



# NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Social Entrepreneurship  
for Roma Communities -  
SERCo

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## Introduction

The segmentation of Europe's labour markets along Roma and non-Roma ethnic lines results in poverty, social exclusion, and lower labour market status for the Roma<sup>1</sup>. Roma labour market integration is not only a human rights imperative but can also “economically benefit both Roma people and the communities they are part of”<sup>2</sup>. Yet, in some cases, the employment situation of Roma seems to have deteriorated, partly due to the general increase of unemployment in the past few years<sup>3</sup>. In order to answer these challenges, a consortium of nine organizations (University of Piraeus Research Center, Greece – SERCo Coordinator; IDEA ROM ONLUS, Italy; CESIE, Italy; The European Roma Information Office-ERIO, Belgium; Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “AMALIPE”, Bulgaria; Fundacio Privada Pere Closa, Spain; Tolerance and Mutual Aid Foundation (TMAF), Bulgaria; Four Elements, Greece and CPSI PAKIV, Romania) has started **the SERCo project. It aims to address the problem of social and economic inclusion of Roma communities in the partner countries by applying the concept of social economy as an innovative solution to reducing the risk of poverty and to enhancing entrepreneurship.** The project promotes social economy as an effective instrument for integrated development of the Roma communities by:

- 1) analyzing the potential of applying social economy practices within Roma communities, from a social, economic and institutional point of view;
- 2) engaging policy-makers and civil servants and training Roma mediators for developing social enterprises; and
- 3) assisting Roma social business initiatives and promoting social economy within Roma communities and to the general public.

Many differences exist between countries, both in the situation and needs of the Roma communities. Therefore, in order to prepare a thorough, efficient and needs-oriented analysis of the social economy models, a diagnosis of the Roma community situation has been needed. Short reports have been prepared and form the present report describing and explaining the situation and needs of the Roma communities in the partner countries. The reports' methodology is based on desk review and secondary analysis.

## Aim

The report aims to present the current situation of Roma communities in Bulgaria, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Italy and Romania in terms of education, employment, health status. It will identify the needs of Roma communities from the perspective of social entrepreneurship.

## Needs analysis of the Roma Community in the partner countries

### BELGIUM

#### Basic characteristics of the Roma community in Belgium

##### 1.1 Demographic characteristics

There are no official statistics about the exact number of Roma living in Belgium since the ethnicity is not registered but it is estimated that there are about 20,000 Roma who do not have a Belgian nationality but the nationality of their country of origin and approximately 7,000 Travellers, 1,500 Manouches/Sinti and 750 Roms who have Belgian nationality. Roma are mainly concentrated in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and Sint-Niklaas, as well as in the cities of Diest, Tienen, Heusden-Zolder and Temse<sup>1</sup>.

##### 1.2 Language and culture

The Manush or Manouches are the Sinti of Belgium, they mainly live in caravans and their first language is the Sinti Romanes, while their second language is the official language of the region they live in. Some Manoush are Catholic, while others belong to the Christian “born again” movement. The sub-group Roms speak Vlax Romanes and their second language is French and they have a semi-nomadic lifestyle. They belong to the Christian “born again” movement. The Travellers consist of Belgian autochthones. They live in caravans and their first language is Dutch for those who live in Flanders and French for those who live in Wallonia. Furthermore, they also use many words of their own language which is called Bargoens<sup>2</sup> and they are mainly Catholic. Finally, there is another sub-

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<sup>1</sup> Peña-Casas, R., Ghailani D. and Nicaise, I., *Belgium – Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma. A Study of National Policies*, HIVA and K.U.Leuven, 2011, p. 37 quoted in *The situation of Roma 2012*. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>2</sup> Samenvatting Diversiteitsbarometer. Available at

<http://www.diversiteit.be/diversiteit/files/File/Barometer/Werk/NL/Samenvatting%20Diversiteitsbarometer%20Werk.pdf> quoted in Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium,

group of Roma which consists of the Roma who originally come from different countries of the Western and Eastern Europe, mainly from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, former Yugoslavian countries, Slovakia and Turkey<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.3 Living conditions and social status

The majority of Roma do not have a permanent residence and they tend to move frequently. The main problem seems to be facilities for Travellers and itinerant ethnic groups, since there are not enough permanent and transient sites to meet their requirements. The unlawful conduct of a minority of Roma has found its way into the media and influenced public opinion which has reinforced certain stereotypes and prejudices<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.4 Poverty in Roma settlements

An estimated 80% of the Brussels Roma live in poverty<sup>5</sup>. They are faced with a lack of available and affordable housing so they tend to live in low quality rental homes with few amenities. They often fall victims of unscrupulous landlords but they are reluctant to file an official complaint out of fear of eviction<sup>6</sup>.

### 1.5 Access to social services

The Roma do not have a specific right to social services or social integration since under Belgian law, the right to remain on Belgian territory determines whether or not a person is entitled to social assistance<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.6 Legislation for Roma

In implementation of the Communication 173/2011 of the European

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FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>3</sup> Vlaamse Overheid (2011), *Vlaams actieplan MOE(Roma)-migranten 2012*, p. 56. Available at [http://binnenland.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/actieplan\\_MOE.pdf](http://binnenland.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/actieplan_MOE.pdf) quoted in Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>4</sup> *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Kingdom of Belgium*, 2012, p. 13. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_belgium\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_belgium_strategy_en.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. 28

<sup>6</sup> Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p. 4. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>7</sup> *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Kingdom of Belgium*, 2012, p. 16. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_belgium\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_belgium_strategy_en.pdf), last accessed: February 2016.



Commission, Belgium adopted a National Roma Integration Strategy on 6 March 2012. This strategy aims at fostering the socioeconomic integration of the Roma, improving their living conditions and fighting discrimination in four areas: employment, education, housing and access to healthcare, according to the priorities of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies<sup>8</sup>.

## Educational Status

### 2.1 Policy issues on education

Belgium is party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and ~~therefore is obliged to promote~~ access to education and to guarantee the right to education to every child without discrimination, not even on the basis of residence status<sup>9</sup>. French and Flemish communities organize “bridging or reception” classes in order to enable the children integrate better into ordinary classes and they grant supplementary subsidies to schools where there is a large proportion of underprivileged children<sup>10</sup>. Finally, Roma mediators are recruited to promote social integration and to encourage Roma families to send their children to school<sup>11</sup>, acting as a link between various services, agencies, schools and local authorities and the Roma families.

### 2.2 Educational level of men and women

According to a study led by the European Network Against Racism<sup>12</sup> in 2001, concerning 175 families/627 people from Roma/Sinti/Traveller backgrounds, almost 1 in 2 Roma children do not attend school at all. For those attending school, the majority are in primary school (1/3), followed by special education (schools for people with special needs) and vocational training (6%), and technical schools (3%). The Travellers’ children receive little or no schooling at all, and some are not even registered<sup>13</sup>. Some parents are very reluctant to send their daughters to school believing that they might be negatively influenced by their non-Roma peers so they try to protect them<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p. 16

<sup>9</sup> Ibid p. 18

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p. 14

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.44

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.atd-quartmonde.be/Les-Roms-entre-reconnaissance-et.html> quoted in *National Report in Belgium in the framework of the project SMILE*, p. 13. Available at [http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE\\_NationalReport\\_Belgium\\_EN.pdf](http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE_NationalReport_Belgium_EN.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>13</sup> Pena-Cesas., R Ghailani, D. *Promoting the social inclusion of Roma. A study on national policies*. HIVA, K.U. Leuven, 2011 quoted in *The situation of Roma 2012*. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>14</sup> La scolarisation des enfants Roms à Bruxelles. La voix des médiateurs culturels Roms. Available at [http://www.legrainasbl.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=407:la-scolarisation-des-enfants-roms-a-bruxelles&catid=54:analyses](http://www.legrainasbl.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=407:la-scolarisation-des-enfants-roms-a-bruxelles&catid=54:analyses) quoted in *National Report in Belgium in the*



### 2.3 Vocational training and lifelong learning

Roma children attending secondary school are frequently found in technical and vocational education as often they prefer learning manual skills such as auto mechanics, welding, plumbing, carpentry for boys and hairdressing and cooking for girls<sup>15</sup>.

### 2.4 Barriers to education

On a number of occasions, Roma children do not get enough support at home to enable them to improve their language skills<sup>16</sup> or they live in remote places<sup>17</sup>. Finally, many Roma consider school as an institution belonging to the non-Roma. Primary school is recognized as beneficial because it helps to acquire useful skills such as reading and writing but things are different in the case of secondary education.

### Employment status

#### 3.1 Type & level (employment profile, status of Roma unemployment, comparison with mainstream unemployment trends, professions)

According to the Belgian National Roma Integration Strategy, only a very limited number of Roma are employed on the basis of a standard employment contract while such contract provided the basis for access to social benefits<sup>18</sup>. Their ability to integrate is closely related to their residence status<sup>19</sup>. The

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framework of the project SMILE, p. 15. Available at [http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE\\_NationalReport\\_Belgium\\_EN.pdf](http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE_NationalReport_Belgium_EN.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>15</sup> Geurts, K., “Met één achterste kan je niet op twee paarden zitten” – Roma-leerlingen op de schoolbanken, in *Handboek Leerlingenbegeleiding*, Mechelen: Plantyn, 2010, p. 9. Available at [http://www.foyer.be/IMG/pdf/100119\\_Met\\_ee\\_n\\_achterste\\_kan\\_je\\_niet\\_op\\_twee\\_paarden\\_zitten.pdf](http://www.foyer.be/IMG/pdf/100119_Met_ee_n_achterste_kan_je_niet_op_twee_paarden_zitten.pdf) quoted in Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p.14. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>16</sup> *National Report in Belgium in the framework of the project SMILE*, p. 14. Available at [http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE\\_NationalReport\\_Belgium\\_EN.pdf](http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE_NationalReport_Belgium_EN.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>17</sup> *La scolarisation des enfants Roms à Bruxelles. La voix des médiateurs culturels Roms*. [http://www.legrainasbl.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=407:la-scolarisation-des-enfants-roms-a-bruxelles&catid=54:analyses](http://www.legrainasbl.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=407:la-scolarisation-des-enfants-roms-a-bruxelles&catid=54:analyses) quoted in *National Report in Belgium in the framework of the project SMILE*, p. 15. Available at [http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE\\_NationalReport\\_Belgium\\_EN.pdf](http://www.romasmile.com/downloads/SMILE_NationalReport_Belgium_EN.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>18</sup> *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Kingdom of Belgium*, 2012, p. 11. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_belgium\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_belgium_strategy_en.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* pp.13-14

unemployment rate is high because of language barriers, low educational achievement, high levels of illiteracy or lack of practical experience. Many Roma also live through unofficial work, including begging, selling flowers or playing music<sup>20</sup>.

### 3.2 Innovations on Roma employment (Any active labour market programs)

Belgium invests funds from the European Social Fund to support vulnerable groups, and members of the Roma community can be part of these groups. In cooperation with intercultural mediators they are individually or collectively advised in the course of their social and professional activation<sup>21</sup>. In its 2012 National Strategy for Roma Integration, the Belgian government set the goal to eliminate the differences in access to employment between Roma and the rest of the population<sup>22</sup>.

### 3.3 Policy issues on Roma employment

Due to transitional restrictions to the national labour for workers from Romania and Bulgaria Roma coming from those countries did not have fully access to the Belgian labour market until 2014<sup>23</sup>.

## Health status

### 4.1 Life expectancy

Roma suffer from poor general health and their life expectancy is 10 years below the average of the general population<sup>24</sup>.

### 4.2 Diseases and immunization uptake

According to a working paper from 2010 from the Flemish Centre for Minorities, many Roma suffer from poor health and it is not uncommon for Roma families to

<sup>20</sup> Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p. 4. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>21</sup> Ibid p.19

<sup>22</sup> Federale Overheid, *Nationale strategie voor de integratie van de Roma*, Brussels, 2012, p. 26. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_belgium\\_strategy\\_nl.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_belgium_strategy_nl.pdf) quoted in Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p.20. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>23</sup> Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p.20. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>24</sup> Ibid p.36

include one or two persons with a severe illness or disability<sup>25</sup>. The most frequent diseases include diabetes, obesity, asthma and infections of the respiratory tract. Poverty is considered one of the main causes of such illnesses, as well as cultural elements, since Roma tend to focus on short-term rather than long term health concerns. There is also the problem of poor monitoring of sickness and disease, excessive use of coffee, alcohol and cigarettes and a poor, unhealthy diet<sup>26</sup>.

#### 4.3 Access to health services

Access to health care is often hindered due to financial concerns and a lack of knowledge of administrative and reimbursement procedures. Self-workers often do not register with a health insurance firm for small risks due to the lack of information on health insurance so they do not have access to social services<sup>27</sup>. The federal government invests in intercultural mediators and there is a pilot project at Sint-Niklaas on accessible health care for Roma for this group paying additional medical attention through counselling, training activities and individual guidance on social and psychological level<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Kingdom of Belgium*, 2012, p. 35. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_belgium\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_belgium_strategy_en.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>26</sup> Vlaams Minderhedencentrum, Werknoot: *Roma in Vlaanderen, knelpunten en aanbevelingen*, Brussel, 2010, p. 15. Available at [http://www.foyer.be/IMG/pdf/Nota\\_Roma-actieplan\\_100211.pdf](http://www.foyer.be/IMG/pdf/Nota_Roma-actieplan_100211.pdf); Morel, M., *De Romakwestie: een mensenrechtelijk perspectief*, *Oikos*, 55(4), 2010, pp. 25-37. Available at [www.oikos.be/tijdschrift/.../725-55-03-morel-de-romakwestie.html](http://www.oikos.be/tijdschrift/.../725-55-03-morel-de-romakwestie.html) quoted in *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Kingdom of Belgium*, 2012, pp. 36-37. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_belgium\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_belgium_strategy_en.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

<sup>27</sup> Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p. 5. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

<sup>28</sup> HIVA, *Kwantitatieve bevraging van de maatschappelijke en economische positie van woonwagenbewoners*, 2010, *Vlaams Strategisch Plan voor woonwagenbewoners*, p.27 quoted in Paul de Hert, Jozefien Van Caeneghem and Milieu Ltd. Belgium, FRANET National Focal Point, Social Thematic Study, *The situation of Roma 2012*, p. 38. Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-be.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016

## BULGARIA

### Basic characteristics of the Roma community in the country

Bulgaria is one of the countries with the most numerable Roma population. The exact number of the Roma could hardly be determined, because a large majority of them prefer to be declared as Turkish, Bulgarian or Wallachians at the population census. According to the census in 2001 370 908 people declared themselves as Roma, and according to the census in 2011 – 325 343 people, out of which 44.13% live in the villages.<sup>29</sup> At the same time authoritative international and Bulgarian researchers determine the number of Roma in Bulgaria of about 800 000 people.<sup>30</sup>

Roma come to present-day Bulgarian lands at different times and from different places. That is the reason why today so many Roma groups exist, differing (more or less) from one another. Due to the overall historical trends on the Balkans and in Europe, due to the history of settlement, development and relations of Roma community in Bulgaria with majority population and other minority communities, Roma in Bulgaria use different names to identify themselves. As mentioned above, according to the Census 2011, 325.343 individuals (4,9 %) are self-identified Roma. 85% report Roma as their mother tongue, 7.49% Bulgarian, 6.69% Turkish, and 0.82% other languages. 56.22% profess Orthodox Christianity, 32.24% Islam and approximately 12% are followers of the Protestants denominations.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, more than 60% of the Roma hide or deny their identity out of fear of discrimination or loss of social status and occupational/professional position. Generally, Roma identify themselves on the basis of three levels of identity: group, ethnic and national identity. At group level Roma call themselves as “Burgudjii”, “Bakardjii” and other group names. At ethnic level, they call themselves as “Roma, Millet or Rudari” (three different names for different communities). At national level, “Roma” have Bulgarian national identity. In addition, many Roma individuals are abroad for several months every year for temporary work assignments and they are consequently not registered by the census - distorting the actual numbers and percentage share of the population. Among the estimations, the highest percentage of Roma estimated is that of the European Council, according to which the Roma constitute 10.33% of Bulgarian population.<sup>32</sup>

The Roma community in Bulgaria is not a homogeneous one but is compiled of a number of layers, meta-groups and sub-groups. The first in historical aspect is the meta-group of the so-called *Yerlii* – i.e. local, settled Roma. They are descendants of the Roma who came during the period from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/2/2/R9.aspx>, last accessed February 2016

<sup>30</sup> Teodora Krumova, Deyan Kolev. *Manual on Roma History and Culture*, 2013, 39, available at <http://www.amalipe.com/files/publications/ManualFINAL.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> *National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration*, 2012. Available at <http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=125&id=1740>, last accessed: July 2015

<sup>32</sup> Krumova, Teodora and Deyan Kolev, authors. *Manual on Roma History and Culture*, 2013, 50-55



century, and who gradually settled and for centuries on lived together with both Bulgarian and Turkish population. *Yerlii* divide themselves into two large groups: *Horahane Roma* (Turkish/Muslim Roma) and *Dasikane Roma* (Bulgarian Roma, Christians). The second large Roma meta-group in Bulgaria are the so-called *Kaldarashi*. The Kaldarashi is one of the best preserved Roma groups in Bulgaria. They still have potestarian forms preserved – such as the Roma court - *meshere*, they speak mainly Romani, they strictly keep their customs and traditions. The lavish way in which they celebrate Easter (Patrangi) and St. George's Day, as well as Kaldarashi wedding ceremonies often points them out as one of the most interesting Roma customs in Europe. The Eastern Orthodox Christianity plays very important role in the life of the Kaldarashi and they are devoted Christians. Until the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century they were nomads, who travelled from village to village to sell their goods. They settled down after the promulgation of Decree 258 of the Council of Ministers dated 1958, prohibiting "nomadism and begging in the People's Republic of Bulgaria". The number of the Kaldarashi in Bulgaria is about 30 000.<sup>33</sup>

Groups of people which the neighbouring population calls "Romanian gypsies" live predominantly in the village regions of Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Nova Zagora, Burgas, Varna, Dobrich, Veliko Tarnovo and Pleven areas. The representatives of this community call themselves "Rudari" or "Ludari" – depending on the local dialect. Due to their specific crafts, the surrounding population knows them as Kopanari (whittlers) and Mechkadari (bear-tamers), for which their words are respectively *Lingurari* and *Ursari*. The Rudari / Ludari speak a dialect of the Romanian language. In Bulgaria there are two dialects – north (more influenced by the standard Romanian) and south (with more distinct influence from the Greek language). Although they live in relatively differentiated ethnical neighbourhoods, they are probably the best integrated Roma group in the Bulgarian society in relation to the level of education, employment rate, as well as the size of the households, in which they do not differ from the Bulgarian population in the certain residential areas. The number of the Rudari in Bulgaria is about 70 000.<sup>34</sup>

No ethnic, religious or linguistic minority has the status of a national minority in the Bulgarian political context. Bulgaria ratified the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities but did not give its minorities the status of national minorities. They are called "ethnic groups". The Constitution of Bulgaria (Konstitutsiya na Republika Balgariya) adopted on 12 July 1991 defines the country as a Unitary Parliamentary Republic. The legal and institutional framework in Bulgaria is highly restrictive regarding positive

<sup>33</sup> Krumova, T., D.Kolev, G.Daskalova – Tsvetkova. *Sbornik materiali "Preodoliavane na tradicionnite I novi anti-romski stereotipi* (A Collection of materials "Overcoming traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes"), 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Krumova, T., D.Kolev, G.Daskalova – Tsvetkova. *Sbornik materiali "Preodoliavane na tradicionnite I novi anti-romski stereotipi* (A Collection of materials "Overcoming traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes"), 2011.



measures defending the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups. The approach adopted by the state level focuses on providing protection against discrimination and guaranteeing basic individual freedoms. But no pro-active mechanisms or instruments are engaged aiming at the enforcement of social, economic, and cultural rights of communities. Besides the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Bulgaria ratified also the EU framework for national strategies for Roma integration in the period up to 2020 adopting its National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS). On March 1, 2012 Bulgarian Parliament approved the NRIS. Thus for first time political document for Roma integration was approved with legislative act. At present this is the major political document guiding Roma integration in Bulgaria.

#### Educational status.

Roma in Bulgaria are the most disadvantaged group in regard to education. The table below shows the school enrolment of Roma children in %

School enrolment up to class 4:	male	30.7%	female	38.7%
School enrolment up to class 8:	male	42.9%	female	37.1%
School enrolment up to class 12:	male	15.7%	female	4.1%
University enrolment in %:	male	0.5%	female	(less)

(National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012-2020)).<sup>35</sup>

There has been only a slow improvement of Roma educational achievements in the last 20 years. Different reasons can be accounted for that Roma children do not go to school or drop out from school:

- Low level of education of parents and their lack of understanding the value and importance of the education for the future prospects of their children;
- Some harmful traditions as early marriages which turn especially Roma girls into school drop-outs as early as the age of 12
- The recent situation of high unemployment even among well-educated youth which demotivates Roma parents to encourage their children to go for education
- Socialization patterns in many tightly knitted Roma neighbourhoods that create group obligations and additional difficulties to break out for an individual educational benefit
- Unfavourable school environments, like discriminatory attitudes of teachers and non-Roma fellow students

<sup>35</sup> *National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration*, 2012. Available at <http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=125&id=1740> , last accessed: July 2015

- The school remains an alien to Roma as no social or cultural Roma elements are communicated. Roma history and traditions are not reflected in text books
- Frequent labour migration of parents resulting in high rates of school absenteeism.
- Lack of motivation and disinterest of students

Official measures in place to enforce compulsory education/facilitate school enrolment/prevention of drop-out include:

- legal obligation of children in the school going age (age 6 to 16) to attend school free of charge
- recently adopted legal provision to stop social support to parents whose children in obligatory school going age are not in school
- additional assistance schemes for socially weak pupils (it concerns all children at school age and not only minorities or specifically Roma students)
- the National Program providing free breakfast for all children from 1 to 4 grade.
- provision of free transport for the kids from villages that have no school
- children who study in focal point schools are provided full day schooling, free lunch and free transportation

At the same time, the adult illiteracy among Roma is the highest compared to other minority groups in Bulgaria. For civil society actors, adult illiteracy is an especially important indicator as illiterate parents cannot assist their children in school homework and often do not put much importance on the education of their children.

Another serious problem preventing Roma from equal access to quality education is school segregation. The successful integration of Roma children into the national system of education needs a balanced class representation of majority and minority children, enriching all with intercultural competence. Even though this ideal could not be achieved in the primary education of remote rural regions with a high concentration of minority groups; it could be supported and achieved in secondary or higher education provided as a rule in bigger villages and towns with more diverse population. In actual fact, the number of Roma students transferred from segregated to desegregated schools constantly grows. Preventive measures for reducing the number of Roma school drop-outs are in place and the Roma children get more and more integrated into the national system of education. Still, some negative tendencies regarding the formation of 'secondary segregated schools' can be observed when Roma students move or are moved to a certain school and gradually become a majority there.

With regard to specific Roma communities:

- The conservative Kaldarashi Roma community still does not perceive education as a strong value. Most of the elder generation of this community never attended school or has completed only 2-3 grades. The majority of the middle generation improved to a certain extent: usually men have completed at most 8 grade (in order to obtain driving license). Women dropped out without completing even primary stage. Among the youngest Kaldarashi primary education is not an exception, although dropping out is still prevalent. Some of the boys continue in gymnasiums but usually leave the school after 1 or 2 years. The Kaldarashi female student who graduated gymnasium and after this did her degree at Veliko Turnovo University is an exception to be mentioned. To summarize, there are some positive changes but they are slow and not sustainable; good education is still an exception.

- The Horahane-Roma group is somewhat different. Their educational attitudes are one generation ahead compared to Kaldarashi: the middle generation (both males and females) has primary education completed and diploma obtained. Many of the youth continue in high schools, especially the boys. There is understanding among the parents that education is important

#### Employment status.

At present, 36% of Roma define themselves as unemployed out of which 11.4% are officially registered with the Directorate of Employment Agency (DEA) and 24.2% are not registered. Data on territorial segments indicate that the number of unemployed Roma in North Bulgaria is significantly higher than in the Southern region (BRqu, A11.1). Findings of sociological surveys conducted in 2010 and 2011 indicate that the Roma (un-) employment has cyclical nature in Bulgaria. The employment rate is lower in the winter and higher in the summer. The average employment rates for the analysed period are 31%. The seasonal nature of the Roma employment rate is easy to explain, taking into account that the two main occupational arenas employing Roma community members are agriculture and constructions. During the last two years there has been a significant decrease of employment in the constructions industries.

Most of the Roma labour emigrants leave their families and their children in Bulgaria with negative consequences for the schooling of children. In a resolution of the European Parliament in March 12, 2009 the fact was outlined that that children left at home by labour migrants experience a general lack of care with reduced physical and mental health, passivity in schools and non-participation in education. At times malnutrition and even abuse of unprotected children is reported. Usually young Roma labour migrants initially leave their children in the care of their parents and relatives.

The employment rate among Roma women is very low, only 23.6%. This is due to the fact that Roma women take care of children and home. About 60.5% of the young women living in the urban areas and 69.3% of the older women are not employed.



### Health status.

Roma share similar situation in the field of healthcare. A World Bank initiated study compiled and analyzed available data on Roma mortality in Eastern Europe concluding that life expectancy of Roma throughout Eastern Europe is about 10 years less than that of the overall population (Ringold D, Orenstein MA, and E Wilkens 2005). According to this study, the average life expectancy of Bulgarians is 73.5 years. Whereupon, the average life expectancy of Roma people in Bulgaria is approximately 63.5 years. According to data of the National Statistics Institute of Bulgaria from 2001, barely 5% of the Roma people reach retirement age (Open Society Institute: 2008). According to a survey carried out among 498 women in seven different Roma communities in Bulgaria in 2012, 52.2% of the participants were not health insured, 47.1% did have a health insurance and 0.7% did not know their health insurance status (Kolev, Baev, Boyanova, Tarnovo 2012). 21.68% of the participants say that the primary care physician refuses to pay house visits when needed. Another indicator related to the access to primary and secondary health services in the same survey shows that 30.12% of the participants felt discriminated by medical personnel. 36.5% say that their children do not attend annual health check up by a physician. The survey shows that the access to emergency health care is very poor. 37.75% say that an ambulance would take up to 30 minutes to reach the patient. According to 11.04%, it takes an hour or more for an ambulance to reach the patient in need. Some 4.01% stated that the emergency room refuses to send an ambulance. Focus group interviews showed that the reasons for refusal of emergency care are due to either the lack of health insurance of the patients or the fact that they live in Roma community. The Bulgarian law on health states that the emergency care is free of charge regardless of the ethnic origin or the health insurance status (Kolev, Baev, Boyanova, Tarnovo 2012).

## GREECE

### Basic characteristics of the Roma community in the country

#### 1.1 Demographic characteristics

Roma population in Greece is not an entirely homogeneous group, but it consists of different (often conflicting) “tribes” of Roma people. The main groups of Roma in Greece can be categorised as follows:

- (a) Domestic nomadic Roma (albeit an extremely limited number);
- (b) Very long-term settled distinct Roma communities, very poor and excluded;
- (c) Very long-term settled distinct Roma communities, a number of which are almost entirely unproblematic;
- (d) Recent Roma migrants who are not EU nationals (especially from Albania, but also from Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);
- (e) Recent Roma migrants from new EU Member States (mainly Bulgarian and Romanian Roma);
- (f) Completely integrated/assimilated Roma who may never even identify themselves as Romani;
- (g) Roma Muslims in Thrace, who benefit from the minority protections available under the peace treaties between Greece and Turkey following World War II;
- (h) Other persons and communities.

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The total share of the Roma within the total Greek population is estimated between 2-3% (ROM Network, 2000). There are estimations regarding the magnitude of Greek Roma that range from 180,000 people to 365 thousands people. An average estimation of 265 thousands Greek Roma seems to be closer to the real numbers.<sup>36</sup>

#### 1.2 Language & culture

The Romani people in Greece are called Arlije, Erlides or Tsiganoi (the most preferred name). The majority of Roma in Greece are Christian Orthodox with the exception of Roma in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (estimated at 20,000 in number) where they are predominately of the Muslim faith. The majority of Roma in Greece consider their religious affiliation an important part of their identity and as a means of social integration. All Roma in Greece to a greater or lesser extent speak Greek while the majority speak the 'Vlachoura-Roma' language. It is important to note that Roma

<sup>36</sup> D. Ziomas, N. Bouzas and N. Spyropoulou, *Greece, Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma: A Study of National Policies*, 2011.

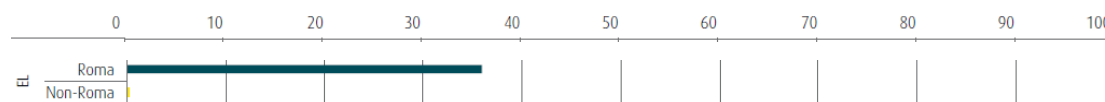
organisations in Greece object strongly to any ethnic distinction between being Roma and Greek.<sup>37</sup>

### 1.3 Living conditions and social status

An estimated majority of the Roma live in quite bad conditions. According to a DEPOS study, most Roma settlements – whether makeshift dwellings or permanent settlements – are segregated and located in remote, substandard areas. They do not have an adequate water supply, are not connected to the sewage system, and many have no electricity, paved roads, or other basic amenities.<sup>38</sup>

Figure1: Persons living in households without at least one of the following basic amenities: indoor kitchen, indoor

toilet, indoor shower/bath, electricity (pooled data) (%)<sup>39</sup>



As already mentioned above, the Greek Roma community is not a homogenous cultural or linguistic entity. The part that is less assimilated, which is a significant percentage, that also live in shanty towns or similar residential conditions, are pejoratively known as Gypsies or Athigganoi and face social exclusion. The exclusion of Roma from the broader Greek society is often romanticized. Roma are perceived as bursting with spirit, family integrity, and artistic expression. These perceptions take a benign form. However, the more common and infinitely more dangerous form that exclusion takes is in the prejudiced beliefs that Roma do not want to participate in society due to ethnic specificities. It is common to believe Roma do not want to be educated, are lazy and irresponsible, and neglect personal hygiene. It is also believed that Roma have an inclination to engage in criminality, especially drug dealing and kidnapping, and choose “parasitic” jobs, such as petty theft and begging.<sup>40</sup> As far as gender roles are concerned, Roma women are in their vast majority “home-carers” while men are usually the ones that bring the home income.

### 1.4 Poverty in Roma settlements

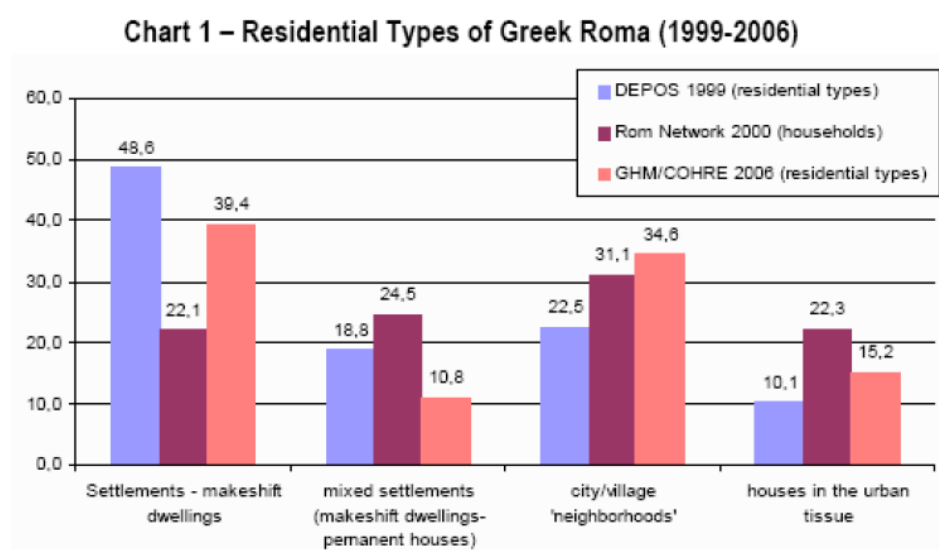
<sup>37</sup> C. Arcoudis, *Roma MATRIX Country Report: Greece*, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Alpha Abdikeeva, *Roma Poverty and the Roma National Strategies: The Cases of Albania, Greece and Serbia*, 2005, Minority Rights Group International.

<sup>39</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, 2012 (Ibid for all similar figures in this report).

<sup>40</sup> M. Lampridis, *Aspects of Social Representation of Roma*, 2004, <http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/handle/10795/275> (last accessed on 20/2/2016)

Housing is a major problem that the Roma community is facing in Greece. As stated in the previous section, evidence suggests that the large percentage of the Roma people experience terrible housing conditions. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) reports that a large proportion of the approximately 265,000 Roma who are living in Greece, live in 52 improvised and dangerous tent encampments while most others reside in poorly constructed dwellings lacking access to basic services such as electricity and water. They are also often under the threat of eviction.<sup>41</sup> Regarding the residential types of accommodation of the Greek Roma, chart 1 below presents the findings of three different surveys conducted in the period 1996-2006:



Extracted from: HLHR-KEMO/i-RED Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Greece, October 2009, pp. 35

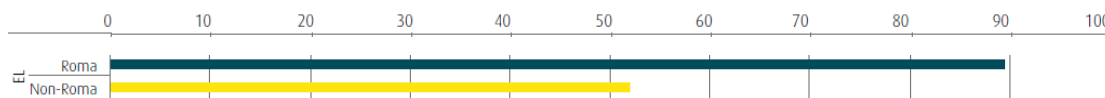
Another data that is indicative of the cramped conditions that the Roma community live in is the fact that the average number of persons per room for the Roma people is close to 3 whereas for the remaining population of Greece is just above 1. All in all, almost 90% of Roma households are at the risk of poverty compared to a 50% for non-Roma households.

Figure 2: Average number of persons per room (excluding kitchen, corridor, toilet, bathroom and any room rented out) (pooled data) (%)



Figure 3: Persons living in households at risk of poverty (%)

<sup>41</sup> D. Ziomas, N. Bouzas and N. Spyropoulou, *Greece, Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma: A Study of National Policies*, 2011.



### 1.5 Access to social services

There is no official data regarding Roma as recipients of welfare benefits. Within Greek social policy, there are provisions to assist those experiencing hardship or who are at risk of poverty. Within these policies there are no distinct social care provisions exclusively for Roma. General public provisions include monthly welfare allowances (for the uninsured), unemployment benefits, disability allowances, family and child support, single mothers support allowances, and rent subsidies. However, these policies - particularly during a period of austerity measures - fail to tackle inequalities as they are part of a highly fragmented social security system that often perpetuates poverty. Inadequate welfare policies, the underdevelopment of social assistance and social care services, limited unemployment protection and meagre social assistance benefits for those in great need, form part of this negative picture in Greece. Inequality is the predominant feature in all aspects of welfare and the risk for poverty after social benefits remains one of the highest in the EU.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.6 Legislation for Roma

Greece is party to major international treaties guaranteeing protection from discrimination, with the exception of minority protection instruments. Following intense international criticism and legal proceedings by the European Commission for failure to implement the EU equality directives on time, Greece finally adopted an antidiscrimination law, partially implementing the EU directives. However, the meaningful enforcement of antidiscrimination provisions, especially regarding the Roma, is rare in practice.<sup>43</sup>

#### Educational status

##### 2.1 Policy issues on education

The bulk of the Roma population (especially the older age groups) continue to be illiterate, and although school attendance is more common among younger Roma than among their parents and grandparents, their involvement in the educational process must still be characterised as insufficient to strengthen and improve their vocational status and mobility. Most Roma children aged 12 and above leave school in

<sup>42</sup> D. Veneris, *Crisis Social Policy and Social Justice: the case for Greece*, 2013, London: Hellenic Observatory, LSE.

<sup>43</sup> Alpha Abdikeeva, *Roma Poverty and the Roma National Strategies: The Cases of Albania, Greece and Serbia*, 2005, Minority Rights Group International.

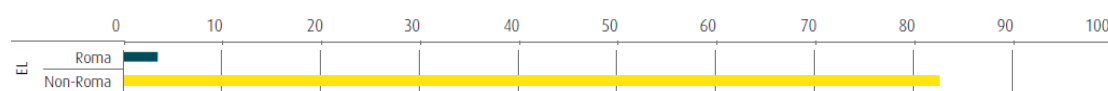
order to find work to supplement the family income. School attendance is often disrupted by a change in location, financial problems requiring the children to work, distance from school, racism in school, lack of suitable, permanent accommodation, and so on.<sup>44</sup>

## 2.2 Education level of men and women

The latest FRA survey, based on Eurostat findings, cites Greek Roma and non-Roma children participation in pre-school education as the lowest amongst the surveyed European countries, where less than 10 % of Roma children are reported to be in preschool or kindergarten compared to less than 50 % of non-Roma.<sup>45</sup>

As for the compulsory school attendance in general, a national research for the General Secretariat for the Management of European Funds and the NGO “Efksini Polis” conducted in 2008, recorded that 54.7% of Roma has never received schooling, 33.4% have finished only a few grades in elementary school, 7% has graduated from elementary school, 3,4% has followed some grades in lower secondary education, 0.5% has concluded lower secondary education and thus compulsory education, while only 1% has continued to higher secondary education . This survey recorded data of nationwide school attendance according to levels of education. This research has showed that just 17.7% of the Roma population have graduated from primary education. Of the total sample, only 2% of the interviewees have graduated from secondary education.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 4: Household members aged 20 to 24 with at least completed general or vocational upper-secondary education (pooled data) (%)



## 2.3 Vocational training and lifelong learning

There are almost no records to account for the participation of Roma in vocational training and lifelong learning. A 2000 survey indicated that only 0.5% ever participated in vocational training programmes.<sup>47</sup> The state programme “Education for Roma children in the regions of Central Macedonia, Western Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace” aims among other, to enhance the access of the Roma

<sup>44</sup> ANTIGONE - Information & Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence, *SHADOW REPORT ON ROMA SEGREGATION IN EDUCATION*, 2014

<sup>45</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, 2012

<sup>46</sup> General Secretariat for the Management of European Funds and the NGO , *Health and community of Roma : Analysis and situation in Greece*, 2009

<sup>47</sup> The Municipal Network ROMANET study, 2000, Multi Roma Action Hellas (INTEGRA).

community to adult education center and second chance schools. Roma women participate in groups of advising regarding family prevention, family programming, financial and professional issues. Classes of training in sewing, hair-dressing and driving were created that aimed at stressing and enhancing literacy skills through the acquisition of technical skills. A number of Roma participated in adult literacy classes and then took part in examinations and obtained primary school certificates. Some of them, with the encouragement of the psychologists-social workers of the Program, continue their education at Second Chance Schools to obtain their secondary school certificate.<sup>48</sup>

#### 2.4 Barriers to education

What distinguishes the Roma community from other protected groups is the extent of poverty and deprivation they suffer, as well as the accessibility of the schools since many Roma live out far away from schools, as well as the attitude or the non-welcoming atmosphere that might be created by the teachers and pupils in the classroom or in the school. These factors along with the lack of financial resources and the fact that they need to move in various areas of the country for professional reasons are the main reasons that dissuade Roma children from participating in school life.<sup>49</sup>

In addition the Roma community and especially the children face the following issues and barriers in relation to their education:

- Lack of pre-school education;
- Delay in registering for school and entering the school system;
- Low rates of school enrolment;
- Poor attendance and high drop-out rate;
- Poor performance;
- Frequent failure to complete mandatory years of school attendance;
- Racist attitudes in school environment.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> ANTIGONE - Information & Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence, *SHADOW REPORT ON ROMA SEGREGATION IN EDUCATION*, 2014

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.dare-net.eu/introduction-to-roma-in-greece> (last accessed 20/02/2016)

<sup>50</sup> ANTIGONE - Information & Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence, *SHADOW REPORT ON ROMA SEGREGATION IN EDUCATION*, 2014



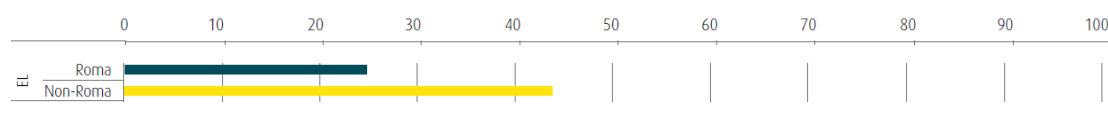
## Employment status

### 3.1 Type & level

For Roma living in urban settlements around Greece, the main occupation is collecting and selling scrap metal and other wares in markets. Roma in rural settlements occasionally earn a living by seasonal agricultural work. This work is usually informal, which means they do not have any health or social insurance. In addition, many claim it is difficult and expensive to obtain the necessary permits, which may lead to problems with the authorities. With the exception of single mothers, who often have to work on a par with men, Roma women usually care for young children and do the household chores. Children are particularly affected by the poverty of their communities, and many girls and boys work to help to earn a living for their families.<sup>51</sup>

A survey<sup>52</sup> found that the Roma unemployment rate, among those interviewed who were economically active was 44.3%, while half of them had remained unemployed for more than 2 years. The vast majority of Roma (77.3%) were recorded as being employed on an occasional or seasonal basis only. Only 22.7% of the active Roma population participates, relatively permanently in the labour market. It was also found that three activities accounted for three-quarters of all Roma employment: trading (20.8%), scrap dealing (30.4%) and agricultural labouring (23.4%). As regards social insurance, only 32.8% of those employed reported that they were insured, while 28% of the uninsured persons were covered for healthcare by the prefectural Social Welfare Directorates. According to the findings of another European comparative research based on a sample survey<sup>53</sup>, unemployment among Greek Roma population stands at 61.7%, while most women (64.1%) are housewives.

Figure 5: Household members aged 20 to 64 in paid employment (pooled data) (%) – excluding self-employment



<sup>51</sup> Alpha Abdikeeva, *Roma Poverty and the Roma National Strategies: The Cases of Albania, Greece and Serbia*, 2005, Minority Rights Group International

<sup>52</sup> The Municipal Network ROMANET study presents, among others, results as regards employment from their research which was conducted between September and October of 2000 and was coordinated by ROMANET as part of the actions of the Operational programme, Multi Roma Action Hellas (INTEGRA).

<sup>53</sup> Eurodiastasi and Oikokoinonia, Study on “The Current Situation of Roma in Greece – drafting an Action Plan for the 4th Programming Period”, funded by the Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2008 (in Greek).



### 3.2 Innovations on Roma employment

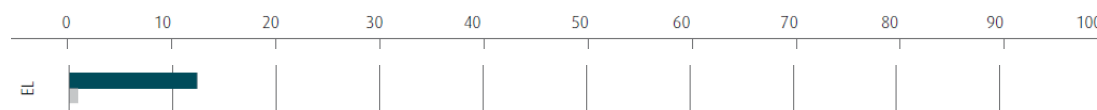
Rom Bazaar is a very innovative and interesting initiative coordinated by the Panhellenic Association of Greek Roma (PEER) in order to increase the employment of the Roma. The Rom Bazaar is a shopping mall which hosts several Roma owned shops and it is the centre of attraction for visitors that wish to buy carpets, handcrafts or other traditional Roma-made objects in good prices. It was a result of an effort to coordinate the management of various grants that have been given to various Roma for micro-entrepreneurship. Instead of each Roma to manage its own place, the grants were managed collectively and it was made possible to develop this shopping mall which provided the necessary space for a market which is at the same time modern but also respectful to the traditional Roma way of selling. The Rom Bazaar is an example of best practice that could be adopted also in other contexts since it is a collective effort made by Roma themselves that combines their trading tradition with techniques of the modern market. It promotes legal trading and on the same time it attracts people. Practitioners could adopt the idea but also the finance scheme that has been used in order to implement the idea.<sup>54</sup>

### 3.3 Policy issues on Roma employment

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A significant issue on Roma employment is the incidents of child labour. The percentage of Roma children from age 7 to 15 who work outside home is around 12%. When asked which type of work children do outside the home, respondents said either that they are collecting objects for reselling or recycling, or they are begging on the street for money. Other activities of Roma children working outside the home include working in a shop, on a farm, in a market or selling things in the streets, running errands or guarding cars.<sup>55</sup>

Figure 6: Roma children aged 7 to 15 who work outside the home (%) (In grey respondents who: did not understand the question, did not know or refused to answer)

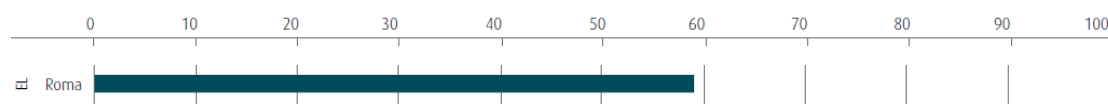


<sup>54</sup> <http://www.romasource.eu/userfiles/attachments/pages/165/rs-actionsynergy-emp-goodpractice-1-2013-en.pdf> (last accessed on 20/2/2016)

<sup>55</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, 2012

Discrimination is also a significant barrier in Roma employment intervention outcomes due to entrenched and systemic discriminatory practices in the labour market: “Roma are almost completely excluded from both the formal and the informal labour market as employees”.<sup>56</sup> However, no direct anti-discrimination actions are noted in the national Roma strategies.

Figure 7: Roma respondents aged 16 and above looking for work in the past 5 years, who said that they experienced discrimination because of their Roma background (pooled data) (%)



## Health status

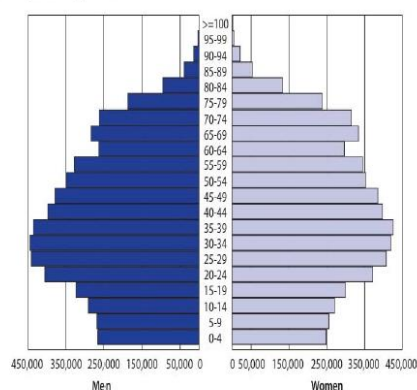
### 4.1 Life Expectancy

The socio-economic profile of the Roma people affects their health and contributes to ill health. Their life expectancy is 10–25 years lower and infant and child mortality are higher than those of the main Greek population.<sup>57</sup> The difference in the life expectancy between Roma and non-Roma people in Greece is clearly shown in the age structure of the two respective population pyramids:

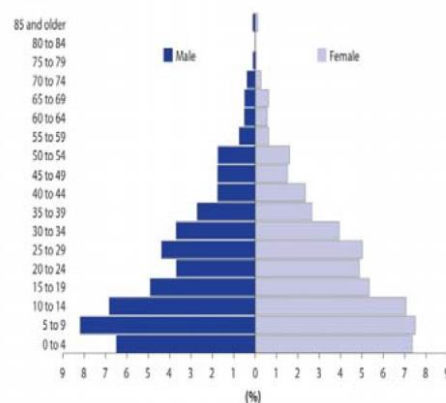
Graph1: General Population Pyramid -Greece

Graph 2: Roma Population Pyramid - Greece

Mainstream Population pyramid



Population pyramid



Note: Graphs are extracted from Fundacion Secretariado Gitano (ed.), “Health and the Roma Community, analysis of the situation in Europe”, 2009, p. 121 and 127.

In particular, the Roma population, in contrast to the general population, exhibits a high concentration in the young ages, a medium to low concentration in the

<sup>56</sup> EUMC (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia), *Migrants, Minorities and Employment in Greece - Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination*, 2003.

Available at: [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/230-EL.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/230-EL.pdf) , Last accessed 20/2/2016.

<sup>57</sup> D. Andrioti, C. Kotrotsou & V. Tsakatara, *The medical social centres in support of Roma in Greece*, 2013. Available at: <http://diversityhealthcare.imedpub.com/the-medical-social-centres-in-support-of-roma-in-greece.php?aid=1705> , last accessed on 20/2/2016.

productive ages, while the elderly are almost non-existent. The percentage of people older than 65 years old is only 1.6% for Roma people, against 16.7% for the general population.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4.2 Diseases and immunization uptake

Research in a number of settlements has shown high rates of hepatitis A and B, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, obesity, and alcohol and drug abuse.<sup>59</sup> After January 2010, a measles outbreak took place in Greece, which originally was found to be related to the recent outbreak in Bulgaria. Most of the cases were unvaccinated and were found to belong to 3 social groups: Roma population of Bulgarian nationality, Greek Roma population, and Greek general population. The reasons for the measles outbreak might be due to limited or inhibited access to services for vulnerable or high-risk populations, cultural or religious beliefs, and to vaccine hesitancy due to vaccine safety concerns. In terms of immunization, 35% of Roma children do not follow the child vaccination program which is the second highest percentage among Europe's Roma population behind Romania (46%).<sup>60</sup>

#### 4.3 Access to health services

In terms of access to health services, a survey found that the main reason for failing to receive medical attention was economic (60% of the cases), the reasons being "could not get off work", "too expensive", "no means of transport", "did not have insurance". In addition, the majority of minors (63%) have never gone to the dentist independent of gender, whereas only 25% of adults have never gone to the dentist. Moreover, 21% of women have never gone to the gynaecologist and 35.6% have never gone for reasons other than pregnancy.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> D. Ziomas, N. Bouzas and N. Spyropoulou, *Greece, Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma: A Study of National Policies*, 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> I. Petraki, *Health Status of Roma People*, 2012 Available at: <http://crisis.med.uoa.gr/elibrary/11.pdf>, last accessed on 20/2/2016.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.gitanos.org/upload/56/59/GRIEGO-final-baja.pdf>. last accessed on 20/2/2016.

## ITALY

### Basic characteristics of the Roma community in the country (max.1.5 page)

#### 1.1 Demographic characteristics (one community or sub-groups)

In 2015, the Council of Europe estimated at approximately 140,000 Roma living in Italy which represented 0.23% of the total population. After many waves of immigration, they were persecuted during the Second World War and in the 1960's, a new wave of migrants arrived in Italy<sup>62</sup>. In 2008, *The Guardian* reported that 30,000 of the Roma today living in Italy descend from those arriving in the 15th century. They are Catholics in majority.

The UNAR<sup>63</sup> distinguish three macro linguistic communities of Roma in Italy, namely Sinti, "Roma" and Camminanti (*Travellers*). Sinti and Roma have several dialects in common that constitute the Indo-European Romani language (romanés), while Camminanti speak a local language.

The National Office also precise that about 45%, are Italian citizen, live mostly in permanent houses, and do not adopt any type of nomadic lifestyles, 32% are from non-EU countries or stateless and 23% come from other EU Member States<sup>64</sup>.

Moreover, in 2010 The percentage of Roma aged less than 16 (45%) is three times the national average (15%) for the same age group, and those aged over 60 (0.3%) is nearly one tenth of national average for the same age group (25%).

The data are not precise about the geographic repartition of the Roma but according to the study of Strati F.<sup>65</sup> seven out of the twenty Italian regions might account for 80% of the total Roma population. The first region is in the Centre (Lazio), the following four are in the North (Lombardia, Piemonte, Emilia Romagna and Veneto, successively) and the remaining two are in the South (Calabria and Campania). The oldest Roma communities and Camminanti Siciliani (around 30,000 persons) live prevalently in the South. Roma came mainly from the Balkans and settled in the South of Italy, while Sinti came from Prussian and Austrian regions and settled in the North and Centre of Italy. They formed a series of communities, whose name corresponds to the Italian regions where they settled. The second migratory wave was between the 19th and 20th centuries, especially after the two world wars. Other Sinti communities (e.g. Gàckane and Estrekhària) arrived mainly in the North of Italy from Germany, Austria and Slovenia. Roma communities (Harvati, Kalderasha, Churara and Lovara) arrived from Croatia, Istria, Slovenia, Hungary and Romania, but also from Poland and Sweden. They settled practically in all Italian regions (Roma Harvati mostly in the North). The third wave consisted of migrants arrived during the 1960s and 1970s. They came mainly from the former Yugoslavia countries (Roma Khorakhané and Dasikhané), Poland (Roma Lovara), Romania (Romanian Roma) and

<sup>62</sup> Richardson Institute (report), *The Roma people in Europe*, 2014

<sup>63</sup> National Office Against Racial Discrimination <http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?lang=it>

<sup>64</sup> Strati F. (report), *Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma - A Study of National Policies*, 2011

<sup>65</sup> Strati F. (report), *Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma - A Study of National Policies*, 2011, p6

also from Algeria (a small group of Roma Kaulija). The prevalent regional location of Roma Khorakhané and Dasikhané was in the North and Centre Italy, while the other groups settled throughout the national territory. The fourth migratory wave interested all the Italian regions and started with the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union in 1989. Roma Khorakhané and Dasikhané (from the former Yugoslavia countries) were the main communities along with Romanian Roma (from Romania and Bulgaria), whose number is still increasing.

The main Italian Roma community consist of the Sinti (Piedmontese, Lombards, Gackané, Estrekarija, etc.) mainly located in the north of the country and the southern Roma (Abruzzese, Neapolitans, Calabresi, Salentines, etc.). To these are added the Roma Harvati and Kalderash migrated to Italy from the early 1900s until the end of World War II. The remaining communities are made up of Roma immigrants since the 60s, especially from the former Yugoslavia (Khoraxané, Kanjaira, Gadjikané, Romunuir, Shiptari, Arlija, Askalija) and, starting from the '90s, from Romania (mainly divided into various subgroups of Kalderasha Roma). In addition of these communities there are, minors, the Roma Polish (Lovara), Albanians (mostly Arlija) and Bulgarians (Arlija and Gurbeti). The old crafts were almost completely abandoned except in some small communities (small circuses and luna-park, gilders, sharpeners tools, brokers, etc.).

## 1.2 language & culture

The different groups of Roma have rich and old culture and story. Music and craft take an important place in their daily life. The culture is mostly unwritten but it remained unified and inside the family. Nearly all of Italian's Roma and Sinti groups speak Italian and a Romanés contaminated by many Italian dialect influences. Immigrants Roma groups mostly speak Vlax Romani. The main cultural and religious traits are strongly rooted in their home countries.

## 1.3 living conditions and social status (gender roles, diversity management)

The only distinctions within communities are based on the gender and on the age. The family (father, mother, children) is the basic structure of the Roma community. The extended family, includes relatives whom they maintain relationships of coexistence in the same group, common interests and business. The division and social force between men and women is based on a division of labour.

For Roma women, early marriages and births, the number of children and severely deprived housing conditions make them particularly vulnerable and struggle their access to education and employment.

## 1.4 poverty in Roma settlements

According to Amnesty international, the population of Roma living in camps live in overcrowded, poor conditions, without adequate access to water and electricity. They are also excluded from social housing, applicants having to prove that they had been lawfully evicted from private rented accommodation, an impossible task for Roma living in or forcibly evicted from camps<sup>66</sup>. Most of the Roma are separated from the

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/10/italy-roma-segregation-camps-blight-city-rome/>

mainstream Italian society. Forceful evictions of camps also make it more difficult to know where exactly the Roma population is situated.

Moreover, l'UNAR warns on the lack of knowledge of the Italian citizen about these communities which lead to stereotypes (as such as Roma are thieves, they exploit children etc.) and encourage racism and discrimination.

### *1.5 access to social services<sup>67</sup>*

One major obstacle that prevents many Roma from accessing social and health services is the lack of appropriate documentation, including birth and marriage certificates, residence permits and identification documents, often leaving Roma officially “stateless” and putting into question their legal status. Other barriers that prevent Roma communities accessing social services are poor information and distrust with respect to social workers. Contact between social service practitioners and Roma communities are not helped either by communication obstacles, often due to language barriers.

### *1.6 legislation for Roma<sup>68</sup>*

Italy's National Roma Integration Strategy defines the roadmap for public policies in the area of the social inclusion of the Roma. In defining policies focused on the gradual elimination of poverty and social exclusion among marginalised Roma communities, the strategy recognises the importance of developing local action plans reflecting the needs of individual communities. The new strategy established four key areas of intervention: education, employment, health, and housing.

The strategy relies on the co-operation of all stakeholders involved in the process of Roma inclusion, including NGOs, the media, academia, and the Roma themselves. It was drawn up with the participation of several Roma communities, alongside provinces and municipalities, and aims, among other things, to resolve the legal status of Roma from the Balkans as well as to recognise the Sinti, Roma and Caminanti as ethnic minorities. It looks, among other things, at how to eliminate Roma camps by providing safe housing and how to promote microcredit, as well as a vaccination campaign for Roma families.

In 2014, the Commission adopted its assessment on the progress made in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in the four key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing, as well as in the fight against discrimination and the use of funding.

The IRIS project (Roma Integration through Sport) by the local committee Uisp Cirié Settimo in Chivasso aims to countering Roma stereotypes. The IRIS project also aims

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<sup>67</sup> Based on

[http://www.eurodiaconia.org/files/Eurodiaconia\\_policy\\_papers\\_and\\_briefings/POV\\_24\\_10\\_Policy\\_paper\\_Social\\_Rights\\_for\\_Roma.pdf](http://www.eurodiaconia.org/files/Eurodiaconia_policy_papers_and_briefings/POV_24_10_Policy_paper_Social_Rights_for_Roma.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> Based on [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/italy/national-strategy/national\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/italy/national-strategy/national_en.htm)



at contributing to the integration of Roma people, and particularly Roma children through sport.

## Educational status.

### 2.1 policy issues on education

One of the top goals of Italy's National Strategy for the Roma is to ensure education for all Roma children, to promote non-discriminatory access to education and to tackle the problem of leaving school early. The MIUR<sup>69</sup> expose that in 2011 some measures were planned to reduce early school leaving rate in Campania, Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily. A National project launched in 2013 involving 13 large municipalities, aimed at increasing school attendance of Roma children in primary and secondary schools.

In 1986, the Education Ministry made it compulsory for Roma children to attend school, introducing the concept of "mutual responsibility"<sup>70</sup>. This means that the Roma people have a duty to send their children to school, and the institutions need to respect their cultural identity. These legislative measures were put in place to improve the situation for Roma people. However, in practice they were not successfully implemented. Prejudice and racism are reasons for why they drop out. Another reason for why the attendance rate is so low among Roma children is that some schools refuse to register Roma pupils who live in camps nearby.

### 2.2 education level of men and women (data and figures about the enrolment of Roma in the different educational stages)

According to the FRA, about 53 % of Roma children aged 4 to compulsory primary education age attended either preschool or kindergarten and only 62% of the 6-15 years old had a preschool experience in 2011. The FRA survey published the highest educational level attained by the Roma people : 20% have only a non-formal education (25% of the women and 15% of the men), 23% have an incomplete primary school education (24% of the women and 21% of the men), 48% have a complete primary school (44% of the women and 53% of the men) and 9% have a complete secondary or higher education (8% of the women and 11% of the men).

Moreover, 16% of Roma people finish the school after 16 or are still in education (12% of the women and 19% of the men) compared to 63% who left before 16 (66% of the women and 61% of the men) and 21% who have never been in education (22% of women and 20% of men have never had an education).

### 2.3 vocational training and life-long learning

According to its Constitution, the Italian Republic guarantees school for all and requires that the mandatory duty of solidarity be fulfilled. Moreover, it is the "duty of the Republic to remove any obstacles constraining the freedom and equality of citizens in order to ensure the full development of the human person".

<sup>69</sup> Italian Education Ministry <http://www.istruzione.it/>

<sup>70</sup> Richardson Institute (report), *The Roma people in Europe*, 2014

From these articles, the Roma community are included in programs of inclusion and training made for migrants and refugees.

There is no specific data about the involvement of the Roma in some vocational training and long-life learning.

## 2.4 barriers to education

In Italy the main barriers to education are the severe forced evictions of the camps<sup>71</sup> in which families often lose everything they have, having a short time to collect their personal belongings including clothes, books and other study materials. The families are left homeless in harsh conditions and have to resettle and it impacts the school attending, discouraging pupils and students.

The FRA also points the lack of will in policies, a virulent racism among Italian people towards Roma communities and the ethnic segregation and discrimination in classes as barriers to education.

### Employment status.

#### *Type & level (employment profile, status of Roma unemployment, comparison with mainstream unemployment trends, professions)*

According to the FRA, in 2011, 31% of the Roma people were unemployed (compared to 9% of Italian), 26% were “self-employed”, 5% had a paid work, 22% were full time homemakers and the rest were in education or had other types of situation (disabled, retired, had another unpaid work etc.). Moreover, in 2011, 69% of young Roma people aged from 16 to 24 are not in employment, education or training compared to 32% of the Italian of the same age in the same period<sup>72</sup>.

There is a huge difference between the men’s and the women’s situations : 48% of the men had a paid work compared to 22% of women and 37% of the men were unemployed compared to 22% of women. The survey shows that none of the men were homemaker compared to 44% of the women which can be explained in part by the cultural fact.

Recycling is the economic activity the most widely practiced the by Roma metropolitan communities. The presence of foreign concentrated in large cities such as Rome, Milan, Naples and Turin is due to the recycling activities that a large number of Roma practice that can only be carried out in urban contexts. Over the years, the gathering and recycling of metals, garments and other objects has become a specialisation of the Roma. Such survival activities which are generally carried out by the individual familial groups have, in some cases, structured itself in the form of social working cooperatives or associations.

<sup>71</sup> Moore A., Central European University, *Roma Education in the 21st Century – A look at contemporary legal*

*framework and barriers to access in Italy and Hungary*, 2014

<sup>72</sup> Istat – Tasso di disoccupazione [http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV\\_TAXDISOCCU](http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_TAXDISOCCU)



### 3.2 Innovations on Roma employment (Any active labour market programs)<sup>73</sup>

At the European and national level, policies have been implemented but it's at the local level where we can find the most diversified forms of interventions in favour of Roma employment to which both Italian and foreign Roma can have access.

The Institutional initiatives offer tools dedicated to all citizens (i.e. apprenticeships for professional qualification, traineeships programmes for youngsters, *borse lavoro* and vocational training). The Social Economy or Third Sector through the NGOs offer also tools (as mediators and assistants) and programs lead with the locals administrations for example to fight against school drop-out, fund toy libraries, work towards social, etc. All the other initiatives generically categorised as "self-employment" of the Roma population consist in majority in social cooperatives and NGOs.

### 3.3 Policy issues on Roma employment

The situation of the Italian job market is characterised by two main elements: the consistent presence of the informal economy and the fact that access to formal jobs is differentiated into many different forms of temporary contracts. Although they have not been indicated explicitly as beneficiaries, Roma are often included in many of the categories who are entitled to benefit from these actions (as unemployed persons, as youth in need of training, or as migrants or refugees in the case that they are foreigners).

The Italian government<sup>74</sup> promotes vocational training and job orientation and has developed some projects targeting Roma people which aims at preventing early school leaving, integrating migrants, fighting undeclared work, promoting access to services, promoting self-employment. A national website has been implemented to improve access for foreign nationals to services such as education, work, housing and childcare.

## Health status.

### 4.1 Life Expectancy

According to the 2013 Istat datas, the average life expectancy in Italy is 84.6 for women and 79.8 years for men. According to World Health Organisation, Italy had the world's 2nd highest life expectancy in 2013.

However, according to Medecins du Monde the indicators for the Roma community show that they live with rates comparable to underdeveloped countries : the new born mortality is 9 times higher than the average in Europe and life expectancy is around 50-60 years.

<sup>73</sup> Based on Roma Education Fund (report), *Roma Inclusion in Italy: National education and employment strategies and actions*, 2012

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/Pages/home.aspx>

The 2011 FRA survey expose that in Italy 26% of the Roma declared having complaints, injuries or diseases that limit their everyday activities, keeping them from doing such things as working, shopping, managing their life or keeping contact with other people. It's seven times higher than the average (non-Roma).

Moreover in 2011, 8% of the men in Roma communities evaluated their health as "very bad" compared to 20% of women. 19% of the men estimated to be in "very good" health, compared to 12% of women.

#### *4.2 diseases and immunization uptake<sup>75</sup>*

Available studies have shown a higher rate of infectious diseases among Roma communities than the majority population and Roma are disproportionately affected by communicable diseases. This is linked to living conditions, health perceptions and behaviour, limited inclusion in prevention programmes such as vaccination programmes, and entrenched discrimination. A study of five Italian cities<sup>76</sup> found risk factors associated with diarrhoea, cough and respiratory difficulties. Factors related to living condition including water stagnating, size of camp (population density), presence of rats, poor housing conditions, houses overcrowded, no indoor access to sanitation, use of wood-burning stoves and prolonged stay are increasing the risks. It appears also that women often lack to have a medical assistance during the pregnancy and information about contraception.

#### *4.3 Access to health services*

The national Italian health system provides universal access to healthcare (including Roma people), prevention and uniform criteria for quality services throughout the country. Additional financial allocations in 2012 and 2013 to a national health institute, created to improve migrants' health and to fight poverty-related diseases. The project "TroVARSI" – Vaccinations for Roma and Sinti – started in 2013, aims at better protecting Roma children from diseases that can be prevented by ordinary vaccination. However, a lot of migrants and especially in the Roma community don't know that they can pretend to these social health services and in Italy 20 % of the Roma don't have any form of medical insurance, according to the FRA, in 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Based on [http://ec.europa.eu/health/social\\_determinants/docs/2014\\_roma\\_health\\_report\\_es\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/2014_roma_health_report_es_en.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2636417/pdf/2035.pdf>

## ROMANIA

### Basic characteristics of the Roma:

In this paper we propose to present a number of characteristics of population Roma from Romania. The main goal is to achieve a material accessible to allowing a large number of readers form a big picture on this minorities in our country.

Roma population has a very young demographic structure, determined by the structure highest values of mortality and fertility Roma compared to the general population. In 1998, about a third of the Roma population was represented by children (0-14 years), the proportion of old people was about 5%, and the average age of the Roma population It was approximately 24 years. Due to declining fertility trends, recorded and Roma population, the share owned by Roma children in the population is declining, but the pressure exerted by the segment of children as dependents in terms of Economically, the active population is still very high, resulting in a level decreased investment in children's families.

Most Roma families are characterized by the following features: Marriage Early non probate, housing young families with one of the families of origin, number raised children, low divorce rate. "Marriage" Roma is still in many case completed only after rules (local) community of belonging, without being authenticated.

Outside the types of marriages - called "legally" or "undocumented" - there are young They live together and make a couple (consensual) without being married in front of officer marital status or face "community" or by agreement between the parents. In 1998, 39.4% of the couples in the sample were recorded in "undocumented marriages".

It should be noted that we do not know how many of these marriages "undocumented" illegal or are marriages in the community (legitimized by specific ritual to participate in wedding or By understanding between parents) - considered by specialists in the field of Roma and by leaders of the majority and the Roma as an expression of a rule Community - and just how many couples are formed without a consensual marriage ritual. Share undocumented marriages is higher for younger age groups report rising from 20% for the group 45-49 up to 83% for the group 15-19 years.

Undocumented marriage is more common for those living in rural areas, those who only house in the neighborhood of Roma families or having a smaller number of 8 years of schooling. They are more prone to such marriages who self-identify as Roma and gypsies and those who know Romani. Not all nations have the same Roma rules about the type of marriage. Among nations Roma, silversmiths, cops, blacksmiths, **zlatarii** and caldararii have a higher share of undocumented marriages, opposite Learning Gypsies silk **lăieșii**, Gypsies hearth and Rudars spoon. But even

within these nations, there are differences from one community to another. At least in the 90s, not can speak of one and the same time of marriage undocumented in two communities that I recognize as belonging to the same nation. Different communities relate to the norm type of marriage differently: there are communities characterized by a tradition of marriages undocumented tradition maintained and at the moment, there are communities that phased marriage undocumented, there are groups of Roma the rule is marriage Roma groups for legalized and consensual couples are increasingly Frequently, without a storage about a local custom. Formation consensual couples is increasing for all categories of population in Romania and other European countries. What is interesting in the case of the Roma population is on the one hand, the increasing incidence of the phenomenon without being accompanied by a visible change of status of women, on the other hand the very high frequency of this form of cohabitation. Increasing incidence "marriages without papers" is not a fact "cultural" itself, meaning usually the norm of Roma communities, but high values were favored cultural peculiarities of this ethnic group. Analysis revealed that differentiating characteristics are indicators opening / isolation with respect to "life" outside the family and community in relation to alternative models marriage. Roma female population structure by marital status reveals a low incidence divorce. In 1998, there are between 2 and 4 persons married to divorced to 100 people acts and between 8 and 9 persons separated or divorced 100 married people with or without acts. Women who do not identify themselves with the Roma have a higher share divorces, thus defining a greater distance model communities Roma and the majority population closer model

### Educational status

Compared with the total population of Romania preschool participation, participation in preschool education of Roma children is about four times smaller. In terms of school participation of Roma is lower by 15-25% than participation in the total population for primary and nearly 30% secondary school. Of attendance at school, the large number of non-answers us make a precise determination to prevent the participation of Roma in this form education. But we can assume that the large number of non-answers reflect the real cases of non-participation. In this case, Roma participation in secondary education would be almost 40% lower than in the general population. In higher education Roma this is rather an exception, the percentage of Roma following a college insignificant. Although low school attendance of Roma children was improved compared to the early 90. It was diminished in a significant proportion of the number of children unschooled and patients who discontinued schooling fell almost by half. This improvement Roma school participation is a result of conditioning allowance for children this school. Although moral and socio-

economic criticism of this measure took effect. Desirable in terms of school attendance of Roma.

The fact that almost 90% of unschooled children come from poor families demonstrates how strong conditioning access to educational resources economic family home. Beyond that correlates with being uneducated and a number of determinants such as: neighborhood (cultural influence), language spoken in the family, declared nationality.

Thus, compact Roma communities, where it is used predominantly Romani in the family and community and where declare their Roma as such nationality, school attendance is lower. We can assume that these community has a great distrust toward school or may drive a cultural model

different but we can not rule out any hypothesis geographical isolation of these communities. Finally, should not ignore systemic factors from within the school system.

The existence of schools with a majority of Roma students is a reality although until

Currently there is a quantitative picture of the phenomenon. It is assumed, however, that, given

the role of the family in school-related financing expenses (fund classes, supplies, special notebooks, textbooks, tutoring, etc.) and in direct or indirect support to school children, these schools have the financial resources significantly lower than those of schools 'normal' human resources and consequently lower.

Generational analysis of education level of the Roma population show that if all generations, educational levels to which most individuals are turning (Primary and secondary) are below the level required to occupy a minimal position on labor market. The lowest levels of schooling we find the generation "elderly" comprising individuals who were or could have been, trained to do so before 1960.

Highest level of education you find the generation "sweep" who has trained or 16 He could do it between 1960-1980. Finally, the young generation that entered or would I had to enter the educational process between 1980 and 1989 generation "Transition" (1990-1998) was an increase in the incidence of non-schooling and generally Tuition levels lower than the generation "mature" improving situation in recent years (due to conditioning the allowance for participation school) is not sufficient to correct the deficit in generation of school participation "Transition" versus generation "sweep" of school age in the '60s and '70s.

A Tuition explanation for these differences between generations consists policies

educational and social from the communist period (period of relative prosperity economic 60s - 70s) which encouraged school attendance of Roma.

### Illiteracy situation.

The lowest incidence of illiteracy is to be found at mature generation, where approximately 30% of subjects can be considered illiterate (Read with difficulty or not at all) while the highest incidence is in generation elderly.

Thus, if generation "older" over 45% of respondents declared read with difficulty or not at all, and the large number of non-responses is likely declared cases of illiterates refusal to respond to the negative image due associated with it.

If we take into consideration the non-responses would mean that within generation "older" over 60% of respondents are illiterate.

Regarding generations "young" and "transition" trend finds that the incidence of illiteracy

It is slightly higher than generation "mature". If in generation terms "elderly", the share of illiterate women is more higher than that of men, the difference between the sexes in respect of illiteracy

reducing the generation where "mature" and canceling generations "young" and "transition".

### Employment status

Professional training is an important indicator of Roma participation social and economic development.

Depending it can integrate more easily market labor and can financially support the families they come from. Just over half of Roma have no job or jobs that need practice

prior qualification in the formal system of training. Thus, 33.5% of Roma have no qualifications (14.3%) are farmers and (4.6%) are day laborers.

Modern qualifications meet in 37.3% of cases and 10.3% of those in traditional cases.

We can not talk of major differences between residence and urban areas respectively. In Instead, men are skilled in a higher proportion than women, the percentage of women free items (37.1%) was significantly higher than that of men (15.3%). Type the Roma community living has profound implications in terms their qualification.

Thus for Roma from compact communities and somewhat isolates are specific or lack qualifications or the existence of competent trades traditional type. As they depart from the Roma community become Qualified, usually in modern professions.

Analysis suggests a generational shift pattern Roma population qualifications.

If the grandparents constitute the main share traditional trades, this gradually decreasing the generation of their parents and get to be poor population young.

If modern type trades trend is the opposite, being more present in If young population which is normal if we take into account changes economic and employment structure occurred in the last 50-60 years. Very important and serious at the same time is that young people without job

adults exceed that weight which means that after 1990 most of Roma youth were not qualified in any profession.

Roma population has a different age structure of the population nationwide. She is very young, about 1/3 of the total being under 15 years unlike the total population is about one-fifth below 15 years. This situation shows that that in the coming years a significant number of Roma youth will enter the labor market, lack of qualification prompting many to turn to work "inferior" in terms of view of remuneration or social prestige.

#### Roma participation in the labor market.

Overall occupancy Roma population in Romania is much lower than the national population (47% vs. 61.7%). The percentage of housewives is over 4 times higher among Roma than on

national and Roma show poor participation of women in the labor market.

Much of the Roma have no occupation (13.2%) and the rate of unemployed who receive aid

Unemployment registered nationwide in 1998 was higher than among Roma (6.3% to 0.5%); The share of registered unemployed is low among the Roma, on the one hand because few have completed high school and vocational school or have He worked with labor and, on the other hand, for a small part of Roma were employees and lost work became unemployed. In addition, many have

recently surpassed the period of unemployment benefit, it is what is called long-term unemployed

term, a situation they do not appear in official statistics on unemployment.

Of the total Roma population employed in the work it represents about 2/3 men (65 %) And just under a third of them are employees. The employees come mainly from communities where Roma live alongside Romanian. This may indicate degrees High Roma integration when adopt the behavior of the majority. The high proportion of day laborers, 41.7% of the population indicate that Roma are in a



difficult situation in terms of employment and, implicitly, the minimum income necessary to satisfy basic needs.

Among the jobs they have close links exist Roma occupations, the job they have

resulting in many cases and occupation or no occupation today. Training low professional makes Roma have few qualifications designed to assist them to enter the labor market and therefore most of them to exploit marginal resources revenue assurance needs to live.

Characterization economic standard of households Roma starts from analysis declared income. To compensate for the fragility of these data were considered Additional information on the types of activities practiced types of income enter the household budget over a year, considered the most important source of by household members, income deemed necessary to cover minimum needs

family, endowment and housing characteristics, subjective assessment of living conditions,

the main destinations for possible additional income. Regarding the main sources of income distinction watched variability in income time delineating between permanent income, which constantly participate in budget household income and non-permanent. The high frequency of the latter is a

peculiarity of the Roma: 53.4% of households reported incomes impermanent in their budget last month before research. Moreover, from 1992 and 1998 permanent income recorded a downward trend in their contribution to household budget, which equates to growth of income instability Roma. Revenue category of permanent income between wages and social transfers. Nonpermanent revenues vary from one time to another, both as source and as size. Within distinguish their income from activities on their own, the result of practice a trade or business carried on its own or income occasional feature mainly by external circumstances of the individual. In this last subgroup includes income from day labor, in kind income for hard work, as those coming from activities "used" as cutting wood, sale of various products, small trade (bottles, berries), work abroad, practicing various unskilled work or minimum degree qualification or activities illegal.

Pensions awarded in the case of illness and disability occurring in 5.8% and 4.7% of households. Over a year, the most common non-permanent source of income is work laborer, declared in half of the households. Behind her stands on group activities own, in which the cumulated trade and business, then land and labor help from others, followed by income from work abroad (4% of households), usury (1.8%), the sale of properties (1.7%), gambling (0.6%), guessed respectively (0.2%).



## Health status.

Due to the difficulties of making an assessment in terms of health care Roma population, we opted for a set of subjective indicators that give an image on the perceived quality of health. According to these indicators 72.5% investigated estimated that the total population does not have serious health problems. 11.2%

They have "little health problems", 14.0% were "serious problems" while declaring 2.3%

Disabled. However, the data reveals the existence of a "risk group" representing 9.6% of

all persons included in the sample. Risk group consists of people extremely vulnerable to serious health problems and a highly economical situation poor (incomes - at best - cover the essential, are deprived of food often or very often and live in households rated as poor operators and very poor).

One of the factors that negatively affect the health of the Roma population and in

especially children from low-income families is both poor nutrition quantitatively and qualitatively that cause vitamin deficiency, malnutrition, anemia, dystrophy, rickets and, in most cases, stature deficit-weight - conditions that - in the opinion of doctors surveyed - affects an important segment of Roma children.

Another important class of diseases and food poisoning are entero colitis. In a privileged situation, in terms of nutrition, there are children institutionalized for which the daily requirement of food is mostly covered. Unfortunately, this situation is a factor for institutionalization of children and also can impede efforts deinstitutionalization.

Another category of children advantaged in terms of food are due infants practice Roma mothers to breastfeed their babies naturally. According to statistics, in 1992 'two-thirds of Roma mothers breastfeeding their children more than nine months '3. Health problems of the Roma population are complex, but are not related ethnic but rather cultural (lifestyle) and socioeconomic (living standards low). And to solve this complex problem requires an approach interdisciplinary provide more than symptomatic treatment.

Pragmatic speaking, to meet the health needs of the Roma population is necessary that the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with local councils in areas with a share It meant the Roma population to develop special programs for healthcare prevention and health education. Another possible solution, already experienced results positive in many Roma communities is to hire Roma people who work as community mediators on health issues. This society initiative Roma Civil has already been formalized through a partnership with the Ministry of Health and Family.



## SPAIN

### Basic characteristics of the Roma community in Spain

Roma Communities are present in Spain for more than six hundred years. Up to now and according to *the National Strategy of Roma Inclusion in Spain 2012-2020*, there are approximately 725.000-750.000 Roma people living in the whole country. In general, at least 40% of total of Roma people are located in Andalucía. Moreover, Catalonia, Valencia and Madrid have also an important presence of Roma communities. In order to avoid racism and xenophobic policies, there is not official registration of ethnic identity in Spain, so that these data are just an estimation based on several private studies. On the other hand, this is a reason why is so difficult to design better policies to guarantee social equality for Roma community.

Since the beginning, Roma families settled in the country side. During the fifties of last century they moved to urban areas.

According to several socio-demographic studies, approximately one third of Roma people living in Spain, are less than 16 years old. Despite decreasing their levels of childbearing, they still have higher birth rate than the general society. Usually, Roma families are composed by 4,7 or 4,9 members<sup>77</sup>.

Most of Roma people in Spain speak Spanish. In fact, during the history, Spanish language has included lots of words coming from Caló language, a mixture between Romani and Spanish that is still alive in some Roma circles. Broadly speaking, Caló preserves vocabulary from Romani language but uses Spanish grammatical structure to be articulated. We can identify two main versions of such language: Catalan Caló and Andalusian Caló<sup>78</sup>.

In general, Roma community has many common values with the rest of the Spanish society. Roma people consider important health, money (and work) and love (family and friends).

On the contrary, and according to the Sociological Research Centre (CIS) and in relation to the study “Social Diagnostic of Roma Community in Spain, a comparative analysis of Roma household survey”, Roma people give more importance to religion

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<sup>77</sup> Laparra, M. *the Social Diagnostic of Roma Community in Spain, a comparative analysis of Roma household survey*. Sociological Research Centre (CIS). Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality, 2011. Available at

[http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/diagnosticosocial\\_autores.pdf](http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/diagnosticosocial_autores.pdf)

Last accessed: February 2016

<sup>78</sup> Jiménez González, N. *¿En que hablan los gitanos españoles?*. Vidas Gitanas, 2007. Available at

[http://www.accioncultural.es/virtuales/vidasgitanas/pdf/vidas\\_gitanas\\_07.pdf](http://www.accioncultural.es/virtuales/vidasgitanas/pdf/vidas_gitanas_07.pdf)

Last accessed: February 2016

than to politics. Some studies have shown the importance that Roma community gives to religion. Approximately, the 40% of Roma are evangelists and are led by family-based values. The other 60% are Catholics, atheists or non-believers. In reality, religion appears as a tool to promote an emancipatory action or to understand their role within the social structure<sup>79</sup>.

Unlike the rest of the Spanish society, the unemployment is the main worry of Roma community in Spain, in comparison with the low importance they give to political and economic problems. They are more sensitive to social problems, especially to those which directly affect to their community: unemployment, drugs, and racism.

According to Spanish Roma social situation, communities are heterogeneous and diverse. Unfortunately, Spanish society usually links Roma culture with people living in poverty, marginalization and in social exclusion contexts. However, there are also Roma families who have relatively higher economic and social status and live in good conditions.

Furthermore, Roma communities are improving their social situation; nevertheless, the 77% of Roma families are living below the relative poverty line. In general, due to the economic crisis the situation became more critical for citizenship, especially for those who have lost their job, or even for those who were in the limit of poverty. Roma communities suffer the consequences of the new economic scenario. For this reason, it is fundamental to keep on supporting social-related initiatives to promote Roma equality and to offer better economic situations to guarantee social rights as education, housing, health and employment.

Over and above the diversity of Roma communities in Spain, an important number of Roma people from Romania and Bulgaria have migrated to Spain since 2002. The inclusion of this countries to the European Union has been the door to all those who were looking for improving their life conditions. In relation to *the National Strategy of Roma Inclusion in Spain 2012-2020*<sup>80</sup>, it is difficult to quantify how many people they are because they are included in greater Bulgarian and Romanian citizen contingents living in Spain and there is no information regarding with their ethnicity.

At political level, "*the National Strategy of Roma Inclusion in Spain 2012-2020*" tries to promote Roma inclusion through different objectives, political measures and plans. The main idea is decreasing social disadvantages. In order to reduce poverty, Spain has launched several initiatives linked with such strategy, for instance the National

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<sup>79</sup> Laparra M, 2011.

<sup>80</sup> *National Strategy of Roma Inclusion in Spain 2012-2020*, available at:

[https://www.gitanos.org/upload/98/25/ESTRATEGIA\\_NACIONAL\\_PARA\\_LA\\_INCLUSION\\_SOCIAL\\_DE\\_LA\\_POBLACION\\_GITANA\\_DEF.pdf](https://www.gitanos.org/upload/98/25/ESTRATEGIA_NACIONAL_PARA_LA_INCLUSION_SOCIAL_DE_LA_POBLACION_GITANA_DEF.pdf), last accessed: February 2016

Reform Programme (PNR). The programme offers multiple measures to promote education. As examples: schooling support projects, grant's programmes, projects to reduce absenteeism, new Vocational Training measures to make studying more flexible, among too many others.

In the field of occupation, the PNR works to reduce labour segmentation and temporary contracts. The aim is to improve labour opportunities for those who are unemployed, especially Roma youth and women. Furthermore, the plan tries to promote the economy of Roma families with the aim of offering better life conditions.

On the other hand, the Roma strategy in Spain is also linked with the *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training ('ET 2020')*, which is useful to: promote lifelong learning programmes and mobility, improve education and training quality, promote equality, social cohesion and an active citizenship; and last but not least, to promote innovation and creativity as well as entrepreneurship in all training levels.

Likewise, the *Labour Spanish Strategy 2012-2014*, *The Rehabilitation and Housing Plan 2009-2012*, *The Social Rights Plan 2008*, *The II Strategic Plan for Inclusion and Citizenship 2011-2014*, *The National Strategy against racism, discrimination, xenophobic and other forms of intolerance (2011)*, among others; are sort of national strategies which are working in cooperation with the National strategy for Roma Inclusion 2020 to develop better social policies for Roma communities.

At regional level, The Government of Catalonia has also developed its Roma Integral Plan which is in its third edition now. *The third Roma Integral Plan of Catalonia 2014-2016*, indeed, looks for promoting Roma education, social live conditions and employment. Also it includes several initiatives to promote community participation, health and housing. The plan have been designed by 10 Roma representatives, together with one member of Roma Studies Centre (University of Barcelona), one Roma community consultant and the Second Deputy of The Advisor Council of Roma Community in Catalonia, which is composed by 21 Roma members from different social organizations.

At local level, Barcelona Council municipality has created together with other Roma entities and representatives a political document called *The Roma Local Strategy 2015* with the aim to promote Roma education, health, housing and Occupation in the city and in its peripheral area.

### Educational status

The educational status of Roma community has improved over the last 20 years. Spanish legislation tries to guarantee the full right of having an equal education to all

society. Thus, Roma children attend at school, which has become perfect place to share different cultures. Progressively, Roma children and young Roma continue studying till becoming lawyers, teachers, engineers, social workers, doctors, nurses, etc.

Moreover, some adults, especially women, are striving to improve their reading and writing level as well as trying to overcome those difficulties found in their childhood.

There are social organizations and institutions, in Catalonia for instance, dedicated to provide schooling support, vocational educational training, university access and second-chance education programmes to Roma youth and adults.

In general, the education of children at primary school and youngsters at secondary school is covered. Although Roma community has lower school attendance rate in primary school than the rest of society, the ratio is currently almost equal. However, there are still some common and frequent problems such as schooling absenteeism and early dropout. These situations are more evident in secondary education, especially for young girls who use to get married at the age of fifteen.

Unfortunately, in relation to post-compulsory education, despite increasing in the past years, the presence of young Roma is still very low in comparison with the rest of society. For this reason, the educational status of Roma community is lower than the rest of society, and even more there still are an important number of illiterates becoming to the older generations<sup>81</sup>.

In conclusion, only 2.6% of young Roma between 18 and 24 years old are currently studying, and what is worse, seven out of ten young Roma do not finish compulsory education. Certainly this is the hint of the big distance between the Spanish society and the Roma community. To avoid crossing this limit that would be the total exclusion of Roma community in Spain is the main reason to promote lifelong learning programmes and vocational educational training programmes. The challenge is to guarantee social equality within Roma community.

### Employment status

Roma community present a high occupancy rate and an important role within the economic activity. In fact, 68,9% of Roma people is employed, 8.8 points beyond the rest of society<sup>82</sup>. This is curious according to the common idea that society has of Roma community. Usually Roma community is seen by society as lazy and passive people. On the contrary, they have not stopped working ever, and what is more, they

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<sup>81</sup> Quoted from *the National Strategy of Roma Inclusion in Spain 2012-2020*

<sup>82</sup> Idem.



use to start working very young. Perhaps, the problem is that the approaches of studies which measure the occupancy rate do not point out to sort of informal jobs<sup>83</sup>.

Traditionally, Roma community lived from craft but due to the new economic situation, they, themselves, have to adapt at other professions. Regarding with their economic activities, they use to have presence at agricultural sector and in the informal markets, selling clothes and shoes. However, there is increasing competition between families in the market, so that they have started to manage the commercialization of scrap metal<sup>84</sup>.

Likewise, sometimes Roma people occupy low-wage employment because of their low level of education. Part time contracts, temporary and flexible place of work are the main jobs Roma people have. Mostly, these poor working conditions usually affect women and in particular Roma women.

According to *the National Strategy of Roma Inclusion in Spain 2012-2020*, 39% of Roma people live from street selling. Moreover, and due to the economic crisis and its impact to labour market, lots of Roma are unemployed. In fact, the unemployment rate doubled in 2005 in Spain, but the unemployment rate of Roma community trebled to reach nearly 37.5%.

### Health Status

Unfortunately, health is perceived neither as one of the main priorities within Roma community. Sometimes, housing, economic situation or occupation are understood as main priorities in Roma life. In fact, most of Roma culturally conceive lack of illness as health and illness as disabling condition linked to death. This cultural universe usually cause: disregard for small symptoms of disease, interruption and abandonment of medical treatment once the patient have improved the main symptoms of disease and to avoid visiting doctors due to be afraid of dying, among others.

Basically, this particular situation contribute to increase social exclusion, especially to all those who are living in vulnerable situation. Consequently, there is a lack of equality in the field of health. For this reason, the infant mortality is 1.4 times higher than the national average and the life expectancy is approximately 8 years less than the national average.

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<sup>83</sup> Laparra M, 2011.

<sup>84</sup> Bochaca, Jordi Garreta, and Núria Llevot Calvet. "Los gitanos en España: mercado de trabajo y educación: crónica de un desencuentro." *Educación y diversidad= Education and diversity: Revista inter-universitaria de investigación sobre discapacidad e interculturalidad* 1, 2007: 257-278.





Moreover, the situation cause: more risk for developing infection diseases, like hepatitis B, C and VIH, a deficient grade of children vaccination, poor nutrition, drug abuse, important dental problems, among others<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> Diagnostic of Roma Community's Health Status. Roma community and health status. Health Directorate-General. Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs. Available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/prevPromocion/promocion/desigualdadSalud/docs/saludComGitana.pdf>, last accessed: February 2016



## Major conclusions

Finally, Roma community has an important representativeness within Roma organizations and an active role into political spaces of dialoguing between policy makers and Roma stakeholders. Thanks to the *European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies* adopted by the European Commission the past 5th of April, 2011, the countries have developed their Roma inclusion strategy to focus on the four areas: education, health, employment and housing.

Although there are lots of initiatives to improve Roma social conditions, there are lots of barriers which make these improvements difficult, for instance: social prejudices, Roma discrimination and anti-gipsy's attitudes. In order to fight against discrimination, Roma advocacy organizations and Roma community leaders are contributing to denounce discrimination actions and to make Roma culture visible. Moreover, they are hardly working together with Public Administration to offer Roma Community better access to health, education, employment and housing.

Beyond this measures, the idea is to promote quality of life and welfare within Roma communities, but in particular, to all those who are in the limit of poverty. Fostering Education should be one of the priorities to promote social equality. Better education may contribute to better grades of social participation, better success into the labour market, better relationships with Administration and better knowledge of one's rights.

In addition, employment is largely on occasional or seasonal-basis and is mostly concentrated in the fields of trading, scrap dealing and agricultural labouring. Poverty and social exclusion also affect their health situation as they have an average life expectancy that 10-25 years lower than that of the general population, high infant mortality rates and a limited access to national health services.

Furthermore, in Romania there are a number of excluded social groups and exclusion processes evident. The Roma ethnic group suffers serious processes of exclusion. It is just one of these social segments but is probably the hardest hit. There are not one but several factors causing social exclusion. If we look at nature their notice that, unless this labor market can be determined by conditions in the local community and the country, have a determining causative factors mainly individual and to some extent cultural (or even in the community meaning cultural community), involving auto exclusion a great extent. The fact that 3.1% of Roma have no identity document excludes approximately 47,000 people (half of whom children) of all rights of citizens of the Romanian state: the education and health services free of allowance for children, emergency aid, other rights of social assistance and social insurance. They will not be able to be literate, to work legally or to be sure; They do not vote, can not

become members of Marginizations or be elected into leadership positions. They can not even come 30 or make them legally married IDs future children. Excluded or self-excluded from the labor market not covered by insurance system social, 75% of heads of Roma families believe that they and their families would be therefore entitled / should receive social assistance.

There is still need to develop appropriate mechanisms to collect data since there is absence of sufficient and accurate statistics regarding the Roma community in all of the partner countries. The national legislation should also be amended, in order to offer more protection to self-employed immigrants and fight against exploitation, undeclared work and discrimination in the workplace. It is also necessary to develop an action plan with detailed measures and establish precise and achievable goals for an effective policy framework. Finally, we also need to regularly monitor the progress that is being made, in order to evaluate the impact of each project.

Regarding the 6 NRIS priority fields, deterioration occurred in 3 of them (housing, health care, anti-discrimination), the situation remained the same in 2 others (employment and culture) while improvement was observed only in the field of education. The overall public environment also deteriorated: 2015 marked significant raise of anti-Roma rhetoric and stereotypes as well in most of the partnering countries. Unfavourable (for the social inclusion in general) mainstream developments in the fields of healthcare and education formed significant additional challenge that would disturb the Roma integration policy in the near future. The biggest success factor in 2015 was the engagement of two ESF co-funded programs (Science and Education for Smart Growth OP and Human Resources Development OP) as well as of EEA Grants and Swiss Contribution with funding the NRIS implementation in Bulgaria. It brings possibilities for fostering NRIS implementation at local level and for engaging broader set of stakeholders. Nevertheless, much more success factors are necessary to overcome the stagnation in Roma integration policy.

The SERCo project should be geared up towards paving a way for addressing almost all the above issues, at least for its end-users, either directly or indirectly:

- Active participation in vocational education through its training programme
- Provision of employment opportunities through social entrepreneurship
- Achieve a long-term future impact of reducing social isolation and discrimination for the target group through vocational education and increased employment



- Indirectly improve the health situation of the target group through all the above.



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## Project Description

**The project promotes social economy as an effective instrument for integrated development of the Roma communities by:**

- 1) analyzing the potential of applying social economy practices within Roma communities, from a social, economic and institutional point of view;
- 2) engaging policy-makers and civil servants and training Roma mediators for developing social enterprises; and
- 3) assisting Roma social business initiatives and promoting social economy within Roma communities and to the general public.

The SERCo partners recognize that social entrepreneurship can be a solution to the issues of Roma people, since it:

- helps resolving some of the existing needs of the community;
- facilitates the qualification on the job;
- uses local resources and allows the development of more entrepreneurs;
- supports traditional crafts;
- increases the qualification and education level;
- stimulates solidarity and lead to the improvement of the relationships between the members of the community;
- represents a self-help method;
- allows hiring people in vulnerable situations.

**The project's core deliverables are:**

- guidelines for Roma social entrepreneurship
- Mediators' training programme
- One-to-one mentoring for social enterprise development
- SERCO VLE for mutual learning
- Public roundtables & info days
- Network for Roma Social Economy



**SERCO Consortium:**

- University of Piraeus Research Center, / [www.kep.unipi.gr](http://www.kep.unipi.gr) , Greece – SERCo Coordinator
- IDEA ROM ONLUS, [www.idearom.it](http://www.idearom.it) , Italy
- CESIE, [www.cesie.org](http://www.cesie.org), Italy
- The European Roma Information Office-ERIO , [www.erionet.eu](http://www.erionet.eu) , Belgium
- Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “AMALIPE”, [www.amalipe.com](http://www.amalipe.com) , Bulgaria
- Fundacio Privada Pere Closa, [www.fundaciopereclosa.org](http://www.fundaciopereclosa.org) , Spain
- Tolerance and Mutual Aid Foundation (TMAF), Bulgaria
- Four Elements, [www.4-elements.org](http://www.4-elements.org) , Greece
- Association Promoting Social Inclusion PAKIV (ACPSI PAKIV), [www.pakiv.ro](http://www.pakiv.ro), Romania

