programmes, Roma participate in public utilities programmes where no special skills are necessary, and in programmes aimed at

⁴³ Data on the inclusion of Roma in 2008 are provided in Table A6 in the Annex 1.

fostering their socialisation and integration into the local community. Unemployed Roma are included in local and national programmes of public works without a waiting period and may therefore be included several times in a row (normally, participation in public works programmes is limited to one year). Programmes for Roma are prepared and fully funded by the Employment Service" (GRS 2010a).

For the period 2008-2013, intensive inclusion of Roma in active employment policy measures is foreseen, with due consideration of the gender aspect. The activities include:

- Definition of criteria and methods for extensive inclusion of Roma in active employment policy measures through establishing regional quotas and identifying priority groups to be involved in a specific measure;
- Creation and implementation of local employment programmes for unemployed male and female Roma;
- Inclusion of Roma in special programmes to prepare them for employment, which include information and motivation subjects, preparation for employment and career plans, training and assistance in job-seeking;
- Creation of programmes encouraging long-term unemployed Roma to regularly take up work for shorter periods" (GRS 2010a).

Projects for the Roma (as one of the vulnerable groups) to be carried out under the Operational Programme for Development of Human Resources 2007-2013, development priority 4, in the period 2007-2013 include training and employment through development of social entrepreneurship, and projects aimed at improving employability and inclusion in the labour market (and ensuring equality between men and women) (GRS 2010a and 2010b).

The cases of good practice are presented in Annex 4.

2.2.4 *Health*

In healthcare the Roma have the same rights as the rest of the population of Slovenia. Primary healthcare is regularly provided to the Roma by hospitals, health centres and home care services (GRS 2010a). The 2008 revision to the Health Care and Health Insurance Act introduced grants to socially disadvantaged individuals and their family members (for instance, those who are eligible for social assistance) to have the difference to the full cost of healthcare services under the compulsory healthcare insurance covered from the state budget. There is no data on the number of Roma taking advantage of this provision since the information about ethnicity is not collected (GRS 2010b). The Patient's Rights Act (2008) introduced an advocate of the patient's rights who, without any charge, informs, directs and represents patients in asserting their rights.

Improvement in the health status of Roma is included in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a). Objective 2 of the national Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016 (MoLFSA, 2006) is to guarantee all Romani children a suitable health care (regular health examinations, also in poor Romani settlements, and vaccination) (MoLFSA, 2006: p. 18).

In the past decade a number of projects and activities were, or have been, focused on healthcare of the Roma in Slovenia, like collecting data on vaccination of Roma children and use of healthcare services by Roma children and women, eradication of tuberculosis in a Roma settlement, research on the Roma lifestyle, and promotion of healthy nutrition and healthy way of living (GRS 2010a). In 2009-2010 the project "Innovative approach to enhancing health in the Roma Community - Roma" was conducted (GRS 2010b). Roma women and girls were the focus group of the health research programme carried out in 2008/2009" (EU 2010: 11). The national conference on "Reducing Health Inequalities among the Roma Population" was organised in 2008, the one on "Health in Roma Women" in 2009, and the one on "Health in Roma Children" in 2010. Further annual conferences on Roma health are foreseen in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a and GRS 2010b). Some more cases of good practice are presented in Annex 4.

2.2.5 *Housing and environment*

The National Housing Programme (2000) identifies Roma as a group with specific needs that should be addressed by local communities and financially supported at the state level in order to benefit both the Roma and other inhabitants in the areas where the Roma live. Similar applies to the Housing Act (2003). According to the Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act (2005), one of the main goals of the promotion of a balanced regional development is the development of the Roma settlements. Regional development programs of the regions where the Roma communities live include development programs of their settlements. The Roma community appoints its representative in the Regional Development Council in the development regions where the Roma lives (ONM). The Roma Community Act (2007) provides Roma with the right to settled spatial and living conditions in the Roma settlements, and includes provisions regulating the state's obligations in respect to the Roma situation in the field of housing. However, spatial planning and provision of infrastructure within settlements fall within the competencies of municipalities, so that the implementation of measures to improve the situation in Roma settlements is dependent on the political will of each municipality.

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning has been managing and coordinating activities to provide technical and financial assistance to the municipalities with Roma population for the preparation of territorial acts related to the arrangement of Roma settlements (GRS 2010a). "The spatial planning aspect of Roma settlements has been addressed by an expert group since December 2006. The group produced the study "Spatial planning problems of Roma settlements in Slovenia" and prepared concrete measures in the form of a selected operational scenario" (MoLFSA 2008: p. 18). In the last few years an important progress was made. A number of Roma settlements were regularized or steps were taken towards their regularization. According to the data collected by an Expert group on Roma settlements in 2010, 55 per cent of Roma settlements had been regularized (compared to 1/3 in 2007) and 5 per cent were planned to be regularized (AI 2011b: p. 34). For instance, one municipality regularised the Roma settlement by reclassifying and purchasing land for resale to Romani residents (EC 2010b: p. 46; Krško Municipality 2009). "This allowed infrastructure improvements. Factors contributing to success were municipal commitment, involvement of local stakeholders including dedicated NGOs and active Romani participation through a Romani counsellor" (EC 2010b: p. 46). In another municipality the municipal land was sold at 15-17 euro per m². All but one municipal councillor voted for it, but the local population was not in favour of this

solution. The Regional Civil Initiative for Solving of the Roma Issue requested from the Mayor to cancel that decision as being discriminatory towards other inhabitants of that local community.⁴⁴

Slovenia has invested in infrastructure to be used by Roma in their settlements, particularly in the 2000s (ONM). Nevertheless the situation of housing remains precarious (EC 2010a: p. 19). In 2005 the central government's Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy started issuing calls for tenders under the 'Implementation Programme of Assistance to Municipalities in Solving Urgent Problems of Communal Infrastructure'. The main objective of the programme has been to co-finance projects to construct basic infrastructure in Roma settlements (access roads to settlements, electricity provision, the waterworks and sewage systems) and land purchases in order to regularise unauthorised Roma settlements (FRA 2009: p. 54; ONM; AI 2011b: p. 48). Eligible were municipalities with an elected Roma community representative in the Municipal Council or with a working body of the Municipal Council for monitoring the situation of the Roma Community (GRS 2010b). All in all, in the period 2002-2010 80 projects were (or have been) financed. The local communities have used 5.6 million euro out of 7.3 million euro allocated for the programme (GRS 2010b).

Legalisation of existing Roma settlements is one of the measures of the National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010–2015 (GRS 2010a). Municipalities are encouraged to include Roma settlements in their spatial plans and plan the rehabilitation of such settlements. They must set up programmes and define methods for remediating the existing situation that is mostly the result of illegal and haphazard construction without professional help. They will have to tackle specific problems, such as land use and ownership, accessibility, public utilities, a timetable for carrying out individual phases of the programme, and financial means. The measure will be financed from the municipal budgets and must be implemented within five years (until 2015). Another measure – to be implemented in a 5 to 10 year timeframe (until 2015-2020) – is aimed at comprehensive urban planning and structural arrangement of Roma settlements. The central budget will provide funds (about 2.2 million euro) in 2010-2012 for the development of regions in Slovenia in which Roma community members live.

2.2.6 *Sport, recreation, culture*

The Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (2002) stipulates in Article 65 that the State shall finance cultural programmes or projects aimed at the Roma community. The Cultural Heritage Protection Act (covering also the Roma community) and the National Cultural Programme 2008–2011 (including the promotion of the cultural development of the Roma community among cultural priorities) were adopted in 2008. According to the Librarianship Act (2001), in the local communities where the Roma live the librarian activity for the Roma is obligatory, including communication in Romani. The National Library has to take care of the librarian material of the Roma Community.

"The Government is paying special attention to the preservation and development of different variations of the Roma language, culture, information and publishing activity. (...) Since 2004, the Division for Minority Cultural Rights and the Development of Cultural Diversity of the Ministry of Culture has developed manifold normative, organisational and financial instruments, advocating for a coherent policy in the area of cultural activities of the Roma community. It now includes three

⁴⁴ The news as of 3 and 21 November 2009 published in Romske novice (<http://staro.romskenovice.si/blog/>, accessed 15 June 2011).

programmes: a special programme, dedicated to protect specific rights of the Roma and involving positive discrimination; an integration programme for their inclusion in cultural and art programmes by public and other institutions; and a European programme aiming to fill gaps in training and employment programmes for the Roma in the cultural sphere” (GRS 2010a).

“Within the specific programme of the Ministry of Culture, the following activities of the Roma community are supported: publishing and editing, cultural animation,⁴⁵ activities for maintaining the Roma language, international cooperation of Roma people, mutual cultural cooperation of various minority ethnic groups, presentations of Roma cultural activities and problems in Slovenia and beyond, events, lectures, seminars, etc.” (GRS 2010a). In 2009, 60 projects of 18 entities were financed. The Ministry of Culture does not differentiate between autochthonous and non-autochthonous Roma (GRS 2010a). Since 2006, direct applications by Roma artists are possible.

Every year, a public call for applications for financing of the Roma community cultural projects is launched. Funds earmarked by the Ministry of Culture for Roma community projects in the field of culture and the number of projects financed have been increasing, as is the number of applicants and the amount of funds applied for. Therefore, co-financing of all (or at least the majority of) proposed projects is still not possible. For example, the amount requested in 2007 was 2.8 times the amount available, and in 2009 it was 4.1 times higher (GRS 2010a).

In 19 municipalities 23 Roma associations were established that are active mostly in the cultural field (Website for Roma councillors). The Roma have established their sport association in Murska Sobota, and several football and other sports teams throughout Slovenia. In June 2011, an international football championship of the Roma was organised with participants from Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Austria, which was opened by the Minister of Education and Sport (MES 2011b).

The Roma Information Centre (ROMIC) has been operating under the auspices of the Roma Union of Slovenia since 2003.⁴⁶ Two Roma media organisations founded by the Roma Union of Slovenia are registered in the Media Register at the Media Directorate: Radio Romic (in 2007 it was assigned a local radio frequency for the Murska Sobota area) and Romano Them/Roma World (a quarterly newspaper) (GRS 2010; MoLFSA 2008: p. 23; ONM). There is some other publishing activity by the Roma as well. In 2003 the first Roma museum was established. Roma camps have been organised annually, and an international conference on Roma was organised in 2005 (ONM).

“A positive development in the field of information activities for the Roma community is the production of radio and television broadcasts for Roma. These have been broadcast for several years by local radio⁴⁷ and television⁴⁸ stations, and lately also as part of the Slovenian national radio

⁴⁵ Since 1996, one to two cultural animators have been financed every year. One is operating at the Roma Union of Slovenia and is in charge of all groups of the Roma Community; his work includes organisation, editorial work, preparation of programmes/schedules, directing, etc. The other animator operates within the Roma Society Romano Vozo Velenje and has been applying for the specific Ministry of Culture programmes since 2005 (GRS 2010a).

⁴⁶ The purchase of premises was financed from the state budget (ONM).

⁴⁷ Two radio stations (the Murski val from Murska Sobota and the Studio D from Novo mesto) have been broadcasting regular weekly programs for Roma for more than a decade. The first one covers the region of Prekmurje and the other one the regions of Dolenjska, Bela Krajina and Posavje. Both the Slovenian and the Romani languages are used in their programmes that provide information about the work and life of the Roma, reports on their cultural, sports and other events, and original contributions by Roma authors, all accompanied by the Romani music. The programmes have been receiving funding from the state budget (ONM).

and television programming” (GRS 2010a). Since December 2007, a weekly Roma show “Naše poti – Amare Droma” (Our Paths) has been broadcast on the national radio, and since March 2008 the fortnightly 15-minute show “So Vakeres? – Kaj govoriš?” (What did you say?), prepared by Roma authors, has been broadcast on the national television (GRS 2010a).

Every year the Roma associations underline the problem of covering the costs of renting premises due to a lack of funds in the specific programme of the Ministry of Culture. Another difficulty is related to co-financing of projects from other sources, municipal budgets in particular. So far, only the Municipality of Novo mesto has co-financed several Roma community cultural projects. One of the reasons may be that the Roma associations/operators lack qualified human resources for fundraising,⁴⁹ although the Ministry of Culture, Division for Minority Cultural Rights, has been continuously providing assistance with applications, filling in forms, drafting projects, fulfilling contractual obligations, conducting activities and monitoring GRS 2010a).

2.2.7 Anti-discrimination

The chapter “Criminal offences against honour and reputation” of The Criminal Code now includes the Roma community. “With respect to hostile statements, the code supplements the approach to regulating the status of members of the Roma community by recognising the significance of respect for ethnic and national identity of the Roma community in the public arena” (MoLFSA 2008: p. 23). Two institutions are responsible for providing victims of discrimination with access to a remedy: the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality. Nevertheless, the view of Amnesty International is that “the government does not have an adequate monitoring and institutional framework to combat discrimination against the Roma by private and public actors” (AI 2011b: p. 5).⁵⁰ Of course, victims of discrimination can also seek judicial remedies before Slovenian administrative, civil and criminal courts as well as before the Constitutional Courts, but the related costs may be an obstacle for the Roma (AI 2011b: pp. 53-54).

Roma have the right to be informed and to take part in providing information through the media. The Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (2005) stipulates inter alia: “according to this Act public service comprehends creating, preparing, recording and broadcasting (...) radio and television broadcasts for the Roma Community (broadcasts for Roma)” (ONM).

“The Government is paying special attention to the integration of Roma into social and political life, and to raising awareness of both majority and minority populations of the existence of discrimination and how to fight it, in particular of public servants who come into contact with members of the Roma community in their work” (GRS 2010a). Their training (including courses in the Roma culture and

⁴⁸ These are the cable TV-IDEA from Murska Sobota (the Prekmurje region) and TV Vaš Kanal (Your Channel) from Novo mesto (broadcasting for the regions of Dolenjska, Bela Krajina and Posavje). Also these programmes have been receiving funding from the state budget (ONM).

⁴⁹ Most Roma associations are led by persons who are not qualified for administrative tasks and accounting, which was revealed by a 2009 audit (GRS 2010a).

⁵⁰ “One of the most serious weaknesses of the Human Rights Ombudsman remedy process is the fact that recommendations made by the Human Rights Ombudsman to remedy human rights violations are not legally binding. If the recommendations are not acted on by the public body to which they are directed, the Human Rights Ombudsman cannot impose sanctions and can only make recommendations to Parliament or forward cases to a prosecutor or inspectorate requesting them to take action” (AI 2011b: p. 55). “Due to a limited mandate the Advocate is not able to offer any meaningful redress to victims of discrimination” (AI 2011b: p. 56).

language) is listed as a measure in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a).

Examples of good practice are presented in Annex 4.

3. Structural Funds

Tasks that have been defined in the Strategy for Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia (2004) are also being implemented within the framework of the new financial perspective of the European Social Fund (ESF) – Operational Programme for Development of Human Resources for the period 2007-2013, Priority 4: Equal opportunities and reinforcing social inclusion: equal opportunities and social inclusion among the young, in particular in education and training systems. The projects include, for instance, providing for employment of Roma assistants in educational institutions, preparation of didactic material and carrying out activities aimed at overcoming stereotypes. In the future, other measures to enhance Roma cultural and social potential will be co-financed from the ESF, for instance, the development of various methods of preschool education and inclusion of children in different forms of preschool education« (GRS 2010; MES 2011a: p. 20).

Roma assistants have been employed and financed under the project »Successful inclusion of Roma pupils into the educational system« (2008-2011), co-financed from the ESF funds (€ 1,354,135 or 85 per cent) (MES 2011a: p. 15; GRS 2010; ESF). The project has been a great success.

Since 2008, some activities in the framework of creating conditions for developing confidence in schools, learning about Roma culture and removing prejudices have been carried out within ESF programmes (GRS 2010a).

In the period 2008-2011 the ESF was co-financing the project "Successful integration of Roma into education" (the total value of the project was over 293,000 euro; ESF contributed 85 per cent). The project included the training of professional workers in educational institutions and of the leadership of these institutions, as well as the training of Roma assistants. The topics of the training were: inclusion of pre-school children into programmes of day-care centres; inclusion of the Romani language and culture into the curriculum and getting Roma children acquainted with the Slovenian language and culture; assistance to Roma pupils; and co-operation between the Roma Community and schools (Peace Institute 2004: p. 28; ZIK).

The ESF financed the establishment of the Roma Educational Incubator in the Roma settlement Vanča vas, opened in June 2011 (MES 2011b). The project is aimed at providing the Roma children help with learning.

In the period 2010-2014 the ESF has been co-financing the project "Enhancing social and cultural capital in Roma settlements" (4 million euro), aimed at raising the quality of education provided to Roma children in the Roma settlements, particularly pre-school education. The goal is to include as many Roma children as possible in day-care centres or other forms of preschool education that provide for learning of both the Romani and Slovenian languages in order to equip children with experiences and patterns for easier inclusion in the school environment. Another goal is to establish a »support for learning« network (GRS 2010a and 2010b; EC 2010d).

Under the Operational Programme for Development of Human Resources 2007-2013, development priority 4, two groups of projects for the Roma (as one of the vulnerable groups) will be financed (at 85 per cent): training and employment through development of social entrepreneurship (10 pilot projects worth 2 million euro), and twelve projects aimed at improving employability and inclusion in the labour market and ensuring equality between men and women, worth 7 million euros (GRS 2010a).

There have been three calls under the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 (Increased employability of vulnerable groups in the field of culture and support for their social inclusion) (GRS 2010a and 2010b). Some of the financed projects are intended for the Roma only. This programme is listed among measures of the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a) as the one "creating conditions for training and employing Roma in the field of culture, in due consideration of the gender aspect". Another measure is also financed from the ESF: "Provision of special services for authors, artists and professionals working in the field of Roma culture".

Slovenia is participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) political initiative that involves 12 European governments that have pledged to improve the situation of the Roma. Structural Funds are drawn for this purpose (EC 2010b: p. 15).

See the list of projects completed in the 2000s in Annex 5.

4. Role of civil society organisations and international organisations

The NGOs provide assistance to the Roma population in the form of food, basic goods for personal hygiene, clothes, shoes, furniture, and household appliances. Assistance to the Roma includes counselling to young Roma couples (Kobal 2002: pp. 29-33, pp. 37-76).

NGOs have been active in the field of education and training of Roma, particularly as providers of help with learning (MES 2011a: p. 18 and 22; GRS 2010a). In the National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a), NGOs are foreseen as participants in a "support for learning" network. Since 2010 the network members have been providing adequate support, in particular to secondary school students.

The Association for the Promotion of Voluntary Work, based in Novo mesto, is engaged in various activities with Roma. They visit them in their settlements and organise workshops and language courses.⁵¹ In 2009/2010 they also conducted a one-year project "Living together" with the aim to increase social inclusion and employability of (among others) the Roma community through education and training (Miklič 2010b).

Dedicated NGOs contributed to regularization of Roma settlements, one by reclassifying and purchasing land for resale to Romani residents (EC 2010b: p. 46).

⁵¹ See: <http://www.primorski.eu/stories/Trst/79973/> (accessed 2 June 2011).

From 2008 to 2010, together with the Government Office for National Minorities, Roma NGOs implemented the awareness-raising campaign "ENOUGH! Go beyond prejudice, discover Roma" (EC 2010b: pp. 29-30; GRS 2010a). NGOs are foreseen in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a) among implementing bodies for activities aimed at preventing discrimination and eliminating prejudice and stereotypes concerning Roma.

Amnesty International has been monitoring the situation of Roma in Slovenia regularly. Their findings and recommendations are provided in their annual reports (AI 2011a) and topical publications (like AI 2006 and AI 2011b).

5. Recommendations

5.1 Key challenges, and the national goals and policies

One cannot but agree with the general statement that, too often, the Roma community is an object of policies and measures rather than an active partner in formulating the measures and the one who takes responsibility for its own future (MES 2011a: p. 6). It is not enough to change behaviour and attitudes of the majority population; the Roma community itself has to adapt too. Also, as stressed in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a), "experience in working with the Roma population indicates that efforts of national authorities and municipalities do not produce good results if Roma are not actively included in these activities."

Regulation adopted in recent years provides an adequate framework for promoting the social inclusion of Roma. However, in spite of all focused programmes and their partial impacts, social inclusion of Roma will largely depend particularly on their education and employment, both of which continue to be strongly influenced by the Romani tradition and culture. The best results could be achieved through an integrated approach to the issue of Roma social inclusion, with active and co-current action of educational institutions, Centres for Social Work, Employment Offices, health care institutions, cultural institutions, NGOs and the police, as suggested in the introduction to the 2011 Strategy for Education of Roma (MES 2011a: p. 6).⁵² More human resources should be invested to deal with various social problems affecting the Roma communities. Amnesty International reported that in the mid-2000s, the community Centre for Social Work employed only one person to deal with a population of 1,127 Roma, scattered across 17 settlements and towns (AI 2006: p. 66). This work may be delegated to local NGOs.

In the mid-2000s the Office for National Minorities stated that improvements had been achieved in the field of education, social security, cultural activities and information services of Roma, at the municipal as well as at the state level. But the situation was worsening in the field of residential conditions, employment and economic status of Roma, all three closely related to the very low educational level of Roma (ONM).

Based on the experience of work with Roma, the CVŽU concludes that – in spite of efforts by state and religious institutions to have children attend school regularly, open new employment options and

⁵² It is stressed in the supplement to the 2004 Strategy for Education of Roma in Slovenia that the achievement of its aims depends also on the success of measures in other areas, like living conditions, employment, health, etc. (MES 2011a: p. 3).

improve living conditions – the approaches applied have not been successful. Obviously, all relevant actors should continue searching for effective approaches.

Social benefits

The research on "Vocational information and counselling to Roma" (Žagar 2006) has shown that in the previous 15 years as many as 30 per cent of the interviewees stopped working because the work paid less than the total of cash social assistance and child allowances. This is one of the greatest challenges for the Slovenian policy makers and NGOs: how to motivate the Roma for education and work without penalising them by a withdrawal of social benefits and aggravating their already poor financial situation?

Education

Roma express resignation and apathy, in the way: "why would I make an effort to educate myself as I cannot change or improve anything in my life?" They tend to transfer responsibility for their unfavourable situation to others, first of all local communities and Centres for Social Work. According to Žagar, getting the Roma motivated for education is the greatest challenge for organisations involved in the education of adults, since the Roma do not perceive knowledge as a value. The survey carried out in the framework of the project "Vocational information for the Roma" showed that "60 per cent of the respondents (Roma living in areas where the survey was carried out) were satisfied with their situation and did not desire either to enter training or to be employed. This is a major challenge for both the Roma community and institutions in their endeavours for extended inclusion of the Roma in educational processes, which is a precondition for their successful integration and leaving the margins of society" (GRS 2010a).

Obviously, one cannot be successful in learning if he/she does not speak well the language in which lectures are given and textbooks written. Based on experience so far one cannot expect in the medium term that all (not even a majority) of the Roma children would be attending pre-school education in day-care centres and learn Slovenian properly. It is also clear that having elementary school classes for Roma children only is not acceptable. It is thus urgent to organise courses of the Slovenian languages for Roma children at least one year before the start of the compulsory education, that is, at the age of 5 years at the latest. These courses should be organised by local communities (in Roma settlements or elsewhere, so to include as many children as possible) and financed from the state budget. In the meantime, more Roma assistants should be employed by elementary schools and more additional help with learning should be offered to Roma children (by teachers, other pupils, NGOs, etc.).

In order to improve the Roma children's knowledge of the Slovenian language, they should be integrated into regular pre-school classes rather than be segregated in Roma classes. The best solution would be to organise transport for these children, so that they can attend pre-school day-care centres outside their settlements. One would understand that the Slovenian people would not like to bring their pre-school children to classes organised at the outskirts of the Roma settlements – for a variety of reasons that may not include racism and intolerance. As correctly stated by Amnesty International (2009), the efforts to include more children into pre-school programmes (in order to

ensure that they speak Slovenian by the school age, and attended school regularly and successfully) should start with education of Roma families and parents in particular.

A comprehensive approach is needed in dealing with a variety of factors that act as obstacles for regular attendance of elementary education. It is necessary to put much more stress on help with learning, particularly in the afternoons, both at schools and Roma settlements (also as a mobile service). Providers should be qualified/trained (MES 2011a: pp. 21-22).

Education of adults should be given more attention, especially due to its importance for the labour market participation. Girls and women should be paid particular attention (MES 2011a: p. 25).

Employment

The great challenge is how to motivate Roma for work, given their very low education and underdeveloped working habits, both of which cause rejection of such workforce by employers in general. The Forum of Roma Councillors suggests the following solutions: part-time jobs, employment "of Roma for Roma" (jobs in Roma settlements, like in construction and childcare), development of Roma co-operatives and Roma social entrepreneurship, subsidising employers giving jobs to Roma, employing a Roma co-ordinator at the Employment Centres in regions where Roma live, etc. (Rudaš).

Healthcare

Special programmes and measures for improving the health status of the Roma population are most welcome. One would wish to see some more concrete measures included in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 (GRS 2010a). However, as realised in this Programme, the health status of Roma strongly depends on their housing and living conditions, hygiene, education, employment and social protection in general. Co-current improvements in all these areas are therefore imperative.

Housing and environment

The state and local communities should accelerate their well-planned action leading to regularization of Roma settlements, which is the basis for an improvement in the currently extremely poor housing conditions in most of these settlements. This is the area where Roma themselves are more-or-less helpless, while the current situation considerably harms the majority local population too.

Water provision is a priority. Without it the Roma cannot be clean and their clothes washed, which is an important obstacle for their inclusion into the society.

Anti-discrimination

It is evident that an optional subject on Romani culture in elementary schools is not enough and that this subject should be included in the obligatory curriculum (and textbooks) at all levels of education

in the regions where the Roma live. Teachers have to acquire relevant knowledge, be adequately trained and dispose of adequate professional literature as well (MES 2011a: p. 17).

5.2 Evaluation and monitoring

In the situation where collected data do not necessarily include ethnicity, it may be opted for focused (systematic or project-based) collecting of data on certain dimension of the social inclusion of Roma. Otherwise it is not possible to monitor the effects of policies in place to increase the social inclusion of Roma and to adapt these policies in order to be more effective. The data should be disaggregated at least by gender, age and attained education.

5.3 Cooperation and dialogue

The Slovenian legislation provides Roma with statutory rights to take part in the management of local communities where they live, and guarantees a continuous dialog with the representatives of the Roma Community at the state and local levels.

As stated by Miran Komac of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, the Roma community has to become the subject of its own development (HRO 2006). Also according to the Minister of Education and Sports, "our task is to empower them. The first step towards this is not to implement projects for Roma but to enable Roma to manage and implement key integration projects by themselves" (MES 2009).

5.4 The use of EU Structural Funds

The EU Structural Funds have been used in many areas, but the area of education has been prevailing, which reflects both its importance and the activity of the Ministry of Education and Sport. In the last years the projects related to the employment of Roma are gaining on importance.

The projects co-financed from the ESF were good and necessary ones, and their results have been helpful. The greatest success was the introduction of Roma assistants in elementary schools.

Slovenia should learn from best practice of other EU countries and implement projects that have proven to be successful in supporting the integration of Roma in various fields.

5.5 Roma in the Slovenia's Europe 2020 national targets and National Reform Programme

Slovenia's National Reform Programme does not mention Roma at all, which we do not consider its drawback. The number of Roma in Slovenia is small. Regulation protecting them and providing them with special rights has been in force, as are many other documents aimed at improving their socio-economic situation and social inclusion.

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Annex 1: Tables

Table A1: Roma population in population censuses (Slovenia)

Population census	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Roma (number, declared))	1,663	158	951	1,393	2,259	3,246
Roma (% of the total population)	0.12	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.12	0.17

Source: SORS 2002, http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=7 (accessed 13 June 2011).

Note: "A general criticism of using official census data is that they greatly underestimate the number of Roma. It is also evident that the numbers change considerably between censuses. The reason lies mainly in the fact that a great number of the Romany population do not declare themselves as Romany in censuses" (Josipovič and Repolusk 2003: p. 131).

Table A2: The total population of Slovenia and Roma, by sex and age groups; 2002 Population Census

Age (years)	Total population (number)			Roma (number)		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Total	1,964,036	958,576	1,005,460	3,246	1,645	1,601
0-4	88,183	45,545	42,638	454	244	210
5-9	96,174	49,383	46,791	364	188	176
10-14	115,810	59,362	56,448	353	160	193
15-19	130,029	66,417	63,612	307	151	156
20-24	147,687	76,190	71,497	332	170	162
25-29	144,977	74,456	70,521	278	137	141
30-34	140,612	71,306	69,306	250	130	120
35-39	153,518	77,366	76,152	223	117	106
40-44	152,142	77,125	75,017	207	110	97
45-49	158,611	82,023	76,588	149	76	73
50-54	138,542	71,061	67,481	113	61	52
55-59	105,161	51,517	53,644	82	41	41
60-64	103,609	49,407	54,202	61	28	33
65-69	95,550	42,069	53,481	31	15	16
70-74	83,473	33,254	50,219	22	10	12
75 and over	109,958	32,095	77,863	20	7	13
	Total population (%)			Roma (%)		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
0-4	4.5	4.8	4.2	14.0	14.8	13.1
5-9	4.9	5.2	4.7	11.2	11.4	11.0
10-14	5.9	6.2	5.6	10.9	9.7	12.1
15-19	6.6	6.9	6.3	9.5	9.2	9.7
20-24	7.5	7.9	7.1	10.2	10.3	10.1
25-29	7.4	7.8	7.0	8.6	8.3	8.8
30-34	7.2	7.4	6.9	7.7	7.9	7.5
35-39	7.8	8.1	7.6	6.9	7.1	6.6
40-44	7.7	8.0	7.5	6.4	6.7	6.1
45-49	8.1	8.6	7.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
50-54	7.1	7.4	6.7	3.5	3.7	3.2

55-59	5.4	5.4	5.3	2.5	2.5	2.6
60-64	5.3	5.2	5.4	1.9	1.7	2.1
65-69	4.9	4.4	5.3	1.0	0.9	1.0
70-74	4.3	3.5	5.0	0.7	0.6	0.7
75 and over	5.6	3.3	7.7	0.6	0.4	0.8

Source: SORS 2002, http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=15 (accessed 13 June 2011); own calculations.

Note: Proportions for Roma exceeding those for the total population for the same age group are marked in grey.

Table A3: Roma in Slovenia, by sex and country of first residence, 2002 Population Census

Country of first residence	Number of Roma			%		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Total	3,246	1,645	1,601	100	100	100
Slovenia	2,716	1,375	1,341	83.7	83.6	83.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	45	20	25	1.4	1.2	1.6
Croatia	21	9	12	0.6	0.5	0.7
Yugoslavia	401	212	189	12.4	12.9	11.8
Macedonia	35	15	20	1.1	0.9	1.2
Austria	4	z	z	0.1		
Germany	10	5	5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Italy	4	z	z	0.1		
Other European countries	z	z	z			
African countries	z	z	-			

Source: SORS 2002, http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=53 (accessed 13 June 2011); own calculations.

Note: z = 3 or less.

Table A4: The ageing index, 2002 Population Census (Slovenia)

	All	Men	Women
Total population	96,3	69,6	124,5
Roma	6,2	5,4	7,1

Source: SORS 2002, http://www.stat.si/popis2002/en/rezultati/rezultati_red.asp?ter=SLO&st=15 (accessed 13 June 2011); own calculations.

Note: Ageing index = population aged 65 and over / population aged 0-14 x 100.

Table A5: Attained education; population of the City of Ljubljana aged 15 years and over; 2002 Population Census (%)

Education	Total population of Ljubljana	Declared Roma in Ljubljana
Less than lower secondary	3.3	34.0
Lower secondary	18.4	42.7
Higher secondary	54.3	18.7
Post-secondary	24.0	4.6

Source: Komac and Medvešek 2005: Table 77.

Table A6: Assessment of inclusion of Roma in active employment policy programmes in Ljubljana, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Novo mesto and Sevnica regional units in 2008 (January–December 2008)

Measure/activity/sub-activity: active employment policy measures	Total number of Roma included	Number of Romani women
1.1.1. Information and motivation seminars (IMS)	82	52
1.1.2. Centre for Information and vocational counselling (CIPS)	40	18
1.1.3. Vocational orientation before inclusion	77	35
1.1.4. On professions – in a different way	6	4
1.2.1. Career counselling and assistance in job-seeking	75	40
1.2.2. Training for life success (UTU)	2	1
1.2.3. Job-seekers club	16	10
1.3.4. Inclusion of unemployed persons in new and development projects	1	1
2.1.1. Institutional training programmes	131	50
2.1.2. National vocational qualifications (NPK) – verification and certification	4	0
2.2.1. Work test	10	1
2.2.2. On-the-job training	40	16
2.3.1. Formal education – 2007/2008	192	68
2.3.2. Project Learning for Young People (PUM)	7	5

Source: GRS 2010a, Table 1 (original source: Employment Service of Slovenia).

Annex 2: Sector-specific acts through which the special rights of Roma in Slovenia are being protected

1. Local Self-Government Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 72/1993, ..., 100/2005),
2. Local Elections Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 72/1993, ..., 22/2006),
3. Voting Rights Register Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 52/2002, 11/2003, 73/03),
4. Act on Enforcing Public Interest in the Field of Culture (Official Gazette RS, No. 96/2002),
5. Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/1996, ..., 98/2005),
6. Kindergarten Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/1996, ..., 100/2005),
7. Elementary School Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/1996, ..., 70/2005),
8. Public Media Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 35/2001, ..., 96/2005),
9. Librarianship Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 87/2001, 96/2002),
10. Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 93/2005),
11. Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 96/2005),
12. Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 16/2008)
13. National Cultural Programme 2008–2011 (Official Gazette RS, No. 35/2008, 95/2010)
14. The Criminal Code (Official Gazette RS, No. 55/2008 ... 55/2009) (ONM; MoLFSA 2008: 23).

Annex 3: Roma assistant

The Strategy for Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia (2004) was the starting point for activities of the Roma Educational Informative Centre development partnership in the framework of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL in 2004-2007. This development partnership drafted the curriculum for the education of Roma assistants. Fifteen selected persons with attained higher secondary education were predominately of Roma nationality (all except one living in Roma settlements and mastering the Roma language). They had six months of education that provided them with additional knowledge in pedagogy, sociology, psychology, computer technology, musical education, Roma language and culture, arts, Slovenian language, and work in an educational institution. It was followed by six months of training. Multiple levels of involvement defined the need for establishment of two professional standards, namely that of a "Roma coordinator" with a lower degree of complexity, and that of a "Roma assistant" at the level of a childcare assistant. The professional standard was included into the standard catalogue of professional knowledge and skills in December 2006. In mid-2007, twenty persons were employed at the Research and Education Institute of Murska Sobota as Roma assistants. The project has proven that the Roma assistants are a welcome and essential support to the Roma in an early phase of their education.

In the school year 2008/2009, 31 Roma assistants were employed and financed through the project "Successful inclusion of Roma pupils into the educational system". Due to a proven positive impact, the continuation of their employment after 2011 is recommended by the 2011 Supplement to the Strategy. It also recommends improvements, like inclusion of Roma assistants in the university education as a condition for renewal of their employment contract (MES 2011a: p. 15). However, this cannot be attained in the short term, maybe not even in the medium term. The problem is the currently low educational level of Roma assistants. Some of them have in fact not even completed elementary education (Lük, Brejc and Vonta 2005: p. 13) that is set as a minimum requirement.⁵³

⁵³ Some Members of Parliament requested that Roma assistants are placed into the educational system and financed from the state budget. The Minister of Education and Sport argued in favour of prolonging the project for three more years because the current Roma assistants do not have a required education and because it is preferred that Roma assistants originate from the Roma community. While, normally, ethnicity must not be put as a condition for getting a job, this is allowed in the framework of the project (NARS 2011).

Annex 4: Cases of good practice

Education

Slovenia is one of 19 countries where the “Step by Step” programme is currently operating.⁵⁴ Step by Step is a child-centred preschool model based on giving children choices in the classroom, individualized teaching, and parent and family involvement in children's education (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2010: p. 12). Training and assistance that have supported the inclusion of Roma children into pre-school and elementary school classrooms are among significant accomplishments of the project (International Step by Step Association⁵⁵). Children are encouraged to make choices and accept responsibility, learn independently as well as cooperatively, and be tolerant and respectful of differences (International Step by Step Association⁵⁶).⁵⁷

At the seminar of a Twinning Project in 2006 a good practice of the Janko Padežnik Elementary School in Maribor was presented. According to the head teacher, the essence of educational work with Roma children lies in the constant search for appropriate methods, continuous assessment, and respect of the tradition of the Roma way of life and culture, and constant cooperation with parents (HRO 2006).

“A case of good practice is the measure of the Municipality of Murska Sobota, which, at the initiative of the Roma representatives, organised a school bus for the settlement of Pušča. In the long run, this helped to raise overall school achievement and attendance. The school bus is completely financed from the municipal budget. The bus is free for Roma children, although under the Elementary School Act they would not be eligible for free rides (the Act provides for free rides in cases when the ride is longer than 4km, while in this case the Roma settlement is 1 to 3km from various schools)” (GRS 2010a).

In the mid-2000s, one of the ten Roma university students in Slovenia founded the Roma Academic Club. She brought these students together, motivated and encouraged them, and organised meetings in order to compare experiences, exchange ideas, and so on. At the 2006 seminar of a Twinning Project, she drew attention to the need to guarantee a certain number of beds in halls of residence (these are currently only reserved for the two national minorities) (HRO 2006).

⁵⁴ It was developed by the NGO Children's Resources International (CRI) that is supporting Soros Foundation projects in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. The Developmental Research Centre for Educational Initiatives “Step by Step” Slovenia was established in order to research, develop, initiate, implement and promote various activities which support educational reform processes in public schools in Slovenia. These activities aim to ensure equal opportunities in education for all children and to involve families and community members in the education process (International Step by Step Association).

⁵⁵ <http://www.issa.nl/network/slovenia/slovenia.html>.

⁵⁶ http://www.issa.nl/program_early_child.html.

⁵⁷ “Step by Step is proving that Roma children can succeed in supportive educational environments. In Step by Step classrooms, Roma children are treated like all other children, and given the opportunity to reach their full potential. As a result of high expectations, Roma children achieve academic outcomes similar to their mainstream peers. Roma teaching assistants are placed in classrooms to facilitate the learning of the majority language, to serve as a bridge between the school and the Roma community, and to bring the Roma language and culture into the classroom. Governments have acknowledged the success of Step by Step's Roma initiatives, often resulting in major Roma education policy changes” (International Step by Step Association, http://www.issa.nl/program_equal_access.html).

The Roma Academic Club was engaged in the establishment of the Roma Educational Incubator (opened in June 2011 in the Roma settlement Vanča vas) that is aimed at providing the Roma children with help with learning (MES 2011b). Help with learning has been provided in other ways too. One of the projects was based on the help provided by Roma pupils to the Slovenian pupils with difficulties in achieving the minimum standards of knowledge, and vice versa (MES 2011a: p. 13).

Within the framework of the project "Vocational information and counselling to Roma", the research into the educational and vocational interests of the Roma was carried out (HRO 2006). The results are the basis for advising and motivating Roma for education. The "Roma Employment Centre" development partnership dealt with various motivation measures for the integration of Roma into educational and training programmes, and organised pilot motivation workshops (MoLFSA 2007: p. 61).

Employment

One of the projects under a small-scale initiative "Roma for Roma" is an example of a cross-sector measure. In 2002-2003, a house for a Romani family with 13 children was constructed by unemployed Roma enrolled in Slovenia's public works programme (EC 2010b: p. 18).

The "Roma Employment Centre" development partnership analysed the wishes of Roma people related to employment, and the employers' demand and attitudes towards employing the Roma labour force. They also introduced the data base of qualified and trained Roma job seekers and of employers willing to employ Roma people (MoLFSA 2007: p. 61). Established in the framework of the project, the pilot Roma Employment Centre operated as a link between the Roma and employers. Unfortunately, due to various organisational and financial problems, it is not operating now (GRS 2910b).

Health

Since 2006 the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota has been implementing programmes and activities aimed at reducing health inequalities among the Roma population under annual programmes. For this purpose, a Roma representative is employed by the Institute as a team member. These activities have been supplemented by media communications and booklets promoting a healthy lifestyle among Roma (in both the Slovenian and Romani languages) (GRS 2010a).

"Improvement of Dietary Habits for the Protection and Strengthening of Health of Romany Population was carried out by the Institute of Education and Culture Črnomelj in partnership with other adult education centres in southern Slovenia. This project included 110 Romani families living in 28 Romani settlements. A survey of Roma diets and health, workshops, lectures and other educational events were used to inform about and promote healthy food options. Aims were to teach Roma to produce healthy food and to develop a network of partners, helping to protect and improve their health. The project specifically targeted Romani women as they are usually responsible for preparing family meals. Funding in the amount of 27 500 EUR came from the Ministry of Health under a co-financing scheme for programmes for the protection and improvement of health. The project was well received by Roma who actively participated. It is considered successful because of its clear goals

and well-defined target group and the active participation of Roma; no formal evaluation was carried out to assess its impact" (EC 2010b: p. 44).

The result of bilateral cooperation of the Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota and the Flemish Institute for Health Promotion in the framework of the Regional Development Programme 2007–2013 is the "Health promotion strategy and action plan for tackling health inequalities in the Pomurje region". It addresses health inequalities within the region and focuses on vulnerable population groups, Roma being one of the priorities (GRS 2010a).

Anti-discrimination

The first nation-wide awareness-raising campaign "ENOUGH! Go beyond prejudice, discover Roma" was implemented in Slovenia from 2008 to 2010. The Government Office for National Minorities carried out activities of the campaign at all major events organised during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2009 (EC 2010b: pp. 29-30; GRS 2010a). In 2009, within the framework of the "Enough!" campaign, a series of meetings, round table debates and cultural events were carried out, as well as numerous competitions. Noteworthy are: the month of Roma culture "Romano čhon" and the Slovenian-Romani musical "Glass Apple". Popular entertainers Murat&Jose, who sing about how important it is to respect diversity, became ambassadors of the campaign and participated in the campaign events, in particular those addressing young people. Particularly active were members of the Roma community who organised a great number of events on the topic of how to reduce intolerance towards the Roma community. The Roma Information Centre (ROMIC) prepared the campaign song "Enough! – Hejrin!" with the basic message of the campaign: there was enough of prejudice, let's open our hearts, let's accept one another, each individual must contribute to better coexistence and a decent living for all. The song was broadcast by all Slovenian radio stations and was one of the trademarks of the campaign (GRS 2010a). Targeted activities aimed at preventing discrimination and eliminating prejudice and stereotypes concerning Roma are foreseen in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010-2015 too (GRS 2010a).

A direct effect of the successful project called "Training the Roma for Radio Journalism" has been the launch of Roma radio production and the broadcast by the Roma Information Centre (ROMIC) "Listen to the Roma" (HRO 2006).

The importance of additional training of those public servants who, in their daily work, have contacts with members of the Roma community was realised. "A fine example of good practice is the training of policemen for work in a multicultural community. In 2003 and 2004, in the Policy Academy project "Policing in a multi-ethnic community", an intensive training programme was carried out for staff from police directorates of Ljubljana, Krško, Novo mesto, Maribor and Murska Sobota. Training was focused on issues linked to working with Roma. The objective of such training courses is to make policemen aware of their own prejudices against a certain group or individual and the negative impact such prejudices have on their professionalism, to introduce them to Roma culture and traditions, understand the importance of an adequate approach, evaluate ways of management of security events and understand the importance of dialogue. Activities continued after the termination of the project and have since become an on-going form of preventive police work in areas with multicultural communities. All training activities are being carried out in loco, in areas with Roma communities. Roma councillors and other representatives of the Roma population participate actively in such training events. Their aim is not only to enhance police competence, but primarily to establish

dialogue with the community. The results are manifold: fewer offences, fewer occasions when policemen were unable to carry out relevant procedures, more offences and crimes reported by Roma themselves and joint management – within individual competences – of complex security events that might, were they not resolved in a timely manner, become serious crimes. A follow-up of the above training courses was an introductory course in the Roma language (40 lessons) and a project of informing inhabitants of certain Roma settlements about legislative provisions concerning typical offences in certain areas and thus causing discomfort to the neighbouring population. A total of 47 policemen voluntarily participated in a course in Romani, the Roma dialect spoken in Dolenjska, carried out jointly by the Police and the Roma Union of Slovenia. Training courses are ongoing and have become a continuous form of work. In past years, more than 600 policemen have participated in this training. These trainings were organised and carried out in close cooperation among representatives of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, Amnesty International of Slovenia and, in particular, representatives of the Roma Union of Slovenia and Roma councillors” (GRS 2010a; HRO 2006).

Annex 5: Completed projects supported by Structural Funds

In the framework of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL 2004-2007 for the Republic of Slovenia, two development partnerships were financed: the Roma Employment Centre (438,000 euro) and the Roma Educational Informative Centre (356,000 euro) (MoLFSA 2007). The ESF contributed 75 per cent of the funds. In this framework, the website for the Roma councillors was financed.

Under Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 (Increased employability of vulnerable groups in the field of culture and support for their social inclusion) the ESF co-financed a 16-month culture and media training scheme for young Roma (the 2010 call was focused on young Roma wishing to get a job as TV journalists or film directors). Eleven short films on the life of Roma were produced. One of them, *Tikne Romnja* (Young Ladies) by a young female Roma director was awarded several awards at documentary film festivals. It was also shown in 2010 at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York (lokalno.si 2010; EC 2010c).

The ESF financed the preparation of the curriculum for teaching and learning Slovenian as a second language. The project, completed at the end of 2010, was aimed at improving the didactics of teaching Slovenian, which would benefit the Roma pupils too (GRS 2010b).

In June 2011, the ESF co-financed an international football championship of the Roma (MES 2011b).