

# Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Greek Roma

Ministry of Health and Social Policy

In the framework of the Lisbon Strategy and the European Union policies for Social Inclusion, in particular taken into consideration the programmes for Roma integration and former Peer Reviews projects, the paper makes a detailed revision to the relevance of these instruments for the implementation of Greek inclusion policy, particularly, the Peer Review developed In Check Republic and in Spain.

The references to the European policy framework, from the Lisbon strategy to the recent Platform for Roma inclusion, place the roots for the analysis of the Greek policy based in two axes, as well as, the obstacles and constrains presented by the implementation of the policy.

The references to the Czech Republic and Spanish models, as potentially transferable to Greek, could be useful, but only studying, step by step, each particular situation of the process in order to check the real possibilities according to the conditions and the needed resources, or to choose the favourable elements to put in practice at that particular moment of the governance or implementation process.

In this context, the Spanish Social Policies affecting to Roma community could be relevant in order to show the mechanisms put in practice by the Spanish administrations. The analysis could be useful to establish the possible transferability, taking in to consideration, the convenient adaptation to similar situations in Greece.

One of the objectives of the peer projects is to have the opportunity to know in situ a good practice. It is very important to choose carefully the experience in order that it could show new methodologies and results which could facilitate the transfer of the knowledge provided for the visit. In the case of Greece, the exchange of experiences could be an added value for all participant countries.

## Comments to the proposed issues related to the discussion paper

### I. Assessment of the possible relevance of the Spanish policy

#### Spanish background:

- Some data about Spanish Roma community:
  - They are communities and families with different characteristics, but with a common culture: family structure, system of values, social organisation and language (some words of *caló*, derivate from the Romani language);
  - 650.000 to 700.000 (estimated by sociological research). It represents 1,6% of the Spanish total population;

- **Spanish Roma community** is living in permanent settlements;
- They are distributed among the Spanish territory, mostly concentrated in some of the Autonomous Communities and in big cities;
- It has been estimated that nearly half of Roma is less than 16 years old. They have less hope of living than the rest of the population.

#### Administrative decentralisation:

- **General Administration** of the State – Ministries.
- **17 Autonomous Communities and 2 Autonomous Cities**  
Most of the former administrative competences of the State have been transferred to the Autonomous Communities in order to develop actions in their territories (education, housing, health, employment, social action, social services and attention to Roma community).
- **City Councils and other Local Corporations (8.000 local authorities)**, which work directly with the population.

#### Ministry of Health and Social Policy

The Spanish government has been working on Roma inclusion for many years. This fact has allowed us developing some experience to afford different problems that are necessary to tackle, which most part of them are common in most countries with Roma population.

It is important to underline that the Spanish Roma has been included from the first Spanish **National Action Plan** for Social Inclusion, as a vulnerable group, according with the mandate of the European commission.

The first step of the process should be the government “political will”, but this is not enough, it is necessary that the will be accompanied of the political commitment and the adoption of measures to address the policy to this particular target group.

To improve funding, management, coordination and monitoring -the “governance” process of the policy- was, and continue being, a permanent challenge for the Spanish government and the professionals involved in the process. The Spanish government has developed some strategies to accomplish the objectives proposed in each stage of the process.

#### 1. Political commitment:

In 1985, the Spanish government decided to create a legal political framework to implement the *Roma Development Programme (RDP)*, which the main goal is to improve the quality of life of the Spanish Roma as the same level of the no Roma Spanish population. The main goal of the Programme was to promote compensatory projects with positive measures for the social inclusion of the Roma community.

In 1989 was established a fund in the national budget for the implementation of the Programme, in such way that assure the continuity of the **RDP**, allowing its sustainability. Simultaneously it was created one Administrative Unit – *Roma Development Programme* – responsible to put in practice the established in the legal framework, at present, depending of the Ministry of Health and Social Policy.

## 2. Governance:

In Spain, the Autonomous Communities have almost total administrative autonomy with competencies on social actions, social services and the attention to ethnic minorities, as consequence, to the Roma communities.

This decentralized political administration system makes necessary to establish a narrow collaboration among the General Administration of the State and the Autonomous and Local administrations. This collaboration is established by co-financing social integrated projects for preventing the marginalization and the exclusion of Roma.

### a. Coordination with the Autonomous Communities:

#### ▪ Financial level:

- **Funds:** It is established agreements, between the General administration of the State and each one of the Autonomous Communities for developing projects addressed to Roma.

This system of agreements produces the *synergy*, which increase the amount of money devoted to the projects. The compromise of the Autonomous Communities is to contribute with a fund, at least, of the 40% of the money transferred to them by the General Administration of the State. This fact, at least, duplicates the fund. Usually, the Autonomous Administrations dedicates to the Programme more money than the 40% required.

#### ▪ Technical level:

- **Management, coordination and follow up:** There are created two levels - *political* oriented: Minister Meetings (responsible ministers for social issues) - and *technical* through a permanent communication on practical issues with the experts dealing with the implementation of the projects, and through the *Follow up Commission of the Roma Development Programme*.

## b. Coordination with the Roma NGOs:

### ▪ Financial level:

Financial support to the NGOs that are realised programmes of social interest in favour to the Roma community.

- Subvention resulting from the 0.7% of the personal *annual tax* of the Spanish citizens who decides that their contribution is for social development actions.
- Subvention for Social Services (*Ministry of Health and social Policy*).

### ▪ Technical level:

The Ministry provides a permanent technical support to the NGOs working on the development of the Roma community.

## 3. Roma participation in institutional bodies:

### ▪ State Council for Roma Community:

Roma participation in public and social life is a principle and priority objective. From the creation of the RDP a Consultative Commission was the platform working as organ of Roma participation, until 2005, when the *State Council for Roma Community* was created (it is assigned to the **MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL POLICY**).

The Council is a collegial inter-ministerial consultative body. The Council institutionalized the collaboration and co-operation of the Roma NGOs and the General Administration of the State for the development of the welfare policies based on the promotion of the Roma community. One of the main objectives is to promote the communication and the exchange of information to facilitate the intercultural integration between the Roma community and the no Roma citizens.

The Council works through six Working Groups: Education, Health, Employment and Social Affairs, Culture, Housing and Citizenship and no Discrimination.

### ▪ State Council of Social Action NGOs:

In 1999 was created the State Council of Social Action NGOs, also assigned to the Ministry of Health and Social Policy. It is established that, at least, two Roma NGOs should be member of this Council.

### ▪ Institute for Roma Culture: It is assigned to the **MINISTRY OF CULTURE**.

It was created in 2007. One of its goals is to maintain a narrow coordination between the *State Council of Roma Community* and the *Institute of Roma Culture*. In order to facilitate the communication the second Vice-president of the State Council, who must be Roma, is also member of the Institute. Some of its main objectives are:

- To promote the diffusion of the Roma cultural patrimony;
- To recuperate the learning of the Romani language;

- To implicate to women and youth Roma in the elaboration of materials to promote the Roma culture.

- **Other actions to promote participation:**

In the believe that ignorance is the main source of racism and discrimination, the Spanish Government has particular interest to promote actions able to visualize the Roma culture in order to improve the cohabitation through the knowledge of the cultures of the different group that, nowadays, form our plural society.

- **Sensitization campaigns: 2006-2007-2008<sup>1</sup>:** Financed with the European Social Funds;
- **Promotion of the Roma International Day (8 of April): “River Ceremony”:** Similar ceremonies at regional and local level and in regional and local Parliaments;
- **Promotion of the participation in International event: EXPO ZARAGOZA** for the first time in this event it was dedicated a day as ROMA DAY, the 23, June, 2008.

#### 4. Studies:

The studies and researches are very important for providing data for developing the most suitable policies, in the most sustainable and efficient possible way. The most recently published and publicly presented by the responsible Ministers are:

- **Ministry of Health and Social Policy:**  
*Health and Roma Community, 2007<sup>2</sup>* -Report based on Health Enquiry 2006 to Roma community – 2006;
- **Ministry of Housing:** *Housing Map and Roma Community in Spain<sup>3</sup>, 2007.*

#### 5. Legislation: Promotion of the intercultural cohabitation and action against discrimination

Spain has transposed the two Directives of the European Union:

- Directive 2000/43/CE: Related to the principle of equal treatment of the persons, independent of his racial or ethnic origin.
- Directive 2000/7CE: Related to establish a general framework for equal treatment in the employment and in the occupation.

In 2003, the Directives were transposed to the Spanish legislation through the Law 62/2003, of December 30, of *fiscal, administrative and social order measures*, in the Chapter III disposes the *Measures for the application of the equal treatment principle*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Developed by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano.

<sup>2</sup> Study ordered by the Ministry of Health and Social Policy, realized by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Study ordered by the Ministry of Housing and realized by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007).

In 2008 it was created the *Council for the promotion of the equal treatment and non discrimination of persons for racial or ethnic origin*, in which participates representatives of the Roma NGOs.

Spain has also signed the *Frame-work convention for the protection of national minorities*, of the Council of Europe.

The Autonomous Communities and the Municipalities can develop their own legislative system (laws for the development and regulation of their own regional and municipal plans and programmes addressed to Roma, for establishing the own Roma councils, for developing activities for Roma)

### Other ministries: policies affecting directly to Roma

#### ▪ Ministry of Education:

In the Law of Education it is priority to consider the diversity of the students, from different countries and different ethnic groups. For this reason; **Equity** is one of the main principles in all levels of education, putting special attention to:

- Diversity;
- Special educational needs;
- Compensation of the educational inequalities;
- High intellectual capacities;
- The inclusion in the curricula of Secondary Education a new discipline: Education for the citizenship.

#### ▪ Ministry of Housing:

The National Housing Plan does not offer particular programmes for Roma or other vulnerable groups; they have the same opportunity to apply for social housing than the rest of the population. However, the members of the Roma community that apply for a house accomplished most of the criteria.

At present, the eradication of the remained slums, as well as, the renovation of buildings where are living members of the Roma community are the main priority for the governments of the three levels of administration of Spain.

In spite of the efforts realized by the Spanish government, still remain slums. According to the *Housing Map and Roma Community in Spain*<sup>4</sup>, 2007, the slums represent the 3.9% of the houses where are living vulnerable groups, mostly Roma. However, in Spain most of the Roma community is living in buildings. The 11.9% of these buildings still had some deficiencies or lack of the minimum comfort for living.

<sup>4</sup> Study ordered by the Ministry of Housing and realized by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007).

- **Ministry of Equality:**

The competencies of the Ministry are oriented to eliminate the inequalities in the society. Some of its objectives are:

- To develop the *Law of Equality* (pending of approval);
- To sensitize to the citizens about their rights of equality;
- To promote the equal opportunities for all.

The Ministry has assigned two institutions for the promotion of programmes and actions in favour of Roma:

- **Women Institute:** *Actions address to Roma women included in the Equality Plans;*
- **Youth Institute:** *Specific actions for young Roma, Included in the Youth Plan, 2009-2012.*

- **Ministry of Labour and Immigration:**

- **General Secretary of Employment:** *Actions related to development of employment;*
- **Council for the promotion of the equal treatment and non discrimination of persons for racial or ethnic origin,** created in 2008 (mentioned in the point Legislation) is assigned to the **Ministry of Labour and Immigration;**
- **Spanish Observatory for Racism and Xenophobia:** *Dealing with subjects related to discrimination.*

## II. Similarities

In the context of the Greek policy, there are similarities with Spain. Greek policy present:

- National scope and inter-ministerial co-ordination;
- Roma are Greek citizens as Spanish Roma;
- Developed National Action Plan;
- An important social component with integration objectives in all the social actions, even though that apparently, the actions are not all of them tackled simultaneously;
- An important impact in housing;
- Funding with national budget;
- Use of the European Funds.

## III. Learning from Greek values

The Greek experiences could be very useful, not only for Spain, but also for the rest of the participant countries.

It possible to realise that some of the problems related to Roma are the same in Spain.

At present, most of the Spanish Roma population is socially integrated, but still there are a percentage of them who remain in disadvantage social conditions, for this reason we continue face the same problematic than the Greek government and many things to learn from them.

#### IV. Questions on Roma social inclusion-debate

The policy debate on Roma issues is always present. We began to deal with these subjects 20 years ago. In this period a tissue of Roma NGO has being developed, which are actively working on the ground. Most part of them receives financial support from the governmental budget.

The main problem arises on Roma issues is **discrimination**. We need to work in deep to solve this issue.

Roma community suffers discrimination, particularly, in **employment and housing**.

The Spanish housing plans have changed, from the relocation of Roma families in blocks of buildings for Roma to the distribution of the families in flats in normalised buildings. Six or eight families are located in each building in order to improve a better and faster cohabitation with no Roma neighbours.

Unfortunately, more than 50% of the no Roma Spanish population declares that does not want to have a Roma as neighbour.

Roma NGOs and the Spanish administrations are working actively in housing relocation.

For that reason, the Spanish administration, general, autonomous and local, have put their efforts developing actions to combat discrimination: cultural events, working group with Roma and no Roma young people, sensitization campaigns, etc.

#### V. Reports on social protection and social inclusion

When it is required, Spain informs on the discrimination issues and on any other possible concerns in all reports that Spain should present to the European Union and other international institutions.

#### VI. Success of the policies

Most of twenty years working in the field gave us the occasion to evaluate the **RDP** and the general policies implemented for the social inclusion of the Spanish Roma community.

In 2000, the University Complutense of Madrid realized the *Evaluation-Study of the Roma development Programme (RDP)- 1989-2000*; the conclusion of the study, the information provided by the professionals working with Roma, plus the experiences made on social interventions, underline the positive effects, such as:



- The importance of the **PDR**, as a key factor for the improvement of living conditions of the Roma community.
- The financial effort made by all Spanish administrations and the public institutions co-funding programmes for Roma that received funds from the EU.
- The promotion and consolidation of the Roma NGO networks.
- The relevant work made on sensitization of the society and with the mass media in order to improve the image of the Roma community.
- The promotion of action against racism and discrimination, particularly with young people.

On the other hand, the level of inclusion of the most part of the Roma community is visible (See **Annex I** of the document).

## VIII. Key issues for debate

How...

- to compare each country experiences to similar situations in order to find possible solutions?
- to include particular programmes and actions addressed to Roma in the development of the NAPI?
- to include Roma programmes in the social protection system of the country?
- to incorporate the minimum income to the Roma communities while are involved in the programmes?
- to develop simultaneous actions in order to develop integrated programmes?
- to promote the suitable governance for the programmes- management an implementation?
- to provide the necessary empowerment to Roma women?
- to develop an professional and efficient Roma NGO networks?

## ANNEX I:

### Some positive results:

- The Roma Development Programme was the key for the inclusion of "Roma issue" in the public administration.
- The increment of financial resources in all administrations and public institutions to co-finance European programmes addressed to Roma.
- The general access of Roma to the public social services network, to the pensions and to the minimum income.
- The impact of programmes for supporting education: A significant number of children (70%) are in pre-school education and 100% in primary school.
- The access to media and high education and the decrease of level of absenteeism and abandonment.
- Progressive better conditions of housing - Less conflicts in the relocation programmes – Eradication of slums.
- Generalization of the access to public health system, particularly, related to children vaccination and paediatric campaigns.
- Improvement of Roma women through actions and training programmes on: Education health, employment, and participation. Transfer the knowledge to the family.
- Consolidation of the participation and the association, particularly of women, through the Roma NGOs.
- Maturity for the participation in the social and political life (still not significant).
- Promotion and support of the public administrations promoting actions, campaigns, conferences, workshops and platforms against racism, particularly for youth.
- Relevant work to aware to society and to media to improve the image of Roma.
- Development of jobs for Roma and other professionals working in social programmes.
- Effort to promote professional training according to the interest of young Roma.
- Development of tools to improve the access to labour market.