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Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma

Summary 1

BULGARIA
HUNGARY
ROMANIA
SERBIA

Monitoring Reports

2007

Table of Contents

Preface	3
Bulgaria	5
Hungary	15
Romania	25
Serbia	37
ANNEX 1: Acknowledgements	49
ANNEX 2: Participating Programs	51

Preface

The EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP) of the Open Society Institute (OSI) monitors human rights and rule of law issues throughout Europe, jointly with local NGOs and civil society organisations. EUMAP reports emphasise the importance of civil society monitoring and encourage a direct dialogue between governmental and nongovernmental actors on issues related to human rights and the rule of law. The reports are elaborated by independent experts from the countries being monitored.

This series of EUMAP reports on “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma” builds on previous EUMAP reports on Minority Protection, which addressed the situation of Roma in Europe. It has been prepared in collaboration with OSI’s Education Support Program (ESP) and Roma Participation Program (RPP). In each country, the reporting teams also benefited from the support and experience of Roma NGOs, which were involved in gathering and processing data for the field research.

The Roma, with an estimated population of between 8 and 12 million spread across the whole continent, are one of Europe’s largest and most vulnerable minorities. Throughout Europe, Roma remain excluded from many aspects of society, denied their rights and entrenched in poverty. The particular problems faced by Roma in accessing quality educational opportunities have been widely recognised.

The “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015” is an unprecedented international effort to combat discrimination and to close the gap in welfare and living conditions between the Roma and the non-Roma, in order to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion. The initiative is supported by the OSI and the World Bank, and endorsed by nine Central and Eastern European countries. The declared objective is to accelerate progress in improving the social inclusion and economic status of Roma.

The Decade focuses on four main areas: education, housing, employment and health care. The EUMAP reports on “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma” aim to support the goals of the Decade in the key area of education, and to establish a framework for regular monitoring throughout the Decade. The reports also aim to provide an assessment of the state of implementation of Government education policies for Roma, to promote consultation with Roma communities on education issues, and to provide data on key education indicators, as well as presenting case studies on selected communities. The case studies were intended to supplement and corroborate data gathered from other sources. They provide relevant local examples, which is particularly important given that information on the educational status of Roma can be incomplete at the national level. The case studies also provide a baseline survey for follow up monitoring, in order to document changes in educational outcomes at the local level, over the course of the Decade.

This first volume of reports covers four countries: *Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Serbia*. Further volumes in the series will be published later in 2007; these will include

reports on the other countries covered by the Decade – *Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro* and *Slovakia* – plus an overview report resuming the main findings across all the countries. All country reports will be translated to the relevant national language and published as a separate report.

The monitoring on “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma” was based on a detailed methodology, intended to ensure a comparative approach across the countries monitored, while the case studies were conducted according to a common template (both available at www.eumap.org). Each of the country reports included in this volume was reviewed at a national roundtable meeting. These meetings were organised in order to invite comments on the draft from Government officials, civil society organisations, parents, and international organisations. The final reports reproduced in this volume underwent significant revision based on the comments and critique received during this process. EUMAP assumes full responsibility for its final content.

For each country report there are detailed recommendations aimed at improving the access to quality education for Roma. These are directed at the national level, to the national governments, ministries and national education agencies, and will form the basis for OSI advocacy activities. Recommendations at the international level, including to the European Union (EU) and to international organisations, across all the countries covered by the monitoring, will be included in the overview report.

This summary report contains only the executive summary and recommendations sections from each of the four country reports. The complete reports can be ordered from EUMAP and are also available online (www.eumap.org).

COUNTRY REPORT: BULGARIA

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Executive summary

Bulgaria has one of the largest Roma populations in Europe, estimated at as much as eight per cent of the population. However, all available indicators demonstrate that Roma children are often denied equal access to quality education. The Government has adopted policies and programmes aimed at improving the situation of Roma generally, but more must be done to address aspects of educational policy most relevant to Roma. The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 is an important platform for the realisation of essential improvements to the education system in Bulgaria, to enable all children to study in schools that meet their needs, reflect their identity, and prepare them for participation in the wider society.

While Bulgarian law permits the collection of personal data with appropriate safeguards, official statistics on education are unreliable, as they rely on schools to report data and there are incentives for schools to inflate their enrolment figures. The Government should take steps to establish other mechanisms for collecting data on education, particularly regarding education for Roma.

In particular, current statistics do not reflect the high number of pupils, especially Roma, who are formally enrolled but rarely attend classes. Local and international researchers have gathered data demonstrating that Roma also attend pre-school at significantly lower rates than the majority population. While the number of Roma who have never attended school appears to be on the decline, Roma are still far more likely to drop out of school, with the proportion of Roma students plunging in higher grades.

Segregation has a long history in Bulgaria; geographical segregation has led to the establishment of segregated “Roma schools” in neighbourhoods and villages where Roma are the majority. Roma are also overrepresented in the special school networks, both in schools for children with intellectual disabilities (“special schools”) and in boarding schools for children with behavioural challenges. With such well-documented evidence of segregation as an ongoing trend, in all levels and branches of the education system, it is clear that the Government must be more active in integrating schools and communities.

The Government of Bulgaria has adopted both programmes aimed at improving the situation of Roma that include a section on education, and programmes targeting education that contain measures aimed at minority groups including Roma, but with very little evidence of impact or implementation on the local level. The *National Programme for the Development of School Education and Pre-School Upbringing and Instruction*, adopted in June 2006, retreats from earlier commitments made towards

desegregation, and does not address many of the specific problems identified in the Government's own Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 (*Decade Action Plan*) in 2005. This divergence should be resolved through the adoption of a comprehensive policy for Roma education, supported by appropriate legislative and financial measures. Earlier Government programmes to eliminate segregation in education have not been implemented, even as NGO-led desegregation initiatives have been expanding at the local level and could serve as useful models for a more comprehensive Government approach. A clear vision and concrete instruments for implementation, including appropriate financial resources, is needed, along with specific monitoring instruments to assess longer-term success rates.

Despite need and confirmed benefits demonstrated at the local level, just over 100 Roma teaching assistants have been appointed to work as classroom facilitators throughout the country. Many municipalities, however, do not have the resources to hire such assistants. Likewise, there are very few teachers of Romanes working in schools at present. While Roma traditions and culture are presented in some textbooks, stereotypical or even biased material about Roma still appears in classroom materials. Measures must be enacted to right this situation. A variety of training opportunities are available for teachers in areas relevant to Roma education, but the impact of such courses is not clear. Better monitoring of these important areas would provide the Government with a better basis for ongoing policy development.

Some of the obstacles blocking access to education for Roma are straightforward: for example, there are not enough pre-school places to ensure that every child will be able to enrol, a problem that current Government policy fails to address. Pre-school costs are also a significant barrier for Roma families, many of whom cannot afford the fees set by the municipalities, and the free meals and travel subsidies offered by special schools may encourage disadvantaged families to enrol their children in such schools. Financing structures need to be reconsidered in order to counteract these constraints.

Geographical segregation is widespread in Bulgaria, both in urban and rural areas, giving rise to “Roma schools” in predominantly Roma neighbourhoods. Although parents can choose to send their children to schools outside the area, few Roma parents do so outside an organised desegregation programme. Even where desegregation programmes are running successfully, many children are left behind. The number of Roma children enrolling in special schools continues to increase, as all schools seek ways to keep enrolment numbers up. The Ministry of Education and Science has promulgated instructions aimed at improving assessment procedures, but research at the local level indicates that these directives have not successfully counteracted incentives to place children in special schools. Better overseeing of the assessment committees is clearly needed to ensure that each child's individual potential is appropriately evaluated.

Many Roma children in Bulgaria speak another language at home, making access to pre-school even more important as a means to improve their Bulgarian language skills before entering school. However, the number of teachers proficient in Romanes is very

small, placing Roma children at a disadvantage from their first days of school. More Roma teachers and teaching assistants, as well as training in bilingual education techniques, are needed at the earliest level of education.

In every way, schools with a high level of Roma students are inferior to those with lower numbers of Roma enrolled. Many Roma schools are in poor physical condition and lack the facilities necessary to educate students adequately, such as computers and laboratories; in the special school networks, even the most basic equipment, such as desks, textbooks and teaching materials, is inadequate or altogether lacking. With such conditions, these schools cannot attract the most highly qualified and motivated teachers, although the lack of vacant teaching positions throughout Bulgaria limits staff turnover in all schools. As the school system adjusts to reflect the lower birth rate and consequent smaller numbers of students, the Government must take steps to ensure that all children attend an integrated school with adequate facilities and appropriate resources.

Recent NGO-conducted research demonstrates that Roma students in segregated schools perform worse on tests in mathematics and Bulgarian language than do their counterparts in integrated schools. Literacy rates for Roma are below those for the majority population; in particular, Roma who have attended segregated schools have much lower literacy rates, possibly because attendance at such schools is poorly monitored, the quality of education is low, and students can pass from grade to grade without meeting basic standards. Indeed, for children attending special schools for children with intellectual disabilities (remedial schools), and other types of special schools, there are no set standards at all – further ensuring that these students will be unable to go on to further education or reasonable expectations of employment.

Teaching in Bulgaria still relies heavily on older methods, and while professional development courses are available, many are offered by NGOs and are not part of recognised teacher training. The Ministry of Education and Science could offer certificates for these courses, which would encourage teachers to take part and advance professionally. Many teachers acknowledge that they have lower expectations for Roma students, despite efforts to improve inter-cultural awareness; this is a reflection of Bulgarian society in general, which still opposes integrating education. Research suggests that once the desegregation process moves ahead, communities are more receptive, further indicating that concerted Government action is needed to take integration forward. In particular, the Government could empower the network of Regional Inspectorates of Education (RIE) to do more with regard to segregation: first to recognise it, and then to work with local authorities to reverse the process and ensure equal access to quality education for all children.

1.2 Recommendations

1.2.1 Recommendations on monitoring and evaluation

Data collection

The Bulgarian Government should do the following:

1. Take steps to improve the overall collection of data related to education, disaggregated according to ethnic group, including Roma and other ethnic minorities, with adequate safeguards for protecting sensitive information and the identity and privacy of individuals.

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Regional Inspectorates of Education should do the following:

2. Develop data collection procedures and mechanisms for education, to ensure that data on education disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity and gender are made publicly available.

Evaluation

The Ministry of Education and Science, the Regional Inspectorates of Education and the Centre for Control and Assessment of Quality in Education should do the following:

3. Ensure that when the national assessment instruments in Bulgarian language and mathematics are implemented, there is an assessment of the outcomes for Roma children specifically, in comparison with national averages.

1.2.1 Recommendations for improving access to education

Structural constraints, legal and administrative requirements, costs

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

4. Ensure that all children have access to full-day two-year pre-school, by:
 - covering any fees for disadvantaged children;
 - ensuring that adequate space is available to accommodate all children, through construction of new classrooms, revision in class scheduling, or reviewing the requirements for the number of children per class; and
 - providing free full-day educational programmes for disadvantaged children.
5. Ensure that mainstream primary schools can offer the same benefits to disadvantaged children as special schools (for example free school meals and school materials, including textbooks) do, so that these incentives do not encourage disadvantaged families to send their children to special schools.

6. Provide full-day educational programmes in primary schools for disadvantaged children, including tutoring and mentoring and catch-up classes, to ensure that these children can succeed in mainstream integrated schools.
7. Further expand the system of providing necessary educational materials (in particular textbooks and exercise books) free of charge to disadvantaged children in primary schools.
8. Provide certificates for primary school attendance (for the purposes of receiving social welfare benefits) periodically throughout the school year, rather than at the beginning of the year, to ensure the actual attendance of children.

Residential segregation/geographical isolation

The Government of Bulgaria should do the following:

9. Fulfil the goals on desegregation detailed in point 1.2 of the *Decade Action Plan*¹ on “Desegregation of Schools and Kindergartens in the Detached Roma Quarters”.
10. Ensure that necessary financial resources are made available at the national and local levels, to ensure the full implementation of all the Government’s adopted commitments and policies on the desegregation of Roma education, and in particular the *Framework Programme for the Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society*.²
11. Ensure that respected Roma organisations and activists are fully involved in, and consulted, in the process of desegregation of Roma education, to help build Roma communities’ confidence.

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

12. Elaborate and submit to Parliament a comprehensive nationwide desegregation programme, based on the best practices in desegregation elaborated by Roma NGOs in local projects. Desegregation should also focus on eliminating the placement of Roma in special schools, and on responsible transfer of misdiagnosed Roma children into the mainstream classes and schools.
13. Where possible, instruct segregated Roma schools (that is, mainstream schools where at least 50 per cent of the children are Roma) to adopt a “zero enrolment” policy, where such a policy would not prohibit Roma children from effective enrolment in school.

¹ *National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005–2015* (Национален план за действие по Десетилетие на ромското включване 2005–2015 г.).

² *Framework Programme for the Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society* (Рамкова програма за равноправно интегриране на ромите в българското общество).

14. Finance research and studies on the process of desegregation of Roma education and the training of educators willing to work in this field.

The Regional Inspectorates of Education and municipal education authorities should do the following:

15. Make desegregation of Roma education one of the focuses of their activity, and monitor and support the process, including through regular school inspections.
16. Ensure that in all integrating primary schools (that is, schools that are receiving Roma children from segregated schools or areas) the following obtain:
 - free transport of all children to the host schools is available as needed, including within city boundaries; and
 - full assistance is provided to the integrating primary schools, for the process of desegregation.

School and class placement procedures

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health Care should do the following:

17. Cooperate to improve overseeing of the Teams for Complex Pedagogical Assessment, to help to eliminate arbitrariness and ensure that parents give their informed consent to such placement.

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

18. Demonstrate commitment to, and progress in, the improvement of diagnostic and assessment tools/instruments used in the assessment of children with special educational needs.
19. In accordance with the *National Plan for the Integration of Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Chronic Diseases in the National Education System*,³ develop standards, methodologies and financing mechanisms for the inclusion of children from special schools in mainstream classes, ensuring that mainstream schools offer all of the support and resources necessary for inclusive education.
20. Require special schools to offer preparatory courses and other support for students taking the exam allowing them to transfer to mainstream schools, and allocate funding to support the implementation of this requirement.

³ *National Plan for the Integration of Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Chronic Diseases in the National Education System* (Национален план за интегриране на деца със специални образователни потребности и/или с хронични заболявания в системата на народната просвета).

21. Dismantle the separate education system for children with behavioural challenges, as it serves no educational or correctional purposes in its present form.
22. Integrate special schools for children with intellectual disabilities into the mainstream education system, with resource teachers appointed in the mainstream schools.

Language

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

23. Fulfil the goals set out in the *Decade Action Plan* with regard to point 2, on “Preservation and Development of the Cultural Identity of the Children and Pupils from the Roma Ethnic Minority”.
24. Develop a clear and coherent national education policy and strategy to ensure that students have access to studying Romanes as a mother tongue or as a second language in practice. In particular, ensure the following:
 - suitable teaching materials are developed and provided to schools;
 - space is made for this in the national curricula; and
 - the required number of students who can form a group for the study of their mother tongue is reduced from 11 to 5.
25. Develop and improve pre-school programmes that strengthen readiness for school among Roma children, placing particular emphasis on language acquisition.

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Regional Inspectorates of Education should do the following:

26. Provide incentives and support for the education of teachers who would like to teach Romanes as a mother tongue.
27. Support and foster in-service and pre-service teacher training courses covering language acquisition and methodologies for bilingual education.
28. Ensure that teacher training institutions have the proper curriculum and courses to prepare teachers of the Romanes.

1.2.3 Recommendations on improving quality of education

School facilities and human resources

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Regional Inspectorates of Education should do the following:

29. Fund and support teachers from special schools who qualify, to be employed as resource teachers in integrating schools, to help with the transition of children from special school environments to mainstream educational environments.
30. Redirect funds from segregated schools in Roma neighbourhoods as they become obsolete, to mainstream, integrating schools. These funds should be used as incentives for the improvement of the schools' infrastructure, and as a means to pay salaries of integrated teachers.

Curricular standards

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

31. Fulfil the goals that it set out in the *Decade Action Plan* with regard to point 4, "Transformation of the Cultural Diversity into a Source of and a Factor for Knowledge of Each Other and Spiritual Development of the Young People. Establishment of an Atmosphere of Mutual Respect, Tolerance and Understanding", and point 5, "Formation of Appropriate Social-Psychological Climate, Favourable for the Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from the Roma Minority".
32. Revise curricula and produce learning materials to take into account Roma history, culture and values, using materials developed by NGOs as models.
33. Further revise the criteria for textbook creation and selection, to bring them into conformity with the principles of multicultural education.
34. Allow for the provision of curriculum development at the school level that takes into account the local Roma community.

Classroom practice and pedagogy

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

35. Explicitly define *quality education*, in collaboration with Roma minority and education experts, using a set of recognised indicators that can be tracked and assessed.
36. Use these indicators for regular monitoring of segregated Roma educational settings, as well as for host integrating schools, at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels of education.

Regional and local pedagogical authorities, inspectorates, and pre-service and in-service training institutions should do the following:

37. Provide training for teachers and administrators in pre-service and in-service training institutions, in child-centred pedagogy, anti-bias education,

methodologies for second language learning, multicultural education, and effective ways of involving parents and communities.

38. Provide support for the in-service teacher training institutions (linked to the inspectorates), to encourage new models and practices of school-based leadership and management, student-centred instruction and parent and community involvement.
39. Support teachers' pre-service and in-service training institutions to include school improvement theory and practice in their official curriculum.

School–community relations

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

40. Increase the number of Roma working in schools, by recruiting and training more Roma as teachers and teaching assistants.

Local education authorities should do the following:

41. Work closely with NGOs and community groups to ensure that efforts to improve education for Roma are coordinated, and that the school is truly responsive to community needs and interests.

Discriminatory attitudes

The Bulgarian Government should do the following:

42. Strengthen anti-discrimination and anti-bias measures, including both legislation and social policies, to reduce discrimination against Roma in all spheres and improve public perception.
43. Provide training to the Protection against Discrimination Commission in order to enhance its capacity to deal with discrimination in education.

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Regional Inspectorates of Education should do the following:

44. Create effective mechanisms for preventing and counteracting racism, particularly inside Bulgarian schools that integrate Roma pupils, by designing and financially supporting programmes promoting interethnic tolerance and cooperation, and combating bias and prejudice, in education.

Universities, and pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions should do the following:

45. Introduce in their teacher training courses specific training modules on inter-cultural, anti-bias and anti-racism training. These courses should take into account the specific facets of Roma discrimination in the Bulgarian education system.

School inspections

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Regional Inspectorates of Education should do the following:

46. Ensure that all schools, including special schools and segregated Roma schools, are inspected regularly and held to the standards defined by law.
47. Specifically include reporting on segregation as a responsibility for inspectors, and require inspectors to take action in line with adopted desegregation policy.
48. Draft standards to be used in the inspection of schools that discourage the overrepresentation of Roma children in schools (over 50 per cent).
49. Create units at the Regional Inspectorates of Education with a specific task to monitor discrimination in education, including segregation.

COUNTRY REPORT: HUNGARY

1. INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Executive Summary

Hungary has one of the most advanced systems for minority protection in the region. A number of mechanisms have been developed to ensure that minority groups enjoy cultural and political rights, but Hungary's largest minority, the Roma, still face obstacles to equality in many spheres. Education in particular has been an area where Roma have been shown to fare worse than their non-Roma peers, despite governmental policies aimed at reducing barriers based on both ethnicity and socio-economic status. As one of the Governments leading the "Decade of Roma Inclusion", Hungary has achieved a high profile for its efforts to improve education for Roma, but much remains to be done before real change takes place for the majority of Roma children.

Substantial research has been conducted regarding Roma children and their access to education in Hungary. However, each study has been conducted according to different criteria and along different methodologies, making comparison of data difficult in some cases. Official data are among the least reliable of these sources, and many believe that sociological studies may be more reliable data sources than State-sponsored censuses. Data disaggregated by ethnicity have not been collected by the Government since 1993, when it passed a law protecting citizens' rights. However, groups exerting pressure from the European Union (EU) affirm that data can and must be collected by ethnicity, if this is done responsibly. The Government needs to do more to collect and maintain comprehensive information on Roma education.

Measures were enacted in 2002 that should support better enrolment of Roma children in pre-school, but the impact of these reforms does not yet appear to be significant. Roma generally start school later and are more likely to drop out than the national average. The proportion of Roma among school-age children has been rising over the last 15 years and research indicates that it will continue to increase. Non-enrolment in primary schools has not been reported as a systemic or visible problem.

Segregation is officially illegal in Hungary; however, research indicates that the separation of Roma children into segregated schools and classes has been on the rise over the past 15 years. Roma are overrepresented in schools and classes for children with intellectual disabilities, and evidence suggests that this is largely due to flaws in assessment procedures; Roma children are also frequently placed in segregated classes at otherwise mixed schools, where they are likely to study a remedial or "catch-up" curriculum. Regulations to more equally apportion children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special needs in each catchment area, and among classes in individual schools, could counteract these trends.

A number of different programmes and policies have been adopted to address issues relevant to Roma children. Most of these Government initiatives aim to support the education of children from “socially disadvantaged” families, rather than Roma as such, although it is clear that Roma are intended to benefit from such programmes. The Government has so far not adequately addressed the needs of Roma and socially disadvantaged children in schools located in segregated residential areas (including town districts, villages and micro-regions), where there is no non-Roma population with which to integrate.

The Government has implemented a funding scheme intended to integrate schools, offering a subsidy and other support through the National Network of Educational Integration (OOIH). While the number of schools using these subsidies has been steadily increasing, research suggests that true integration remains a slow and uneven process. The Government has suggested that NGOs join the process and bring cases of segregation to the attention of the authorities, rather than improving the internal means of identifying problems. But without funds opening up for such activities, NGOs and activists will not be able to contribute to the fight against segregation as envisaged. Civil society has been active in the educational sphere, but the central Government itself should assert a more active role in moving desegregation forward, rather than relying on local authorities for implementation without providing support or external monitoring of progress. The lack of a mechanism to monitor and oversee the implementation of integration programmes has been identified as a problem, but no solution has been put forward.

The absence of a centralised system to track or administer programmes dealing with Roma teaching assistants and Romanes teachers also leads to a lack of data in these areas. While teaching assistants have received training on both Government and non-governmental courses, there are no centralised regulations for employing Roma mediators/teaching assistants, nor information about the total number of such assistants working in schools. Likewise, the number of teachers proficient in Romanes is unknown, but is almost certainly very small. Little attention has been given to these issues in the Hungarian Government’s *National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion* (hereafter, *Decade Action Plan*), despite their importance in creating an educational environment that is receptive to Roma children. Indeed, biased and insulting material about Roma remains in some Hungarian textbooks, and there are no courses for teachers focusing on tolerance or multicultural education available as part of standard teacher training. A number of different avenues for addressing complaints about discrimination in education exist; while only a limited number of cases have been brought forward, activists have successfully pursued charges of segregation in the courts.

Due to a lack of pre-schools in small villages, almost 20 per cent of Roma children live in areas with no pre-school nearby, and the transportation to villages where there is a pre-school may not be provided. Overcrowding is also a problem in areas where there are pre-schools. Generally, administrative requirements for enrolment in school are not an obstacle for Roma families; however, cases have been reported where Roma children

were turned away from pre-schools due to their parents' social disadvantage or unemployment. Private schools are increasingly popular in Hungary; however, as most of these are too expensive for Roma families to afford, many function as segregated institutions. Although there are no conclusive data in this regard, education in public schools does not seem to impose a serious financial burden on low-income families, as the State and municipal support for socially disadvantaged children alleviate most costs.

The physical separation of Roma communities is increasing, with a growing number of Roma children living in homogenous settlements. Schools draw their pupils from a legally defined catchment area, although parents can choose to send their children to another school outside the area. In practice, however, few Roma parents elect to send their children to other schools, while non-Roma parents are more likely to withdraw their children from schools with a high proportion of Roma. While the parents' wishes must be taken into account, the Ministry of Education and Culture should take steps to mitigate "white flight" and ensure that integration by law is not undone through segregation by choice. It is very common to assign children to classes based on their intellectual abilities. Assessments for placing children in special schools or classes for students with intellectual disabilities are sometimes conducted under inappropriate conditions and without appropriate attention to language or cultural issues. Although mechanisms exist for re-transfer of children into mainstream schools and classes, there are no statistics maintained on the actual number that take place.

Roma children are not consistently able to gain access to education in their mother tongue, although minority language education is provided for by law. Minority education, which does not necessarily mean minority language education, has been a longstanding problem in Hungary: in several cases Roma children have been given remedial "catch-up" classes rather than authentic minority education. Roma alone among the country's ethnic and national minorities have no accredited teaching material in their mother tongue at all, nor accredited teacher training courses where minority language-speaking teachers can study.

Reforms aimed at improving the quality of education in Hungary have not reached Roma children to the extent needed. School funding is a particularly contentious issue; various subsidies and forms of support are available to schools that meet specific criteria, but this approach can create incentives for schools to skew data in order to qualify for as many grants as possible. Schools without the necessary experience in applying for these funds may also lose out in this competitive process.

The Government cannot track school results for Roma, as records on achievement, disaggregated by ethnicity, are not maintained. A set of indicators, and the collection of data needed to monitor progress in key areas of school performance, should be established to determine in which areas Roma children need more support to succeed academically. Roma children are frequently relegated to classes or schools where teachers acknowledge that they have lower expectations for their students' performance, and curricula with lower standards are used. Teachers may receive

training in current student-centred techniques, but in practice often rely on lectures and more traditional methods. The Ministry of Education and Culture should support greater access to in-service training and classroom support so that teachers can continue to develop their skills, particularly when working with Roma students.

In smaller villages school–community relations are often informal, but where such day-to-day contacts do not take place, there is little evidence that more structured mechanisms engage Roma parents as needed. Research on discriminatory attitudes indicates that many teachers and school directors harbour negative perceptions of Roma students, but that such attitudes are not overtly expressed, and rather come across in the form of low expectations. In addressing the more direct consequences of such prejudice, such as segregation in special classes or the inclusion of biased material in textbooks, the Ministry of Education and Culture should also focus on these indirect forms of discrimination and take steps to eliminate them in the classroom.

School inspections are performed by independent experts commissioned by the local authorities. As these same authorities are ultimately responsible for the school, they may be motivated to select experts predisposed to give the school a good report. The National Public Education Evaluation and Examination Centre (OKÉV) has the authority to sanction schools for discrimination, but the maximum penalty that it can impose is low, and there are examples where its inspectors have failed to note physical segregation in schools under review. Better central overseeing of the inspection system should be a priority in the desegregation process.

1.2 Recommendations

1.2.1 Recommendations on monitoring and evaluation

Data collection

The Hungarian Government should do the following:

1. Review regulations to ensure that, to the full extent permitted by relevant EU legislation, data collected is made available disaggregated by ethnicity, colour, religion, language, gender, age, location and nationality.

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

2. Gather and make public statistical data on the situation of Roma in the field of education, with due respect to the principles of data protection and privacy.
3. Regularly monitor disaggregated data on school enrolment, performance and progression, with the aim of ensuring a correct assessment of Roma access to education.
4. Establish and maintain a central database on public school results, including student achievement, failure and grade repetition rates, among other major indicators.

5. Establish and maintain a monitoring system at the national level, based on data from schools ensuring the enrolment of disadvantaged children, and the actual maintenance of integrated classes.

1.2.2 Recommendations for improving access to education

Structural Constraints, Legal and Administrative Requirements, Costs

The Government should do the following:

6. Ensure coordination of educational regulation, financing, and control, delegating one central State body, preferably the Ministry of Education and Culture, with authority to oversee the process.
7. Provide additional direct social benefits to enable the poorest families to meet all the costs of education, including incidentals such as clothes, shoes, a daily meal and schoolbooks, class money, and fees for cultural events.

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

8. Fulfil its goal on education set out in the *National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion* (hereafter *Decade Action Plan*) with regard to target 4, “Increasing the number of pre-school spaces, compulsory admission of children of vulnerable families, and providing free meals for those in need”.
9. Require compulsory pre-school attendance from as early an age as possible, and establish monitoring to ensure that children are in fact attending pre-school.
10. Ensure that there is an adequate number of pre-school spaces – whether through new investment or in micro-regional cooperation – to accommodate all multiply disadvantaged children and children with special needs.
11. Revise the rules and regulations of public education so as to provide a principled, unified and simplified legal context, with particular attention to the level of legislation at which issues are regulated, and the need for overall coherence.

Residential Segregation/Geographical Isolation

The Government of Hungary should do the following:

12. Fulfil its goal on education set out in the *Decade Action Plan* with regard to desegregation, in target 1. “Increasing the number of schools utilising special financial incentives for integrated education”.

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

13. Take steps to centralise its control of aspects of the education process related to the National Network of Educational Integration (OOIH), in particular to

improve quality control and the review and selection process of individual pedagogical experts within the programme.

14. Provide free room and board to disadvantaged children in cases where the nearest integrated school is more than a 60-minute bus ride away.
15. Follow ENAR/ERIO recommendations¹ with regard to “undertaking initiatives to combat intolerance of non-Roma parents and pupils; guaranteeing free and informed choice for Roma parents; introducing independent mechanisms to monitor and evaluate desegregation policies”.

School and class placement procedures

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

16. Fulfil its targets set out in the *Decade Action Plan* with regard to the integration of children in targets 2, 3 and 5:
 - “fight against the practice of false diagnosis (as having intellectual disabilities) and stigmatisation of Roma children in the education system”;
 - “questioning of children previously diagnosed with intellectual disabilities and reintegration into mainstream classes”;
 - “improving overseeing of the process to qualify as a ‘private pupil’”.
17. Take steps to immediately end the misplacement of Roma into special and/or remedial classes.
18. Ensure that children with intellectual disabilities are correctly identified, by:
 - Promptly finalising the development and adaptation of diagnostic tools and tests to correctly identify children with intellectual disabilities;
 - Ensuring that these tests are subsequently constantly updated;
 - Ensuring that the diagnostic tools and test are not culturally biased;
 - Ensuring that when a Roma pupil is being tested, a Roma representative is also included in the Expert Panels for Assessing Learning Abilities.
19. Establish a firm commitment to a reintegration policy for misdiagnosed children, many of whom are Roma, from special schools and classes, adopting the necessary measures and ensuring the necessary financial resources at the national and local levels to make it effective.

¹ Recommendations from the proceedings of the conference “From Segregation to Integrated Schooling: the Way Forward. Roma and Equal Access to Education”, co-organised by the European Network against Racism (ENAR) and the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), 28–29 April 2006, Brussels, available at http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/roma/conference_proceedings.pdf (accessed on 1 March 2007).

20. Ensure that children previously misdiagnosed as having intellectual disabilities can be reintegrated into mainstream schools, via continuation of the “Out of the Back Row” programme and by offering free catch-up programmes for misdiagnosed students under the age of 18.

Language

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

21. Fulfil its obligations under the Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (Minorities Act) pertaining to multicultural and minority education, in particular with regard to its obligation to provide education materials and teachers able to instruct in Romanes and Beash; special attention should be paid to this at the pre-school level.

1.2.3 Recommendations on improving quality of education

School Financing

The Government should do the following:

22. Establish sectoral neutrality, so that denominational and private schools receive State funds only as long as they comply with the same equal treatment obligations as do public local government and State-run schools.
23. Take steps to ensure that the financing of public education is also effectively based on the principle of sectoral neutrality.
24. Establish and monitor equal treatment criteria ensuring enrolment to disadvantaged children and maintaining integrated classes, and allocate funds from the central budgetary and EU funds only to schools and authorities that meet these criteria.
25. Reinforce the Ministry of Education and Culture’s powers to provide effective sanctions and remedies against all types of violations of equal treatment in education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

26. Calculate the allocation of all types of central budgetary support so as to cover the actual costs of public education; the level of central budgetary contribution should be maintained despite decreasing student numbers, so as to ensure quality education for all.
27. Propose the imposition of criminal liability on school maintainers if all types of State funds are not spent as earmarked.

28. Comprehensively revise Article 66 of the Public Education Act to reintroduce compulsory catchment areas and impose the costs of education on families contracting out of this system.
29. Distribute education-related EU funds in a speedy and effective manner. Establish a central emergency fund to cover expenses incurred by NGOs and other entities applying for these funds, until they receive the actual grant.

School facilities and human resources

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

30. Ensure the integrated education of children with special needs, guaranteeing assistance from special teachers at all levels of education during and after class.
31. Offer training and retraining in integrative teaching techniques to teachers at all levels.
32. Increase the number of teachers trained to work with children with special needs.
33. Establish minimum criteria in schools and pre-schools concerning infrastructure, staff, physical conditions, and educational results. Schools or classes not meeting the minimum criteria should receive assistance from an emergency manager and shut down if underperformance continues for three years.
34. Open additional Study Halls (*tanoda*) with the explicit aim of improving in a measurable way the school performance of Roma pupils and their progression to higher levels of education.
35. Further develop the network of mentoring and tutoring teachers to implement the new pedagogies in which they are being trained, in support of truly integrative classrooms.

Curricular standards

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

36. Ensure that extracurricular activities, such as additional language, art and subject specialisation, are genuinely extracurricular and available to all students; funding for disadvantaged pupils should be made available for them to attend.

Discriminatory Attitudes

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

37. Include anti-bias education and/or education for social justice as a requisite pre-service and in- training course for teachers.

38. Include training on tolerance and diversity for local authorities, school maintainers and representatives of the local media, in order to prevent or counteract stereotypes and prejudices against Roma ethnic groups.

School Inspections

The Ministry of Education and Culture should do the following:

39. Bring greater cohesion to the existing review and control mechanisms for schools and pre-schools, through the publication of a decree unifying and regulating the criteria for all types of reviews of schools.
40. Ensure that the existence of all Roma special classes or catch-up classes in schools be a criteria for school reporting and the basis for penalties.
41. Retrain public education experts and other types of reviewers with a view to attaining expertise in the field of equal treatment.
42. Centralise the appointment of expert reviewers and unify the records of local reviewers to ensure that the process is objective and fair.
43. Authorise central review and overseeing mechanisms to review decisions on home schooling.
44. Develop mechanisms to monitor the rates at which children are assessed as having intellectual disabilities, to ensure that special schools do not recruit students through improper diagnosis to compensate for declining enrolment numbers.

COUNTRY REPORT: ROMANIA

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Executive Summary

The Romanian Government has energetically adopted policies and programmes aimed at improving the situation of Roma generally, and has made Roma education a priority for the use of European Union (EU) funds. However, implementation of these policies has been far weaker than the ambitious targets suggest, and a range of serious obstacles to quality education remains for Roma children. An active civil sector has acted in partnership with the Government in a number of successful projects designed to increase Roma access to education, and the gradual scaling-up of these initiatives should be monitored to track results. With Romania now a member of the EU, it is vital that the international encouragement that has played such an important part in past efforts to better address the needs of Roma does not falter. The “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015” could be a framework for Romania to consolidate and broaden improvements in education for Roma, rather than yet another programme promising more than it delivers.

Romania has a high proportion of young Roma, making access to quality education all the more urgent. While comprehensive official data are not available, a number of independent studies have collected relevant information on the Roma population and educational issues. The numbers of Roma – and importantly, the numbers of Roma who identify themselves as such – enrolling in school have been steadily increasing. However, despite the important contribution that pre-school makes to a child’s later school success, there is still a large number of Roma children who do not attend pre-school, due to costs, lack of space, and geographical isolation. Roma also appear more likely to drop out of school than their non-Roma peers, and a much higher percentage of Roma over the age of ten have not completed any level of schooling.

Segregation is a persistent and pervasive issue in Romania; the separation of Roma settlements from majority communities has led to the growth of Roma-only schools serving these settlements and neighbourhoods. However, practices such as deliberately placing Roma children in separate classes, or channelling them into special schools for children with intellectual disabilities, have also been reported. As various studies have used different methods for determining what constitutes a segregated school, a comprehensive survey using a consistent methodology and definitions should be a priority for the Government.

The main Government document addressing the situation of Roma in general is the *Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma*, adopted in 2001 and updated in 2006. Research has shown that *Strategy* implementation has been uneven in the areas that it targets, which include education. The “Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, with a Special Focus on Roma” project, which has been

developed and run since 2003 with support from the EU's Phare programme, includes support for county-level strategies and has been effective in piloting a variety of approaches aimed at improving Roma access to education. In 2004, the Government also drafted an Action Plan as part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (*draft Decade Action Plan*), but this has not yet been adopted.

The ongoing process of decentralisation particularly affects education, as local authorities gain greater autonomy, but often without clear responsibilities, and the central Government retains fewer and fewer mechanisms to combat negative trends such as segregation. As this process continues, the Government should ensure that there are accessible and competent bodies to address potential problems within a more decentralised system, that local authorities are given clear mandates and support to implement their new level of autonomy, and that the needs of Roma communities are appropriately addressed by local policies.

A notification issued by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2004 outlines the steps that schools and school inspectors must take to identify and eliminate segregation; however, as this notification lacks the force of law, its implementation has been limited.

Roma mediators have been working in Romanian schools since 2000, and while the selection and training of 200 mediators were carried out as part of the Phare programme's "Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, with a Special Focus on Roma" project, limited resources and a lack of clear regulations for hiring additional mediators have limited the expansion of this initiative and threatened the position of existing Roma mediators. Government efforts to increase the number of Roma teachers and teachers speaking Romanes, as well as Romanes language classes, have been more successful. However, more material reflecting the Roma minority should be included in curriculum content, and made an integral part of the education on offer for all children in Romania, not only the minority itself.

NGO-funded and Government-funded teacher training is available on topics relevant to Roma education, and the Government should establish a system to monitor and evaluate all courses in order to consolidate and build on their good practices.

The National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) has been operating since 2002, but to date has received only one complaint related to access to education, where the Council issued a warning to a school found to be segregating Roma students. The capacity of schools for handling discrimination is low, and there should be local solutions in place for dealing with different situations.

While precise figures on the number of Roma without identity papers are not available, research clearly indicates that the scope of the problem is large; the Government should take steps to collect more data on this issue and, in particular, to assess its significance as a barrier to school enrolment. The costs for maintaining a child in school are not

affordable for most Roma families: a clear connection exists between the economic status of Roma and the educational attainment of their children.

The public authorities still largely ignore the problem of residential segregation of Roma communities, and a real change will take place only with systematic State intervention. Widespread geographical segregation in Romania has led to a high proportion of Roma children living in Roma-majority settlements and neighbourhoods, often at a distance from majority communities and infrastructure, including schools.

Although overrepresentation of Roma in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities is not as serious a problem in Romania as in other countries in the region, some Roma children are still placed in these schools to take advantage of meals and accommodation benefits. Such benefits should be made available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds attending any schools, to eliminate any incentive to attend special schools. The Government's "Second Chance" programme, while generally involving exclusively Roma students, remains a better option than previous efforts to integrate older-than-average students, which tended to place such children in classes with younger peers.

Romania has an established system offering Romanes language instruction, with the numbers of both students and teachers increasing steadily, supported by the good cooperation between civil society and Government efforts in this area.

Romania has made some important advances with regard to the quality of education available to Roma. Nevertheless, serious inequalities remain, and the Government must ensure that education reform takes the specific needs of Roma students into account.

Despite a number of reports highlighting the poor condition of schools with a high proportion of Roma students, little has been done to address the basic conditions of such schools – poor heating, inadequate sanitation, and overcrowding. As schools receive much of their funding from local revenue, specific action at the central Government level is needed to supplement funds in disadvantaged areas.

The school results of Roma pupils have been improving, although this is still measured in terms of declining failure rates. Decentralisation has had a positive impact on curricular development, as schools are encouraged to develop modules reflecting local culture and traditions. However, the Ministry of Education and Research should ensure that materials about Roma culture and contributions are part of all Romanian children's education.

A range of training opportunities related to Roma education are available to teachers, many offered by NGOs with specific experience in the field. This is a positive step towards more active techniques; however, after training, there is little support provided to teachers to help them to continue to innovate in their classrooms. In addition, more focused efforts are needed to involve Roma communities in schools; sustained outreach and communication from all parties are needed to bridge the enduring gap between Roma parents and schools. Low expectations and negative perceptions of Roma in the

classroom are pervasive, and the Government must take steps to enhance tolerance in schools as a corollary to measures addressing physical segregation.

Romania's informal network of Inspectors for Roma Education is a model in many regards; the Ministry of Education and Research should reinforce this system and ensure that it continues to work to enhance the inclusion of Roma throughout the country, and through all levels of education.

1.2 Recommendations

1.2.1 Recommendations on monitoring and evaluation

Data collection

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

1. Improve the data collection mechanisms related to the school population, in particular for Roma students and migrant students, with adequate safeguards for protecting sensitive information and identity and privacy of individuals.
2. Ensure the public availability of statistical data disaggregated by age, ethnicity and gender, on the situation of Roma in the field of education; this could, for example, be made available on the Ministry of Education's portal website.
3. Design samples of the pupils participating in international educational testing, such as PISA and TIMSS, to include consistent sub-samples of Roma pupils. Report the results of these international testing disaggregated on ethnicity in order to allow the identification of trends in Roma school achievement of throughout the "Decade of Roma Inclusion".
4. Use the existent data collection systems in the longer term; for example, the Roma database software designed in the frame of the Phare 2003 project could provide reliable data, if used in the future to track student records and school achievement.
5. Develop a "tracking" system between schools for students who migrate with families inside the country or abroad.

Evaluation

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

6. Monitor desegregation actions and the impact on the beneficiaries.
7. Initiate evaluation research in order to document the impact of different interventions, projects and programs after the formal end.
8. Balance quantitative data collection mechanisms with qualitative data collection in order to get system-related data, as well as information related to people's lives.

School Inspectorates should do the following:

9. Monitor and respect quality standards for the school's environment, including with respect to ensuring adequate space, heating, lightening, space available per child; to this end, the ARACIP (the Romanian Agency for Ensuring Quality in Pre-University Education) quality criteria and self-assessment forms should be used at the school level.

1.2.2 Recommendations for improving access to education

Structural Constraints, Legal and Administrative Requirements, Costs

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

10. Ensure that all children have access to full-day two-year preschool, by:
 - Extending the compulsory preparatory class (*grupa pregatitoare*) to two years for all disadvantaged children;
 - Ensuring that adequate space is available to accommodate all children; this could be through construction of new classrooms, revision in class scheduling, or reviewing the requirements for the number of children per class;
 - Providing free, full-day educational programmes for disadvantaged children.
11. Make provisions for those children who do not have the appropriate papers to have access to preschool education.
12. Allocate funding for primary and secondary schools to ensure that children who qualify can receive support such as meals, clothes and after school programmes.
13. Take concerted action to tackle child labour; specifically find ways to target child labourers to return to, and stay in, school, such as through the above-mentioned incentives.
14. Provide full-day educational programmes for disadvantaged children ("after school programmes"), including tutoring and mentoring. Teachers should receive financial incentives for extra-hours; children should receive a free lunch, at a minimum.
15. Continue and encourage more "Second Chance" classes where necessary, and further ensure appropriate implementation of the recruitment, teaching, assessment and certification procedures for "Second Chance" students.

Residential segregation/geographic isolation

The Government of Romania should do the following:

16. Adopt the National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion – the *National Action Plan at the National Level* (hereafter, *draft Decade Action Plan*)¹ – including the section on Education issues and especially its provisions for combating school segregation.
17. Ensure that appropriate and clear roles and responsibilities are set out for the new structures designated for implementation of the *Roma Strategy* in a decentralised system:
 - Working Group for Public Policies for Roma (Grupul de lucru pentru politicile publice pentru romi);
 - Ministerial Commissions for Roma (*Comisiile ministeriale pentru Romi*);
 - County Offices for Roma (*Birourile Judetene pentru Romi*);
 - Local experts for Roma issues (*Expertii locali pentru problemele romilor*).
18. Fulfil the goals set out in *The Governmental Strategy for Improvement of the Condition of the Roma*,² especially in regards to ending the practice of placing Roma children in separate classes.
19. Involve the representatives of Government in territory (*Prefecturi*) in facilitating institutional dialogue among local stakeholders, such as the local authorities, school staff, county school inspectorate, parents councils and NGOs, in desegregation projects.
20. Allocate governmental and EU funds as a priority to localities demonstrating efforts to improve social cohesion through school desegregation initiatives.

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

21. Issue a ministerial order on the elimination of segregation, defining segregation broadly so as to include separation on the basis of the socio-economic status of parents, occupational class, gender, religion, or academic abilities. School directors who maintain separate school classes for Roma, or not elaborating and implementing desegregation plans in the case of separate schools, should be subject to financial and professional sanctions.
22. Create a working group to reunite the National Agency for Roma, the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), as well as Roma NGOs, in order to design a nationwide strategy for school desegregation,

¹ *The National Action Plan at the National Level (Planul Național de Acțiune)* (hereafter, *draft Decade Action Plan*)

² *The Governmental Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma (Strategia Guvernului României de Îmbunătățire a Situației Romilor)*.

drawing on the best practices on desegregation established in the Phare 2001 and Phare 2003 educational programmes.

23. Train the county school inspectorates to carefully prepare for the desegregation process; this includes preparing teachers, parents and pupils, creating and maintaining a welcoming school environment, and delivering educational and social support for pupils in need until their complete integration in their new classes and schools, as part of a comprehensive desegregation programme.
24. Strongly support and empower the role played by school inspectors in monitoring school and placement procedures, and assisting schools in desegregation efforts, as identified in the Ministry of Education Notification 29323 of 20 April 2004 on school desegregation; this could be through training, best practice exchange, and by channelling resources for implementing the activities.
25. Provide assistance to the county inspectorates, to ensure that experts on community facilitation and desegregation go into schools and the community, to provide mediation and counselling in case of debates or conflicts.
26. Support inspectorates in the use of school self evaluation – which includes school de-segregation as a topic – to encourage schools nationwide to use these instruments in the process of desegregation.
27. Continue to collect data, and monitor desegregation measures started in the 2005–2006 school year through the Phare 2003 project.

The Regional Inspectorates of Education and local education authorities should do the following:

28. Set up long-term and short-term desegregation plans; assist schools, monitor and support desegregation at the school level, including through their regular school inspections.
29. Support the creation of school networks at the local level, with the aim of sharing experience and adopting optimal desegregation plans.
30. Ensure that the free transportation of all children to the host schools as required by law is available as needed, and offer their full assistance for the process of desegregation.
31. Address non-educational barriers to school desegregation, including not only transport, but also other poverty-related barriers.

School and Class Placement Procedures

The Ministry of Education and Research should do the following:

32. Fulfil the commitments made in Government Emergency Ordinance No. 192/199 and the Education Law No. 218/ April 2004 that stipulate the integration of children from special schools to mainstream schools.
33. Demonstrate commitment to, and progress in, the improvement of diagnostic and assessment tools/instruments used in the assessment of children with special educational needs.
34. Develop standards, methodologies, and financing mechanisms for the inclusion of children from special schools in mainstream classes, ensuring that mainstream schools offer all of the support and resources necessary for inclusive education.

Language

The Ministry of Education and Research should do the following:

35. Commit itself to the curriculum and curricular materials development to support the Roma language and culture classes that are occurring across the country.
36. Pilot a Romanes language curriculum in grades one to four.
37. Encourage and support in-service and pre-service teacher institutions to offer courses in language acquisition, methodologies for bilingual education and techniques, intercultural education, inclusive education.
38. Create a clear job description for the inspectors for Roma regarding language learning.

1.2.3 Recommendations on improving quality of education

School Facilities and Human Resources

The Ministry of Education and Research and the County School Inspectorates should:

39. Ensure that more qualified teachers are appointed in the schools from disadvantaged communities, specifically in the rural areas.
40. Control the turn-over rate of teachers by providing incentives for teachers working in disadvantaged and Roma communities, including free training programmes.
41. Extend the decentralisation process by increasing the use of local school and community recommendations and needs in appointing teachers rather than using the computer-based teacher job allocation system.
42. Make basic investments in infrastructure.

43. Find a means of ensuring that trained Mediators can subsequently be employed, and those that are hired can remain in service.

Curricular Standards

The Ministry of Education and Research should do the following:

44. Review the educational philosophy and common set of principles and norms for all schooling in pre-tertiary education in regards to diversity and the multicultural nature of Romanian society, and make necessary changes in creation criteria to integrate cultural and ethnic diversity issues both at the level of objectives (attainment targets and specific objectives) and at the level of content.
45. Cooperate with the National Textbook Agency in order to strengthen the cultural diversity dimension in textbooks at all the school levels.
46. Support the creation of good quality learning materials that take into account Roma history, culture and values, and also reprint such materials already developed by NGOs.
47. Open a competition for the creation of books in Romanes that comply with the national curriculum for at a minimum the early primary grades, and identify financial resources to ensure the costs are not prohibitive.
48. Review the proportion of school based curricula in the general context of the national curriculum, such that schools and teachers can effectively adapt the educational offer to the real needs linked with ethnic structure of the students and community.
49. Elaborate of a set of professional incentives to encourage teachers to develop alternative learning resources.

Classroom Practice and Pedagogy

The Ministry of Education and Research should do the following:

50. Support schools and teachers to use new standards to help in the quality of the education they deliver.
51. Monitor the implementation of those teaching standards that incorporate indicators regarding quality education, such as those prepared by the Romanian Agency for Ensuring Quality in Pre-University Education (ARACIS); these standards incorporate lessons learned from various projects and programs in the field of inclusive education, education in Roma communities or disadvantaged communities.
52. Continue training, employ and engage school mediators in the education process.

53. Elaborate a new national policy for initial and continuous teacher training with explicit references to include in the curriculum intercultural or multicultural education as a specific component.
54. Glean the experience in in-service teacher training that has occurred in projects run under Phare and NGO projects, and mainstream that practice into pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions.
55. Encourage innovations in schools with highly mobile student populations, such as the children of seasonal labourers who are away for the same period every year; this could be in the form of, for example, summer study packs, and student portfolios.

County level and local pedagogical authorities, inspectorates, and in-service training institutions should do the following:

56. Provide training for teachers and administrators in pre-service and in-service training institutions, in child-centred pedagogy, anti-bias education, methodologies for second language learning, multi-cultural education, and effective ways of involving parents and communities.
57. Provide support for the in-service teacher training institutions (and encourage their cooperation with the inspectorates), to encourage new models and practices of school-based leadership and management, student-centred instruction and parent and community involvement, including the use of school self-evaluation as a quality assurance tool.
58. Support teachers' pre-service and in-service training institutions to include school improvement theory and practice into their official curriculum.

School-Community Relations

The Ministry of Education and Science should do the following:

59. Continue to stimulate Roma to work in schools by providing scholarships and distance education programs for teachers and school mediators; Roma NGO involvement in the trainings would be recommended.

Local Inspectorates should support schools to do the following:

60. Encourage the increased involvement of Roma parents in school decision-making.
61. Actively pursue their own institutional development and improvement.
62. Reinforce school improvement and school development efforts by building on the experience gained in some schools with other projects, and organising exchange visits and networking between schools.

63. Foster links wherever possible with organisations such as community development NGOs, that can work with groups of parents to enhance their capacity for meaningful involvement with school life, to increase their confidence and ultimately to enable them to influence school policy and practice.

Discriminatory Attitudes

The Government of Romania should do the following:

64. Increase the visibility of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) and other national institutions charged with countering discrimination.
65. Address quality differences between schools and discriminatory practices by enforcing respect for legal regulations and norms.
66. Encourage and support financially programs for interethnic tolerance and cooperation.

Universities and pedagogical high schools should:

67. In their initial training of teachers, extend to a larger scale specific training modules on elements such as: intercultural education, equal opportunities, family involvement in school life.

School Inspections

The Ministry of Education and Research and the County School Inspectorates should do the following:

68. Ensure that all schools, including special schools and segregated Roma schools, are inspected regularly and held to the standards defined by law.
69. Train and nominate inspectors in charge with segregation issue and require all inspectors to take action in line with desegregation policy.
70. Support and encourage inspectors to undertake the monitoring process as a learning and supportive function, not as control function.

COUNTRY REPORT: SERBIA

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Executive Summary

Serbia has gone through a period of dramatic change over the past seven years. The ongoing process of reform has acknowledged Roma children's unequal access to quality education, particularly through the country's participation in the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015". In practice, however, progress remains uneven: as promising initiatives are developed, a host of obstacles are identified and not adequately addressed. Political changes have disrupted progress in this area, but the current Government should follow through on commitments made at the national and international levels, to ensure that Roma receive a quality education in an integrated setting. Basic data on Roma in education should be collected and maintained, both to tailor policy and to track progress. Serbia's active and experienced civil sector is a rich resource on which the Government can draw, able to offer a medium for more direct communication with Roma communities themselves.

As in most other countries, there is a lack of reliable data on Roma in the Serbian education system. The existing estimates should be treated with a degree of caution, but generally it is agreed by the Government and by NGOs that there are up to 500,000 Roma living in Serbia. Only about two per cent of children in the relevant age ranges are attending pre-school education, and fewer than 40 per cent are included in primary education. Between 70 and 90 per cent of Roma children who enrol in primary school drop out at some point. According to the official censuses, over 60 per cent of Roma have not completed even primary school. As the proportion of Roma children is increasing, immediate Government action is needed, to ensure that future generations receive a quality education that would give greater access to employment and enable them to actively participate in society.

Although there are no data on the extent of segregation of Roma children in Serbian education, evidence does point to its existence. The most frequent forms of segregation are as follows: segregation of children into separate classes; segregation of children in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities – often following improper placement procedures; segregation in adult education where Roma children under 15 are placed in schools for adult learners with an abridged curriculum. According to official information, there is only one physically segregated school in Serbia, the Vuk Karadžić Primary School in Niš. However, due to a lack of research and monitoring nationwide, the true extent of this problem is unknown. Although physical segregation may not be as common a phenomenon in Serbia as in other countries, the existence of other forms of segregation points to the failure of the mainstream system to appropriately educate diverse populations in Serbia, and reveals its overall weakness, as

evidenced by the fact that Roma make up an estimated 50 to 80 per cent of children enrolled in special schools.

Roma education issues have entered the mainstream, being addressed in general policy documents, in addition to separate policy documents targeting Roma education specifically. Serbia has joined the “Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005–2015”, and has adopted action plans covering the Decade’s four priority areas, including one for education (*Decade Action Plan on Education*). Several Serbian municipalities have also adopted local strategies and/or action plans for improving Roma access to education. All national policy documents accept that the main obstacles for Roma access to education are as follows: exclusion from education and high drop-out rates; poor quality of education and overrepresentation in schools for underachievers; discrimination and segregation; lack of respect for Roma identity. However, there is a clear gap between declarations and practical implementation. A comprehensive, systematic approach to carrying out these policies is needed, as the isolated projects that have been established to date cannot effectively address the breadth of the problems identified.

Despite evidence of segregation across Serbia, formally the State does not recognise the existence of segregation, and desegregation has not so far been dealt with seriously as a matter of policy. However, in some strategic documents certain preventive measures have been proposed, and the Government should begin the research needed to gain a clear picture of the scope of segregation.

Policy documents envisage the introduction of Roma Teaching Assistants (RTAs) in pre-schools and primary schools. After piloting projects, the existing school practice has revealed serious obstacles to greater engagement of RTAs. RTAs were sometimes perceived as “intruders” by the teaching staff. Furthermore, since teaching is generally not based on interactive methodology, many RTAs had essentially nothing to do in the classroom. Importantly, the rigid required qualifications often become a barrier to RTA employment. When appropriately implemented, Roma teaching assistant programmes can be an important means to enhance participation of Roma in education. The true inclusion of RTAs in the teaching and education process in Serbia will require establishing the legal ground and financing mechanisms, working with teachers to change their practice, as well addressing practical obstacles.

Roma are officially recognised as a national minority, and Romanes as a mother tongue of a national minority. Yet, in practice, education in Romanes is only offered as an elective course in primary school – and currently only in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The educational curriculum in Serbia is not very sensitive to the values of multiculturalism and identity of national minorities, and envisioned changes to the curriculum to include multiculturalism and elements of Roma culture and language have not as yet materialised. In schoolbooks, Roma are mentioned at best in the context of World War II and the Holocaust, but more often Roma are mentioned in a stereotyped and negative manner. Official teacher training programmes do not have courses on tolerance and multicultural education (including bilingual education), or a

methodology for working with children from deprived backgrounds, nor other aspects of inclusive education. The Ministry of Education and Sports should work with these training institutions to address the lack of an in-service teacher provision, and develop standards in this area to improve practice in the classroom.

Roma are often exposed to various forms of covert as well as open discrimination by members of school administrations, teachers, other children and non-Roma parents. However, there is no specific and comprehensive anti-discrimination law or anti-discrimination monitoring body in Serbia. Although the Law on Foundations of the Education System forbids discrimination, in practice there have been no cases of sanctions against alleged perpetrators of discriminatory acts in education. The European Union (EU) and other international bodies could be an important force to encourage the adoption of improved anti-discrimination mechanisms in Serbia.

There are serious structural constraints on Roma access to education. Roma children often lack pre-school preparation and as a result fare badly in schools or drop out completely. The physical capacities of existing pre-schools are not sufficient to meet the needs for pre-school-age children in general, and this particularly affects Roma children, who make up a higher proportion of this age group. In addition, the legal and administrative requirements, such as for birth and medical certificates and residence papers, as well as the practice of pre-schools defining their own (internal) criteria for admission, among other factors, pose serious obstacles to the access of Roma to pre-school education. The amended Law on the Foundations of the Education System envisions the introduction of a free and mandatory zero year to prepare all children for primary school. However, the existing infrastructure is clearly insufficient to ensure its effective implementation and the Government should allocate funds to ensure adequate places for all children to comply with such legislation.

Administrative and legal barriers, as well as hidden costs of education, are important barriers to the access of Roma to primary education. Even though children with incomplete paperwork may still be enrolled in a primary school, subject to the good will of the school's administration, expenses for school supplies, clothing, transport, and extracurricular activities become prohibitive for the majority of Roma families, who are often living in poverty. Many Roma parents agree to their children being sent to special schools, in part because these schools relieve the economic burdens of education (school supplies, transport, meals and even boarding). However, these schools deprive children of future educational and professional opportunities. The Government should make available financial assistance for disadvantaged children in mainstream education to remove these incentives.

The residential isolation of Roma settlements and bad housing conditions are also obstructing Roma access to education. In addition, insufficient knowledge of the official language of instruction and absence of bilingual education in Romanes, or of the use of bilingual techniques in early childhood education, coupled with insensitive or discriminatory assessment procedures, may often result in misplacement of Roma pupils in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities.

Roma are systematically exposed to a lower quality of education. Most schools in Serbia are run-down and in need of renovation and newer equipment. Given that many Roma live in impoverished settlements lacking adequate infrastructure and local tax investments, the quality of school buildings in Roma settlements could be even worse than average, although official information is not available.

While, formally, teachers in majority-Roma schools are equally qualified, the phenomenon of “white flight” affects both the student body and the teaching staff. This results in lowered expectations and lowered quality of instruction, and worse achievement of Roma pupils, as demonstrated by the results of standardised tests. Half of the Roma children tested in one study had not mastered elementary mathematical knowledge after the third grade, and an estimated 56 per cent have not mastered even basic knowledge of the Serbian language grammar after the third grade. In the absence of official curricular standards, Roma pupils are reportedly taught an abridged curriculum, and often automatically passed from grade to grade without acquiring basic literacy in the early grades of the primary school, precipitating their drop-out in the higher grades of the primary school. A set of clear and coherent criteria for grading, and a monitoring system to confirm that teachers respect these criteria, should be developed and put in place to address this issue.

Teachers’ prejudices play a significant role in lowering the quality of education for Roma pupils even when Roma are educated in the same classroom as non-Roma. Teachers allegedly disregard racist bullying and harassment of Roma pupils by non-Roma peers and their parents, and often themselves display discriminatory attitudes towards Roma, manifesting prejudices deeply entrenched in the local communities and society at large. Cooperation between schools and parents, if it exists at all, is superficial. Communication with Roma parents is allegedly limited to meetings at which teachers criticise Roma parents about their children.

The newly established Educational Supervision Service could, in theory, be a systematic tool for monitoring barriers and obstacles to the quality of Roma education, and also for supporting real pedagogical innovation and change on the school level. However, there is no indication that this really happens in practice, and on the local level some school inspectors appear unaware even of the existence of State educational policies to improve Roma access to education. The Ministry of Education and Sports should provide better training for inspectors, coupled with a clear mandate to identify and address cases of discrimination.

1.2 Recommendations

1.2.1 Recommendations on monitoring and evaluation

Data Collection

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

1. Ensure that the Electronic Management Information System (EMIS) contains full and reliable information, to enable systematic monitoring of the quality of education that Roma pupils receive, with a view to improving their quality of education.
2. Make regular annual reports containing information on the education of Roma children public and freely available to all relevant stakeholders.
3. Take steps to improve the overall collection of data disaggregated according to ethnic groups, including Roma and other ethnic minorities, with adequate safeguards for protecting sensitive information and identity and privacy of individuals.
4. Develop data collection procedures and mechanisms for education, to ensure that data on education disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity and gender are made publicly available.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

5. Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Common Action Plan for Advancement of Roma Education in Serbia*¹ (hereafter, *Decade Action Plan for Education*), revising its priorities, measures and activities, in accordance with real achievements.
6. Develop clear indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Roma-related education initiatives.
7. Evaluate the results of the implementation of the “zero year”, in cooperation with schools and kindergartens, as well as Roma stakeholders; on the basis of this evaluation, develop an action plan to improve the inclusion of Roma children.

The Education Inspectorate should do the following:

8. Establish a clear system of monitoring and sanctioning of discrimination in education.

¹ *Jedinstveni akcioni plan za unapredjivanje obrazovanja Roma* (Common Action Plan for Advancement of Roma Education).

Civil society organisations should do the following:

9. Monitor and report the emergence of segregated classes and schools, and make their research available to the public and policy-makers.

1.2.2 Recommendations for improving access to education

Structural Constraints, Legal and Administrative Requirements, Costs

The Government of the Republic of Serbia should do the following:

10. Fulfil the measure detailed in the *Decade Action Plan for Education* on “Legal regulation of non-segregated inclusion and continued schooling” by passing an official regulation to enable the enrolment of children with incomplete personal documentation in pre-schools and schools, and to set legal criteria for the priority enrolment of disadvantaged children in pre-school.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

11. Pending the adoption of binding legislation, send a recommendation to all schools to enrol children with incomplete personal documentation in pre-schools and primary schools.
12. Develop financial and other incentives for pre-schools to enrol children from disadvantaged families, to counteract the tendency for pre-schools to give priority to families with two working parents.
13. Fulfil the measure detailed in the *Decade Action Plan for Education*, on “Legal regulation of non-segregated inclusion and continued schooling” to ensure that all children have access to free full-day two-year pre-school, and to ensure that adequate space is available to accommodate all children.
14. Develop financial and other incentives for schools and local self-governments, with the active participation of Roma NGOs and organisations, to actively identify local Roma children left outside the school system and ensure their enrolment.
15. Ensure that mainstream primary schools can offer the same benefits to disadvantaged children as do special schools for children with intellectual disabilities (for example free school meals and school materials, including textbooks), such that these incentives do not encourage disadvantaged families to send their children to special schools rather than mainstream primary schools.
16. Introduce a national system to provide necessary educational materials (in particular textbooks and exercise books) free of charge to disadvantaged children in primary schools.

Residential Segregation/Geographical Isolation

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

17. Fulfil the measure detailed in the *Decade Action Plan for Education* on legal regulation of non-segregated inclusion and continued schooling, that defines concrete measures for the prevention of segregation as well as desegregation mechanisms; in particular, provide support (via the local inspectorates) to pre-schools and schools with a tendency to have exclusively or majority Roma children, to develop desegregation programmes.
18. Redesign the local schools networks, such that pupils from residentially segregated Roma communities are equally distributed among schools in the locality.
19. Further revise the new Draft Law on Pre-School Education, to provide free transport to children coming from settlements that are one kilometre or more away from the nearest pre-school.
20. Establish a system for the ongoing monitoring of segregation in educational institutions.
21. Initiate professional and public debate about the issue of segregation.

School and Class Placement Procedures

The Government of Serbia should do the following:

22. Make it legal to allow Romanes language translators to be present when Roma children with insufficient knowledge of Serbian are put before a medical commission (Commission for Categorisation of Children with Developmental Disabilities, or “Categorisation Commission”), to assess their abilities.
23. Enact official regulations that would prohibit the formation of special or segregated “Roma” classes in primary schools.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

24. Abolish testing as a requisite for access to the first grade, and provide support within mainstream schools for educating children with learning difficulties.
25. Develop mechanisms for retesting children already committed to special schools and adult education schools, and provide them with adequate educational support to assist their return to mainstream schools.
26. Reevaluate the diagnostic and assessment tools/instruments used in the assessment of children with special educational needs, especially in terms of cultural bias.

27. Provide training to the medical commissions (the Commissions for Categorisation of Children with Developmental Disabilities, or “Categorisation Commissions”) and raise awareness of the reality of differences in language background and cultural context, which can affect a child’s performance on exams.
28. Create clear policy and procedures for transferring children from special to mainstream schools, or from segregated to mixed classes.
29. Prohibit the enrolment of Roma children of school age in schools for adult education, and transfer those pupils who are of school age from these schools to mainstream schools.

Language

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

30. Develop pre-school programmes that strengthen readiness for school among Roma children, by placing particular emphasis on language acquisition and bilingual techniques.
31. Introduce an elective course on “Roma Language with Elements of National Culture” in primary schools, based on the model used in Vojvodina, and make the necessary provisions for its implementation for all of Serbia.
32. Support and foster in-service and pre-service teacher training courses covering language acquisition and methodologies for bilingual education.
33. Ensure that teacher training institutions have the proper curriculum and courses to prepare teachers of Romanes.

1.2.3 Recommendations on improving quality of education

School Facilities and Human Resources

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

34. Allocate financial resources for school infrastructure reconstruction and maintenance, in order to bring up to par the quality of buildings in deprived areas and regions.
35. Counteract the process of “white flight” by improving the quality of education, through the provision of incentives to teachers working in schools showing a tendency to enrol higher numbers of Roma children; such incentives should be linked with assuring a better quality of education for Roma children.
36. Ensure formal conditions for the immediate implementation of the measure on legal regulation of non-segregated inclusion and continued schooling of

employing Roma Teacher Assistants (RTAs) in pre-school and primary school institutions.

37. Define recruitment criteria, procedures, job description and secured financing for Roma Teacher Assistants (RTAs), and ensure their continuous education and support through mentorship by experienced RTAs.

Curricular Standards

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

38. Prioritise the development of national level curricular standards and standards of textbook quality.
39. Issue criteria for teachers to assess and grade student achievement, to prevent the subjective lowering of expectations and the inflating of grades for underachieving students.
40. Introduce standardised testing, for an independent assessment of student achievement.
41. Review the educational curricula for all schooling in pre-tertiary education with regard to diversity and multiculturalism, and make amendments to the curricula as necessary.
42. Ensure that the criteria for textbook development, creation and selection include ethnic diversity issues for all school levels, and that elements of national cultures (including Roma) are included in mandatory teaching materials
43. Accredite and support training and good quality learning materials developed by Roma NGOs, which take into account Roma history, culture and values, and support their distribution to schools in Serbia.
44. Train a national-level expert team that would provide leadership in developing multicultural education materials, taking into consideration the experience of university centres with longstanding experience in the field of Romology.

Classroom Practice and Pedagogy

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

45. Urgently create a system of in-service teacher preparation, with clear criteria for the accreditation of training and services, and allow for the provision of those services by NGOs and university faculties as well as State institutions.
46. Create a system to ensure the continuous training of teachers, education advisors/inspectors, and school managers in pre-service and in-service training, in the following: child-centred pedagogy, interactive teaching methodology, individualised approach, anti-bias education, methodologies for second

language learning, multi-cultural education, and effective ways of involving parents and communities.

47. Accredite in-service teacher training providers to offer new models and practices of school-based leadership and management, student-centred instruction and parent and community involvement.
48. Clarify immediately the distinction in roles and responsibilities between the Education Inspectorates and School Supervision Services of the regional ministries of education.

The School Supervision Service should do the following:

49. Support and assist school management and teaching staff so that they can respond to the needs of Roma pupils, by developing annual working plans, adjusting curricula and introducing extracurricular activities.
50. Provide opportunities for future teachers and educators to receive experience in real educational settings (schools and pre-schools), especially with children from disadvantaged communities.
51. Conduct in-service training for school management and teaching staff on the specificities of problems encountered by the Roma community in education.
52. Encourage school management and teachers to use training resources developed by other providers.
53. Enforce equality regulations and sanction instances of providing lower quality education to children from deprived backgrounds.

Pre-service teacher training institutions should do the following:

54. Sensitise university professors to the educational needs of Roma and the importance of bilingual education, with a view to amending the curriculum of the teacher training institutions and introducing new courses that would help to educate competent human resources, to work with children from deprived surroundings.
55. Include school improvement theory and practice into the official curriculum of the teacher training institutions.

School–Community Relations

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

56. Encourage and better utilise civil society experience and expertise in improving access and quality of education for Roma children, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders on the community level.

The School Supervision Services should do the following:

57. Support schools to find create ways to involve parents and communities in school life and the learning process.

Discriminatory Attitudes

The Government of the Republic of Serbia should do the following:

58. Pass without delay comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, including in the field of education, and ensure its effective implementation.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

59. Translate the anti-discriminatory provisions of the Law on the Protection of National Minorities and the Law on the Foundations of the Education System into practical mechanisms and procedures, to ensure their effective implementation.
60. Educate teaching staff, pupils and parents on their rights in education and against discrimination.

School Inspections

The Ministry of Education and Sports should do the following:

61. Give appropriate authority and support to the newly formed school supervisors to act as mentors and support to schools and teachers, and to monitor the barriers and obstacles to quality of education for Roma.

The Education Inspectorate should do the following:

62. Provide information to school inspectors on the Roma-related educational initiatives that form part of the official educational policies, with a view to inspecting their implementation.
63. Instruct school inspectors to better identify and sanction instances of discrimination against minority pupils.

ANNEX 1: Acknowledgements

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EUMAP report on ‘Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma’ – Volume 1 (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Serbia)

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ANNEX 2: Participating Programs

About EUMAP

This report on “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma” builds on previous EUMAP reports on Minority Protection. In 2001 and 2002, EUMAP released two series of reports looking at the situation of Roma and Russian speakers in Central and Eastern European countries. In 2002 and 2005, EUMAP published reports on the situation of Roma and Muslims in selected Western European countries. In 2007, EUMAP will be initiating a new monitoring project that will look at the situation of Muslims in eleven cities in Western Europe.

In addition to its reports on Minority Protection, EUMAP has released monitoring reports focusing on the Rights of People with Intellectual Disabilities, the Regulation and Independence of the Broadcast Media, Judicial Independence and Capacity, Corruption and Anti-corruption Policy, and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. EUMAP is currently initiating a follow-up monitoring of the Regulation and Independence of the Broadcast Media, which will have a special focus on digitalisation; publication is expected in late 2007. All published EUMAP reports are available online, both in English and translated to the national languages (www.eumap.org).

About ESP

The OSI’s Education Support Program (ESP) and its network partners support education reform in countries in transition, combining demonstration of best practice and policy advocacy to strengthen open society values, and promote justice in education, in three interconnected areas:

- Combating social exclusion: equal access to quality education for low income families; desegregation of children from minority groups; inclusion and adequate care for children with special needs.
- Openness and accountability in education systems and education reforms: equitable and efficient state expenditures on education; anticorruption and transparency; accountable governance and management.
- Open society values in education: social justice and social action; diversity and pluralism; critical and creative thinking.

Support is focused in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, South Asia and Southern Africa. ESP has offices in Budapest, London, and New York and previously had an office in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where it was known as Open Society Education Programs-South East Europe (OSEP-SEE). The Budapest office now oversees work in South Eastern Europe as well. Past work of OSEP-SEE can be accessed at www.osepsee.net.

About RPP

The OSI's Roma Participation Program (RPP) is committed to further the integration of Roma in society, and empower Roma to challenge the direct and indirect racial discrimination that continues to hinder such integration. RPP views integration not as a flattening process of assimilation, but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. This commitment finds expression in RPP's four core objectives:

- Providing institutional support and training to Roma NGOs capable of effective advocacy; linking these NGOs to wider regional and national activities and campaigns, and strengthening networking across borders to impact on policy processes at the national and EU levels.
- Creating training, development, internship and funding opportunities to consolidate the new generation of Roma women and men who will be the future leaders of national and international Roma movements.
- Broadening awareness of the priorities of the “Decade of Roma Inclusion” and creating opportunities for increased Roma participation in the Decade process.
- Promoting Roma women's access to public institutions and participation in decision-making processes, and to build a critical mass of Roma women leaders.