



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

Partner report - Preparatory phase ROMANIA



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

Statistic data:

According to 1992 census, 89.4% of the total of the population are Romanian, and 10.6% are ethnic minorities. There were registered 1 624 959 Hungarians (7.1%), **409 700 Roma (1.7%)**, 119 462 Germans (0.5%), 65 764 Ukrainians (0.3%), 8 955 Jews (0.04%) etc.

According to the 2002 census, the total population of Romania registered a drop of 5%, and the ethnical structure, at least in what Roma is concerned, is higher. Thus, as to the last census, there are 89.5% Romanians, 6.6% Hungarians, **2.5% Roma (535 250)**, 0.3% Ukrainians, 0.3% Germans etc.

The end of the communist regime (1989) brought for the Roma in Romania a symbolical acknowledgement by being represented in the Romanian Parliament and the Council for National Minorities – CNM, along with other 15 national minorities.

In the same time, there is no definition of “national minorities” in Romania in the domestic law or any specific legislation regarding the right to be asserted as distinct minority group. In practice, the concept of national minority is understood as referring to the “historic minorities”, which have been living in Romania for years.¹ On the other hand, the political change from December 1989 brought no social – economical development for Roma, but a considerably poverty and degradation of the living conditions, Roma being in the same time the category of the most affected citizens in the Romanian society. Placing Roma at the periphery of the society and the discrimination they are subject to in every domains of public life is still a matter of concern for many political and civic actors. As various studies and researched point out, in 1997 the poverty rate for Roma was of 79%, compared to the national rate of poverty of 31%²; 5% of Roma in Romania don't have birth certificates and approximately 4% don't have identity cards³; the number of illiterates of this community is significant: 44% of the men and 59% of the women (C. Zamfir, E. Zamfir, 1993:93); to all this data we can add the way they are accepted or tolerated by the majority population. Namely, two thirds of the Romanians think that Roma shouldn't be allowed to travel abroad, almost half support the idea of limiting the increasing of Roma population and 36% think that Roma should live separately from the rest of the society⁴.

The political evolutions in the last decade in Romania made a series of changes, not only in the social-economical life, but also in what regards the governmental policies. If at first Roma were completely ignored by different Governments in regard to adopting coherent policies, subsequently, better said since 1998, Roma became more often a

¹ This idea is reflected in the 1992 census that noted the existence of 16 minorities and in the national minorities' delegation in the Council of National Minorities and Parliament – the Program of Monitoring Accession to EU. The Minorities' Rights in Romania

² Open Society Institute, Ina Zoon, *At the Periphery of the Society*, 2001

³ Open Society Institute, Ina Zoon, *At the Periphery of the Society*, 2001

⁴ Public Policies Institute, *Intolerance, discrimination, authoritarianism in public opinion*, Bucharest, 2003



political issue of discussion and concern on the agenda of international bodies (EU, OSCE, Council of Europe) and, in the same time, on the agenda of the current government. In April 2001, the Romanian government adopted HG 430/2001 “Strategy for the Improvement of Roma Situation”. This document reflects on one hand the political desire of the Government to address to specific issues of Roma and, on the other hand, the indifference of some political or social actors to implement successfully the measures foreseen in the strategy. Also in regard to the legal framework, Roma are a special issue of the Governmental Decision no.839/31 July 2002, regarding the National Plan for Anti-Poverty and Promotion of Social Inclusion (chapter XIV). Through this strategy it can be re-confirmed the existence of social, economical and educational gaps between various categories of citizens, among which Roma, and also their inclusion into the governmental affirmative policies.

The Roma community is extremely diversified⁵ and many Roma are not registered as so; although the official census in 2002 pointed out a number of **535,250** Roma in Romania (2.5% of the population) there is widely acknowledged that the real number is close to 1.5 million. It seems indubitable that Roma are far from being represented in the political and decisional life⁶.

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

The low school participation of Roma population is and was considered the main problem of education for Roma population. A series of prejudices and stereotypes ascribe to the low school participation of Roma their negative attitude towards education. The majority of studies in the field (Zamfir C., Zamfir E., 1993, 1996; McDonald c., 1999; D.Ringold, 2000; Jigau m., Surdu M., 2002; UNDP, 2002) identifies the following causes of the low school participation of Roma: the precarious economical situation of a large part of Roma population, the position of periphery group, at the margin of the Romanian society. The poverty of most of the Roma population is an obstacle in accessing education; the costs related to education (cloths, shoes, manuals, books, transport, food etc) are not accessible to many Roma⁷.

To all this it can be added the situations encountered at local level, the separation of children in different class-rooms or the existence of segregate schools on ethnical grounds. An important problem for the Ministry of Education to deal with in the present is discrimination against Roma children, encountered in the educational system at local level. At present there are in Romania schools or classrooms formed exclusively or in majority of Roma pupils, and the quality of education in these environments is much less than in the majority children. The schools success of Roma children is conditioned

⁵ Roma population is divided in approximately 40 groups, based on the traditional customs and structures, jobs, language, religion and degree of travelling. Roma groups include Ursarii, Căldăarii, Lăutarii, Spoitarii, Fierarii, Grăjdarii, Rudarii, Boldenii, Argintarii, Aurarii. Another distinction is between the ones that settled, the sedentary (Vătrașii) and the one living in tents (Corturarii).

⁶ The Monitoring Program of Accession to EU. The Minorities' Rights in Romania

⁷ Segregation of Roma in education – Physical or social distance?, Publishing house Arves, 2003, page 48



by the promotion of an inclusive education. The children' separation on ethnical criteria could only develop an unfavourable situation both for Roma children and the Romanian society in general. This fact is also confirmed by the statistic data indicating that the percentage of schools registering situations of school abandonment is higher in the case of schools with Roma, in comparison to the system as whole. The biggest difference appears at primary school level: almost twice higher, if we compare to the total of schools with Roma pupils and almost three times higher in the case of schools with 50% of Roma⁸.

The specialised studies indicate the fact that “phrasing the problem in terms of segregation of Roma in education is not acknowledged by the officials as so. It’s to assume that officials on education are not willing to accept that segregate schools exist in the system. The support of the education officials and a broader social support may be obtained by focusing on the negative consequences of segregation in Roma education (the low quality of education). The educational policies focused on Roma would be more legit and more supported at social level if the problem of Roma segregation was treated as a problem related to the low quality of education in some schools of the system (it is the very case of segregated schools). According to the number of Roma pupils in schools, the measures of educational policies are different.

Thus, in what we call mix schools it is required a mix of desegregation within the school, with focus on creating a real multi-cultural environment and teacher training in order to eliminate the prejudices and stereotypes regarding Roma. In the category of schools with a majority of Roma pupils, the policies to be followed may be combined: desegregation within the schools, but also the school desegregation by changing the ethnical competence. The schools in which Roma pupils are preponderant impose mainly measures of school desegregation.”⁹

In Romania there are schools with Roma pupils only or with a high percentage of Roma children (what leads us to the term of segregation), the educational process in these schools is deployed (like in the communist period) after the same curricula of the other schools in the system. In this meaning, the use of term “segregated schools in Romania” has no equivalent with the use of this term in other countries in the region (it is not referring to special schools or differences of curricula). We could characterise Roma segregation in the Romanian educational system as a *de facto* segregation¹⁰. *De facto* segregation, in the Romanian case, isn’t a consequence of an official law/ policy, but a manifestation of tradition, prejudices and inaction. Law does not impose the physical separation of the minority from the majority and there are no legal obstacles in surpassing the segregation situation.

⁸ Ministry of Education and Research, Science Institute of Education, Research Institute of Quality of Life – Participation of Roma children to Education – problems, solutions, actors, page 50, Bucharest 2002

⁹ Quote Mihai Surdu, Segregation of Roma in education – Physical or social distance?, Publishing house Arves, 2003, page 38

¹⁰ See Mihai Surdu, Segregation of Roma in education – Physical or social distance?, Publishing house Arves, 2003, page 36



Contrariwise, the Romanian Constitution¹¹ and the law of education¹² affirm explicitly the right to education and, moreover, the equal access to education of any person, regardless of the race, ethnicity, social origin, sex, etc. Also, the recent regulations of the Ministry of Education and Research allow the enrolment of a child in any school from the system, regardless of his/her domicile. The anti-discrimination legislation in Romania, namely Law 48/2002 for the approval of Governmental Ordinance no.137/2000 regarding the prevention and sanction of all forms of discrimination completes the legislative framework in the field of education, referring expressly at discrimination.

The actions of the non-governmental organisations, as well as Romani CRISS', trigger an alarm signal in the system. The impact of this signal for the system should be the changing of the public policy. It is true that the reaction in the system will be "there is no segregation, there is no discrimination, or, if it was, it is isolated now!" The non-governmental action is confirmed. In our case the National Council for Combating Discrimination identified discrimination in school from Cehei, Salaj county. It is true it was sanctioned with a warning. But this warning means monitoring. Not necessarily from the National Council for Combating Discrimination, but from the Roma non-governmental organisations. In the same time, the alarm signal triggered by the Roma organisations regarding the "school segregation phenomenon" and implicitly the attention that the Ministry of Education and Research should give upon the education of Roma children, brought recently an improvement of the legal framework through a Ministry's Notification that reinforce its position towards the separation of children in schools based on ethnic criteria.

Through this document, the Ministry **forbids** the forming of groups in the pre-school education or the 1st and 5th classes with an exclusive or preponderant component of Roma pupils. This type of organising the groups/ classes, regardless of the invoked reasons, constitutes forms of segregation. We can say that Notification is in line with the series of governmental measures that ensure an adequate legal framework for the development and equality of chances among citizens. What worries us is the fact that Notification was approved at level of Secretary of State, not through an Order of the Ministry of Education. In the Romani CRISS opinion, this is another proof of hesitation from the public institutions regarding the issue of Roma. But, through its periodical evaluations and monitoring, Romani CRISS will continue focusing its attention to see in what degree the County School Inspectorates will apply the stipulations of the mentioned Notification. Beyond these considerations, still it is not enough that, in a case of obvious discrimination, the institution specialised in combating discrimination apply a warning, with no effect after all¹³. On the other hand though, the attributions of this institution are legally limited in what regards the action following the contravention sanction. At least in the present, this action lacks visibility. The involvement of this institution and creation of a pressure from the civil society in realising coherent public policies on the prevention and sanction of discrimination is strictly necessary. The

¹¹ Art. 32 (1) of the Romanian Constitution: "the right to education is ensured by the obligation of the primary education, by the secondary education and the vocational one, by the college education, as well as other forms of training and perfecting."

¹² Law of education no. 84/1995, with subsequently modifications and completions, stipulates in art. 5 paragraph 1: "The citizens of Romania have equal rights in accessing all forms and levels of education, regardless of the social and economical condition, ...race, nationality, ...", and, according to art.12, paragraph 2 "the organising and content of the education cannot be structured following exclusive and discriminatory criteria based on... ethnicity".

¹³ See Report CRISS vs. County School Inspectorate Salaj and Cehei school – www.romanicriss.org



sanction itself of the act of discrimination is only of the purposes of the law, but, beyond the text of law, the NCCD should involve actively not only in preventing the phenomenon, but also in combating it through a comprehensive approach, along with all social actors. Without a complex approach, it is impossible to influence the whole society, and isolated measures, without impact, cannot reach the final effect of the law.

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

The Romanian labour legislation:

- The *Labour Code* provides the principle of equality of treatment in the labour field and non discrimination treatment, prohibiting any direct or indirect discrimination based on criteria such as sex, national origin, race, colour, ethnic origin, etc (art. 5 and 6, Romanian Labour Code).
- The *Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002*, provides the equality in all economic activities and in the field of employment and profession and prohibits (art. 5 – 9):
 - discrimination on account of the race, nationality, language, ethnic group, etc, in a labour and social protection relation with respect to the conclusion, suspension, modification or cessation of the labour relation;
 - conditioning the participation of a person in an economic activity or one's free choice and exercise of a profession one or more discrimination grounds provided by law;
 - the refusal of any legal or natural entity to hire a person on account of the applicant's race, nationality, ethnic group etc.;
 - job advertisement or interview, the employer or employer's representative set conditions related to the belonging to a race, nationality, ethnic group etc.;
 - discrimination perpetrated by employers against their employees with regard to the social facilities granted to their employees on account of the employees' belonging to a race, nationality, ethnic group, etc.;

All these deeds are provided by law as contraventions and sanctioned with contravention fine or warning.

- *The law no. 202/2002 regarding the equality of chances between men and women* provides special measures for promoting the principle of equality between men and women for eliminating all forms of direct and indirect discrimination (these provisions represent an indirect support for promoting Roma women in the field of employment).
- *Government Decision no 430/2001 on the Government Strategy for improving the Condition of Roma* provides special measures to be taken by some public institutions in order to ensure to free and equal access to labour market for Roma



- Many of the actions concerning Roma population in the specific area of social security and employment are related to measures of social assistance of a general nature and with issuing laws in this specific field: law on preventing and fighting social discrimination, law on unemployment security system and encouraging the workforce employment, law on the guaranteed minimum income, etc.

Barriers in the access to labour market and vocational training

One of the most damaging forms of discrimination against Roma in most European countries is the obstacles this community have to face in making its way into the labour market. Discrimination, including the increasing regulatory restrictions placed on the “traditional” economic activities of Roma, such as street vending, trash collection or crafts contributes to economic hardship for many Roma.

The unemployment is one of the problems severely affecting the Roma community living in Romania. Even if the national unemployment rate is around 8 % (in 2003, and 7.3% in April 2004)¹⁴, for the Roma community this considerably higher. For this reason the National Agency for Workforce Employment considered Roma among target groups to be included in workforce employment and vocational training programs. Some of the Roma activists affirm the unemployment rate could reach even 55% of the total Roma population.¹⁵

- Lack of vocational training courses targeted on Roma communities in respect with their traditional occupations and according with the demand on labour market.

Street vending is an important economic activity for Roma and is encountering increasing difficulties due to stricter regulations (local or national regulations). Trash and waste collection (especially scrap iron) and recycling is another important activity among Roma. There are many Roma involved in traditional crafts confronted with obstacles in obtaining the necessary authorisation for working legally. These authorisations are to be obtained from the local Mayer Hall and for this a person should proof she/he has a specialisation on that working area or an official proof that she/he worked in the area for at least 3 years. For most of Roma these proofs are difficult or impossible to be obtained because they learn these traditional crafts in their families.

In the same time, in order to sale their handcrafts they should also obtain a special authorisation from the Mayer Hall. The three responses to the question, *What traditional Roma activities practiced in your close community could be a source of income today?* that received the greatest support are music, commerce and handicrafts (for the study made by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) The expectation that music can be a source of competitive advantage is lowest in Romania 48 percent of respondents. The problem is the lack of sufficient demand for these skills in current economic environment.

- Roma children abandon school during the first level of education (1st to 4th grade) and lack of professional qualification, mostly among Roma women. Usually the unemployment discrimination against Roma and their proportionally low number

¹⁴ Official statistics of National Agency for Workforce Employment, 2003 - 2004

¹⁵ European Roma Rights Centre Report, Bucharest, 2001



in the labour market is blamed on their lack of training. For this reason both National Plan for Workforce Employment and National Plan for Vocational Training are focused on Roma involvement in the Labour Market, with a special attention paid to Roma women.

- Lack of information in the rural areas, where the number of unemployed peoples (Roma or other nationalities) is higher. Roma who stay out of the formal labor market are often involved in income generation in the shadow economy or subsistence agriculture. Roma involvement in informal sector activities in Romania is particularly high.
- Although there are relatively low unemployment rates for Roma in Romania, they are mirrored by relatively high involvement in informal sector activities. Although “only” 1 out of 4 Romanian Roma is unemployed, of those involved in income generation activities, less than one in three obtains employment in the formal sector. In an attempt to get closer to the ILO definition of unemployment, information from the self-definition question and the question *What was the type of labor relation with which you earned money last month?*, were combined to produce a broader definition of Roma unemployment. The average rate for the region using this revised definition was 24 percent in Romania¹⁶
- Discrimination on the employment process (7 sanctions applied by NCCD to 7 different central newspapers for publishing advertisements imposing ethnic origin limitations).

Instead of emphasizing exotic but outmoded handicrafts, the flip side of traditional Roma occupations should be promoted: their flexibility and service oriented character. The traditional service oriented focus of Roma crafts suggests that Roma could be well suited for inclusion in rapidly growing service sectors. The real lie not in the skills themselves but in the entrepreneurship that underpins them.

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

Accommodation:

Legal provisions:

The *Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002*, provides the freedom of movement, choice of residence and access to public places (art. 16 -18).

General problems:

¹⁶ “Roma in Central and Eastern Europe”, Report of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), 20.12.2002



- problems related to the right of ownership on the Roma's dwellings and lands, the issues related to applying of laws and regulations concerning the constitution of the land ownership right, including promotion of legislative initiative in this area;
- Poor condition of the houses and environment in the areas inhabited by Roma. Discriminatory accommodation is perhaps the area which creates many other barriers for Roma: lack of access to health, access to employment, physical segregation. In Romania, the big majority of Roma is sedentary, but there has been an important exodus over the last years from rural to urban areas. For this reason an important number of Roma lives in neighbourhoods where they represent the majority.
- Lack of minimum conditions of houses in the rural area inhabited by Roma (electric power, sewerage, gas and sanitation services)
- Discrimination of Roma on the renting or selling the houses (4 sanctions applied by NCCD for discrimination deeds in this field). There are discriminatory barriers for Roma with regard to renting or purchasing homes from private parties stemming from owner prejudice and pressures by potential neighbours.

Health care:

Legal provisions

The Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002, provides the free access to legal, administrative and health public services, to other services, goods and facilities (art.10).

General problems

Discrimination may have different faces and often is not explicit. In many areas, especially those involving provision of social services, ostensibly neutral legal provisions may in practice have a discriminatory impact.

These "hidden impediments" are apparent in the regulation of health care services. In Romania, the right to health protection (and the state obligation to provide it) is enshrined in the Constitution. Romania embarked on a contribution-based overall health care reform in 1998. Families receiving social support receive health insurance without paying any contribution. Eligibility for non-contributory health insurance is conditional on access to social support, the Eligibility criteria for which can be affected by various administrative practices, potential exclusion errors, possible discriminatory denials, and insufficient information. Access to health care for certain social groups—like Roma—can therefore be denied on administrative grounds.

Romania's social security system also creates "hidden impediments" to supplying social services. Access to social support is conditioned on the apparently neutral requirements of permanent residence and possession of appropriate identity



documents. Large parts of the Roma population however do not have identity documents and consequently cannot be registered as permanent residents.

- small number of health visitors, nurses and physicians within the Roma communities;
- insufficient access of Roma to the public medical preventive and curative services in the rural communities;
- many Roma are not included in the Health Insurance System and are not registered with the family doctor, usually because they do not have identity papers;
- lack of medical consulting and family planning for Roma women coming from traditional communities
- Lack of medical staff originating in the Roma community.

Justice and police services

Legal provisions

The Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002, provides the free access to legal, administrative and health public services, to other services, goods and facilities (art. 10).

General problems

- lack of good knowledge on human rights, political and social civil rights, the rights of ethnic and national minorities, in accordance with the international norms and obligations assumed by Romania;
- lack of legal education and delinquency prevention in the Roma communities;
- There are Roma not having identity documents and for this reason they do not benefit from social support and they do not enjoy the exercise of their fundamental rights.

Access to goods and services

Legal provisions

The Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002, provides the free access to legal, administrative and health public services, to other services, goods and facilities (art. 10).

General problems

- Discrimination of Roma regarding the access in public places (bars, clubs) – 8 sanctions applied by NCCD for discrimination deeds in this field.

Mass media

Legal provisions



Law no. 504/2002 on Radio and Television Broadcasting provides the sanctioning of discrimination deed perpetrated by radio or television. The competent institution to apply sanctions in such cases is The National Audio-Visual Council.

The Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002, provides the right to personal dignity (art. 19). The NCCD has the competence in sanctioning the newspapers perpetrating discrimination deeds on this field.

General problems:

- The use of stereotypes and prejudices in mass-media, encouraging the discrimination of Roma people and maintaining a distorted image on this minority (6 sanctions applied by the NCCD for discrimination deeds in this field).

There are a disproportionate number of negative references regarding Roma. Usually Roma are identified when this has no relevance whatsoever on the story being covered and a minimal use of Roma sources by reporters. For this reason, they are often portrayed in a very stereotyped version.

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

The evolution of the education system toward Roma – Affirmative actions

5.1 At university level – the Ministry of National Education’s affirmative action
Policies on Roma started in 1992/1993, at the initiative of the Social Work Chair of the Bucharest University, by granting 10 distinct places for Roma candidates to the social work section. Subsequently, in 1993/1994, the affirmative action program was taken over by the chairs of Universities in Cluj, Iasi and Timisoara. The MNE’s initiatives regarding education for Roma took more shape in 1998, through the Order of the Ministry of Education 3577/1998, that stipulated the grant of 149 places for young Roma in 8 university centres, going to 373 places subsequently (2000/2001) in 23 university centres, 397 (2001/2002) in 29 universities, respectively 422 in 37 universities (2002/2003)¹⁷.

Another strategic objective was the promotion at university level of the education at distance for unqualified Roma teachers (with no university studies, only the high school diploma), with the purpose of getting a college diploma with double specialisation of “schoolmaster” – Romani language teacher. The program started in October 2000, at the initiative of Prof. Gheorghe Sarau –Directorate of Teaching in Minority Languages and had as beneficiaries 159 students in 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003¹⁸. A report points out that some universities (such as the ones in Cluj, Constanta and

¹⁷ Through MER’s Order no. 4120/09.06.2003, regarding the delegation of school figures in State universities, there has been granted 422 special places for Roma candidates in applying to colleges and faculties within 37 universities.

¹⁸ Gheorghe Sarau, Romanian Model. Short history of the initiatives and strategic targets regarding education for Roma implemented by MERY and NGOs in 1990-2002



SNSPA, Bucharest), fully understanding the necessity of affirmative measures for Roma, foreseen in the last years supplementary places for Roma¹⁹. This initiative of the universities increased the number of places with 50 every two years over the ones granted through the Ministry of National Education's Orders.

It is laudably the universities' policy of affirmative action for Roma, thus contributing to the training and development of young elite of Roma.

5.2 Education in Romani language – The study of Romani language is organised in the context of general legislation of the Romanian education and the legislation regarding education for national minorities²⁰.

Until legislative stipulations and regulations on education in Romani language appeared, there have been a series of initiatives in that area that led to the promotion of affirmative measures for Roma.

A first initiative regarding education in Romani language belonged to professor Gheorghe Sarau, who, in 1992/1993 organised for the first time in the Romanian educational system an optional class of Romani language, within the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Bucharest. This initiative was the base of the idea to set up a chair of Indianism, where it should function alternatively a B. class of Hindi and one of Hindi-Romani. Thus, starting with 1996/1997, it was set up the class of Hindi and in the fall of 1997, the class of Hindi-Romani, with 7-10 places. Still in the context of affirmative actions, the Ministry of National Education established in 1998 the class of Romani language and literature, as B section, with 10 special places for Roma and non-Roma young candidates²¹.

5.3 At pre-university level – set up of classes and groups for the study of Romani language within the Normal Schools (former pedagogical high schools). In 1990/ 1991, at the initiative of Roma inspector, professor Ioana (Ina) Radu, the first three experimental classes are established within three Normal Schools in Bucharest, Bacau and Targu Mures. These classes had as purpose the training of future Roma teachers. The school curricula stipulated that for these classes the study of Romani language and literature (3h/week) and pedagogical practice in the last years of study (the 4th and the 5th), at the primary classes studying the Romani language and literature.²²

5.4 At high school, vocational level – the Ministry of Education extended the series of affirmative measures also at the level of high schools and vocational schools. A first regulation in toward this direction was made through the MNE's Order no. 5083/ 26.11.1998 and the ulterior similar orders for years 2000/20001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004²³. The number of Roma pupils attending the educational system (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational) in school year 2002/2003 was, at

¹⁹ Gheorghe Sarau, Short history of education for Roma, www.edu.ro

²⁰ The study of mother tongue is organised based on Law for Education no. 84/1995 and Minister's Order no. 4646/1998

²¹ The strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and UNICEF regarding the education of Roma children – Outcomes and Perspectives, Bucharest 2003

²² Gheorghe Sarau, Short history of education for Roma, www.edu.ro

²³ MNE's orders: 4562 / 16.09.1998; 4542 / 18.09.2000; 4857 / 01.11.2002 – www.edu.ro



country level, of 158,128 Roma pupils, meaning 4.23% of the general total of the pupils in the Romanian educational system, of which 15,708 Roma pupils also chose the additional Roma curricula (Romani language, history and traditions). In school year 2002/2003, there have been granted places for Roma candidates in high schools and trading schools within the limit of 2 places/ specialisation/ class, regardless of the school, leading to a number of 1345 Roma children enrolled in the 9th.

The impact of affirmative policies may be reflected through a comparative analyse of the statistic data since 1990 until the present. As the data on Roma pupils' school participation show, in school year 1989/1990, the total number of Roma pupils with age between 6-18 was of 109 325 (58 325 boys and 51 000 girls) among which 61 143 speakers of Romani language²⁴. A last statistics regarding the school participation of Roma pupils refer to school year 2002/2003, stipulating total number of pupils of 3 738 175, of which 158 128 Roma pupils, a percentage of 4.23 %. It can be confirmed an increase of Roma children's participation to the educational system in 12 years with 48 103 Roma pupils and an increase of Romani language speakers 61 143 (1990) to 80 293 (2003)²⁵.

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

Within the Government Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma, the main anti-discrimination policies are implemented as follows:

1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity:

- With the regard to the measures of vocational training, re-skill and employment of Roma labour force, under the National Program for increasing the workforce in the year 2001, the following results were reported due to courses of vocational training: 270 Roma population were enrolled in vocational training courses, 232 completed them, 205 were employed. The crafts in highest demand on the labour market were: plumber, concrete worker, iron worker, mason-plasterer. Under the National Program of workforce employment in the year 2002, vocational training courses enrolled 282 Roma people, of whom 80 got a job. In 2003, a number of 215 Roma were enrolled in these courses.
- This institution has started a partnership with Roma non-governmental organisations and the local authorities for recording in the Catalogue of Romanian Occupations (COR) specific Roma crafts, as well as other occupations: social care/sanitary personnel, personal attendants to severely disabled Roma, social visitors. The "health visitors" occupation was entered in the COR at code 513902. The occupation of "attendant to severely disabled persons" entered in the COR at no. 513304, and it represents a step that sets

²⁴ The strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and UNICEF regarding the education of Roma children – Outcomes and Perspectives, page 72, "...after the innovating table realised by Insp. Ina Radu in 1990", Bucharest 2003

²⁵ Idem, page 73 – data sent by the county school inspectorates in September 2002- June 2003.



in place conditions for the unfolding of a program of vocational training for Roma attendants to disabled Roma population.

- In cooperation with non-governmental organisations, The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity is implementing programs in order to inform and educate the Roma population about the disadvantages of the “black” labour market.

2. *The National Agency of Workforce Employment (NAWE):*

- In 2001 – 2003, based on the national program action for Roma workforce employment, NAWE helped 19.504 Roma to find a job. In the year 2001 5.188 Roma were employed, in year 2002 – 5.535, and in the year 2003 – 8.781.
- For facilitating the access of Roma population to the labour market, the National Agency of Workforce Employment organised at a national level, on March the 9th 2003 the first Job Opportunities Fair for Roma population. During the first edition of the Fair, 10.401 Roma were participating, 8.531 jobs were offered and 1.523 Roma were employed. On April 23rd 2004, NAWE organised the second edition of Job Opportunities Fair for Roma population. A number of 11.304 jobs were offered for Roma. 4.167 Roma were selected for being employed. At this second edition participated 9.845 Roma.

3. *The National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD):*

- During 2003, the NCCD started a national campaign for awareness rising in the field of anti discrimination in the field of employment. The campaign was carried out in cooperation with NAWE. NCCD published information leaflets regarding anti discrimination legal provisions in the field of employment. The leaflets were distributed to all central newspapers publishing job advertisements, as well as to Regional Agencies of Workforce Employment.
- 7 sanctions were applied by NCCD to 7 central newspapers (warnings) for publishing job advertisements containing discriminatory conditions on the grounds of: sex, age, ethnic origin (Roma).

The Steering Board of the NCCD issued a special instruction concerning the good practices and non-discriminatory conditions in the employment area.

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

Accommodation (housing)

- The Ministry of Administration and Interior has drawn up the files with the specifics of the dwellings and facilities in the zones inhabited mainly by Roma population. After centralising the data received from City Halls and prefects offices concerning the territorial needs of dwellings and environment rehabilitation, The Ministry of



Administration and Interior, with the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing, drawn a national program for rehabilitation of the dwellings and environment, including those in the area inhabited by the Roma. The program will be developed to cover 10 years, with urgent measures of rehabilitation of the dwellings and areas inhabited by the Roma population in the first 4 years.

- After applying 4 contravention sanctions for discrimination deeds in this field during 2003, The NCCD did not received other complains or petitions about these kind of discriminations.

Health

- The Ministry of Health and Family has focused its efforts on carrying out the introduction at a national, institutionalised level, of the “health visitors” system. The Minister of Health and Family Order no. 619/2002 was issued to endorse the functioning of the occupation as a health visitor and of The Technical Rules concerning the organisation, functioning and financing of the health visitors activity. According to it, 166 posts of health visitors were approved in 34 counties. The program concerning the health visitors in the Roma communities and regarding the activities being unfolded by the Ministry of Health and Family to improve the Roma population’s conditions is heavily documented. In 2003, the health visitor system continued to develop concomitant with the completion of the visitors’ professional training.

- A Plan of Action of the National Strategy for the Health of Reproduction in the Roma communities was established by the Ministry of Health and Family in cooperation with the Roma civil society and of the active health visitors.

- Information campaigns in the field of health, medical consulting, and family planning for women within the Roma communities, especially about mother and child protection – these specific measures were included in the National Program of Child and Family health.

- Vaccination and immunisation campaigns in the Roma communities.

Justice and police services

- The Ministry of Justice substantiated a research into the particulars of the Roma inmates in the Romanian prisons, with a view to adjusting the probation, recouping and social rehabilitation programs in the Roma population traits. There is also a plan adopting social reinsertion programs of the Roma convicts, considering their traits. This plan is already applied in cooperation with local NGOs’ (example: The reinsertion of Roma convicts in their communities applied in cooperation with The Timisoara Interethnic Institute).

- The Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs initiated a plan for obtaining identity papers, materialised through the conclusion of partnership among the Roma NGOs’ and The General Directorate for Persons’ Computerised Records, the Bucharest City Hall, and the NGOs’ Directorate of the Government. More then 18.000 persons received identity documents.



In order to resolve tensions and conflicts, every County Police Inspectorate worked out a strategy for identifying the towns where groups of Roma population live. It was prepared a portfolio for every such place, monitoring the latent and the active conflicts between the Roma groups or between the Roma population and the majority population representatives.

Training courses regarding the anti discrimination legislation and the good practices in the field of equal treatment, for the police officers were held in cooperation with the NCCD. Some police officers were actively involved in solving discrimination cases by sending petitions to The NCCD.

Access to goods and services

- The NCCD carried out a sanctioning campaign during 2003 regarding the free access of Roma in public places. 8 contravention sanctions were applied for perpetrating the provisions of law in this field. During 2004 The NCCD did not receive other petitions or complains on this issue.

Mass media

- During 2003, The NCCD carried out a national campaign (public debates, seminars) to inform the journalists about the right to personal dignity regarding all of the 14 grounds of discrimination provided by law, including Roma, as well as to remove the stereotypes and prejudices regarding the Roma community.

- 6 sanctions were applied for journalists and newspaper for perpetrating the right of personal dignity of Roma people.

- The Centre for Independent Journalism published a Good practices Guide for journalists.

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

Discrimination against the Roma minority continues to be in practice, especially regarding the way mass media reflects the Roma community image, the living conditions are still poor and access to social services is limited for the Roma communities.

I. Government Ordinance nr. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, adopted by Law no. 48/2002, modified by Government Ordinance no. 77/2003, adopted by Law no. 27/2004.

Roma have been able to benefit from the new framework for antidiscrimination and are responsible for 34 petitions during 2002, 66 petitions during 2003 and 15 petitions during 2004 (till June 1st 2004) of all complaints made to the National Council for



Combating Discrimination. The NCCD applied 24 contravention sanctions for Roma discriminations out of 54.

The Legislation in place in Romania modified by the Law no.27/2004

1. The present law sanctions the **instruction to discriminate**, prescribed in Article 2 paragraph (4) of Council Directive 2000/78/EC. The Romanian law does stipulates **harassment** as a form of discrimination, imposed by the European acquis through Article 2 paragraph (3) of Council Directive 2000/43/EC and Article 2 paragraph (3) of Council Directive 2000/78/EC.
2. The Romanian law does not enclose any disposition related to **“reasonable accommodation”**. The need to regulate reasonable accommodation is all the more stringent given the fact that GO 77/2003 expressly names “disability” as a prohibited ground in Article 2, paragraph (1). Moreover, European directives mandate national regulations to this effect (Article 5 of Council Directive 2000/78/EC).
3. The Romanian law is not in harmony with the European directives’ provisions in the field of the burden of proof. Article 8 paragraph (5) of Council Directive 2000/43/EC and Article 8 paragraph (1) of Council Directive 2000/78/EC mandate the existence of national regulations to this effect. Consequently, persons who consider themselves wronged because the principle of equal treatment has not been applied to them can establish, before a court or other competent authority, facts from which it may be presumed that there has been direct or indirect discrimination, and it shall be for the respondent to prove that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment. **The reversal (shift) of the burden of proof should apply to all legal proceedings.** Therefore, it is all the more necessary that the victim benefit from shifting the burden of proof before a court, given the difficult situation in which the victim has already been placed²⁶.
4. The evidences accepted for proving the existence of discriminatory treatments are those established by the Code for Civil Procedure. Still, by the last modification of the anti-discrimination law **Audio and video recordings** are recognized as evidence by this act, in order to prove discrimination.
5. Recognizing **statistical data** as evidence in the field of discrimination is in line with the minimal requirements of the two community directives (paragraph (15) of the Preamble to Council Directive 2000/43/EC). Despite this fact, the law is not explicitly recognising statistical data as evidence recognised by the law with regard to discrimination.
6. GO 137/2000 allows standing in the courts in cases of discrimination against a community or a group only for *“nongovernmental organizations whose mission is to protect human rights”*, although Article 7 of Council Directive 2000/43/EC and Article 9 of Council Directive 2000/78/EC prescribes that shall have a standing organizations witch have **“...a legitimate interest in ensuring that the provisions of this Directive are complied with...”**. Consequently, the Romanian provisions are restrictive since NGOs who are solely concerned with protecting minorities or disadvantaged categories, without a broader mission to protect human rights, do not have standing in

²⁶ Note: The 43/EC/2000 provides the reversal of the burden of proof only for cases when there is no national specialised body in order to solve discrimination cases.



the courts in cases which are of interest to them. Furthermore, in cases of legal representation of natural persons by NGOs, the Romanian law requires a *specific mandate granted by the victim*, instead of **simple request of the victim** prescribed by the European directives. An amendment in this sense is needed also in order to be constant with the dispositions of the Law 202/2002 for equal opportunities between women and men.

7. The last modification the anti-discrimination legislation is including the mentioned amendment.
8. The Romanian law does stipulate **victimisation** as by the European directives (Article 9 of Council Directive 2000/43/EC, Article 11 of Council Directive 2000/78/EC). Still there is the need of enacting the organisation and the functioning **of the NCCD as an autonomous** administrative authority, structured in separate departments with distinct attributions, through an organic law passed by Parliament (in accordance to the provisions of Article 72 and Article 116 of the Romanian Constitution)²⁷.

II. In 2001 Romania adopted a governmental strategy for improving the conditions of Roma/Gypsies under its action plan to eradicate discrimination: Government decision no. 430/2001. This strategy has resulted in the setting up of a joint committee for application and follow-up, ministerial commissions and county offices and in the appointment of local experts; all these bodies and individuals work exclusively on Roma/Gypsy matters. A State Secretary has also been appointed; this position is currently filled by a member of that community.

The strategy (for 10 years, 2001 – 2010) provides 10 lines of action, as follows: public administration, housing, social security, health care, economy, justice and public order, child welfare, education, culture and religious affairs, communication and civic involvement. For each of these lines sector strategies for implementation were drawn up, each of these strategies applied by the competent public institution. The general plan of measures 2001 – 2004 is not fulfilled and there are still problems regarding the equal treatment of Roma people.

- Lack of access to housing of an acceptable standard remains a very important problem for the Roma population. There are positive local initiatives taken, but there are still Roma communities not benefiting for normal housing conditions (lack of electricity, sewerage, methane gas, sanitation).

- County-level strategies for relations with the Roma have been developed by the police. While cases of unjustified police violence against Roma communities used to be reported, there have also been cases of police officers being sanctioned for such abuse, as well as there have been police officers actively involved in complaining to the NCCD about cases of discrimination against Roma.

- In the area of labour policy, the National Employment Agency and its county offices have started active co-operation with the Roma County Offices in order to improve access to the labour market (although to date there has only been limited progress). Vocational training programmes for Roma have also been initiated. However, further

²⁷ “In the exercise of its functions, the Council independently carries out its activity, without any restriction or influence coming from other public institutions or authorities”, Government Decision no. 1194/2001 for organization and functioning of the NCCD.



reforms are needed to increase employment opportunities for the many Roma who have not completed compulsory education.

- In the education sector, legislation has been modified to provide educational programmes for Roma who did not attend school. National programmes also include reserved places in high school and university for Roma students. Progress in the other areas covered by the Roma Strategy has been limited due to a limited funding.

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

Romanian system adopted a targeted approach of discrimination against Roma. Both *Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination* and the *Strategy of the Government of Romania for Improving the Roma's Condition* were created in cooperation with Roma civil society, considering the fact that Roma discrimination phenomena has left deep marks on the collective memory and which has led to the social limitation of the Roma.

Having in mind the main goal, improving the condition of Roma communities, as well as the specific culture, language, traditions of this population, a targeted and mainstreaming approach is a must.

For this reason, The NCCD drafted a National Action Plan for Combating Discrimination 2003 – 2007. For each of the 14 grounds of discrimination was created a Sector Strategy for preventing and combating discrimination, each one tailored for that specific ground.

The Strategy for preventing and combating discrimination against Roma was created in cooperation with Roma Civil society (27 NGOs' were involved in drafting the General Policy Recommendation on Antidiscrimination Legislation).

The Strategy contains 9 domains of action: Education, Health, Employment, Public Administration, Justice, Access to goods and services, Housing, Mass media and Communication. The implementation of the strategy will be ensured in cooperation with central/local level institutions and Roma NGOs'.

It must be said that during the drafting and first stage implementing process of such strategies, having a very specific target, misunderstandings may occur, especially between different Roma representatives or NGOs' coming from different communities.

For this reason, before clear actions will be started in applying the strategy, large consultations at local and regional level will be held.



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

I. National and regional level bodies

1. **The Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations** is a specialised body of the Government, having special attributions in insuring the communication between the national minorities existing in Romania. One of the structures of the department is **The Office for Roma Issues**, which is directed by a State Secretary; this position is currently filled by a member of that community. After the Strategy of The Government for improving the Roma conditions was adopted the following structures are established for the purpose of a proper organisation and coordination of the Master Plan of measures for the applying the strategy:

- The Joint Committee of Implementation and Monitoring
- Inter-Ministerial commissions on Roma
- County offices on Roma (*regional level bodies*)
- Local experts on Roma affairs (*regional level bodies*).

The Office for Roma Issues is in charge with implementing the PHARE Program for improving the Roma condition.

2. **The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and The National Agency of Workforce Employment** have special attributions in implementing the Strategy for improving the Roma conditions in Social security and employment sector: measures regarding vocational training, re-skill and employment of Roma labour force under the National Program for increasing the workforce employment, organising the Annual Job Opportunities Fair for Roma population, vocational information and counselling, applying the laws regarding the unemployment security system and of encouraging the workforce employment. The National Agency for Workforce Employment develops active measures through its local bodies – County Agencies for Workforce Employment.

3. **The Ministry of Education (MEC)** has special attributions in implementing the Strategy in the field of education. In 2001, MEC set up the *General Directorate for Education in the Languages of Ethnic Minorities*, the duties of which include, beside assuring tuition in the students' mother tongue or in the languages of the ethnic minorities, also the matters of education of Roma children. MEC appointed 42 school inspectors for education in the Romany language, half of them being Roma and drawn up the plan to encourage school attendance and reduce the school abandonment among the Roma pupils and set up "The strategy to encourage Roma children and young people to attend school".

II. Non-governmental organisation

II. 1. **Romani CRISS** – *Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies* is an independent non-profit organisation established on April 4, 1993. The founding members of the organisation are: Roma Ethnic Federation (FER), Research Centre of



Roma/Gypsies from the Rene Descartes University in Paris, and the Sociology Institute of the Romanian Academy.

Romani CRISS inherited the FER experience in addressing incidents of community violence against Roma in Romania in the early 1990s from a human rights perspective, by using tools such as conflict resolution, mediation, litigation, as well as community, national, and international advocacy. Since its inception, CRISS has been conducting advocacy work in multiethnic communities in Romania where Roma live, in order to strengthen local democratic institutions and mechanisms and to ensure the respect and promotion of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights on a non-discriminatory basis.

Impact of Romani CRISS in the Romanian society

1. Prevention of inter-ethnic conflict

Through its mediation, campaigning, and legal defence role, Romani CRISS has played a key role in stalling the wave of community and mob violence against Roma that swept Romania in the early 1990s, as well as in preventing the eruption of new tensions on the local level. Some of the cases of inter-ethnic conflict documented and litigated by Romani CRISS on a national level are now in the final phases at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. More importantly, Romani CRISS' intervention at the level of the relevant authorities determined local and national actors to develop an early-response system to warnings of potential conflict and to develop mechanisms for community dialogue and conflict resolution on a local level.

2. Community development work

Romani CRISS has worked closely with communities to address specific needs identified on a local and national level, assisting Roma to access basic identity documents, providing health mediators in most counties in Romania, supporting higher enrolment rates and school attendance among Romani children, and supporting the development of local Roma non-governmental organizations. As a result of Romani CRISS community development programs, more than 2 300 Roma without personal identification documents have received ID cards, over 85 000 Roma have received health insurance, and a number of children in areas where pilot programs have been developed have been enrolled in the educational system or catch-up programs with a view to integration into mainstream schools.

3. Raising awareness of specific issues

Since its inception, Romani CRISS has developed a number of highly successful national campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the human rights issues pertaining to Roma among the general public. Thus, in the immediate wake of a wave of inter-ethnic violence in 1993, Romani CRISS organized highly publicized public protest actions in all major centers in the areas where the conflicts had occurred, culminating with a hundred-strong Roma rally in the capital, Bucharest.

Developing young Roma activists and experts

Over the past few years, Romani CRISS has organized a large number of trainings on human rights issues for Romani activists and local organizations, human rights monitors throughout the country, lawyers, educational and health mediators, etc. In addition to developing Romani CRISS' own networks for documenting, defending, and preventing human rights violations, the trainings have had the effect of multiplying the work of Romani CRISS at a local and community level, as well as the level of national and international institutions. Many of those trained by Romani CRISS over the past



years are now working in various ministries in Romania, as well as in intergovernmental bodies such as the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe, or international non-governmental organizations such as the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest or Columbia University's Public Interest Law Initiative in Budapest.

4. Influencing anti-discrimination legislation in Romania

Beginning with 2000, Romani CRISS has worked as part of a broad coalition of civil society actors, including mainstream human rights, minority rights, and gay and lesbian associations, which sought to influence the development of new anti-discrimination instruments and mechanisms in Romania. Romani CRISS legal experts have worked to evaluate, amend, and press for more rigorous implementation of existing anti-discrimination standards. At the same time, Romani CRISS has been among the first organizations to test new anti-discrimination instruments by submitting cases to the newly established equality body, the National Council for Combating Discrimination, and by following up with court action and advocacy relating to strategic cases. Moreover, the recommendations of the studies published by Romani CRISS, together with the changes proposed by the civil society coalition that Romani CRISS has been a part of, have been adopted by the Romanian Parliament when the anti-discrimination law was amended in early 2004.

In recognition for its achievements, in 1998, Romani CRISS received the "Democracy and Civil Society Award" jointly granted by the United States, the European Union, and the UK Government in support of democracy, reform, and civil society.

II.2. Aven Amentza - Centre for Public Policies and Intervention

II.3. Agency for Community Development "Împreună"

II.4. Resources Centre for Roma Communities

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

There are good practices for each field of activity when discrimination occurs.

Employment

- creating local partnerships between the public entities, like The County Agency for Workforce Employment, and local Roma NGOs' for facilitating the access of Roma people to job offers, to vocational trainings, and to cooperate in identifying the main problems of the local Roma communities in the field of employment.
- according grants to non-governmental organisations that establish and run social assistance units. 47 subsidised non-governmental organisations have provided social services to 20.491 persons in need, including 2.037 young people.

The role of community involvement in Roma development



In 1996 a local community development project started in Nusfalau (Salaj County), linking community mobilization, training, and other development activities. In April 1997, two representatives of the community of Brazilia-Nusfalau were included in a training program for Roma leaders organized focused explicitly on issues of interactions by the *Association Romani Criss*. At the end of the training courses a project idea for establishing a small brick factory employing Roma and producing bricks for Roma houses was formulated. The idea was appealing because it could provide assistance without dependency. In addition to receiving part of the necessary development resources from external donors, the Roma community pledged to “match” the donor’s investment with labor inputs. Part of the production was used for Roma housing construction, part was sold to cover project costs, and part was used to improve living conditions in the community. In 1997, the project helped six families to be connected to the electricity infrastructure, and clothing and school supplies were purchased for school children.

By the project’s formal completion in September 1998, over 300,000 bricks had been produced. 10,000 bricks were donated to the victims of calamity from a neighboring commune to repair damaged houses.

The project did not stop with the expiration of the external funding, however. Starting from 1999 the project was continued by Agency for Community Development “Împreună”. In 1999 the brick factory supplied the bricks needed for the construction of 10 social houses in Nusfalau. Another three houses were built and two others renovated in 2000; a community centre was established with support from the *Roma Participation Program* of Budapest; and six other houses were renovated with the support of the *Resource Centre for Roma Communities*. Almost 250,000 bricks were produced in 2001, representing a good source of income for Roma in the community²⁸.

Education

- there were drawn up and implemented, in partnership with international bodies such as UNICEF, NGOs’ and the local public authorities, a number of projects aimed to encourage and improve the school attendance and reduce the school abandonment with the Roma children:

- “The access to education for disadvantaged groups, especially for Roma children” – it had in view to train the Roma teaching staff, school inspectors and school visitors to work in disadvantaged communities with school attended by a high percentage of Roma children, focusing on cultural diversity.
- A partnership between MEC, UNICEF and Giurgiu County School Inspectorate and with the help of the County’s local authorities have been conducted the pilot project called “priority Educational Zones’ in a school whose pupils were 50% Roma, a project those results will substantiate an enlargement of the system at a national level.
- Easy terms for Roma candidates at the admission exams to vocational and apprenticeship schools: MEC assigns distinct places for Roma candidates in high schools for the training of future Roma primary-school teachers. There are also

²⁸ Institute of Quality of Life, Romania



distinct places assigned for Roma students in high schools, vocational and apprenticeship schools. Similar conditions exist for college admittance for Roma students.

Stimulating Roma participation in the political life by granting a special place in the Romanian Parliament (in the Inferior Chamber), a right provided for all national minorities, recognised by law, in Romania.