

Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion

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**Peer Review**

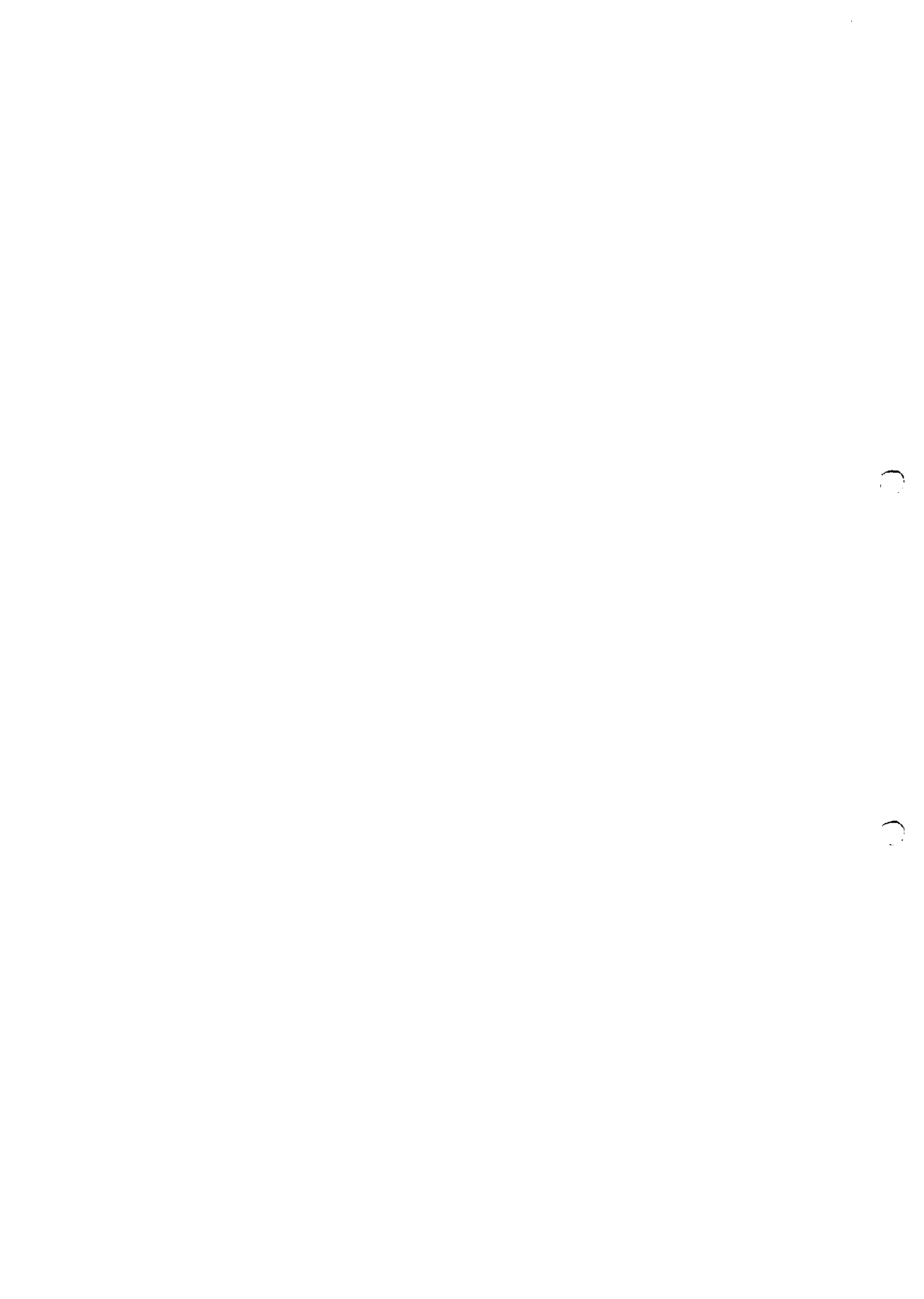
# **Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma**

**Greece, 27-28 May 2009**



On behalf of the  
**European Commission**  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities







Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion

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In co-operation with

**the Ministry of Employment and  
Social Protection**

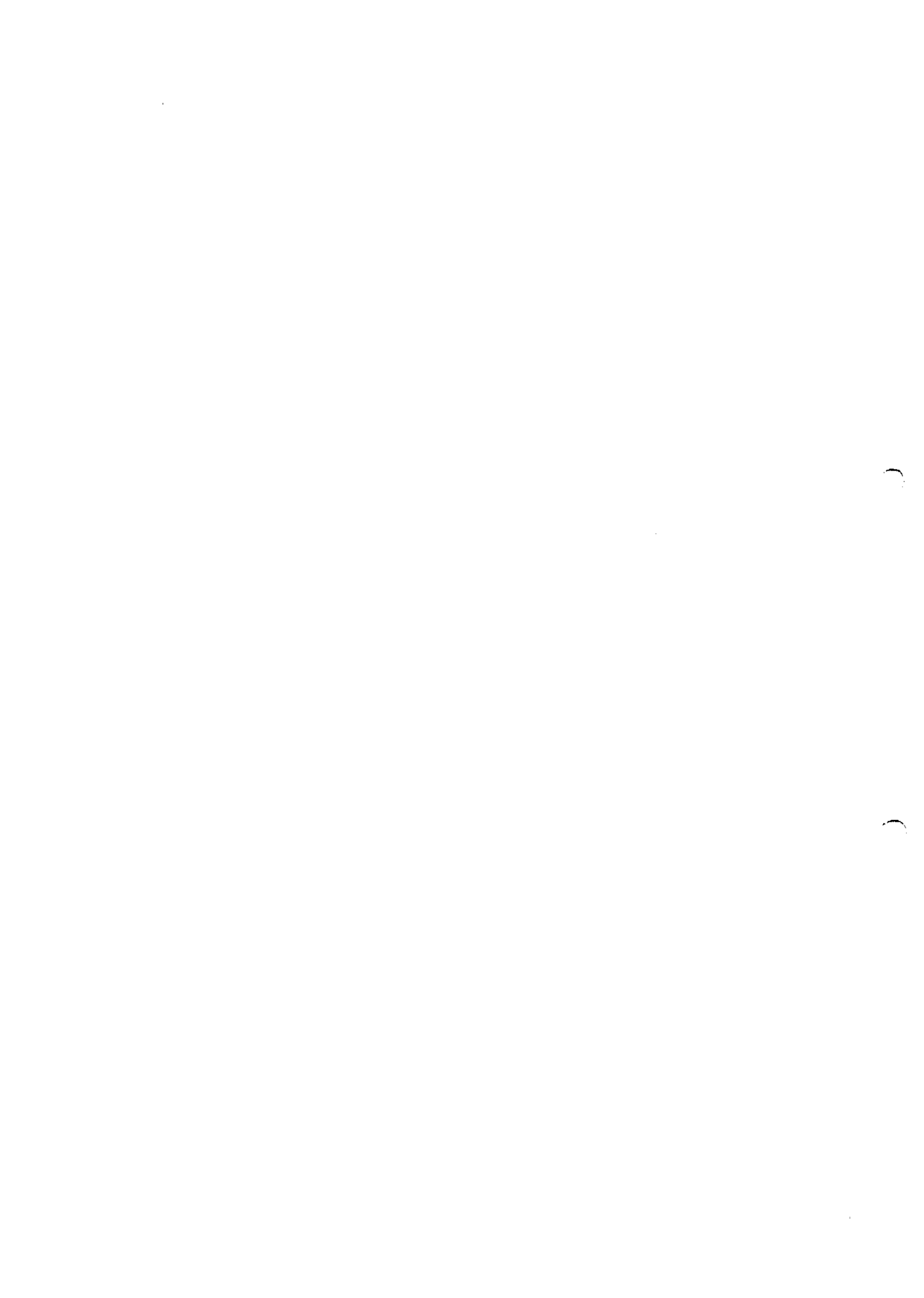
and

**the Ministry of the Interior**



On behalf of the  
**European Commission**  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities





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## The Greek Roma issue

### Spatial and social exclusion and integration policies

Host Country Report

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Problems of physical planning and property ownership**

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

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

### **Problems of technical infrastructure and services**

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

## **1.2 Social parameters**

### *1. Issues of Urban and Municipal state of affairs:*

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

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

### *2. Employment*

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

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

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

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

### 3. *Household income*

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

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

### 4. *Health – Hygiene*

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

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

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

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

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

#### 5. *Access to Social Services*

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

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

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

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

## 6. *Education*

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

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

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

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

Education is extremely vulnerable to external factors, such as movement, financial problems that lead to child labour, distance from school, phenomena of racism at school, lack of suitable and permanent residences, etc.

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

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

### 2.1 AXIS 1: Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Housing Loans**

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

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

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

## 2.2 AXIS 2

### MEASURE 1: Employment

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

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

#### Action budget Funded by ESF and ERDF

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

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

### MEASURE 2: Education

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

#### Specific goals included:

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



**Interventions realised**

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

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

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

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

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

**MEASURE 3: Health – Welfare Services**

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

**Interventions realised**

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

## **General Evaluation of Action Impact**

### **Socio-medical Centres (IAK)**

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

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

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

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

## **MEASURE 4: Culture Services**

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

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

### **Interventions realised**

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

### **Action Budgets**

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

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

### **General Evaluation of Action Impact**

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

### **MEASURE 5: Sports Services**

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

Basic actions for achieving the basic goal were:

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

### **Action Budget**

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

### **General Evaluation of Action Impact**

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

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

#### Strategic planning framework and implementation conditions methodological principles of strategic planning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5. The Operational Action Plan

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

### **Thematic Planning**

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

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

### **The model of spatial integrated intervention**

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

### **The model for the mechanism of dissemination and implementation of policy**

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

### **The Local Intervention Plans and their basic components**

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

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

#### **The basic components of the tool are as follows:**

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

### **The Local Intervention Plans and the phases in their implementation**

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

#### **THE FIRST PHASE:**

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

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

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



## **METHODS AND CONDITIONS FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

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

### **Basic actions – conditions for ensuring the above include:**

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

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

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

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

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

### **The overall strategic approach**

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

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

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

## PRIORITY AXIS 1: HOUSING AND BASIC INFRASTRUCTURES

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

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

### Proposed Measures

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

## PRIORITY AXIS 2: HEALTH

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

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

### Proposed Measures

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

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

### **PRIORITY AXIS 3: EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

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

#### **Proposed Measures**

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

### **PRIORITY AXIS 4: EDUCATION**

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

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

### **Proposed Measures**

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

### **PRIORITY AXIS 5: SOCIAL WELFARE**

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

### **Proposed Measures**

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

### **PRIORITY AXIS 6: CULTURE**

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

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

### Proposed Measures

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

### PRIORITY AXIS 7: PUBLICITY / AWARENESS-RAISING / NETWORKING

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

### Proposed Measures

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

### Conclusions and suggestions

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

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

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

The different dimensions require different policies defined by synergy and internal cohesion, for which **specific strategic goals** should be set, and the structural sum of these goals shall serve the general strategic goal which is to **“eliminate the circumstances of social exclusion and create the conditions for social integration”**.

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

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

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

**These cases could be:**

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

## Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Greek Roma<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This paper discusses the programme for the social inclusion of Greek Roma in the light of certain admitted limitations which have prompted a reassessment of the original programme. At the same time the paper links aspects of Greek experience to initiatives elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> as well as locating the discussion within the wider context of European social inclusion policy. There is a specific focus on problems of accommodation, including settlements and encampments, not only since solution of these issues presents a fundamental challenge to the programme under review but also because homelessness and housing exclusion is a prioritised thematic area for 2009 for the Social OMC.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the paper, as of the review, is to assist the development and implementation of a successful social inclusion programme for Greek Roma by drawing on the experience of other Member States, while in return offering positive suggestions for practice that might be transferred to comparable yet different situations in partner countries.

### The Lisbon Strategy, Social Inclusion and Roma populations

#### Policy framework for social inclusion

In 2000, with the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy, the European Council decided to launch an initiative 'to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010' (European Commission 2006a). This aim was to be achieved principally by means of realising more fully the economic potential of the Community – especially through more skilled employment, which can be regarded as the main goal of the Lisbon Strategy – but was to be accompanied by a reduction in social inequalities. Consequently this initiative also focused on the key policy issue of poverty and later on other areas where social exclusion was prevalent, such as education, housing, pensions and health. Particular attention was to be paid to the most vulnerable groups and those suffering multiple deprivation with especially high risk of exclusion, such the disabled, children and young people, women, ethnic minorities and immigrants, the homeless and the institutionalised. Roma populations contain some of the most vulnerable and multiply deprived people on many, if not all, of these counts. This was recognised by several countries in specified measures for Roma in their National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (NAPSI).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This article adopts the usage of the European Commission's July 2008 report, using 'Roma' as an umbrella term for the wide range groups referred to by this or related names (European Commission 2008a: 3, footnote 3).

<sup>2</sup> Mainly to previous Roma-related Peer Reviews in the Czech Republic and Spain. In a short paper like this it is inevitably necessary for Peer Review partners to recognise which aspects discussed resemble their own situation.

<sup>3</sup> See Social Protection Committee (SPC 2009: 3, §3.1).

<sup>4</sup> Countries mentioning Roma included Greece and Spain as well as Central and East European (CEE) countries, such as Hungary (FOCUS *et al.* 2004: 39-40).

A flexible approach to cooperation between the Commission and Member States was adopted to take account of the varied administrative and legal structures of individual countries. This Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is 'a mutual process of planning, monitoring, examination and comparison ... on the basis of common objectives' where sharing experience and good practice is encouraged by peer review exercises (Atkinson *et al.* 2005: 33, 36-38; European Commission 2006b). In addition, a network of independent non-governmental experts makes regular reports to assist the Commission in its task of reviewing the implementation of the social inclusion process (European Commission 2008c). The importance of social inclusion was reiterated at the March 2005 meeting of the European Council and a pragmatic approach to policy assessment was advocated, placing even greater emphasis on 'effective monitoring and evaluation provisions' such as more efficient use of 'targets, benchmarks and indicators, [and] better links with economic and employment policies' (EPSCO 2005, European Commission 2005).<sup>5</sup>

In spite of this well-established policy framework a 2007 overview of reports by national experts on social inclusion found poor linkage in many cases between Lisbon economic strategies and those for social protection and inclusion and concluded that '[e]ven where they are reasonably integrated, it tends to be in selected areas only, ... whereas social inclusion as such is often absent. ... A cause for concern is the relative lack of attention to whether economic policies ... are contributing ... to raising the incomes of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion' (Begg and Marlier 2007: 4-5).

The strongest criticism of the apparent neglect of social inclusion was voiced by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), which stated that 'poverty has become almost invisible in the Lisbon process', pointing to the difference 'between the strong commitment to ensure a link between Structural Funds and [economic] Lisbon, compared to the weak link with the social Lisbon goals through the OMC Social Protection and Social Inclusion and specifically the priorities of the Social Inclusion National Action Plan' (EAPN 2007: 1.5).<sup>6</sup> The Greek report by the social inclusion expert was equally critical, arguing that the government's Lisbon strategy only 'pays attention to the objective of achieving high economic growth', although 'no links are evident between economic growth and social inclusion'. While 'the guiding principle' appears to be the 'spill-over effect', where 'gains from economic growth ... spread out to the whole population', in Greece the 'high rate of working poor' 'suggests ... "permanent inability" of the vulnerable social groups to benefit from the gains from economic growth' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 3.6).<sup>7</sup>

### Roma populations and social inclusion

In many Central and East European (CEE) countries, sporadic efforts had already been made since the early 1990s to integrate their substantial yet marginalised Roma populations. Such initiatives intensified in candidate countries after 1997 when negotiations for accession to the EU

<sup>5</sup> From January 2006 increased effectiveness was to be aided by simplification of reporting mechanisms and streamlining of separate strands 'into one integrated OMC for Social Protection and Social Inclusion' (Social OMC) (European Commission 2008b).

<sup>6</sup> The EAPN Hungarian report, emphasised that the 'highest possible percentage of cohesion policy and structural funds would be focused on the Lisbon objectives' (i.e. growth and jobs) (EAPN 2007: 5).

<sup>7</sup> 'In 2001, the working poor rate was 13 percent in Greece and 7 percent in EU-15'. 'Greece continues to exhibit a high level of income inequality, measured either by Gini coefficient or by the ratio S20/80, remaining one of the most unequal income distribution[s] among the EU-15 Member-States' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 6).



gathered pace. A political criterion for these applicants was 'respect for minorities' and the excluded situation of their Roma citizens was a source of repeated criticism in regular reports by the Commission. Meanwhile EU-funded projects assisted candidates to fulfil this requirement and 'under the Phare programme, more than €100 million ha[d] been spent [in the decade] since 1998, targeting primarily education, infrastructure and other fundamental challenges for Roma communities' (European Commission 2008a: 49 §10.3).

Reviewing this aid, a comparative report on Roma-targeted Phare programmes in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania identified not only the 'absence, in any of the five countries, of a clear policy framework for social inclusion of Roma' (EMS 2004 II) but also disproportionate and poorly directed use of PHARE support. While a World Bank study recognised that the widespread impoverishment of Roma in the CEE region was almost entirely due to the loss of their former jobs in the Communist economy (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 1), it was found that less than 10 percent of PHARE funding had been devoted to projects 'to address long-term unemployment that is endemic in Roma communities' (EMS 2004: 6). Likewise, when Roma life expectancy is at least ten years less than the general population, 'only 3% [of PHARE expenditure had been] on health related initiatives' (*ibid.*).<sup>8</sup>

While the PHARE programme was the main conduit for EU financial aid to CEE countries and provided the bulk of all support for Roma inclusion initiatives, numerous NGOs and other national and international donors, including governments, also sponsored Roma projects. The most significant of these other agencies remains the Open Society Institute (OSI), which still runs a variety of programmes in many ex-Communist countries. In 2003 the OSI and the World Bank jointly announced an ambitious new initiative, the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015), at a Budapest conference timed to coincide with the release of the most comprehensive study to date on levels of Roma impoverishment and exclusion in CEE and South-East European (SEE) countries.<sup>9</sup>

At the launch of the Roma decade in February 2005, participation was pledged by eight governments,<sup>10</sup> while support was offered by many institutions including the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the UNDP. A new comparative survey provided an important new database on the situation of CEE and SEE Roma populations (UNDP 2005). The Decade targets key issues of housing, education, employment and health and has important similarities to the Lisbon process and in many ways can be regarded as a parallel, complementary programme. However important differences are that with the exception of the Roma Education Fund (REF) the Decade has no funding of its own and, until February 2009 when Spain joined, applies solely to Roma in ex-Communist countries.

The concern of the Commission for excluded Roma populations was given added impetus when, in 2004 and 2007, a total of ten former Communist-ruled countries became EU members. This meant that the enlarged Community gained up to 5 million Roma – larger than the population of some new entrants (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 12). Roma, like other fellow-citizens, had already been migrating in limited numbers to existing Member States ever since the fall of Communist regimes

<sup>8</sup> As indicated in the 2008 report (European Commission 2008a: 49), the greatest part of Phare funding, a third, was devoted to education projects, while over a quarter (27 percent) was spent on infrastructure (EMS 2004: 6).

<sup>9</sup> The report included chapters on Hungary, Slovakia and Romania but also on Spain (Ringold *et al.* 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Signatories to the Decade were Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovakia. See home webpage for Decade <<http://www.romadecade.org/>>.

after 1989. They came mainly as illegal workers or more controversially as asylum seekers, claiming endemic discrimination and sporadic racist attacks threatened their safety.

However, after easing of visa restrictions in anticipation of the accession of Romania in January 2007, an estimated half a million Romanian Roma had migrated legally to Italy. There they joined indigenous Italian Roma, Roma refugees from former Yugoslavia and Albania and illegal immigrants in the long-established shantytowns on the outskirts of Italian towns and cities. Heated press campaigns, attributing rising levels of crime to Romanian Roma, grew to a crescendo in late 2007 following a brutal murder and resulted in vigilante attacks on Roma, the demolition of a shantytown in Rome and the burning of another in Naples and the passing of an emergency decree to expel those seen as a threat to security. In this way the consequences of both EU enlargement and continuing Roma exclusion in CEE countries combined to threaten not only the relationship between two Member States but also the fundamental right to freedom of movement within the EU (Hooper 2007, Popham 2008).

These disturbing events coincided with renewed pressure on the Commission to review and improve its initiatives for Roma populations throughout the EU. In late 2007, for the first time, the European Council addressed 'the very specific situation faced by the Roma across the Union' and calling on Member States 'to use all means to improve their inclusion', requested a progress report from the Commission (European Council 2008a). In early 2008 the European Parliament, followed by a coalition of leading NGOs concerned with Roma issues, passed a resolution that the Commission adopt a more proactive role on the basis of a new 'European framework strategy for Roma inclusion' (European Parliament 2008: §6). This demand was supported by several CEE governments including Hungary, then chair of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The Commission duly published its progress report in July and then convened the first-ever Roma Summit in September 2008. In its response, the Council strengthened the earlier call for old and new Member States to take more concrete action and make better use of the Structural Funds. Among other requirements, the Commission was asked 'to organise, initially, an exchange of good practice and experience between the Member States'<sup>11</sup> and to 'stimulate cooperation between all parties ... in the context of an integrated European platform' (European Council 2008b).<sup>12</sup>

Demands for a new Roma strategy focused attention on the long awaited restatement of the social agenda, updating the already modified Lisbon Strategy. Announced on 2 July 2008, this new package comprised legislative proposals, studies and recommendations and included the Commission's progress report on Roma. It also coincided with a Eurobarometer poll in which a large majority of EU citizens expected social inequalities to increase in the coming years and this was before the scale of the world-wide recession had become apparent. Accompanying the debate on the Commission's future role were disturbing reports of physical attacks on Roma including murders, reminiscent of the upsurge of anti-Roma violence in CEE/SEE regions during the turbulent economic conditions of the early 1990s. Apart from Italy, these incidents are now growing in frequency in new Member States, particularly Hungary, and often involve populist

<sup>11</sup> This Greek Peer Review represents an important contribution to this exchange of experience. In addition a Europe-wide, comparative report of examples of good practice in Roma inclusion has been commissioned. This report will be based on individual country reports from eighteen Member States and is being carried out by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and Roma Education Fund (REF). Publication is due in mid-2010.

<sup>12</sup> Consultation over the structure and role of such a Roma 'platform' is currently taking place under the auspices of the Czech Presidency (in Prague, 26-27 February and 24 April 2009).

extremist parties which appeal to local concerns about concentrations of excluded Roma, often described as ghettos (ERIO 2009). Housing is only one aspect of Roma exclusion but this acute focus of popular unrest makes this current Peer Review, with its emphasis on housing and settlements, particularly timely and relevant to all Member States with Roma populations.

### Relevance of earlier Peer Reviews

Greece has an extremely diverse Roma population, as explained later, and the original Greek programme addressed a wide range of types of dwelling from travellers' camps and peripheral settlements to urban housing. These accommodation patterns reflect differing degrees of integration of Greek Roma groups and the aims and experience of this initiative should be relevant to Peer Review countries with Roma populations and their own specific living conditions. Furthermore the Greek programme demonstrated early recognition that the complex issues associated with Roma marginalisation require integrated and multi-faceted treatment – an approach now seen as essential for offering the best chance of promoting inclusion. However adoption of this kind of comprehensive policy poses challenging questions about an appropriate institutional structure, coordination of implementation, effective delivery and adequate funding, all of which will be of concern to participants attending this review.

Two earlier Peer Reviews are closely related to this current exercise since both projects, although targeted at improving the situation of Roma in specific excluded locations, were also linked to wider national strategies of Roma inclusion. The Spanish example is particularly relevant since, like the Greek programme, it adopted a broader integrated approach in recognising that far more than better living conditions were required for effective inclusion.

The 2006 review, the *Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Avilés*, sought to rehouse marginalised Roma groups from dilapidated settlements to improved accommodation. This initiative had already been put forward in Spain's 2005 National Plan for Social Inclusion as an example of 'best practice promoting social inclusion and was subsequently selected as one of the principal case studies in the discussion on *Integrated policies and actions to promote the social inclusion of Roma in urban environments and disadvantaged neighbourhoods*' (Fresno 2006: 1).

While the project's title might suggest it only had limited local significance, it took place within the context of a national plan. Even though Spain introduced a highly devolved system of regional autonomy, the institutional structure of this initiative involved municipal cooperation with regional and national government bodies, which also contributed to the funding. Among the principal features was the integrated nature of the project design, which addressed multi-dimensionality in social inclusion by combining provision of vocational training and work experience with associated initiatives for education, health and community development. Close cooperation at governmental level was matched by the effective implementation by a combined team of key public and private actors and the involvement of national and local Roma NGOs as well as of Roma beneficiaries at grass-roots level (see Annex 3 for details).

The other Peer Review, significant for the Greek case, is the Czech Republic's 2005 *Field social work programmes in neighbourhoods threatened by social exclusion*. This was the first Peer Review to be held in a new Member State and examined a project providing advice and help to impoverished families, overwhelmingly Roma, living in excluded urban localities. Advice was

given by a prominent NGO, with a long record of involvement with Roma issues, on critical social problems afflicting its clients, such as housing problems, unemployment, debt, access to health care, education, drug addiction and unregistered citizenship. An integral feature of the project was negotiation of contracts between social workers and clients, so that those receiving advice were empowered by taking decisions and responsibility for their actions.

While the NGO recognised the multiple and interrelated aspects of exclusion in offering counselling on a wide range of concerns, it was not in a position to require municipalities to take effective action. The same was true of government in spite of a national strategy in place since the year 2000 and specific mention of Roma in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (Czech Government 2000, Minev 2005a: 5). On the other hand the project was funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and had been adopted by it in collaboration with other municipalities, demonstrating its transferability. Nevertheless Peer Review participants concluded that: '[g]iven the gravity of the problems and the limited resources available ... [the project] can perform no more than "harm reduction", ensuring that the clients' situations do not deteriorate further, rather than achieving full social inclusion' (Minev 2005b: 7) (see Annex 4 for further details and discussion).

The aim of the present Peer Review is to draw on the experience of other participant countries to improve the previous policy for the social protection and inclusion of Greek Roma. The two previous Peer Reviews concerning Roma, described above, have important lessons for the current exercise, which should help to consolidate knowledge already gained. This is aided by the presence of Hungary, Spain and Greece, as partners in earlier reviews. While the two previous examples focused on localised projects, they both share with the Greek programme an integrated approach to the complex aspects of exclusion, although to differing degrees. Also, although small-scale initiatives, they are linked to national programmes and crucially provide useful models for cooperation - both between different levels of government, a vital factor in increasingly devolved systems of governance, and between municipalities and other social actors. In addition the Czech and Spanish examples emphasise the importance of active Roma involvement rather than treating beneficiaries as passive recipients of welfare. Particularly appropriate in today's climate is the positive lesson from the Spanish project in Avilés, which was conceived during a period of economic decline.

## The Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Greek Roma

### Background

Greece has a special significance in the centuries-long history of Roma in Europe and the Greek-speaking realm of Byzantium has been regarded as the crucible of Roma European identity and the base area from which they later spread throughout Europe (Marushiakova and Popov 2001a & b). The presence in most Romani dialects of more loan words from Greek than from any other language, such as basic terms like 'road' (*drom* – Romani, *dromos* – Greek), attests to a long residence in and around what is now modern Greece (Fraser 1992: 55-56).<sup>13</sup> Also most scholars

<sup>13</sup> In the absence of reliable historical records, linguistic evidence has been used to infer the possible date of the departure of Roma people from India, the routes of their subsequent journeys westward and the duration of their

argue, albeit speculatively, that the two most common sets of names used by others to denote Roma have Greek origins.<sup>14</sup>

While isolated claims of possible early Roma arrivals are unreliable, '[t]he first [firm] evidence we have ... of Gypsies in Europe is on the territory of the Byzantine Empire' and certainly 'during the fourteenth century', 'Gypsies were well established in the Peloponnese and a number of Greek islands' (Marushiakova and Popov 2001b: 35, Fraser 1992: 49). It is not implausible that their extended presence on Greek territory is an important factor in explaining the extreme diversity of the present-day Greek Roma population, ranging from those who are highly educated and well integrated yet affirm Roma identity, through marginalised shantytown inhabitants on the fringes of Greek towns and cities, to tent-dwelling, travelling groups pursuing a nomadic life.

Greece is a Balkan country and its Roma have similarities with those of Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia and Albania but unlike its nearest neighbours (Turkey excepted), it was never ruled by a Communist regime. Consequently Greek Roma did not experience state initiatives to draw them into the mainstream labour force that were widespread throughout Communist countries. Instead, as in Spain, the majority remained on the periphery of the labour market and the decline of traditional occupations led to growing urbanisation with Roma increasingly moving into dilapidated houses and overcrowded settlements. Here most are trapped 'in an informal "grey market" without financially viable prospects', often 'dependent on the seasonal employment of one family member and on welfare benefits' (MESP 2009b: 4-5).<sup>15</sup>

#### Wider social inclusion framework, policy objectives and target groups

This complex situation presented a considerable challenge to the Greek government which viewed 'the situation of the Roma in Greece ... [as] unsatisfactory and indeed unacceptable' and was 'determined to do everything in its power to remedy the situation' (Greek Government 1999). In 1996, it announced a National Policy Framework for Greek Gypsies, having decided that the only way to counter the deteriorating situation of the majority of Greek Roma was 'by well organised long term inclusion policies and within an integrated approach' (MESP 2009a).<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless the great differences among the Roma population posed serious difficulties for the design of a comprehensive policy and the Programme was eventually introduced five years later in 2001.<sup>17</sup> Delays were attributed to the need to consult with 'smaller [Roma] groups, scattered

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stay in particular areas (Hancock 2002: 7, Fraser 1992: 10-32). Interestingly 'almost all the words having to do with metalwork are from Greek' (Hancock 2002: 10).

<sup>14</sup> The English name 'Gypsy' (*Gitane* - French, *Gitano* - Spanish) is thought to derive from the port of Modon (now Methoni) on the western coast of the Peloponnese, which had a Roma settlement known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as 'Little Egypt'. The Hungarian name '*Cigán*' (*Cikán* - Czech, *Cigán* - Slovak, *Tsigan* - Romanian, *Tsigane* - French, *Zigeuner* - German, etc.) is thought to have been applied to Roma in Byzantine times after a heretical sect known as the *Atsinganoi* (Fraser 1992: 52-55).

<sup>15</sup> Certain occupations, 'such as recycling work, itinerant trad[ing] and junk [collecting], are practiced almost exclusively by the Roma' (MESP 2009b: 5). In rural areas Roma 'occasionally earn a living by seasonal agricultural work', while 'in urban settlements around Greece, the main occupation is selling scrap-metal and other wares in markets' (Abdikeeva 2005: 7).

<sup>16</sup> This announcement followed criticism of a major police raid on a Roma settlement (ERRC/GHM 2003: 184).

<sup>17</sup> 'According to the government's own Implementation Review for the Years 1996-1999, the only part of the initial project that had been completed by 2000 was a survey on Roma housing conditions' (Abdikeeva 2005: 7). Five settlements were to have been relocated 'immediately' but by the end of 1999 none had yet been moved

around the country' to build consensus and the 'sluggishness of bureaucracy in its every endeavour' but also to 'widespread ... prejudice', including that 'displayed by police officers or by elected officials at the local administration level' (Greek Government 1999).

The Integrated Action Plan (2001-2006) was developed 'within the framework of the national policy concerning Roma'<sup>18</sup> and its main objective was 'the smooth integration of Roma in ... Greek society while maintaining their particular ethnic and cultural characteristics' (MESP 2005, Annex 1: 38-39). More broadly it aimed to prevent the risk of exclusion (Objective 2) and also formed part of the specific 'comprehensive interventions' to support 'particularly vulnerable population groups (persons with disabilities, Roma, the elderly, the uninsured, repatriates and immigrants' (Objective 3). As such, it was included in the Greek National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (ibid: 10, 23, MESP 2008a: 1).

The principal target of the Plan was the immediate problem of inadequate living conditions. Almost half of Roma families lived in dilapidated housing in run-down urban neighbourhoods, which 'are exclusively or mainly populated by Roma', while a further quarter lived in mixed settlements consisting of an approximately equal mixture of houses and shacks. Gravitation towards towns meant that 60 percent of 'seasonal families' also lived for part of the year in urban neighbourhoods, while 28 percent of these families lived in settlements.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly the first segment, or axis, was to address infrastructure issues, which involved the improvement of existing accommodation and the construction of new settlements, including the provision of organised camp sites for Roma who travelled. An integrated approach meant recognition that improvement of accommodation on its own would be insufficient to increase inclusion, since serious concerns such as poverty would be unaffected. Consequently a second axis addressed problems of education, employment and vocational training, health and welfare, as well as cultural issues including sporting activities (MESP 2009a).

The Plan 'gathers all the interventions proposed and implemented by various agencies, organises them and classifies them along [the] two axes'. Responsibility for these activities is borne by an Inter-Ministerial Committee, which includes representatives drawn from central and local government and from Roma organisations, as well as Roma experts (MESP 2008a: 6).<sup>20</sup> The Committee is coordinated by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, while at local level 'measures ... are largely being implemented via decentralised, administrative structures and municipal administration' (MESP 2005: 29, 23; Annex 1: 38 & 2008a: 1).<sup>21</sup> Proposals are submitted to the Ministry by local authorities and assessed by the Inter-Ministerial Committee, which is 'primarily concerned with the matter of coordination and cooperation between co-responsible agencies for the implementation of separate actions' (MESP 2005, Annex 1: 26).

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(ERRC/GHM 2003: 10). The first relocation, of a settlement not in the original plan, eventually took place in 2000 as a result of NGO pressure and only after the intervention of the Greek Ombudsman (Alexandridis 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Somewhat confusingly documents refer to two periods for the Integrated Action Plan :2001-2006, probably to include this within the corresponding NAPSI period, and 2002-2008.

<sup>19</sup> See MESP (2009b: 1-3). Although these figures are from 2009, the proportions are likely to be similar. A 2005 NGO report stated that 'an estimated half of the Roma population live in shacks, without access to electricity, sanitation or piped water ... [and] often under the threat of eviction' (Abdikeeva 2005: 1).

<sup>20</sup> As well as national representation, 'local authorities – upon their [own] initiative have established an inter-municipal Rom network ... [which] cooperates on a regular basis with central administration' (MESP 2008a: 11).

<sup>21</sup> According to Law 3463/2006, 'any proposal or project aiming at the housing rehabilitation of citizens in need falls within the primary responsibility of the competent Local Government Organisations (MESP 2008a: 6).

The broader National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPSI) acknowledged the difficulties of coordinating different institutional levels and to encourage the participation of different actors, Objective 4 was set as 'Mobilising all Institutions and Agencies'. In this context the importance of effective supervision and assessment of on-going activities was emphasised: 'The success of policies also directly depends on appropriate monitoring and evaluation. Decentralised service structures contribute to this as an opportunity is offered for an immediate recording of the results and of needs at the local level' (ibid, Annex 1: 31). Meanwhile central government intended to review national policy in order 'to re-examine the soundness of the specific objectives, to explore the degree to which they will contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion, and to re-determine them, if necessary' (ibid: 10).<sup>22</sup>

### Legal framework and related issues

The anti-discrimination legal framework underpinning the National Policy Framework for Greek Gypsies includes article 5.2 of the Greek Constitution which states: 'All persons living within Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 14).<sup>23</sup> This general guarantee was strengthened in 2005 by the delayed incorporation into Greek law<sup>24</sup> of two European Council Directives from 2000. One, commonly known as the Race Directive, requires equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.<sup>25</sup> However the Greek Ombudsman highlighted problems in interpreting this law (ibid: 16) and doubts have been raised about its enforcement (Abdikeyeva 2005: 6).<sup>26</sup> Also, although citizens, Greek Roma often lacked essential documents such as identity cards (ibid: 6, Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 15) but the housing loans scheme proved a strong incentive for Roma to obtain these (MESP 2008a: 3).

Most Greek Roma were only granted citizenship in the mid-1970s and had previously been seen as 'aliens of Gypsy descent' (Roughieri 2000: endnote 2). Nowadays, the 2008 updated report on the Action Plan emphasises that 'Gypsies in Greece [represent] ... an integral part of the Greek population; they have unequivocally expressed the wish to be considered and treated as Greek citizens, and not only as persons of Roma origin'. Consequently, since Roma 'are not registered separately from other Greek citizens, either during the national census, or in the municipal rolls'<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> While this referred to 10 National Social Objectives to be achieved by 2010, it also states a general principle. However this did not appear to have been applied in a related 2006 Implementation Report on the National Reform Programme (2006-2008), which the Greek independent non-governmental experts sharply criticised for being a mere 'technical exercise' as simply 'a repetition of the main initiatives taken or intended to be taken in certain social policy areas crucial to social cohesion' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 4).

<sup>23</sup> Other legal instruments are international Covenants and the European Convention on Human Rights (ERRC/GHM 2003: 178-9).

<sup>24</sup> Law 3304/2005 was passed following 'intense international criticism and legal proceedings by the European Commission' (Abdikeyeva 2006: 6).

<sup>25</sup> The Commission's abbreviated name is the Racial Equality Directive (European Council 2000a). The other directive combating discrimination was the Employment Framework Directive (European Council 2000b).

<sup>26</sup> The earlier Action Plan had been criticised on the grounds that it 'lacks a rights-based approach, which would target discrimination as a key cause of Roma exclusion and poverty, and completely omits gender issues' (Abdikeyeva 2005: 8).

<sup>27</sup> 'The overwhelming majority (97%)' have now registered, also with municipalities (MESP 2009b: 4).

... there is not a precise number of the Roma population as such' (MESP 2008a: 1).<sup>28</sup> The most recent Ministry 'rough estimate' is a total number of 65,000.<sup>29</sup> In this context it should be noted that, as in many other Member States, the indigenous Roma population has been augmented by recent Roma immigrants, in the case of Greece mainly from Albania.<sup>30</sup> However, the Action Plan applies only to Greek Roma (Abdikeeva 2005: 6).

The Action Plan had previously referred to their 'ethnic and cultural characteristics', although '[o]fficially ... there are not any ethnic minorities in Greece' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 13). Some integrated Roma 'reject the very notion of an ethnic minority',<sup>31</sup> although some poorer tent-dwellers are said to disagree (Abdikeeva 2005: 6). Nevertheless, in view of their inadequate living conditions and poverty, Roma were classified in the Action Plan as a 'socially vulnerable group' and this term is repeated in the 2008 report (MESP 2005: 29, 2008a: 1).

### Financial provision for policy components<sup>32</sup>

The Integrated Action Plan 'does not have a budget of its own but ... relies on funds from the CSF [Community Structural Funds] and other sources (national funds ... [and] other financial sources)' (MESP 2009a). In the general NAFSI most 'comprehensive interventions' to benefit 'specific, particularly vulnerable population groups', including Greek Roma, were mainly funded by the CSF. However '[p]roblems in the planning and implementation of the programmes, in combination with their sometimes fragmentary character, led to low rates of absorption' (MESP 2005: 10). Structural problems, particularly economic decentralisation procedures, were blamed for preventing 'speedier and more effective implementation of ... policies at the regional and local level' (*ibid.*: 23). Delay or even failure in making use of allocated funds was especially pronounced in actions intended 'to prevent the risk of exclusion' (*ibid.*: 10). These general difficulties should be borne in mind when assessing progress of programmes for Roma.

The initial budget for the Action Plan for Roma was €308.6 million, of which 57 percent (ca €176 million) was devoted to infrastructure and 42.85 percent (ca €132 million) to services (EETAA 2001: 37, 115). According to the 2008 report, in the infrastructure segment: 'All projects are financed exclusively by national resources' and since 2002 until 1 June 2008 a total of €65.54 million had been allocated from the national budget for **infrastructure works** of which €39.13 million had been spent (MESP 2008a: 6).<sup>33</sup> Also, since 2002, the Ministry of the Interior has approved **land purchases** for 17 municipalities at a total cost of €5.16 million in order to relocate

<sup>28</sup> 'Unofficial estimates for Roma refer to a number of 250,000 persons' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 14). But other estimates range from 70,000 to 300,000 (Abdikeeva 2005: 6). The 2008 report casts doubt on 'any precise number ... [as it] is not based on ... credible procedures and criteria' (MESP 2008a: 1).

<sup>29</sup> This represented an 8-10% increase from a 1998 estimate of 60,000 (MESP 2009b: 1).

<sup>30</sup> The Greek independent experts point out that since the early 1990s 'Greece, once a traditional emigration country, has become ... a destination country for a large number of immigrants. ... Among the countries of origin, Albania dominates the picture, as 57.5% of ... legal immigrants living in Greece were Albanian nationals in 2001'. They add: 'To date the Greek State has not yet accepted the fact that Greece has become a "de facto multiracial" and multicultural society' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 11-14). Among these Albanian nationals 'there is a sizeable community of 'immigrant Roma from Albania, who have been legally living in Greece for over a decade, although few have obtained citizenship' (Abdikeeva 2005: 6).

<sup>31</sup> 'In Serres, Roma residents reportedly signed a petition against all [Gypsy/Roma] designations, insisting they were Greeks' (Abdikeeva 2005: 13).

<sup>32</sup> Annex 2 gives table with breakdown of budgetary costs.

<sup>33</sup> Funding by year (2003, 2004, 2005) for infrastructure expenditure is also given. See MESP (2005, Annex 1: 40).



existing settlements or build new ones. In addition 9,000 **housing loans** of €60,000 each have been allocated for Greek Roma living in sub-standard accommodation (mainly tents or shacks), i.e. a total budget of €540 million. These loans, too, are funded and by the state budget, which also guarantees the loans and interest payments to participating banks. Beneficiaries are subsidised for 80 percent of interest payments and can pay off the loan over a 22-year period (ibid: 1-2). The Infrastructure budget also includes the construction of **socio-medical centres** and provision of **mobile units** as well as the establishment of **educational and cultural premises** (ibid: 5-6).

Yet, while some initiatives, particularly infrastructure projects and housing loans, were targeted specifically at the Roma population, others in the second axis of services, such as education and employment programmes, were broader in scope and disaggregation of funding is not always possible.<sup>34</sup> In **education**, the Induction of Gypsy Children to School initiative<sup>35</sup> was incorporated with others for repatriated Greeks, from around the Black Sea (Pontic Greeks) and Albania, and for Muslim children with a total budget for all three for the 2000-2004 period of €29.3 million and expenditure of €20.6 million. Of these, the Roma programme had a much lower absorption rate than the others (MESP 2005: 21) and enrolment and drop-out rates were seen as problematic, particularly for girls.<sup>36</sup> Education for Greek Roma Students, following on in the 2005-2007 period, had a budget of €5.3 million (MESP 2008a: 7). In **employment**, Roma were also among the beneficiaries of the EU initiative EQUAL to combat employment discrimination and assist vulnerable population groups to enter the labour market. The total budget was €141.25 million over the 2001-2006 programming period. Also within the context of the Sectoral Operational Programme for Employment and Vocational Training, Roma were among those to benefit from projects to learn the Greek language, create New Jobs and New Entrepreneurs (MESP 2008a: 9 & 2005, Annex 1: 40). In **health**, 'a total of 27 [socio-medical] centres have been established' in areas where there are organised Roma encampments, each with annual running costs of €100,000, while travelling Roma are served by 3 mobile units. Between July 2003 and March 2004 expenditure on these mobile units was €176,000 (MESP 2008a: 8 & 2005, Annex 1:39). Within the framework of mass programmes of sporting activities for 'population groups at risk of social marginalisation', **sports** projects have been organised in Roma encampments and also **culture** programmes have been developed in areas with a high concentration of Roma (MESP 2008a: 8, 11-12 & 2005, Annex 1:40).

### Policy reviewing and reassessment

The Integrated Action Plan had been reviewed on a regular basis since its inception in 2002 to improve its relevance and efficiency, as well as having being amended to ensure compliance with binding international documents.<sup>37</sup> However in 2008, towards the end of the second phase of

<sup>34</sup> For example, Second Chance educational projects included Roma, repatriates, Muslims, immigrants and prisoners, while employment-related EQUAL projects reached a wide range of vulnerable groups (MESP 2005, Annex 1: 21, 33).

<sup>35</sup> A 2009 document gave a total budget of €12.258 million for this in the period 1997-2007 (MESP 2009b: 13).

<sup>36</sup> These were also seen as problematic for older Muslim girls in spite of the high absorption rate (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 20, MESP 2005, Annex 1: 20)

<sup>37</sup> For example, a 2006 legal amendment to comply with the statement on forced evictions by the Committee on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the UN's covenant (ICESCR) and the Council of Europe's recommendation on improving housing conditions for Roma and Travellers, etc. (MESP 2008a: 2).

implementation, a decision was made to undertake an assessment study in order to review and evaluate progress made up to and during the third CSF planning period.<sup>38</sup> This review would involve **investigation of any remaining implementation activities, assessment of the effectiveness of measures undertaken and identification of examples of good practice.**

The specific aims of the study were listed as:

- a) **Evaluate** all actions related to the National Integrated Programme for the Gypsy Population, as well as other projects undertaken to benefit this population group;
- b) **Investigate and update** any available data regarding the existing conditions and problems;
- c) **Draft a long-term, integrated Action Plan**<sup>39</sup> to be adopted within the framework of the fourth CSF planning period and afterwards.

## The results so far

### Policy results and evaluation

In view of the desired outcomes from the Peer Review on the part of the Greek hosts, particular attention is paid in this section to the continuing problem of **accommodation**, which lies at the heart of the social protection and inclusion of Greek Roma, as well as to issues of overall programme design, institutional forms and coordination.

As described above, 57% of the Integrated Action Plan's budget was allocated to the first axis of **infrastructure works**, covering land purchases, settlement construction, temporary housing and basic infrastructure, as well as housing loans to individual Roma families. Since 2002 the Ministry of the Interior has approved **land purchases** for 17 municipalities and **permanent settlements** have already been established at several municipalities while other work is still in progress.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, since 1997 there has been on-going construction of a total of 1,763 **prefabricated houses** in temporary settlements to deal with urgent housing needs.<sup>41</sup> **Infrastructure works** associated with existing and new settlements have been undertaken, such as sewage and road construction, water and electricity supply, playground provision, etc., and an average of 30 municipalities have been financed each year. Also 27 **socio-medical centres**,<sup>42</sup> 3 **mobile medical units** and 13 **educational and cultural centres** have already been established (MESP 2008a: 5-6).

A major element of the housing initiative is the provision of **housing loans** 'to Greek Gypsies living in shacks, tents or any other construction that do not meet minimum requirements on

<sup>38</sup> This section is a slightly adapted version of a box in the 2008 updated report (MESP 2008a: 10).

<sup>39</sup> The actual term in the original is 'long-term multi-filed Action Plan' (ibid.)

<sup>40</sup> As examples four named municipalities are listed with a total of 187 permanent residences (MESP 2008a: 5). These appear to have been built before 2005 as the same total is given for the period 1997-2004 by Ziomas *et al.* (2006: 26).

<sup>41</sup> Figures for the period 1997-2007 (MESP 2009b: 8). However Ziomas *et al.* (2006: 26) give a figure of 1,674 for the period 1997-2004.

<sup>42</sup> However a higher figure of 32 planned centres is given in the 2008 assessment (MESP 2008b: 9).

permanent habitation'. Funding for 9,000 loans was initially agreed and following assessment of the data on applications, a revised figure of 8,785 was accepted by the Ministry of the Interior. 2008 data shows that 6,984 applications were approved and of these 5,689 loans (almost 82%) have already been granted by participating banks. However earlier data from 2005 indicates a total of 15,665 applications of which 5,747 (36.7%) were approved. Of these applications, 6,117 (39%) were from women, whose share of successful applications was similar (37%) with 2,114 approved. The relatively high proportion of women both applying and gaining approval for loans was attributed to the effect of policies to strengthen the position of women in society, such as introducing a single-parent family criterion (ibid: 1-3).

Housing loans are highlighted since this initiative is regarded by the Greek authorities as an 'innovative and ambitious' example of good practice by offering Roma participants the chance to adapt rapidly to very different and admittedly challenging new housing conditions. This transition is helped by adopting an individualised approach in settling beneficiaries in accordance with their desire to live near kinsfolk and their requirements for making a living. However it is acknowledged that positive discrimination in the form of state-backed loans might carry a risk of inducing a mentality of benefit dependency (ibid: 4).

Another significant risk is that although the isolated location of many present-day Roma settlements in Greece reflects the marginalisation of their inhabitants, the construction of new state-sponsored all-Roma urban developments might result in segregated, social excluded ghettos as they have elsewhere, especially in some CEE countries. In view of this very real danger, a pilot project in Crete offers a positive alternative where 131 families in a remote Roma community, without basic infrastructure and amenities, are offered loans to relocate to houses in 'a place of their choice' (ibid.). Assuming this move is of their own free will and provided the necessary support is given in their new homes, this resembles the approach of the Avilés project, where families were offered housing among the non-Roma community. Following the Cretan model, housing policy for Greek Roma is expected to evolve in future from a programme of building new settlements, unless this is unavoidable, into a strategy of integrating individual families within local communities.<sup>43</sup>

Even though the Integrated Action Plan had been regularly reviewed from the start, the overall assessment in 2008 revealed a wide range of deficiencies.

As regards the infrastructure axis, systemic problems had been encountered in the planning and coordination of Roma housing initiatives, particularly in operational design, organisation and implementation, where these were often treated separately instead of being mainstreamed into more comprehensive local programmes. Many difficulties stemmed from inadequate preparation of projects, involving poor awareness of existing housing conditions, inability to anticipate problems and the absence of prior needs assessments. No doubt the failure to involve Roma families in the decision making process played a significant part in these omissions. Clear criteria were missing for the approval of projects and also for their coordination, monitoring and evaluation. Funding problems included vague financial criteria, failure to secure requisite public funding for projects and inadequate use of relevant Social Fund (ESF) resources, although this last shortcoming had been characteristic of wider NAFSI initiatives for other particularly

<sup>43</sup> The actual wording is: 'it is almost evident that that the Greek Gypsies' National Integration Policy is smoothly transforming into project and policies of individual rehabilitation within the local communities' (MESP 2008a: 4).

vulnerable population groups. Newly built accommodation for Roma also presented problems, since the houses could be of poor structural quality, inadequate in size<sup>44</sup> for the intended occupants and expensive, which proved a deterrent hindering the development of an integrated housing policy (MESP 2008b: 3-4).

A major element of the services axis of the Action Plan is the provision of **education** to Greek Roma, where over half of adults had never attended school (MESP 2009b: 7). While the main programme, now in its second phase as Education for Greek Roma Students (2005-2007), is specifically targeted at this group, this initiative forms part of a broader attempt to meet the educational needs of a growing numbers from 'social groups with a particular social, cultural or religious identity'.<sup>45</sup> In 1996 the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs 'adopted "cross-cultural education" – a new form of education in Greece' and by 2006 a total of 26 cross-cultural schools were in operation where 'at least 45% of pupils are Roma, repatriated and/or foreign students' (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 17).

In the 2005-2007 Roma programme 'the aim is to integrate Gypsy children in the existing educational system (without establishing separate classes)'.<sup>46</sup> To increase school attendance and reduce drop-outs, a network of 170 'intervention schools' and 150 'monitoring schools' provide extra tuition and support by mediators, cultural and recreational workshops, teacher and staff training, and new educational materials. Greater access to education is encouraged by reducing enrolment requirements and by providing record cards for itinerants and also allowances for students. At the same time schools seek to raise awareness by working with local non-Roma communities and by organising 'parent schools' for Roma. Further assistance is offered through the establishment of Educational Support Centres (MESP 2008a: 7 & 2008b: 7).

In general the 2008 assessment reported an overall improvement with increased enrolment numbers, higher attendance and better academic performance of Roma students. In the 2006-2007 academic year, intervention schools enrolled 8,065 students compared with a total of 9,000 over the longer earlier period. The decrease in drop-out rates from 25 percent to 15 percent over the two implementation phases was partly attributed to the financial inducement of allowances. Relatively weaker results from rural areas were explained by the facts that in such localities Roma groups were more mobile and had worse living conditions. Apart from this the report noted 'insufficient implementation of supplementary teaching classes ... [and] exploitation of educational material' (MESP 2008a: 8).<sup>47</sup>

**Employment** is a key factor in promoting social inclusion yet one of the hardest areas in which to make significant progress for severely marginalised groups such as Roma. Apart from the earlier EQUAL programme, the main means of improving Roma access to the labour market is by participating with others in the Sectoral Operational Programme for Employment and Vocational Training at both national and regional level. In 2008 it was reported that to date 1,338 Roma had benefited from 67 programmes offering training, counselling, Greek language classes and other

<sup>44</sup> A minimum size of 85 sq. m. per house had been established in 2004 (*Ibid*: 5). In 2001 the ROM network had complained: 'The low specifications ... and their small size render them completely unsuitable' (MESP 2009b: 9).

<sup>45</sup> The total number of foreign pupils increased from 44,000 in 1996 to 119,000 in 2003 (Ziomas *et al.* 2006: 17).

<sup>46</sup> The 2008 Updated Report mainly refers to 'Gypsies' but the term 'Roma' also appears (MESP 2008a: 6).

<sup>47</sup> Similar deficiencies in the earlier phase were blamed on the prioritising of necessary 'preliminary actions: [such [as a] census of Roma children and [their initial admission in school] (MESP 2005, Annex 1: 20).

support. Of these, 12 percent had joined labour activation schemes and 2 percent had obtained more permanent employment. In addition 1,402 proposals had been submitted to a Roma entrepreneurship programme of which 580 (41%) had been approved, while 34 Roma had established their own enterprises (MESP 2008a: 9 & b: 5).<sup>48</sup>

As with infrastructure, the 2008 assessment found problems of operational design, project organisation and implementation. The lack of preliminary needs assessments resulted in actions which sometimes neither met requirements of the local labour market nor those of Roma participants. Standard programmes were inflexible and unable to adapt to take account of the special characteristics of their Roma clients, particularly their potential, skills, needs and expectations. Other design problems were gaps in the continuity of initiatives, and failure to integrate them with other measures to boost employment. Organisational and implementation difficulties included poor coordination and management of partners, lack of effective time-planning and delays in starting and implementing projects. A significant shortcoming, found elsewhere and also a feature of the Czech Peer Review, was that counselling 'focused mainly on psycho-social support without addressing employability enhancement and labour market entry issues' (MESP 2008b: 6).

Health benefits should follow immediately from initiatives that improve living conditions (accommodation and infrastructure). The Integrated Action Plan also includes the provision of 27 socio-medical centres near organised encampments and 3 mobile medical units serving travelling Roma, as well as vaccination, preventative and health education programmes. Many vaccinations have been carried out and Roma knowledge and attitudes to health issues are reportedly improved. The centres have the advantages that they are relatively small and flexible, accessible and user-friendly to their Roma clients and aware of local communities and the living conditions of Roma.<sup>49</sup> An important aspect of the centres is that they benefit not only Roma but also non-Roma communities in the vicinity, which helps in the difficult task of making local people aware of the situation of Roma groups and more sympathetic to their inclusion.

Although reported outcomes of this element of the services axis are mainly positive, design, organisational and implementation difficulties were encountered once more. While Roma health was known to be markedly worse than for the majority population, no prior systematic research underpinned the health interventions. Another fundamental problem was that health initiatives were not supported by national funding but were dependent on EU support and this lack of mainstreaming was also reflected in poor links with the hospital network at regional and local level and difficulties experienced by Roma in trying to access official health institutions. At the same time there were delays in the provision of both infrastructure and pharmaceutical supplies (ibid: 10).

In spite of health education efforts and increased vaccinations (50% of adults and 75% of children), basic health indicators 'remain unchanged' and 10 percent of adults 'face serious health problems'. Women's health was of particular concern for although health awareness had grown, this had limited effects on practice. Of the 40% aware of the Pap test for cervical cancer almost

<sup>48</sup> The NAPSI document reported that between 2001 and 2003 a total of 1,183 Roma had participated in the Operational Programme for Employment and Vocational Training, while in the period 2002-2004 subsidised programmes to create new jobs and to assist entrepreneurs had benefited 160 and 51 Roma respectively (MESP 2005, Annex 1: 40).

<sup>49</sup> Over half (55.4%) of Roma households in the vicinity made use of the centres (MESP 2008b: 6).

all had taken it only once, while of the 50% who knew about mammograms, only one in four had taken it only once. 80% of women did not use any method of contraception and 10% said that at least one child had died, mostly before the age of ten months (MESP 2009b: 5-6).

### **Obstacles and constraints**

The 1996 decision by the Greek government to adopt a National Policy Framework for Greek Gypsies marks a watershed in the approach to the indigenous and long-established Roma population in Greece. Having been categorised previously as 'aliens' and mostly granted citizenship only two decades earlier, Roma were acknowledged thereafter as an integral part of the Greek population and the generally precarious and insanitary living conditions of the majority of Roma were frankly condemned as 'unacceptable'. However, there has been no provision as regards measures targeting the "indigenous" Greeks despite the acknowledged extensive and deep-rooted prejudice of the latter vis-à-vis the Roma.

Nevertheless poor progress in initial measures to relocate settlements and delays in introducing the Integrated Action Plan have already been noted, as have suggested underlying reasons of 'bureaucratic sluggishness' and 'prejudice' within police forces and local authorities. However the wider National Action Plan drew attention to and fundamental structural problems, particularly those linked to the process of decentralisation, which impeded efficient coordination and 'effective implementation of policies at the regional and local level'.

Consequently it is not unexpected that the Integrated Action Plan for Greek Roma suffered corresponding failures of coordination between central, regional and local authorities. Not least of the problems was that operational projects were sometimes presented and approved before the Action Plan had been completed, leading to difficulties in incorporating and funding these initiatives within the overall programme. Indeed the absence of guarantees of secure and timely funding was seen as a general problem (MESP 2008b: 11-12 & 2009a).

Although the Inter-Ministerial Committee was entrusted with scrutinising and approving project proposals for local authority projects and coordinating the agencies involved in their implementation, the 2008 assessment study identified the '[a]bsence of a Central unified centre for the overall coordination of the Action Plan' as a principal problem in the overall design. Linked to this institutional gap were deficiencies in the 'lack of an integrated approach in regard to the design and implementation' of projects, 'lack of homogeneity of interventions' and 'insufficient promotion of regional and local partnerships' (MESP 2008b: 11-12).

Further shortcomings, involving both the Committee and local implementing partners, concerned failure to anticipate potential setbacks and poor preliminary assessment of 'the most important problems and needs'. In some cases this led to projects 'insufficient[ly] addressing ... [the] real needs' of Roma, partly due to poor knowledge of Roma characteristics and requirements. Monitoring and evaluation of interventions was another shared responsibility that was reported as inadequate. Charged with the main responsibility for implementing local projects, municipalities and their local partners sometimes had insufficient organisational and technical skills to fulfil their roles adequately. Nor did they always involve 'Roma households in the decision making and

implementation process' (ibid.). And, on occasions, municipalities simply tried to resist the initiatives.<sup>50</sup>

All these factors strongly suggest that the Inter-Ministerial Committee lacked sufficient capacity to carry out the massive tasks of designing and coordinating a complex Integrated Action Plan, adequately scrutinising local authority proposals, monitoring progress of approved schemes and then recording and evaluating results. Furthermore, in an organisational situation of devolved powers, where 'any proposal or project aiming at the housing rehabilitation of citizens in need falls within the primary responsibility of the competent Local Government Organisations', the Committee most probably possessed inadequate authority to perform the coordinating role with which it was entrusted (ibid: 6). Faced with this situation, and looking to the future, consideration of the two previous Peer Reviews concerning Roma and also of their institutional context could be helpful.

### **Potential lessons from previous Roma-related Peer Reviews**

The Czech Republic had launched its national policy for Roma integration in 2000 and in 1997 had established an Inter-Ministerial Committee, renamed after 2004 the Government Council. Although the role of this body was mainly advisory, it nevertheless also had some coordinating functions. However, following devolution of many former centralised responsibilities, particularly for housing, the Council had found itself virtually powerless to influence regional and local authorities. These sometimes even went as far as diverting the work of Committee appointees at regional level from the Roma-related coordinating duties, for which they had been recruited, to these authorities' own totally unconnected tasks (Czech Government Council 2005: 11).

Spain's National Programme for the Development of Roma was introduced in 1988, two years after accession to the European Community. As in Greece at later date, and also in some CEE countries, a central administrative body was established, in this case supported by three coordinating commissions. A substantial national budget was provided, supplemented by matching funding from regional and local authorities and by a voluntary income tax levy. While the existence of a national programme and a coordinating unit encourages policy coherence and continuity as well as dissemination of experience, the commitment of regions and local bodies in Spain's highly devolved system of governance is encouraged by the requirement for them to contribute at least 40 percent of project funding.

A striking difference between the Peer Review cases of Spain and the Czech Republic is that whereas the project in Avilés was initiated and led by the municipality but fully supported at regional and national level, the Czech project is an NGO-led initiative which, although supported by the relevant ministry and in harmony with national policy, has limited integration with local policies of municipalities where it operates. Indeed it has been convincingly argued that it is precisely certain local authority policies that have been largely instrumental in creating the desperate situation which the NGO is seeking to alleviate (Baršová 2003: 19-20).

<sup>50</sup> See Ziomas *et al.* (2006: 26).

While the wide diversity of Greek Roma and their consequent housing situations are more varied than their counterparts in Spain, there are nevertheless important resemblances between the two countries, such as the long-established presence of indigenous Roma and, if often limited, a certain level of popular acceptance of Roma as part of wider national society. Not least of these similar features is the willingness of the central government to pursue a national policy aimed at the social inclusion of Roma within the structural context of a devolved administrative system. Therefore it is likely that, with appropriate modification, certain elements of the Spanish model may well be transferable to the situation of Greece in the reformulation of its Integrated Action Plan, while the example of the Czech Republic – in spite of the endeavours of the NGO and the Government Council – may offer some warnings.

### Concluding thoughts

Finally, in considering future policy it is important not to view the options in isolation but to bear in mind the wider political and economic context in which these initiatives will be located. Largely because of extensive and deep-rooted prejudice, it is regrettably always a problem to gain popular support for marginalised Roma populations. At the present time a crucial aspect of public dissatisfaction is the widespread perception, shared by many experts on Roma issues, that despite considerable financial outlay by the EU, national governments and donors on numerous initiatives for Roma inclusion, these funds are producing negligible progress and therefore are, to all intents and purposes, wasted.<sup>51</sup> This is a Europe-wide phenomenon and in the current climate where ordinary citizens are suffering the effects of recession, represents a critical situation where time is rapidly running out. Consequently any future Roma policies must be seen at last to deliver tangible and demonstrable results.

### Key Issues for debate at the Peer Review meeting

Greece, as Peer Review host, has already identified in the Abstract document the **purpose** of the Review and also indicated the main **outcomes** it would wish to emerge from the process. These mainly concern the **institutional form and managerial mechanisms** and **improved design of policies in relevant sectors** for a more successful future Integrated Programme.

Therefore key issues for debate could include the following topics:

- **Organisational structures** – government structures, planning procedures, review mechanisms, administrative decentralisation, national and local cooperation, importance of local commitment.
- **Implementation, monitoring and evaluating** – central and local accountability, management systems, working with partners, self assessment and external scrutiny, corrective measures.
- **Research** – continuing requirement for basic empirical information and critical analysis, data collection issues, (e.g. disaggregated data), regular exchange and dissemination of findings.

<sup>51</sup> For example, see MfD (2009).



- **Funding sources** – including EU support (ESF, ERDF), national and regional funding, importance of local financial involvement, other donors, Roma contributions.
- **Increased mainstreaming** – criticised as deficient in the 2008 Assessment, particularly in the policy areas of housing, employment and health.
- **Anti-discrimination measures** – utilising EU and national instruments in key areas such as equal opportunities for women and men, housing, education, employment, health, evictions.
- **Necessity of community work and local community benefits** from pro-Roma projects – as means of building popular support and political consensus, (e.g. socio-medical centres).
- **Awareness raising activities** targeting the "indigenous" Greeks as a means to tackle the widespread and deep rooted prejudices vis-à-vis the Roma.
- **Housing** – construction of new settlements and/or family integration to local communities, (e.g. Cretan pilot scheme); client-centred services and individualised approach.
- **Education** – provision of pre-school education and family support, parental involvement (esp. mothers); risks of segregated schools, girls dropping out, lack of parental role models.
- **Employment** – realistic integration into labour market as opposed to activation schemes, vocational training, entrepreneurs, poverty trap, 'grey economy' issues, social economy.
- **Health** – registration and vaccination campaigns, health education (esp. mothers), pregnancy and contraception, access to mainstream services, poverty and health, substance abuse.
- **Multiply-deprived vulnerable Roma** (e.g. girls and women, children, pensioners, single-parent families, disabled, institutionalised, homeless, undocumented people, immigrants).
- **Roma participation** – involvement at all levels: planning, employment possibilities (e.g. infrastructure), monitoring implementation and evaluating; inter-group cooperation.

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## Annex 2

CONCISE FINANCIAL DATA OF THE OPD (extract from MESP 2009b: 16-17)

### Under AXIS 1

Measures of Axis 1		Estimated cost in M €	National Funds	Community Funds (ERDF)	Particip- ation of National Funds (%)
<b>New Hamlets</b>		<b>139.40</b>	<b>119.59</b>	<b>19.81</b>	<b>86%</b>
	Land Acquisition	17.61	17.61	0.00	100%
	Studies	7.34	5.14	2.20	70%
	Infrastructure networks & landscaping	23.48	9.17	14.31	39%
	Reception services infrastructure	7.34	4.04	3.30	55%
	Construction of new residences	83.64	83.64	0.00	100%
<b>Improvement of existing residences</b>		<b>10.27</b>	<b>10.27</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Improvement of existing hamlets</b>		<b>11.74</b>	<b>5.14</b>	<b>6.60</b>	<b>44%</b>
	Land Acquisition	1.47	1.47	0.00	100%
	Studies	4.40	1.10	3.30	25%
	Infrastructure networks & landscaping	2.93	0.73	2.20	25%
	Reception services infrastructure	1.47	0.37	1.10	25%
	Additional residences	1.47	1.47	0.00	100%
<b>Reception facilities for people passing through</b>		<b>14.67</b>	<b>8.07</b>	<b>6.60</b>	<b>55%</b>
	Land Acquisition	5.87	5.87	0.00	100%
	Infrastructure networks & landscaping	5.87	1.47	4.40	25%
	Establishment of communal facilities	2.93	0.73	2.20	25%
<b>TOTAL AXIS 1</b>		<b>176.08</b>	<b>143.07</b>	<b>33.02</b>	<b>81%</b>

## Under AXIS 2

MEASURE	FUNDING FORESEEN*	FUNDING APPROVED**	%
MEASURE 1: EMPLOYMENT	66,030 m Euro	13,107 m Euro	20%
MEASURE 2: EDUCATION	29,347 m Euro	12,257 m Euro	42%
MEASURE 3: HEALTH& WELFARE SERVICES	13,206 m Euro	8,014 m Euro	60%
MEASURE 4 : CULTURE SERVICES	16,140 m Euro	685,000.00 Euro	4%
MEASURE 5 : SPORTS SERVICES	2,934 m Euro	757,738.00 Euro	25%

### **Annex 3 Spanish Peer Review (2006): Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Avilés (Principality of Asturias)**

*The Municipal Programme of Shanty Towns Eradication in Avilés is a remarkable case of good practice on many counts. One way to demonstrate this is to recount how the project developed, avoiding repetition of previous information, and then follow this narrative with a formal list of transversal issues, identified as critical success factors, which the programme exemplified.*

Political concern over the growth of shantytowns in Avilés had intensified during the economic crisis of the late 1980s. Faced with the enforced closure of the vast steel complex that had been the city's main employer, the municipal administration reacted in a remarkably way. Reflecting on a post-industrial future, it decided that the town should not contain shantytowns. But instead of razing these to the ground and driving out their mainly Roma inhabitants, as has been done recently in Italy, the administration set out to integrate them. This 1989 local plan was linked with the 1988 National Programme for the Development of Roma (NPDR).

The initial plan was that, as an intermediate step, social workers would 'resocialise' these people in a separate, purpose-built development on the outskirts of town. After a few years it was recognised that to make improvements in housing conditions, while continuing to maintain residential segregation, was failing to make progress towards social inclusion. So, in spite of the considerable expense of having constructed new accommodation, this was declared redundant and progressively demolished while a programme to match individual families to suitable normal housing was implemented. In this way, to their great satisfaction, Roma families were gradually resettled among other city-dwellers. Unsurprisingly there were some objections from future, non-Roma neighbours but officials patiently explained that the Roma were citizens too and had the same rights and added that, on the basis of personal experience, they were actually nice families. 'Try it for a few months and see!' they suggested and resistance soon ceased. This firmness in the face of difficulties exemplified the resolute political will that characterised the whole project throughout its various phases.

The main strengths of this project were that the project team recognised that factors preventing social inclusion were interrelated and in response they designed an integrated and sustainable approach. As well as providing desegregated housing, they also addressed unemployment concerns – mainly through vocational training schemes, education issues – by providing desegregated kindergarten and school places with support for pupils and they also registered Roma families at health centres and initiated inoculation programmes.

The organisational structures were no less impressive for every level of government – national, regional and municipal – played an active part alongside civil partner NGOs and Roma organisations. The national Roma NGO, the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* (FSGG), played a prominent part, particularly through its acclaimed and ESF-supported employment programme *Acceder*. Central government provided assistance and guidance while the regional government supplied much of the funding. This was particularly important in the most decentralised country in the EU with seventeen administrative areas with varying levels of autonomy. A crucial element in the success of the project was that agreement between political parties was negotiated in advance. This prevented the scheme ever becoming a vote-catching



issue or a political football in the local media. By no means least, the team worked closely with the Roma beneficiaries who were active participants in the scheme.

The problem is therefore to discover what conceptual and institutional structures will produce the best results in fostering schemes that, whatever their scope, must ultimately be local in their application. This is for the obvious reason that all Roma communities are sited in specific locations. To be successful such schemes must gain local non-Roma support – or at least tolerance, which is one of the most important lessons from many examples of good practice. Without such support, local authorities – the elected representatives – are likely to resist or sabotage instructions from central authorities. Indeed this has been the experience of all past large-scale attempts to integrate (or sometimes assimilate) Roma populations, ranging from the endeavours of Maria Theresa in the Habsburg Empire, those of Communist regimes and more recently, some policies of post-Communist CEE/SEE governments with EU financial assistance. The necessary counterpart to non-Roma support is local Roma involvement at every stage of initiatives. This has been a stated aim of various policy transformations over the years but largely remains an unfulfilled intention.

Elements of the Avilés programme most relevant to Greece :

- Recognition that improved accommodation, even linked to social work, can fail to promote integration (re: new settlements with prefabricated accommodation)
- Willingness to reconsider plans if not solving most important problems
- Adoption of successful integrated approach (also with significant Roma participation)
- Establishment of viable regional and local partnerships
- Ability to access Social Fund (ESF) funding (e.g. via the *Acceder* programme)

For further information, see: Fresno (2006), Guy (2006), Guy and Fresno (2006) and Peer Review

<<http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2006/social-integration-of-roma-people-municipal-programme-of-shanty-towns-eradication-in-aviles>>

**Transversal issues** (Extract from *Peer Review and Assessment in Social Inclusion: Executive Summary* (European Commission 2004))

Several transversal issues can be identified to develop into a list of critical **success factors** for use in the design of future programmes:

- *Political consensus*: political support and strong government commitment have a positive effect;
- *National framework and local implementation*: a combined bottom-up and top-down approach may be seen as a factor contributing to the success of all good practices;

- *Institutional framework*: creation of partnerships at multiple levels and with multiple partners benefited most good practices;
- Co-operation at governmental and service provision levels, leading to *integrated services* which provide adequate solutions to the problem of social inclusion which is multi-dimensional;
- *Client-centred services* and *issue-oriented co-operation* lead to more efficient support for the beneficiaries;
- *Pathway approaches* based on the assessment of the individual capabilities of clients and accommodating to their needs and potential pay attention to the long-term social inclusion process;
- Attention to the development of appropriate *professional competences* of all actors involved is generally needed.

## **Annex 4 Czech Peer Review (2005): Field social work programmes in neighbourhoods threatened by social exclusion**

The Field Social Work Programme in the Czech Republic is operated by NGO People in Need.<sup>1</sup> This is one of the largest organisations of its kind in post-Communist Europe, providing relief aid and assistance through projects in over thirty seven countries since 1994. Together with its partner, Czech Public Service Television, it has a creditable track-record of defending the rights of the Roma populations of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

People in Need began its Field Social Work Programme in 1999, which largely -although not exclusively - targets very poor Roma families living in dilapidated tenement blocks in urban settings. Typically these people suffer from problems of long-term unemployment, benefit dependency, debt, poor living conditions and health and are often at risk of eviction.

The programme is funded mainly by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs but municipalities and private foundations also contribute and so this programme represents is a good example of private/public partnerships (NIZW 2005). However, although the localities chosen for intervention follow invitations from municipalities, it was reported that 'collaboration with local authorities and civil society is limited'. Furthermore, the potential for solving accommodation problems is restricted by the fact that '[v]ery few municipalities now provide social housing and central government lacks the power to influence them'. Even more serious is the suggestion that 'municipal workers may have private economic interests that conflict with care for Roma families (e.g. property ownership)' (Minev 2005b: 22, 16-17). In other words officials can be part of the process by which the localities at risk of exclusion are actively created by real estate companies moving Roma from former state-owned apartments in desirable locations to desolate areas where Roma are already concentrated.

The aim of the programme is 'to support and develop clients' social competencies and thus their social mobility, and to prevent harm following from their social situation'. In 2004 it focused on sixteen localised neighbourhoods, employing a team of twenty-five streetworkers. Having undergone rigorous training, these adopt an individualised approach to their clients' needs and negotiate explicit contracts with them to encourage active participation in suggesting solutions to their own predicament. In addition to counselling and giving advice on problems, the streetworkers act as mediators with doctors, teachers, police, officials, etc., on their clients' behalf, since usually these families 'have very limited access to assistance from government institutions, which often deal with them repressively' (NIZW 2005).

The Peer Review Discussion Paper and Synthesis Report emphasised the dedication and professionalism of the NGO and explained how this approach both empowers clients and exemplifies the evolution of social work from the 'production of social services to "production" of citizenship and political participation' (Minev 2005a: 10). However, although praising the flexibility of the programme in adapting to the specificity of Roma clients, Peer Review partners commented on 'the restricted impact of the programme on the general [marginalised] situation of the clients' and were sceptical about whether it could achieve more than 'harm reduction' (Minev 2005b: 7). To some extent this view has similarities with the critical evaluation of the Greek

programme that counselling for Roma 'focused mainly on psycho-social support without addressing employability enhancement and labour market entry issues' (MESP 2008b: 6).

When reviewing specific pro-Roma projects it is always important to consider the national policy and institutional context and in the very same year that the Czech Peer Review was held, a bleak report revealed deep problems in the organisational structure. This report was issued by the national advisory body for Roma policy, the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs. In the Czech Republic the institutional arrangements to realise the goals of the national policy towards Roma were, at national level, the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, the broader Government Council for National Minorities, seven employees 'who [we]re at least partly responsible for Roma affairs' and whose 'task ... [wa]s to support "mainstreaming" of policies of equal opportunities for the Roma'. In addition, there were experts attached to ministries, while at local level there were coordinators at regional authorities and advisors and assistants at district authorities (Czech Government Council 2005: 8).

While this might appear to be an adequate administrative network to support the implementation of pro-Roma initiatives, this was evidently not the case. Although the Council was 'the sole central interdepartmental authority whose aim is to unify activities of individual ministries', its capacity and remit were limited for its role was always advisory and it did not possess any executive powers of its own. As was also stated in the Peer Review Synthesis Report, the Council was unable to 'supervise the performance of tasks entrusted to regional authorities and to municipal authorities with extended competencies, or draw any conclusions from their failure to fulfil such tasks'. It had been proposed to remedy this lack of an effective coordinating body by setting up a special unit, either attached to the Government Office or to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, but 'no consensus was reached in this respect, particularly due to one of the government's priorities, which is the prevention of further growth of the state apparatus' (ibid: 8)

At local level the network of advisors simply disintegrated. Some municipalities failed to appoint anyone to fulfil this role and 'due to the fact that the establishment of a post of Roma advisor and assistant is not prescribed by the law, it cannot be imposed upon local authorities to employ such workers'. Meanwhile, as has already been noted, some authorities simply used their advisors for other tasks. As a result 'a significant part of consistent network of Roma advisors, which covered the whole territory of the country, has been scattered'. This state of affairs was not helped by the indifferent attitude of many municipalities, where 'representatives and employees of local authorities have little information about the content of the government Concept [i.e. plan] and most of them are not too interested in it' (ibid.: 8, 12).

Inevitably these structural problems had implications for funded programmes designed to encourage Roma integration. The existence of such fundamental weaknesses and the necessity for remedial measures is highlighted in the following frank extract from the report.

[A] problem of the distribution of government funds ... for the purpose of social inclusion of Roma communities is the lack of coordination among ministries, which results in scattering of these funds. At the same time, there is *de facto* no authority that would effectively coordinate the policy of the ministries and create priorities of the subsidy policies applied by the government in this sphere for every calendar year. *To increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the Roma Integration Policy Concept, it is necessary to re-assess the current financial support system and to propose*

*such framework that will permit the implementation of long-term measures proposed in the Concept at the local level and in cooperation with all relevant partners.*

(Czech Government Council 2005: 9, emphasis in original)

In the meantime the Government had recognised an apparent growth in the number of the type of locations targeted by the People in Need programme and the absence of basic research. The result was an in-depth survey (Gabal 2006), which for the first time revealed their extent and the depth of exclusion of their inhabitants.

For further information, see: Minev (2005a & b), People in Need (2008) and Peer Review <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2005/field-social-work-programmes-in-neighbourhoods-threatened-by-social-exclusion>



## General and actual information on Roma issues in Finland

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### General and actual information on Roma issues in Finland

Let us start with short description of Roma in Finland. According to the Finnish Constitution Roma people have the right to preserve and develop their language and culture. The Roma community is small in Finland in comparison with many other European countries. There are an estimated 10,000 – 12,000 Roma in Finland and about 3,000 Finnish Roma living in Sweden.

Roma people are Finnish citizens and they enjoy full civil rights and are subject to the civic duties these entail. They have a strong cultural identity of their own but they also regard themselves as Finns. Finnish Roma are actively involved in building up the Finnish society.

The central organ in Finland's Romani policy and administration is the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, which was set up already 50 years ago in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. It serves as a platform for co-operation and expertise on Roma issues between the Roma people in Finland and the public authorities. In addition to the national board there are four Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs in conjunction with the State Provincial Offices in the south, north, east and west part of Finland. They are financed by the State budget since 2005. The Advisory Boards act as cross-sectorial bodies for the Romani population and the authorities. They work with both provincial and local authorities.

The Regional Advisory Boards have increased the participation of the Roma in decision-making at local level. They have improved the possibilities to influence the situation at grass root level to benefit Roma people. Their tasks include increasing the understanding of Romani culture, promoting equality and preventing discrimination. The Regional Advisory Boards can also run regional and local development projects for improving the situation of Roma people.

#### National Policy on Roma under preparation

The Finnish Minister of Social Services and Health Ms. Paula Risikko has assigned a working group in January 2009 in order to prepare Finland's first National Roma Policy. The working group's task will be finished by the end of June.

The objective of the National Policy on Roma is equal treatment and inclusion of people belonging to the Roma minority in different spheres of life in Finland. The policy covers all sectors and will be prepared in a Working Group consisting of representatives of Roma people's own organisations and representatives of the different administrative sectors and other relevant bodies. By mainstreaming the promotion of equal treatment and inclusion of the Roma into various actions by society the rights of the Finnish Roma minority can be furthered in the way required by Finnish legislation and obligations stemming from international agreements.

The programme will include concrete recommendations covering education, employment, welfare and health, housing, the police and prison administration, Romani language and culture, elimination of discrimination, institutional matters and international activities. The working group consists of a chairman and vice chair and 21 members. Five regional hearings with Roma people as well as a hearing with municipalities will be organised during the process.

### **Assessment of the Greek model on Roma inclusion based on Finnish experiences**

First of all, we would like to congratulate Greece for an excellent work on Roma issues. We find the model described in the discussion paper very comprehensive and strategic. The model is in our opinion usable and transferable to other countries.

We welcome the work done on housing issues and education of Roma children. It is a good start and gives a solid base on which to proceed. We believe that one has to start with making concrete improvements. Prioritizing children and housing is wise, since both areas mutually reinforce each other. Housing issues and the welfare of Roma children and families are also closely connected. For example problems with the school attendance of Roma pupils are often linked with lacking or insufficient housing facilities.

Outcomes of measures taken both in early and primary education and housing require time. Our experience is that progress is slow and Roma people haven't always the patience to wait for things to get better. They want rapid actions. The Greek model on housing policies for Roma varies from the Finnish one. The Greek authorities have done a remarkable job with providing housing for Roma people. There is however still room for developing a more integrated housing policy.

Having worked with improving the housing conditions for the Roma population for decades we still face problems in Finland. Now the problems are more on discrimination and reconciliation of Roma's cultural habits regarding housing with the majority's lifestyle. In Finland the main problem Roma people encounter is that they are being denied apartments they have applied for. Low income narrows substantially Roma people's freedom of choice when seeking for an apartment. This creates pressure on an already narrow housing market.

However, important steps in improving the housing situation of Finnish Roma was made already in 1976 when special legislation was passed by Parliament in order to improve the socio-economic position of the Roma. Each municipality was obliged to provide housing (an apartment or a private house) for the Roma families and persons living in the municipality. Special funding was also available in the State budget for the municipalities. Many Roma families were travelling around in the country before that. The difference between the Greek and the Finnish model is that in Finland the special measures are earmarked for benefiting the Roma population but targeted to mainstream housing. In Finland there are no separated housing areas, quarters or blockhouses for Roma people only. Roma people live in the same areas and houses as other Finns. In addition, the special legislation gave a number of Roma people possibilities to private ownership of apartments and houses. It also successfully put an end to a travelling life and moved towards a settled and more stable life.

The idea with parent 's schools in conjunction with increasing the school attendance and giving



extra support to Roma children we find innovative and excellent. There are many reasons for this. First of all, many Roma adults have not received any systematic education themselves and they may even be illiterate. Secondly, receiving basic education help Roma parents to motivate their children in keeping up their studies. And thirdly, Roma adults get a possibility to meet other Roma people in the same situation and to support each other within their own community. Also in Finland Roma people have asked the authorities not only to give support to the children but in addition to give guidance and support to the parents. So-called summer schools for entire Roma families have been successfully arranged. Concrete help to parents with the daily upbringing of children is also needed.

The National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs in Finland has published early childhood material<sup>1</sup> for Romani parents. The material is distributed by all prenatal and child welfare clinics in Finland free of charge. The guide booklets have been bilingual in Finnish and Romani language. The Roma has very well received the guides.

### **Models for promoting participation and combating discrimination**

The administrative model for promoting Roma issues in Greece seems to be quite centralized. The Inter-Ministerial Committee is a good start, but not enough, as stated in the discussion paper. Our experience shows that permanent bodies with stable funding and permanent staff are needed. In Finland the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs was set up as already mentioned as early as 1956. The board has two employees; a senior officer and a secretary. The tasks of the Advisory Board are to:

- Monitor and report to the authorities on the development of the Roma people's living conditions and opportunities for participation in society;
- Take initiatives to improve the economic, educational, social and cultural conditions of the Roma people and to promote the employment of Roma;
- Work for putting an end to all forms of discrimination; including promoting Romani language and culture;
- Participate in international activities to improve the conditions for the Roma.

The Advisory Board has influenced the development of Finnish legislation and administration in matters concerning the Roma. Its main function is to ensure Roma people's participation in Romani affairs and provide expertise in all matters related to Roma.

However, it is equally vital to have a legal instrument to protect the rights of the minorities. For that purpose, the office of the Ombudsman for Minorities was founded in 2001 in Finland. The Ombudsman together with the National Discrimination Tribunal ensures legal protection against discrimination of ethnic minorities according to the Non-discrimination Act, which entered into force in 2004. The office has nine employees.

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<sup>1</sup> Read with the Child in 2006; Grow with the Child; Taking Care of Teeth with the Child coming up in 2009; Exercise with the Child coming up in 2010.

There is a clear division of work between the legal instrument and consultative body instrument. Likewise, a body for supervising the legal rights of Roma people in Greece could be something to consider.

Since decisions affecting Roma people are taken at local level a greater involvement of municipalities and possible bodies for participation are needed. In Finland we have four regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs. The regional bodies were set up in 2005 and after some struggle the state funding for them is now secured.

Furthermore, some 20 forward-looking municipalities have set up official co-operative and cross-sectoral working groups on Roma issues. Our experience is that the local groups can settle concrete issues at the municipal level and pressure on the National Advisory Board with concrete problems will diminish. We would encourage the Greek authorities to consider setting up a similar model with regional bodies and local working groups supporting and implementing the Greek Integrated programme for the Roma population.

Empowerment of Roma organisations must not be forgotten. In the discussion paper we don't find information on the present situation of Roma organisations in Greece. What kind of organisations do you have and how are they funded? In Finland we have several Roma organisations. Some are focused on subgroups like Roma children, young people and women, some on thematic issues like art or religion. In 2007 an umbrella organisation, the Finish Roma Forum (Finitiko Romano Forum), was created, which comprises of 12 associations all over the country. The Forum carries out projects and lobbying activities as well as aims at strengthening the co-operation between Roma organisations. The funding of the Forum is project-based, which makes long-term work difficult. The Finnish organisations on Roma would need a permanent public funding and training in lobbying and international co-operation.

Since evolving international and national legislation in human rights, minorities and discrimination brings us all new tasks and challenges it is essential to ensure that Roma organisations and activists are able to contribute with their know-how in international Roma issues. The participation of Roma representatives should be ensured at all levels; local, regional, national and as well as international.

We are also convinced that good Roma role models in Music, Culture, Politics, Academia etc. can give visibility and support for Roma people. Outstanding personalities are also a gateway to political influence since elections are about individual votes to individual candidates. Unfortunately there are no Roma representatives in Finnish Parliament so far. However, we have been encouraged by the municipal elections last year (2008). There were over 20 Roma persons as candidates for mainstream parties and at least six of them were elected. Almost all of them received at least one Committee membership in municipal administration. We would be very interested to hear what the situation is in Greece?

## Towards an integrated service provision model

Our main message to the Greek authorities would be to gradually integrate services for the Roma population with services provided for the rest of the population. From the discussion paper we find out that 27 socio-medical centres have been set up for the Roma population, sports and culture projects and programmes are tailor-made for Roma people and 13 educational and cultural centres for Roma have been established. We would like to know if there is a specific reason for organising segregated services for the Roma population? In Finland the starting point has been that services for Roma people are provided in the same settings and facilities as for the rest of the population. This means that Roma children attend the nearest day care centres and schools together with their peers. If extra support is needed to Roma children and families, that support is provided within normal settings. Specific projects, for instance family support, may be carried out in order to achieve equal opportunities in practice. We call it positive discrimination. Even if Roma pupils still drop out from schools more frequently than the main population, the general situation of Roma pupils has steadily improved.

In Finland the Roma population also attend the same health centres, child welfare and maternity clinics as the rest of the population. At the moment there are not big problems concerning the use of health services. Unfortunately we don't have enough facts on the use of health services and therefore we intend to make a special survey on promoting welfare and health among the Roma population in 2010. For instance, we believe that information about health promotion and healthy living conditions doesn't reach the Roma population fully. If that proves to be the case, we have to address the issue in some way.

## The way forward

Employment of the Roma population is a common challenge to us all. The next step in Greece would be to focus on adult education and guidance and assistance for Roma people in order to enter working life. In Finland the level of education of the Roma population has slowly improved. Even if Roma people have passed the same exams as the rest of the population they still face problems in getting a job. Discrimination is reported to take place when employers hire staff and trainees. Roma people face specific problems in getting traineeships. Therefore, specific projects are currently running in vocational training centres to help Roma people find the right path to employment. The preliminary results are very encouraging.

We believe that in spite of the economic recession Roma issues and policies can and must be pushed forward. In fact the recession should be used for the benefit of Roma people. Many countries, including Finland, have adopted so-called recovery packages, which focus on building the infrastructure. For instance as a part of the recovery plan housing for Roma people can be addressed. We also believe that programmes and actions involving the local authorities are needed. Most of the problems can be addressed and solved at local level.

## Concluding remarks

Finland warmly welcomes the Peer Review on Roma inclusion. We believe that we have a lot to learn from each other. We also believe that we can work more together at European level. First of all, we welcome the Draft Council Conclusions on Inclusion of the Roma, which contains common basic principles on Roma Inclusion. Roma issues should be better addressed within the work of the Social Protection Committee as a part of the follow up to the Active Inclusion Strategy. We would for example need to address the side effects of the free movement of Roma people within the European Union. What means do we have to help people moving around without basic living conditions? European Conferences on Roma Inclusion would be helpful for all Member States, the Commission and Roma organisations in order to raise awareness of the problems Roma people face and to seek solutions together.

## **Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma**



## Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Greek Roma

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This paper reflects only the opinion of the authors.

The comments and remarks to the discussion paper reflect the situation of Sinti and Roma in Germany.

### Historical background

As in other European countries there is a very long tradition of Sinti and Roma people living in Germany. Since the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century, the Sinti have been living in German-language territory.

Roma came to be at home in Germany at a later time from Eastern Europe. In the course of history Sinti and Roma had to suffer discrimination, were crowded out from various trades and driven out of towns and regions. Despite these problems, the Sinti and Roma by and by managed to establish themselves locally, and in their respective home regions they worked among other as manual workers, employees, craftsmen, artists, small tradesmen and handicraftsmen.

Due to the racist fanaticism under the Nazi despotic rule, the Sinti and Roma in Germany and in the occupied areas were exposed to persecution and genocide with the aim of their extermination. Of the 40,000 officially registered German and Austrian Sinti and Roma more than 25,000 have been murdered by May 1945. This persecution left its mark on the survivors and also has an impact on the generation born after 1945.

After 1945, many of the surviving German Sinti and Roma, whose health had been impaired and whose material basis of existence had been destroyed, still had had to struggle with discrimination and prejudices even by police and local government.

In 1982 the German government declared, the persecution of German Sinti and Roma to be a crime against humanity. On 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1997 the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe entered into force for Germany.

This convention as well as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages are perceived as legal instruments that are used to protect national minorities and their languages. Only those groups of the population which meet the following criteria are considered national minorities within this convention:

- their members are German nationals;
- they have their own identity;
- they wish to maintain this identity;
- they are traditionally resident in Germany; and

- they live in the traditional settlement areas (As regards the last criterion, an exception is made to the German Sinti and Roma).

The convention applies to the Danes, Frisians, Sorbs and Sinti and Roma.

## Facts and Figures

Germany has a population of 82,218 million inhabitants of whom 9% are foreigners. The German Sinti and Roma are estimated to number up to 70,000 persons. Some Sinti organisations put the number even higher. Most of them are settled down.

The majority lives in the old Länder, including Berlin. Within the organisations of German Sinti and Roma, there is no general agreement on the designation as either a national minority or an ethnic group. But there is a common agreement, that the German Sinti and Roma are an inseparable part of the German people.

One major problem is the education of Roma children. They are over-represented in special schools and under-represented in higher education; some Roma children are said not to attend schools regularly, with the known negative consequences for their personal and professional development. Under the conditions of a difficult labour market young Sinti and Roma have difficulties to find a job or to participate in vocational training.

Besides the German Sinti and Roma Roma people from other countries and of other nationalities live in Germany; they have the same rights and obligations as all foreigners.

## Assessment of the possible relevance of an integrated programme for Roma inclusion in Germany

German experience shows that problems and difficulties of people living in poverty or are excluded are mostly the result of a bundle of reasons. Different measures have to be taken to combat the different origins of exclusion and to realize inclusion. Certainly coordination is useful. But an integrated programme and comprehensive planning from national to the local level is often difficult, time-consuming, costly and lengthy.

An integrated programme for Roma inclusion planned, organised, managed and implemented by the national government would not fit to the German situation and its political system.

The Federal system in Germany gives only limited powers to the federal government even in legislation; normally the Länder – the regions – are responsible for the implementation of federal laws and are – for example – primarily responsible for all matters concerning education. There is no direct link between the federal and the local level. Actually the German constitution forbids the German government and parliament to impose new tasks directly on local governments. In its 3<sup>rd</sup> report under Article 25 paragraph 2 of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities the German government declared national inclusion plans designed for German Sinti and Roma hardly to be feasible.



Local and regional government often establish or finance programmes and measures to solve problems of Sinti and Roma. They are often assisted in these tasks by organisations of the Sinti and Roma and welfare organisations.

Since 1991 the Federal government supports the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Documentation and Culture Centre of German Sinti and Roma by public means. Actually a memorial of the victims of the Nazi genocide of Sinti and Roma is built in Berlin with federal funding and support by the Land of Berlin.

As recognised minority German Sinti and Roma have the possibility to work together in a consultative council at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, but do not practise this for internal reasons.

Regional government often supports regional associations of Sinti and Roma; some funds projects to the cultural identity of Sinti and Roma or support educational and remembrance projects.

## **Assessment of similarities or differences to the Greek policy**

Not knowing the precise details of the Greek development in this field it is difficult to make a serious comparison between Germany and Greece.

One important difference – as already mentioned – is the lack of an integrated inclusion plan at the national level in Germany. Besides the mentioned legal problems it is to point that a plan designed specially to the minority of German Sinti and Roma could be only implemented with the consent of the group concerned.

Similar to Greece, most activities are realized at the local level which is of great importance for every form of better inclusion.

Also if there are no great differences in absolute numbers of Greek or German Roma – 65,000 in Greece and 70,000 in Germany – but in comparison to the total population there is a net difference. From a purely quantitative aspect the integration of Roma is more difficult in Greece than in Germany. National plans for German Sinti and Roma would not be reasonable if they included measures focused on specific regional areas, because there is no large concentration of German Sinti and Roma in defined regions.

Instead of creating separate settlements for Sinti and Roma as it has been the case in the past, the actual trend is to integrate the housing of Sinti and Roma into new settlements for all citizens. For example, the city of Muenster decided in 2000 with the approval of all parliamentary groups of the city council, that refugees, particularly Roma from the Kosovo and southern Europe should be better integrated in German neighbourhoods. Instead of building houses for up to 225 person only smaller houses for about 50 persons with similar standards as the surrounding buildings of Germans were realized. Before the buildings were constructed future owners were informed and encouraged to support the newcomers. These volunteers' activities as well as those of a so-called cultural-interpreter of Roma origin, who helped Germans and Roma to understand the

different mentalities, avoided conflicts between neighbours and helped Roma to get acquainted with the new situation and the German administrative structures, are steps for a better mutual understanding.

The signing and implementation of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is regarded by the German Sinti and Roma as well as by the German government as an important step to more inclusion of German Sinti and Roma. Through contacts with German Sinti and Roma associations it became clear, that the groups accept special measures only if they are necessary to document their discrimination in history, to gain acceptance for their group and understanding for its historical fate, to overcome prejudices and to prevent future discrimination. Otherwise German Sinti and Roma do not want to be treated differently from members of the majority population in a similar social situation. So they reject special classes for Sinti and Roma children to prevent segregation.

### **Assessment of the learning value of the Greek policy for Germany, German experiences that could be useful in the Greek context**

As the situation in Germany is different from that in Greece it will be difficult to apply Greek experiences, measures and projects directly to the German situation. But it will be useful to get to know the Greek experiences to tackle the problems of education, health, occupation and housing; for example the idea of "housing loans" seems to be interesting. As the migration of Roma will continue in Europe it is always important to have more information about Roma from southern Europe and their reactions to certain measures and proposals.

As in other countries Sinti and Roma in Germany are confronted with prejudices and different forms of discrimination; therefore it will be helpful to get to know by what means and measures the Greek government tries to influence and change these attitudes.

The already mentioned Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities is regarded by the German Sinti and Roma as an important political success and a step to help to preserve their identity. It is also regarded as a step against discrimination even by public authorities.

German experiences showed, that close contact and cooperation with Sinti and Roma associations are helpful, to identify problems and to start common activities especially at the local level. At the local level it seems important to have no segregated housing, to give help to Roma and German inhabitants to get along with each other and to offer social-pedagogical support for Roma families and help at school for their children.

It seems to be very useful to have specially skilled persons of Roma origin who are familiar with the German social and administrative structures and who can act as interpreters between Roma and Germans communities.

Also a large political consent helps to establish measures which contribute to social inclusion.

## **Important questions about social inclusion of Roma debated in Germany**

At the national level the discussion concerning German Sinti and Roma has been dominated in the past decades by their historic fate, the necessity of a fair compensation and their efforts to combat any form of discrimination of their group. Looking at the situation of German Sinti and Roma one has to bear in mind, that the racial persecution by the Nazi regime has had direct or indirect impact on the survivors and the next-born generation. It was only in the decades after World War II that a general process of change within the state and society, gradually evolved towards acceptance of the German Sinti and Roma. With reference to the overall population the process has undergone a positive development, but is yet not completed.

The German Sinti and Roma see the Act on Equal Treatment to be an important legal signal to prevent discrimination in civil and labour law. They noted, that cases of discrimination by companies were satisfactorily resolved.

By funding counselling bureaus of Sinti and Roma organisations and other initiatives the government side gives help to members of the minority in difficult life situations and contributes to enhance their chances of economic and social integration.

In the past decade a great number of Roma people from foreign countries, which are refugees or asylum seekers, came to Germany; due to this situation these newcomers have been confronted with the residence and integration problems of foreigners too, which made their integration in Germany even more difficult.

Exaggerated press reports on criminal activities of children of Roma origin in Cologne obliged the Cologne youth office to take the steps necessary for a comprehensive programme of more help in school, more help to the families and other measures. The success of these measures showed that a large number of children and their families were willing to cooperate.

## **Potential contribution of such a policy to the objectives and strategy of the German National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion**

As there is no national social inclusion strategy for Roma the German Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion do not mention Roma people expressively; but the problems they are confronted with are treated in the report.

## Measuring success of these policies in Germany

The success of measures and activities can be judged from different standpoints:

- those of the people directly concerned, in this case the Sinti and Roma;
- those who planned and implement these activities (administrations, welfare organisations);  
and
- the acceptance by the neighbourhood or by the general public.

Experiences with housing projects showed that in cases where Sinti and Roma became involved in the planning and decision-making, these houses and flats were accepted as their homes and no vandalism and destruction was to be seen.

Creating new settlements in the town of Muenster the future owner of houses were informed, that a small group of houses for refugees (Roma) was build there too; in consequence of this early information, conflicts were avoided, good neighbourhood relations established and help for children was organised by volunteers of the neighbourhood.

In the Cologne case the help for children and families led to the following results:

- more registration to schools and kindergarten;
- most parents accepted the help;
- children taking part in the project are coming more regularly to school and are making their homework more often;
- a net reduction of pick pocketing;
- no more participation of children living in Cologne in housebreaking;
- a reduction of intensive offenders among children and no follow up by younger children.

In the framework of the Dutch-German Interregio-project "Integrating migrants" at Muenster an effort was made in 2007 to evaluate the costs and benefits of the different measures. The new instrument **SROI** (Social Return ON Investment) allows

- the exact evaluation of realized measures;
- the description of intended and non-intended effects;
- the estimation of the effects, which would be realized without these measures; and
- a final rating in Euro of the consequences of the measures taken.

This instrument should allow social investors to judge the social and economic effects of their investments; the project has not been finished.

## Key issues and main questions at the review meeting

1. Does the Integrated Action Plan for Greek Roma has had a large political support by all parties or parliamentary groups at the national, regional or local level? How can such a support be realized?
2. Is there any legal possibility to strengthen the power of the Inter-Ministerial Committee?
3. What can be done to reduce prejudices of the Greek majority? Will it be possible to gain volunteers from the Greek majority to help Roma children to continue school? How can municipalities get interested in decent housing for Roma or other activities to support them? Which incentives or sanctions may be necessary to achieve the targets of Roma integration?
4. How can a dialogue between Roma and the Greek majority be established? What could Roma do?
5. Can professional "interpreters" of Roma origin help to fulfil the gap between Roma and Greek people?
6. The Greek programme for "house loans" seems to an interesting way; will it be continued?
7. The introduction paper of Will Guy comes to a very pessimistic perception of the actual results of all efforts for social integration of Roma all over Europe. What are the reasons for these negative results? Can it be changed? What has to be done, by whom differently?



**Integrated programme for the social inclusion of Roma  
– Hungarian and Greek situation:  
mutual relevance, similarities, important questions, national  
strategy, successes, key issues for debate**

**Zsuzsa Vincze**  
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour  
**Tibor Derdák**  
Ambedkar Secondary Grammar School

The Hungarian Government determined our country's tasks adopting the following Decision:

No. 1105/2007. (XII.27.) Korm. of the Government on the Government Action Plan for 2008–2009 related to the Decade of the Roma Inclusion Programme Strategic Plan Regarding Government measures for 2008 and 2009 necessary for the implementation of objectives as enshrined in Resolution 68/2007 (VI. 28.) OGY of the Parliament on the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme Strategic Plan (hereinafter referred to as Strategic Plan), in accordance with the Roma Integration Council

This decision determines the tasks of different ministries. This is a complex approach to the whole of the Roma integration problematic. The Minister of Social Affairs and Labour has tasks on the majority of the problems to be solved.

The discussion paper cites the World Bank study: the widespread impoverishment of Roma in the CEE region is due to the loss of their former jobs in the Communist economy.

## **The employment situation of Roma in Hungary**

- According to a research led by Mr Istvan Kemeny in 2003 **less than one-third of Roma men aged between 15 and 74 had any income from work identified as the primary source of subsistence** and one-third of them had some regular work. Another characteristic of Roma people's employment is the wide-ranging occurrence of undeclared, casual work.
- According to the mentioned research **one-sixth of Roma women had any income from work identified as the primary source of subsistence** and one-sixth of them had some regular work.
- **The reasons of the high unemployment rate**
  - A major proportion of Roma people live in those micro-regions of the country that are afflicted with social, economic, infrastructural, employment disadvantages.
  - The **low level of school qualification** of the young Roma adults - According to the survey in 2003, 82.5% of young Roma people aged between 20 and 24 have actually completed primary school. On the national average, in 2001 54.5% of 18-year-old people

had general certifications of secondary education, while in the case of young Roma people between the age of 20 and 24 in 2002 5% could complete secondary schools. The proportion of Roma students admitted to universities and colleges was even lower: 1.2% of Roma people aged 20–24 attended institutions of higher education.

- **The temporary employment of the most of young unemployed Roma can be solved only by public work programmes.** During the public work programmes there are no possibilities either participating in trainings or creating working carriers.

### Legal background

- 68/2007 (VI.28.) parliamentary resolution on the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme Strategic Plan;
- 1105/2007. Governmental decision on the Government Action Plan for 2008–2009 related to the Decade of the Roma Integration Programme Strategic Plan.

A chapter in both of the parliamentary resolution and the governmental decision is dedicated for the labour market integration of Roma.

**Goal:** the facilitation of the Roma people's integration in the labour market in association with their training and retraining, as well as the improvement of the level of Roma people's employment.

### Government Action Plan for 2008–2009

- **“Decentralised programmes for the employment of disadvantaged persons”** – human services, vocational trainings, labour market trainings, and supported employment are provided for the participants. Social workers as mentors as well as professional networks assist them to get into the labour market. The total number of participants is thousands. Resource: New Hungary Development Plan, Social Renewal OP 1.1 measure.
- **START programmes** – their goals are to facilitate employers for employing disadvantaged persons (as young people, persons getting maternity benefit or carer's allowance, persons over the age of 50 as well as persons with low school qualifications). The number of claimants of START card: 99794 persons, START-PLUSZ card: 13378 persons, START-EXTRA card: 6145 persons.
- **“Make a step forward!” programme** – it gives possibilities for people with low school qualifications for getting vocational qualification or getting higher vocational qualification with one level than they currently have. Besides people having obsolete qualification is also involved in the project for giving them the possibility to get a new and economically proper qualification. During the implementation of the programme more than 22.000 persons can be supported.



- **The projects of the National Employment Public Foundation**
  - Roma musician employment programme, resource: 142,5 million HUF. At present 79 persons are employed in the frame of this programme.
  - Roma (labour market and social) service network programme, resource: 160 million HUF. More than 300 persons were involved in the programme.
  - Support of Roma people's economic activity (draft programme), resource: 200 million HUF. The programme's goals are improvement of the competitiveness as well as appearance in the labour market of Roma enterprises.
- **Public work programmes** – resources: 10 billion HUF, the employment of 13 500 persons can be supported this year. This year seven public work programmes were initiated (forestry, flood-inland inundation defence, public road, in national parks etc.)
- **Complex labour market programmes** – regional Public Employment Services ensure several services as trainings aiming completion of primary school, vocational trainings and supported employment for increasing the chance of disadvantaged persons in the labour market.
- The most important active labour market measures in the employment of Roma are still **public work programmes, wage-supports and training supports**. Thousands of persons participate in public work programmes. (The estimated number of participants with Roma origin is 12-15 thousand.)
- **Applications for promoting job-creation** – resource: 2,66 billion HUF, 160-170 enterprises can be supported, which result 2500-2800 new jobs.
- **“Way to employment” programme** – its goals are to create back-to-work measures for beneficiaries of regular social assistance as well as to improve these persons' labour market opportunities. The planned programme started on 1 April 2009 can ensure annually 60-66 thousands persons' temporary employment in 6 hours/day.

## Best practices, initiatives

### Employment linked educational programme

The aim of this programme:

- Ensuring at the same time real, long-term employment and training possibilities
  - for young Roma unemployed persons (dropped out from the educational system and labour market) for integrating them to the labour market in the field of social as well as child welfare basic and specialized service system.
  - for Roma young persons finished the primary school for providing school leaving certificates or OKJ vocational qualifications, in the frame of trainings.
- Sensitize of the employers and reducing prejudice of workers in basic and specialized service system against Roma.

Resource: New Hungary Development Plan, Social Renewal OP (development of action plans for the period of 2009-2010 is under way), 30-35 persons / regions could be involved.

### Ensure the conditions of labour market mobility

- Beside the high unemployment rate in underprivileged regions it seems that in other regions the long-term vacant jobs' number is also high. With the facilitation and support of mobility the better harmonization of supply-demand in labour market could be ensured in these regions.
- Several individual reasons obstruct the interregional mobility in the labour market. E.g. lack of social houses, the enormous differences between the prices of properties in different regions, inadequate qualification etc.
- People living in the most disadvantaged regions should be assisted for entering employment in regions having more labour possibilities or for moving to these regions.
- In the implementation of the above mentioned, the social system – including labour support system – should be revised in the aspect of development of supports promoting the mobility in the labour market. In public employment plans introduced in the "Way to employment" programme the measures of mobility should be considered.
- The goal of the supporting policy based on the principle of equal opportunity is to support only those tenders and programmes, which can ensure diminishing of Roma segregation in schools and housing.

In the framework of urban-rehabilitation programmes, 160 anti-segregation plans were prepared. These plans have to address the cities' interventions and measures until 2013 for housing, social, health and employment integration of people living in Roma settlements.

### **The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour programme for promoting the residential and social integration of those living on encampments and encampment-type residential environments**

Specific steps on the part of the government to support the social integration of the residents of encampments were made for the first time since the political transition, in 2005. At present, work has begun on the eleven encampments which won in the third round of the programme. In the spring, the Ministry will once again announce an invitation to tender.

In Hungary, nearly 100,000 people live on some 500 encampments and encampment-type residential environments. A significant number of these are to be found in small towns and villages or outside the administrative boundaries of small towns and villages. Clearing encampment and encampment-type residential environments requires a great range of varied opportunities for intervention – depending on the type of encampment, its size, micro-regional and regional location etc. Different types of resources and methods are required to achieve the integration of families living in Alsószentmárton, on Guszev encampment in Nyíregyháza or in a basement flat in Szomolya.

Flagship programme “Nem mondunk le senkiről” (we won’t give up on anybody) from the New Hungary Development Plan focuses on the development of the most disadvantaged regions. In the social urban rehabilitation programme within the framework of the Regional Development Programme for which invitations to tender have been announced, it is possible to apply for funds to rehabilitate segregated urban areas. For this reason, the Ministry has primarily announced this invitation to tender for the kind of small towns and villages which are not able to tender for the programmes described above, and which because of their level of economic potential would be unable to implement a programme for integration on the scale of several tens of millions of Hungarian forint.

During the past three years, 31 towns and villages have been awarded total funding of 1.5 billion Hungarian forint.

The fundamental objective of the programme is to create conditions for the social reintegration of residents of these towns and villages. The priority is for planned, documented programmes to be set up which achieve the following in parts of towns and villages where the social status of residents is low (working age residents with a maximum of 8 years’ primary-level education at best and without a regular income from employment): to prevent further increase of the housing stock, to move towards anti-discrimination, anti-segregation and to reverse exclusion and promote integration. The main target for the programme is to bring the proportion of persons with low social status among residents of areas which are considered as being segregated up to the same level as for the general population of the town or village as a whole. In order to do so, it is necessary to radically reduce the number of persons with low social status in segregated areas, which in the majority of cases can be achieved by the dissolution of the segregated areas. The residents of these areas are confronted by the lack of basic infrastructure and exclusion arising from their low level of education, long-term unemployment and discrimination in many areas of life.

In addition to the housing aspect, a mobilisation strategy is being drawn up in which there is great emphasis on programmes for the integration of children and young people in education,

integration of adults into the employment market, facilitation of access to social and health services and community development.

The towns and villages used exceptionally varied methods while implementing the programme and varied cooperation developed, even more so because there was no single formula in place for implementing the programme. In all cases, the emphasis was on creating and implementing a flexible programme which adapted to local characteristics and needs.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour programme for promoting the residential and social integration of those living on encampments and in encampment-type residential areas is continuing in 2008 with nearly HUF 1 billion (funding from Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and the National Public Fund for Employment), in towns and villages with a population of less than 15000.

	2005 programme (implemented)	2006 programme (implemented)	2007 programme (planned)
Number of families moving into new homes	42	77	83
Number of homes refurbished and fitted with sanitary facilities	412	95	46
Number of participants in training programmes	28	148	305
Number of participants in employment	202	39	87

## Education

The Discussion Paper writes about education policy as well: „over half of adults had never attended school” among Greek Romas.

The situation is much better in Hungary at that specific point, but in the secondary level of education system the Hungarian situation is also very bad. About 70% of Hungarian youth reaches to secondary school leaving exam while this same proportion is only 7% among Roma youth in Hungary.

The Discussion Paper writes about education policy in intergational terms which is a new direction in Hungary. Until 2002 integration was no than expressed goal in education of Roma children. Romas are considered national-ethnic minority in Hungary. Professional conditions of teaching the Romani and the Beas languages in public education institutions should be created and developed. The development of material necessary for teaching of Romani and the Beas languages as well as related researches and surveys should be supported. Professional tasks related to Romani and Beas language teacher's and interpreter's training should be coordinated and supported and means by which the accreditation of such trainings could be promoted should be examined.

This collective national minority status helped local authorities to segregate Roma children. Although Roma children represent less than 10 % of student population, almost half of Roma children go to classes where they are the majority!

From 2002 the Hungarian Government implements an educational integration policy on every level of education. In the framework of the support of the implementation of one hundred and seventy equal opportunity action plans in public education, chance creating programmes (especially those for desegregation, kindergarten education, integration and methodology, the revision of deficiency and the support of further education) affecting almost five hundred public education institutions have to be launched.

In order to create a high quality inclusive school model and to establish the professional cooperation of schools applying modern pedagogical methods, a programme should be launched for the support of the conversion of at least thirty-five schools engaged in integration practices into methodological and hospitation service centres.

For the maintenance and strengthening of the educational success of the Roma young studying in higher education and for the support of the high level mastering of their chosen field of expertise, four so-called "Invisible Colleges" have to be operated.



## 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 the Czech 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 constraints presented by the implementation of the policy.

The references to the Czech Republic and Spanish models, as potentially transferable to Greece, 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*, derive 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>53</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>54</sup>* -Report based on Health Enquiry 2006 to Roma community – 2006;
- **Ministry of Housing:** *Housing Map and Roma Community in Spain<sup>55</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>53</sup> Developed by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano.

<sup>54</sup> Study ordered by the Ministry of Health and Social Policy, realized by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007).

<sup>55</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>56</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>56</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.



## Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma

Valeriu Nicolae

On 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 the 2914<sup>th</sup> GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting adopted a series of conclusion in what is up to this point the most consistent document of the European Union. Among other things it acknowledged that

*4. [ these} policies for Roma should be developed with reference to the age of the different audiences targeted, so as to support solidarity between generations whilst breaking the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next. They must also take account of the problems specific to Roma women;*

*5. better results may be obtained when vulnerable groups are closely involved in drawing up policies intended to improve their situation and to promote and protect their fundamental rights;*  
It also called upon the Commission and the Member States that  
*...in close cooperation,*

*10. on the basis of the conclusions of the report from the Commission, to take account of the situation of the Roma when designing and implementing policies to defend fundamental rights, combat poverty and discrimination and uphold gender equality, and ensure access to education, housing, health, employment, justice and culture, and where appropriate to identify specific actions for 2009 and 2010 to that end;*

*11. to make better use of the Structural Funds, the Pre-Accession Instrument and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument to promote the inclusion of the Roma, particularly in the fields of education, housing, health, employment and access to justice and to culture;*  
**CALLS UPON THE COMMISSION**

*12. before the end of the first half of 2010, to submit to it a report on progress made;*

*13. to continue and deepen the discussions and organise a further summit concerning Roma in cooperation with the three presidencies in office from 2010 (Spain, Belgium, Hungary);*

*14. to organise, initially, an exchange of good practice and experience between the Member States in the sphere of inclusion of the Roma, provide analytical support and stimulate cooperation between all parties concerned by Roma issues, including the organisations representing Roma, in the context of an integrated European platform."*

**In what follows we try to address the main issues proposed for debate in the background paper for the Peer Review in Greece by identifying what we believe to be the main problems at this moment. During the meeting we plan to come up with solutions to the problems we list here**

1. The existing EU monitoring and assessment mechanisms are too diplomatic and tend to focus almost exclusively on positive practices. In our view, this tendency translates in practical terms into discouragement of constructive criticism or objective reporting on failed

- practices. The focus on positive practices often backfires as most governments or implementing organisations will present exaggerated positive reports or positive reports of totally or partially failed projects. Such practices lead to further financing, a cycle that clearly discourages constructive, but critical, analysis of failures. This leads to a repetition of mistakes and becomes an inefficient way of using EU or national money.
2. The Open Method of Coordination—the only available method of intervention at the European level—cannot produce results in the absence of a clear European Roma policy.
  3. Social exclusion exists in a Europe where freedom of movement is a fundamental principle. The problems Roma face in their countries travel with them when they choose to leave. Efforts to bribe Roma to leave countries failed and did nothing but increase the number of Roma looking for easy handouts in those countries.
  4. Without a long-term, comprehensive, pan-European approach based on actions of the member states to address social exclusion and racism against Roma efforts to promote social inclusion of Roma can produce only unsustainable and limited results. This is due to the relatively short electoral cycles at the level of member states and EU institution cycles. A long-term strategy could improve the existing sharp fluctuations in the attention paid to Roma issues.
  5. The existing European framework promotes “equality of opportunities” de jure while de facto it preserves the status quo. Often this framework is used by extremist politicians to justify the strident inequalities that Roma face. It is impossible to eliminate the obvious disadvantages Roma face in our societies just by having laws that prevent further unequal treatment. The result in most cases is preservation of the existing disparities between Roma and majority populations.
  6. Anti-Gypsyism continues largely ignored despite being the main obstacle in the social inclusion of Roma. Anti-Gypsyism is fundamentally linked to exclusion of Roma and translates into incomplete citizenship, reduced social and economic participation, and lower esteem.
  7. Social inclusion of Roma is often mistakenly understood as forced assimilation. The responsibilities for social inclusion are almost exclusively put on Roma while partially or completely ignoring the structures, policies, institutions, and individuals reproducing or creating exclusion or forced assimilation.
  8. Two significant elements for effective social inclusion of disadvantaged individuals are access to respect and identity, aspects generally ignored by existing policies. The focus at this moment stays on rapid and low cost inclusion, which cannot produce sustainable results.
  9. Producing short term or immediate results are the pitfalls of existing piecemeal project-based approaches funded through EU or member state programmes. Lack of a long term, comprehensive strategy, as required—considering the extreme complexity of obstacles towards Roma inclusion—leads to unsustainable processes that create frustration both within Roma communities and the majority population, and that ultimately increase exclusionary pulls.

10. Discussion about social inclusion of Roma is plagued by ambiguities. Two factors contribute to this: first, the lack of clear and reliable data; and second, a lack of clarity with regard to terminology. Such ambiguities need remediation if policies of Roma inclusion are to make sense, and if policy and process are to be assessed and monitored in a way that makes sense.

**a. Problems within Roma civil society and Roma communities**

1. The existing Roma civil society has, in general, failed to address or stimulate debate within the Roma communities on problems related to responsibilities of Roma citizens. This is due primarily to objective reasons, but nonetheless the outcomes are visible: dependency and self-victimisation. The existing dichotomised approach to discourse that presents Roma either as victims of discrimination or as a security threat builds barriers to dialogue and success. Begging, trafficking, abuses related to children's rights, violence, or criminality are absent from the discussions or focus of Roma NGOs.
2. The EC, National Governments and donors do not offer (any) incentives for Roma NGOs to focus on advocating and developing Roma human resources. Structural Funds which are administrated by National Governments often act as an inhibitor for watchdog Roma organisations which in most of the cases depend financially on their monitoring target( National Governments).
3. A failure to involve successful Roma who most often prefer to hide their ethnicity is one of the most visible shortcomings. This correlated with inability to stimulate significant changes at the grassroots level lead to a real blockage in attracting new people in the Roma civil society.
4. Roma NGOs are at this moment in the positions of contractors paid directly by the national governments through national or EU funding. This approach often encourages a subordinate position of the NGOs as they have to accept guidelines designed and imposed by the European Commission and national governments. It is exceptional when Roma NGOs have played a role in the design of above-mentioned guidelines. This situation helps absolve national governments from their responsibilities towards their Roma citizens and puts the governments in charge of monitoring the work of NGOs. This leads to a ghettoisation of Roma issues outside the governments work, as responsibilities for solving the problems are delegated to contracted Roma NGOs.
5. The organisational and human resources capacities of existing Roma NGOs cannot deal with the many complex issues that need address for a sustainable change both within Roma and non-Roma communities.
6. The EU financial and managerial rules require both expertise and extensive experience that is almost impossible to find within the Roma community. These EU projects are service- and results-oriented and not meant to develop human resources capacity within the project teams. They are led by profit-oriented consultancies not interested in developing or investing in Roma human resources. The very few Roma involved in such projects are usually the most important and efficient national Roma activists and their

participation in the EC projects leads to a serious limitation of their activities and curtails their much-needed constructive work elsewhere.

**b. Problems within the Member States**

1. Roma issues are perceived as an undesirable portfolio for any minister, as they are for governments in general. While anti-Gypsyism is rampant, anti-discrimination or positive measures directed towards Roma are highly unpopular.
2. Bureaucrats have no incentive for working within national governments in programs to enhance the social inclusion of Roma. Under-representation within the governmental structures of Roma is obvious.
3. Governments react to Roma issues only in times of crisis. Governments tend to delegate Roma issues to the European and international level and pass responsibilities to intergovernmental organisations. This is a very dangerous approach and a EU Roma policy should insist on placing the main responsibilities towards Roma on national governments.
4. Governments have very limited expertise in Roma issues and even more limited political support for Roma-focused actions.
5. The member states fail to assume responsibility for ensuring equal access to opportunities for their Roma citizens and to ensure that Roma assume their responsibilities as citizens.
6. Governments have failed to promote positive role models from within the Roma communities, as they have failed to provide access to identity and respect for their active Roma citizens.
7. Coordination and sharing of experience among national governments continue to be limited and rather inefficient. The formation of an inter-ministerial group at the level of the European Council or of a multilateral initiative among concerned member states were solutions debated in the past, but, due to different reasons, they never materialised.

**c. Problems within the European Commission**

1. Limited motivation to take more responsibilities and assume leadership at the level of coordination and agenda-setting regarding the social inclusion of Roma within the EU seems to be the main problem.
2. Limited expertise and lack of efficient mechanisms within the European Commission capable of monitoring and evaluating progress related to social inclusion of Roma is another important obstacle. The EC seems reluctant to recognise or address its own failures, considering the content of the Staff Working Paper published by the EC on 2 July 2008.

3. Discrepancies between rhetoric and action at the level of the Commission are becoming obvious. Despite strong promotion of inclusion of Roma and "incentive measures" to address the existing socio-economic gap, the European Commission has failed to employ among its permanent staff a single Roma.
4. Ambiguities regarding responsibilities of the European Commission, are often used as reasons for reduced or no involvement of the EC in matters where the EC could make a difference
5. Lack of coordination among the EC and other intergovernmental organisations is an issue which continues to be ignored.

Lack of long-term vision and continuity in its Roma related activities is also a serious obstacle. Due to significant progress during to the accession process, the Commission has high expectations concerning the countries with a significant Roma population. The EC cannot meet those expectations without a serious rethinking of its role in conjunction with strong political support from the Council of the European Union

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