



Promotion
of Roma/Traveller
Integration and
Equal Treatment
in Education
and Employment

Partner report - Preparatory phase HUNGARY



1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA/TRAVELLER PEOPLE

Act LXXVII. of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities enumerates 13 minority groups, among them the Roma minority. Minorities in Hungary dispose of the same rights and civic status as people belonging to majority population do (Hungarian Constitution Art.70/A). However, some special measures have been adopted in order to preserve and develop minorities' identities. The above Act created the system of local and national minority self-governments offering minorities a possibility of personal autonomy in the functions of culture and – to a great extent – education. There are two other important acts concerning minority self-governments: Act LXV. Of 1990 on Local Governments sets some rules of functioning, while the rules of electing minority self-government representatives are set by Act LXIV. of 1990 on the Election of Local Government Representatives and Majors. In 2002, 1911 minority self-governments have been elected, within this number, 1004 self-governments have been formed by the representatives of Roma. The above mentioned acts concerning minorities are under modification now, in order mainly to ensure a real legitimacy of these autonomies and to increase their proper and effective functioning.

Another legislative measure of specific importance is Act CXXV. of 2002 on Equal Treatment and the Equality of Chances. The new act implementing Council Directives No. 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC provides a comprehensive framework for the fight against discrimination on all possible grounds and in all fields of life.

According to international sources, the fourth biggest Roma population in Europe lives in Hungary. But at this point, it is very important to clear the problematic question of numbers and statistical data concerning Roma people in Hungary. In fact, a wide range of data are available concerning Roma people in Hungary. But these data are only estimations. The causes of this phenomenon can be found in the legal background: The Data Protection Act (Act LXIII. Of 1992.) defines racial origin, national affiliation, nationality and ethnic status as special personal data, that can only be processed (recorded, stored, forwarded, disclosed) under specific, very strict conditions. Although this regulation does not forbid collecting such data anonymously, voluntary, it restricts the collection of ethnically related data by various state authorities. Gathering and evaluating statistical data becomes further complicated through the principle of self-identification laid down in the Act on Minorities – according to this right, it is solely up to the individual to confess or not to confess belonging to a minority group. So all statistical data to be read in the Hungarian report should be viewed as a vague estimation showing tendencies rather than facts.

In the light of the above, estimations go from 4 – 6% up to 7-10% of the total population in Hungary, that means from 400 000 up to 1 million Roma people. During the national census in 2001, when national affiliation was asked anonymously, only 190 046 persons defined themselves as Roma. The latest sociological researches (effectuated in 2003) show, that approximately 6% of Hungarian population are Roma.

Three subgroups among Roma population can be identified: the greatest is the group of Hungarian –speaking Roma (70-75%), there are Vlach-Roma speaking Romani (15-



20%), and so called Beash – Roma people, speaking the Beash language, an archaic form of Romanian (10%). Roma people live dispersed in the territory of Hungary – among the approximately 3200 municipalities, in about 2000 live Roma people. But mainly they live in the economically disadvantaged northern regions with underdeveloped infrastructures, around 60% among them in rural areas, mostly villages. Segregated Roma villages occur. In general, Roma people face poor living conditions and social disadvantages, a large proportion among them are unemployed. Their mortality rate is over the double of the national average and there is a life expectancy gap of 10-15 years vis-à-vis non-Roma due to low health standards. They face severe disadvantages in education. The accumulation of the above factors results in a situation where Roma are isolated and experience widespread discrimination in all fields of life. The tendency is demonstrated by the cases the Ombudsman for National and Ethnic Minorities has dealt with in the past few years: in 2001, from 453 cases, 292 concerned the Roma minority; in 2002 246 out of 471 cases, finally in 2003: out of 672 cases, 372 were Roma- cases.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF GENERAL PROBLEMS REGARDING DISCRIMINATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AGAINST ROMA/TRAVELLER

Article 4. of Act LXXIX. Of 1993 on Public Education (modified lately) contains the interdiction of direct and indirect discrimination on any grounds. Under the notion of direct discrimination belong on the one hand especially the exclusion of a person or a group from rights and/or services following from the law, on the other hand the creation or maintenance of an educational institution or teaching methods that are sub-standard and do not enable to the extent as other methods/institutions to the child to continue his studies in a higher degree. Segregation is also forbidden as a form of direct discrimination. However, not all forms of differential treatment are regarded as discrimination – legitimate aim and proper methods may justify specific teaching plans. The law also forbids victimisation. Articles 27-28 of Act CXXV. of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Equality of Chances are in line with the rules set by the Act on Public education. Article 29 enables the adoption of positive measures for specific groups of people.

The Act on Public Education and Decree of the Ministry of Culture and Public Education No. 32/1997. (5.November) on the “Guidelines on the education of children of national and ethnic minorities in kindergartens and schools” describe Roma minority education as a specific form of minority education. Common rules of minority education are, that participation in these programs is facultative, it depends on the choice of the parents. Minority education has 4 forms: minority language – education, bilingual education, education in Hungarian but intensively teaching the minority language, and at last, special culture – centred education for Roma, that was combined until the end of 2002 with so called “catching – up” elements. These elements have been removed on the suggestion of the Minority Ombudsman. He pointed out, that this kind of program was inadequate for two main reasons: firstly, it (even the name of the program) links the image of backwardness to Roma identity, constituting discrimination



in itself. Secondly, catching – up tuition has to be ensured to all and exclusively to those children who need it.

That situation in numbers (estimations!) is the following: most Roma children (70-94%) finish some kind of primary school (8 classes) only 33% start secondary education, less than 1% get a degree in higher education. This situation is to a great extent the result of various discriminatory practices existing in the field of education: in 3500 primary schools, more than 6-700 segregated Roma classes providing sub-standard education exist, that means that 1/3 of Roma children aged 6-14 years attend classes where the majority of children are Roma. These classes may be created in 3 ways: either under the pretext of the minority education program, or as catching – up classes for mentally retarded children and children with learning difficulties (60% of classes with Roma majority!), or just “by chance” (on the demand of non-Roma parents). Roma children often attend segregated schools – a very cruel practice is to channel Roma children into special schools for mentally retarded children – 20% of Roma children attend such schools or classes. From such schools and classes they have no way back to ordinary higher education system. In the European Union–average, 2-3% of the children are considered as mentally retarded – in Hungary, this percentage is 5,3%. The number of Roma children is increasing among said-to-be retarded children: in 1974-75 it was 26%, in 1993 42,6% and a research in 1998 found that in Borsod- Abaúj-Zemplén county 94% of the children attending special schools were Roma. Another form of creating segregated Roma schools that has occurred recently is the establishment of private schools by non-Roma parents with local government support.

Other forms of segregation are declaring Roma children as private students and a lately revealed form is to create classes with few students. Other discriminatory practices occur – mostly simultaneously with segregation - such as discrimination in providing material conditions for education.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF GENERAL PROBLEMS REGARDING DISCRIMINATION IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT AGAINST ROMA/TRAVELLER

In Hungary, employment has been the most developed field of anti-discrimination – legislation until the adoption of Act CXXV. of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Equality of Chances. In 2001, the notion of indirect discrimination was included into the Labour Code (Act XXII. Of 1992). Thanks to the initiatives of the Ombudsman for Minorities for the most part, the general anti-discrimination clause was extended to the recruitment process. The rules of the Act on Equal Treatment are in line with the above: both direct and indirect discrimination is forbidden, including the phases of the establishment of the employment relationship, starting with the public announce for an employee. Both the Labour Code and the Equal Treatment Act recognize genuine and determining occupational requirements in line with the EU Council Directives. The share of the burden of proof does also exist in the field of employment discrimination – this is not only possible before the courts - as a result of the Ombudsman’s recommendations, also the Labour Authorities use this method from 2000.



During the socialist regime, the employment rate of Roma people was nearly as high (85%) as that of the total population (87%). Mostly, they were employed as unskilled workers in big factories or mines. After the change of regime the employment rate dropped dramatically, more than 1 million workplaces were closed down, among them those where most Roma people were working. Today – that is sociological researches say – the unemployment rate among the working-aged, willing to work people is on average 5%, among Roma people 40%. Among Roma who are employed, only 16% of men and 10% of woman have a legal and stable work. 70% of them work as unskilled workers and only 8% have white-collar jobs.

It is undeniable that the education level of Roma population is in close relation with the above data, but researches show, that discrimination from the side of the employers plays also a great role in the disproportionately high unemployment rates of Roma. We do not dispose of any data from the extent of employment discrimination, because these cases mostly don't reach the public. Nevertheless, the few cases that have come to light demonstrate the hidden practices of employers very well. It is quite often, for example, that on the phone, the employer tells the place to be free, and when he meets the person, he says that he doesn't need workforce any more.

The report of the Csongrád County Employment Center of 2000 states, that most employers do even then deny to hire a Roma person, when they would get maximal state subvention if they hired him/her. The report of Borsod County Labour Center of 2003 also considers discrimination as a factor hindering the employment of Roma people. However, it was only in February 2004 for the first time that a labour court established discrimination. In that case a firm wanted to hire people for packing-work, when Roma applicants came, they consequently claimed that the staff was complete, when non-Roma came, they were willing to employ them.

Proving discrimination is especially difficult in recruitment cases – in one case the applicant simply failed to prove that she has applied for the job, as the employer denied to have ever met her. In the recent case of February 2004, the Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities tested the employer, in this way the fact of differential treatment of the employer could be proven.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF GENERAL PROBLEMS REGARDING DISCRIMINATION IN OTHER FIELDS AGAINST ROMA/TRAVELLER

As we could mention problems on nearly all fields of life, we have chosen two specifically problematic fields to examine more in details: the field of housing and the relation of Roma to police and administration of justice.

There are an increasing number of complaints received by the Ombudsman in the sphere of housing. Two main forms of discriminative practice occur in this respect against Roma citizens: on the one hand actions aiming to prevent them from buying houses or apartments in a settlement, on the other persuasion and pressure – even through official measures to move out of the settlement. All this happens either with the active participation of the mayor and the municipality, or in other cases as “merely”



strikingly grave instances of maladministration. Another form of discrimination is, that local governments often place arbitrary conditions on eligibility for housing assistance with the effect that Roma are excluded.

Housing problems have worsened with the modification in 2000 of the Act on the Rent for Dwellings and Premises and on the Regulation of their Alienation easing the procedure of eviction. The town clerks' decision on eviction can be executed within 8 days from the notice, irrespective of the recourse of legal remedy. According to a study, in the period of January 1. and November 1. 2003, 55% of the victims of the reported evictions or threatened eviction-cases were Roma.

Another problem concerning the housing of Roma is the increasing dimension of segregation. Today, 25% of Roma people live with exclusively Roma in their neighbourhood, 31% have mostly Roma in their surroundings. Segregation does not only have quantitative aspects - like education segregation, it also means qualitative segregation. According to a World Bank Study, 54,9% of Roma households does not have access to hot running water, 34,7% to cold running water, 66,6% do not have adequate sewerage, 49,8% do not have bathrooms or showers in their homes, 50,1% do not have indoor toilets. About 36 000 Roma live in slum settlements. Sociologists fear the worsening of segregation tendencies.

Hungarian and international human rights organisations continue to report on striking cases of police – ill-treatment. Studies report, that only a small proportion of complaints lodged by detainees on the grounds of police mistreatment result in final court ruling. In cases of racially motivated offences (committed either by the police or by other persons), victims are often not in the situation to assert their rights properly. They are often not willing to turn to the police or to other competent authorities in order to make a complaint – on the one hand because if they are detainees, they fear the worsening of their situation, on the other hand because they don't trust the objectivity of policemen either. A research from 1997 among 1530 police officers indicates the following: 54% considered criminality to be key element of Roma identity – of whom all but 4% considered this trait to be genetic. 64% considered incest typical among Roma and 74% came to the conclusion that society expects them to be hard with Roma. We can only hope that this shocking tendency has improved by 2004. What we can not be sure – because of the hidden character of these acts - is, whether terrible cases of police-mistreatment that come to light from time to time are demonstrating a general tendency or not. A recent study of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee is quiet promising, as it could not reveal significant differences in the treatment of detainees in pre-trial custody. Anyway, effective steps have to be made in order to prevent police ill-treatment and to fight hostile attitudes.

In 2003 huge debates arose concerning the attitudes of judges and public prosecutors towards minorities. The controversies have been provoked by a judgment that explained the lower amount of compensation awarded for having detained a person who proved to be innocent with the “primitive personality” of that person, who happened to be Roma.



5. MAIN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR COUNTRY IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Two main categories of measures can be mentioned in this context – to the one belong measures enhancing the participation of Roma children in all levels of education, to the other group belong measures combating the phenomena of segregation and low-quality education.

General measures supporting the participation of Roma in the education system include the provision of scholarships for Roma students, the construction of student dormitories and certain pilot projects such as Gandhi Secondary School. Applicants in a disadvantaged social situation can be admitted to higher education under more favourable conditions than others.

Segregation, as noted at Question No.2 does not only mean separate, but also lower standard education of Roma children, which means to a great extent channelling them into catch-up classes or special schools for mentally disabled children. The measures against segregation combat in the first place these phenomena. As already mentioned, the Acts on Public Education and on Equal Treatment prohibit all forms of segregation. Beside this interdiction, specific measures are needed in order to remedy the situation. The most important among them are the following:

A survey conducted by the Minority Ombudsman in 1999 revealed various deficiencies in the mechanism of placing children into special schools or classes, among others, that the tests used for establishing mental disability label children differing from the others from social or cultural reasons in disproportionately high numbers as mentally handicapped. The procedure has been modified to some extent (socio-cultural features and native language of the child have to be considered on the request of the parents). The Ministerial Commissioner for the Education Roma and Disadvantaged Children (Commissioner for Education) urges further changes in the procedure, as reinforcing the role of medical investigation and fixing the limit of mental disability in the commonly used 70 point IQ instead of 86 used sometimes in Hungary.

Another problem that had to be solved was the problem of financing the education system, as a direct relation could be revealed between the number of children declared disabled and the growth of the grant financing of the education of mentally retarded children. In 2003, the Commissioner for Education started a program for the reintegration of said-to-be retarded children – children in the first two grades of primary schools are being overviewed, and who is proven to be healthy is being reintegrated into ordinary education system. For two years, schools reintegrating these children get a temporary grant after each child in the amount of 70% of the disability normative. In this way, schools become motivated in the reintegration of these children, even if they need special attention for some time.

Another way of combating segregation is that of the National Network for Integrated Education set up by the Commissioner for Education. This Network elaborates methods and good practices for integrated teaching and through nearly 50 base-institutions it helps interested schools in teaching together children with different socio-cultural features. Two new grants (financial motivation for schools!) are available for this purpose: one for an ability-evolving program – children in very disadvantaged social



position defined by a ministerial decree is receiving specific help at schools in order to combat learning difficulties and to evolve their abilities. But these children have to be educated together with others who don't need ability evolving – for this purpose, a grant for integrated teaching is available. Schools that are interested in the program have to apply at the Network, and after the first year of participation, they have to prepare a desegregation plan so as at least 10% of the disadvantaged pupils should be integrated each academic year. For academic year 2008-2009, full desegregation has to be obtained in the participating schools. It is important to see that although these measures do not explicitly address Roma children, in the view of the Education Commissioner, mostly segregated Roma children will fit in the requirements of disadvantaged situation set by the regulation.

6. MAIN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR COUNTRY IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT

The measures concerning the employment- situation of Roma people can be divided into two subgroups: measures combating the phenomena of discrimination on the one hand and policies and projects aiming the reintegration of Roma people into employment.

Measures combating discrimination have mostly been overviewed at Question No. 3. Some other measures that may be useful in the future in combating or at least signalling discrimination:) Government Decision 1021/2004 (18. March) on the Government Measures Aiming the Integration of Roma (Integration Measures) stipulates the cooperation of County Labour Centres with Roma minority self-governments and Roma NGO-s in order to promote the employment of Roma. It also prescribes, that Labour Centres should prefer Roma professionals when hiring their staff, if the applicants dispose of the same qualities – until there are two Roma professionals in the staff of the Labour Centre.

As to the fight against unemployment, Roma people often actively participate in public work programs – in 2001 they received approximately 40% of the funds allocated for such programs. However, this cannot be considered as a long-term solution.

The Integration Measures stipulate the elaboration of secondary education programs for young people disposing of primary school education that provide them with skills that are worthy on the labour market. These programs will be elaborated by 31. June 2005.

There are PHARE-programmes aiming the reintegration of Roma in the labour market, among others, they offer financial means to local initiatives. Several pilot projects have been started in the last few years to promote the employment of Roma – some of them proved to be successful, some of them not at all. Absolutely failures were courses such as of basket – weaving or making rag-carpets, because there is minimal demand among employers for workforce with such skills. Although it does not seem to be the



most appropriate method, some projects offer financial “reward” for enterprises hiring Roma people.

Better perspectives seem to have the following projects, for instance: A Roma health-care staff training has been organised in Győr-Moson – Sopron County by a Roma association. 19 men and 1 woman participated at the 600 hours–course, during the time of the training and 17 months after it they also received financial help. Some associations (like the Child Protection Centre in Győr and several self-governments and minority self-governments) were willing to employ those who had finished the course.

In rural areas, among others Roma families (about 5000) benefit of so called social land-programs. These programs provide to socially disadvantaged applicants living in the most depressive areas goods, training and ongoing professional help in order to enable them agricultural production. Although this kind of program does not offer a long-term solution for generations, it undoubtedly has positive effects. It has been proven to be useful concerning the living standard, self-esteem and future employment perspectives of the previously permanently unemployed participants and in reinforcing social cohesion in the community.

A new and really promising approach appears in the joint pilot project of the Ministry of Education and the State Secretary Responsible for Roma Affairs of the Office of the Prime Minister. The project aims to employ the person being trained during the time of the training and afterwards. Unemployed Roma aged 18-35 years are employed at schools that provide them a certificate of final examinations in secondary school and with a profession enabling to them to work as family coordinators at schools. The school applying to the project guarantees to employ the person for another 2 years after he has obtained his qualification. As the participants already work during the time of training, they get a wage. (And family coordinators are really needed in education in order to promote communication between families and schools.) This new approach fortunately seems to be generalised in future – the Integration Measures stipulate the elaboration of such training programs that provide employment (and the practice needed) simultaneously. The method of joining training to employment seems to be the optimal way to solve problems on the short term and on the long term in one step.

7. MAIN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR COUNTRY IN OTHER FIELDS

In the field of accommodation, Act CXXV. of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Equality of Chances contains the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination. Although Article 26. stipulates the interdiction of discrimination specifically to state and municipalities as owners and distributors of permissions and housing assistance, Article 5. of the Act extends it to private persons too, as it prescribes to keep the obligation of equal treatment to everyone who makes an offer to contract with previously not defined persons. Announces to let a flat belong to this category, for example. The Act also bans setting conditions to get accommodation that aim non-voluntary, artificial segregation.



In order to combat sub-standard housing conditions, Government Decision 1021/2004 (18. March) on the Government Measures Aiming the Integration of Roma (Integration Measures) stipulates the elaboration of comprehensive model-programs and yearly action plans in order to eliminate/upgrade slum-settlements and slum-like habitations. The deadline for these measures is the end of 2004. Until June 30. 2005, a government action plan on slum-settlement elimination has to be prepared based on the experiences of the above programs. According to Hungary's Joint Inclusion Memorandum, a slum settlement elimination model programme will start in 2004 in four regions. The programme will use a comprehensive approach, which includes improving housing quality, expanding employment opportunities, increasing education, improving health, offering environmental education and expanding community development. The European Roma Rights Centre notes, that slum settlements upgrade and elimination programmes have run in Hungary since the 1960's years. Yet the realisation of these programmes was quite slow and not effective. The Medium Term Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma envisaged for example in 1997 the elaboration of slum-elimination programmes – a draft decree on the realisation of this programmes was prepared after 4 years, and finally, no funding in the state budget was available to realise the plans.

In 2005, a long-term redemption-help programme will start, that will provide assistance among others help to families who are threatened of being evicted because they cannot pay for public utility services.

In order to improve the legal protection of Roma people, there are ongoing efforts to ameliorate communication between Roma and the police. Romology has been introduced into the curriculum of police training, seminars and trainings are organised for officers, and there is effort to recruit Roma policemen. There is an agreement on cooperation between the National Roma Self-Government and the National Police Headquarters. Roma rapporteurs will be appointed to each county headquarter.

Aiming to prevent conflicts and to assist Roma people in asserting their rights, specific local conflict management offices have been set up under the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Justice, together with the National Roma Self Government and the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities created an Anti-Discrimination Network providing free legal aid to discriminated Roma persons. The Network consists of lawyers (one or two in each county) commissioned by the Ministry of Justice. However, experiences with this programme are twofold – local Roma self-governments sometimes complain of not being satisfied with the work of the advocate in their county. Furthermore, the fact that this system does not cover the costs of the legal proceedings, which must be paid by the plaintiff if the case is not upheld, act as a disincentive.

In 2004, a further network under the Ministry of Justice is being established – Act LXXX. Of 2003 stipulates free legal aid to be provided to financially disadvantaged persons by lawyers, notaries, minority self-governments and NGO-s. Hopefully, this new organisation will be successful in asserting the rights of the most vulnerable.



8. IMPACT OF THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION ADOPTED, AND THE ACCOMPANIMENT MEASURES TO THESE LEGAL ISSUES REGARDING ROMA/TRAVELLER IN YOUR COUNTRY

The most crucial problem in adopting anti-discrimination measures and measuring their impact is the lack of correct statistical data (the reasons are detailed at Question 1). It is really hard to assess the effectiveness of measures without knowing for sure the real extent of problems. So we can say from the point of view of an institution dealing with discrimination cases that until complaints concerning a specific kind of discrimination remain as frequent as they have been before, legislation has not obtained a measurable success.

As to the recently (December 2003) adopted Act on Equal Treatment and on the Equality of Chances, it is too early to speak about experiences. What we can say in advance however is, that although officially the Act is in effect from January 2004, to a great part it will not be effective in combating discrimination, because the new Authority charged with ruling on the complaints of discriminated people is only intended to be set up in January 2005. A further question is, whether such a fully new authority, set up by a Government Decree, lacking experiences in the theory and practice of any kind discrimination will be the most suitable institution for promoting equal treatment. In our point of view, a more reasonable solution would have been to widen the powers of the Ombudsmen – almost 9 years of experience and good practices (see at Question 12) would have enabled a more effective fight against discrimination without delay from the entering in force of the Act. Another problem constitute in our view the limited scale of sanctions applicable in discrimination cases. The most general sanction envisaged by the Act is fine. Researches show, that fines have not been proven to be really effective in other fields of law either. The Act fails to provide real redressing to the victim of discrimination, – not in line with ECRI Recommendation No. 7., that emphasises the need of reparative, if possible non-pecuniary sanctions that aim asserting the rights of the victims. This Recommendation also envisages specific sanctions to the different fields of life, and preventive, educative sanctions to be imposed on the perpetrator. These sanctions lack absolutely from the Act on Equal Treatment.

It is important to reveal some problems that have come to light in relation to Roma programs in the past few years. Today, already the third Government package on the social equality of Roma population has been force. The first was adopted in 1997, the second in 1999 and the most recent is the already mentioned Government Decision 1021/2004 (18. March) on the Government Measures Aiming the Integration of Roma (Integration Measures). A great problem has been the lack of appropriate, clear financial background and the lack of effective communication. The Programmes have failed to specify amounts for the implementation of the goals specified. Moreover, many projects implemented in the frame of the programme aim to improve the situation of the socially disadvantaged in general, not specifically the situation of Roma – but are communicated as Roma programmes to the public. In some cases, mixing up Roma-programmes with programmes providing assistance to socially disadvantaged groups have reasonable justification (for example in the field of education), but it is to note that also in this case, negative by-effects occur. In the other category of cases, this approach covers the actual lack of effective, high-quality, coherent projects. In 2000, Hungarian Government claimed to have spent 7,1 billion forint (approximately 28



million euros) on Roma programmes. However, this expenditure covers universal programs accessible to every citizen (public work programmes, assistance to long-term unemployed, general health screening,...), PHARE contributions that were not even spent, and supplementary allocations perpetuating the segregation of Roma children.

As about universal programs, the competent ministries calculated the percentage of Roma participants, and registered the amounts spent on Roma in the frame of the universal programme as having been spent under Roma-programmes. In this way, great amounts could be “spent” – and communicated to have been spent “on Roma” without providing any specific assistance to Roma people. But negative attitudes and stereotypes on Roma could effectively be reinforced this way.

9. ADOPTION OF A TARGET AND MAINSTREAMING APPROACH REGARDING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA/TRAVELLER PEOPLE ACCORDING WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE

In our point of view, the proportion of strengths and weaknesses concerning target and mainstreaming approaches depends mostly on the features of the adopted programme itself.

A comprehensive approach taking into account the way in which different problems are based one on another, and considering the socio-psychological aspects of a complexity of problems could be very effective in ameliorating the situation of Roma people. For example, coordinated programmes that take into account the complex net of relations between education and employment on an individual, but also on a sociological level may serve as a tool to solve problems on the short term and on the long term at the same time.

However, when adopting a comprehensive strategy, some aspects have to be taken attention on:

At first, we have to decide, in what way it would be expedient to define the target group. The target group can be composed either of persons of Roma ethnicity (problems of registration may occur) or simply of socially disadvantaged people. This decision is theoretically preceded by another – we have to know at first whether the causes of discrimination of Roma people are rather related to the fact that they are in a great percentage socially disadvantaged or merely to the fact, that society is prejudiced against Roma, irrespective of their social status. This question is subject to great debates from time to time, and we have to face the fact, that we cannot know the answer for sure.

Anyway, measures of social assistance will be inevitable in view of the statistics. But we find crucial that social disadvantages should be addressed as general social problems, by the way of general social measures - not as specific “Roma – problems”. This has a special importance concerning the communication of different governmental programmes to the public – measures ameliorating the situation of socially disadvantaged people must not be communicated as Roma programmes, otherwise



even successful economic and social measures may have as by-effect the increasing antipathy of the society.

Closely related to the above, one of the most important elements of a successful programme is to address not only Roma, but the majority society at the same time – not by means of financial assistance, but by means of communication. It is crucial to give majority society appropriate, not-biased information about the culture and history of Roma people. Methods have to be elaborated by experts of diverse sciences (sociologists, linguists, pedagogues,..) in order to reduce prejudice against Roma (and other minorities) in the society, beginning at the level of pre-school and reaching all fields life. Unfortunately, this aspect does not get the attention it deserves in the programmes on the amelioration of the situation of Roma, although even the best elaborated economic and social measures cannot be successful on the long term, if general attitudes towards Roma do not change in society.

Another basic condition of a successful programme would be a the active participation of representatives of Roma in public life in general and in the planning, implementation and assessment of Roma – programmes.

10. NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS MORE ACTIVE AND APPROPRIATE TO CORRECT DISCRIMINATION AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THEIR ACTIVITIES

As Roma are undoubtedly the greatest minority in Hungary, there are quite many state institutions dealing mainly or exclusively with them. However, due to limits of space, we found it more important to introduce some other stakeholders of the situation of Roma. Between the spheres of state and private institutions is the system of Roma minority self-governments: In 2002, among the 1911 minority self-governments elected, 1004 self-governments have been formed by the representatives of Roma. The most important rights of minority self-governments are the following: they are entitled to establish and maintain institutions in the areas of education, the preservation of cultural traditions and media. They can solicit information and submit initiatives to public administrative authorities related to minority issues. Consent of local minority self-governments is required for local government decrees affecting minorities and the use of minority languages, for the appointment of leaders of minority institutions and for any local decision concerning minority education. National minority self-governments have similar rights; they are entitled to express opinion on acts, statutes and decrees affecting minorities, to establish and maintain cultural institutions and to take part in the professional supervision of minority education. It is to note, however, that in the experience of the Ombudsman, violation of the rights of minority self-governments occurs quite often, due among others to the lack of effective sanctions.

As to the non-governmental sphere, some NGO-s of specific interest are introduced below:

The Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities (NEKI) is an association providing free legal aid to discriminated Roma people since 1994. During the last 10



years, NEKI has initiated 250-300 cases before courts and other competent authorities. Apart from legal defence, their activities also include publication of annual and thematic reports.

The Autonomía Foundation, established in 1990 focuses its activity on the following areas: poverty and ethnicity (providing grants and loans to support self-help initiatives which enable Roma people and others to build economic and social autonomy); environmental sustainability (supporting environmental projects involving local unemployed Roma people) and civil society (supporting the professional and sustainable development of emerging and established NGO-s).

The Kurt Lewin Foundation has been set up in 1995 to prevent prejudice among different groups by the methods of education and culture. They aim the social integration of socially disadvantaged groups. From 1993-1998, they organised summer-schools for Roma and non-Roma secondary school – pupils. They also effectuate scientific research from 1998. They maintain two homepages; one of them is RomaPage, a webpage on information and culture for Hungarian Roma. They organise trainings to prepare to higher education entrance exams to the faculties of sociology and social politics for Roma children and for pupils living in children’s homes.

Among Universities, the University of Pécs is to mention. It disposes of an independent Department of Romology since 2001. At present, they have 50 students majoring in Romology and approximately 500 students are attending Romology courses from all over the University. 200 students are participating in the postgraduate program. Up until 2004, the Department has organised 7 accredited teacher training courses in regional centres for altogether 300 participants. 40% of the permanent staff of the department is of Roma ethnicity. They have a well established relationship with other Romology trainings and their university textbooks are used in education nation-wide.

The faculty on pedagogy of the University of Kaposvár also disposes of a faculty of Romology.

11. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES AND STRENGTHS OF OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES IN YOUR COUNTRY REGARDING ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES AND POLICIES FOR ROMA/TRAVELLER

In this part of the Questionnaire, we have chosen to introduce an initiative in the field of education – the Ec-Pec (Step by Step) Foundation. It represents Hungary as a full member in the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), which has 28 members worldwide. Ec-Pec Foundation was established in February 2001 with the intention of promoting the child-centered Step by Step pedagogical program in institutions (preschools, schools) educating disadvantaged children and supporting program development in educational institutions already using the program. All ongoing programmes and those planned for the future have the common mission of helping Roma children to achieve school success. The base of their philosophy is the conviction, that on the one hand, social disadvantage automatically leads to



disadvantage in the classroom, but on the other hand, it does not affect ability, it only limits possibilities without appropriate assistance. The child-centred approach and the selection of the appropriate method present a feasible solution.

The Foundation introduced the Step by Step training programme into the system of Hungarian in-service teacher – training. Their long-term goal is to provide up-to-date training programs that take the teachers' needs and the institutions' developmental programs into consideration. Their trainings are conducted by twenty highly qualified educators, who are also active teachers. They place special emphasis on ongoing trainings for their trainers as well, in order to maintain high professional standards. They have offer training programs:

-Basic Step by Step training for preschool, grade 1 and 2 and grade 3 and 4 teachers in 60 hours

-Thematic trainings related to the Step by Step program in 30 hours, on the following issues:

project planning (use of activity centres in the child-centred classroom, ways to integrate subject matter); differentiation – cooperative learning and peer assistance; child observation and ongoing evaluation – alternative methods; global reading and writing – the creative writing process (development of critical thinking); project related work processes in teaching mathematics; natural sciences – learning by experience and use of the research log.

Ec-Pec Foundation played an active role in establishing the “Step by Step for Critical Thinking” Association, providing both the Step by Step Program and the Program for Critical Thinking. This latter provides a continuation in upper grades of the Step by Step Program, until grade 8.

Some of the ongoing projects of the Foundation are following:

Roma Special Schools Initiative aims to increase the chances of socially disadvantaged children in achieving schools success by preparing students from special schools or remedial classes for integration into regular classrooms, and assisting them further to achieve school success.

The Training and Development of Institutions related to the Roma Social Integration PHARE Programme is composed of two different training programmes that aim achieving tolerance and understanding between minority and majority populations. The number of participants of these training programmes are around 450-500 persons in Hungary.