

Roma Centre of Skopje



European Roma Rights Centre

Joint Submission

Shadow Report

On the Situation of Romani Women

In the Republic of Macedonia

October – November 2005

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1. Overview

- 1.1 The Roma Centre of Skopje (RCS)¹, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)² and the Network Women's Program (NWP)³ (hereafter "partners"), with the support of the UNIFEM regional office in Bratislava, jointly provide this shadow report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (hereafter "Committee"), commenting on the Initial, Second and Third Periodic Reports of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hereafter "Macedonia"), submitted under Article 18 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereafter "Convention"). The submission is based in great part on a research project undertaken throughout 2005 by the listed organisations, together with 11 Romani women researchers, which aimed to document the situation of Romani women in Macedonia. Unless otherwise specified, references below to research refer to the findings of this research.
- 1.2 The need for a specific shadow report on the problems experienced by Romani⁴ women in Macedonia flows from the dearth of information on minority women, including Romani women, in the State report,⁵ despite abundant indications that Romani women comprise amongst the most vulnerable groups in the country.
- 1.3 Romani women in Macedonia face serious problems with regard to their status within both the family and society. Discrimination in access to education, health care, employment and citizenship, as well as issues of violence are amongst the main problems facing Romani women in Macedonia.
- 1.4 As result of isolation, high levels of poverty and a lack of support from responsible institutions, a considerable number of the Romani women in Macedonia live in dysfunctional relationships with their partners. The disrupted mental and physical stability of female victims of violence also directly influences and endangers the development of their children.
- 1.5 The research on which this report is based has confirmed that multiple and/or intersectional discrimination against Romani women remains a key concern in Macedonia. These matters are particularly worrying in light of the fact that **the Macedonian government has, to date, failed to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework by which Romani women could seek to secure their rights and/or challenge abuses when these occur.**

¹ The Roma Centre of Skopje (RCS), based in Skopje, is a local non-governmental organisation intending to foster the integration of the Romani community in Macedonia by empowering Romani activists and Roma-led non-governmental initiatives. Through its activities to empower young Romani women activists and Romani youth, the RCS promotes gender equality and human rights of minorities.

² The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation engaging in a range of activities aimed at combating anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma. The approach of the ERRC involves, in particular, strategic litigation, international advocacy, research and policy development and training of Romani activists. The ERRC is a cooperating member of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and has consultative status with the Council of Europe, as well as with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

³ The Network Women's Program (NWP), an initiative of the Open Society Institute (OSI), promotes the advancement of women's human rights, gender equality and empowerment as an integral part of the process of democratisation. Its offices are in New York and Budapest and it has partners in 25 countries. Since 1999, the NWP has been working in partnership with Romani women activists on the Romani Women's Initiative (RWI). The RWI promotes the human rights of Romani women by empowering Romani women activists in Central and Eastern Europe.

⁴ The word "Roma" is used throughout this report as a plural noun. The word "Romani" is used as an adjective.

⁵ Available on the Internet at:
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/463/31/IMG/N0446331.pdf?OpenElement>.

2. Summary of the Main Research Findings

2.1 A summary of main research findings follows below, based primarily on research undertaken during 2005, including field research by a team of 11 Romani women researchers, supervised by the partners. A summary of research methodology is included below in the main body of this submission, at section 6.

- 1. The lack of desegregated data by gender and ethnicity in Macedonia prevents the Government from defining the real problems faced by Romani women in Macedonia and consequently from formulating effective policies aimed at addressing the discrimination encountered by this vulnerable group.**
- 2. Existing data about the size of the Roma community in Macedonia are frequently misused in the media to encourage alarmist conclusions and deepen prejudices and racial hatred against Roma in Macedonia.**
- 3. The National Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion (adopted in 1999) does not prioritise the needs of minority women. Although low levels of school attendance by Romani and Albanian girls is mentioned as a concern in this plan, there is a lack of concrete measures to address the multiple barriers faced by minority women in their access to all fields covered by the Convention.**
- 4. The majority of Romani women in Macedonia are at present de facto excluded from a range of protections guaranteed by the Convention, especially in the fields of education, employment, health and participation in public and political life.**
- 5. Lack of registration of Romani newborns and lack of access to citizenship as a basic document for practicing all guaranteed rights is a serious issue in need of special attention.**

2.2 With reference to the Preamble of the Convention and Article 2:

DE JURE Situation:

The constitution of Macedonia provides that all citizens are equal before the law, regardless of their gender, race and colour of skin, national or social origin. A number of laws also include declamatory equality clauses. Gender equality is emphasised in the Family Law and the Law on Inheritance, both of which provide that married couples have equal rights and obligations in family matters.

However, comprehensive laws setting out detailed provisions of which individuals might avail themselves in cases in which they suffer discrimination⁶ on grounds of gender and/or race/ethnicity,

⁶ This submission uses the term “discrimination” in its richest possible meaning, as set out under international law, as well as under the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights in interpreting the scope and meaning of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as under European Union law. The latter includes four separate definitions of discrimination: 1. “direct discrimination”, taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on a prohibited ground (racial or ethnic origin, gender, or other prohibited ground); 2. “indirect discrimination”, taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons belonging to the protected category at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary; 3. “harassment”, deemed to be discrimination when an unwanted conduct related to racial or ethnic origin, gender, or other arbitrary criterion, takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and 4. an instruction to discriminate against persons on grounds of racial or ethnic origin or gender. The core assessment undertaken in this submission is, however, against the Convention’s Article 1 guarantee the fundamental rights are not frustrated on arbitrary gender grounds, combined with the similar guarantee included in Article 1 of the ICERD, with reference to racial discrimination.

or any other of the grounds protected under international law, do not currently exist in Macedonia, leaving all individuals – including the particularly weak Romani community – exposed to these very serious harms, and lacking effective recourse when acts of discrimination take place.

Research findings:

From a total of 237 interviewed women:

- 143 (60%) have experienced discrimination and/or related harms in the educational system;
- 63 (25%) have experienced discrimination in access to employment;
- 113 (48%) have experienced discrimination in access to health care; and
- 166 (70%) have been victims of domestic violence.

Discrimination and related harms in education:

Of 143 women reporting discrimination and/or related harms in education:

- 57 (or (40%) reported cases of discrimination by their teachers;
- 30 (or 21%) experienced direct acts of harassment at the hands of their classmates;
- 15 (or 11%) reported discrimination by other school staff; and
- 41 (or 29%) suffered unequal treatment by their parents, especially the selective promotion of Romani boys, and relegation of Romani girls to subordinated/subjugated roles.⁷

Discrimination in employment:

Of 63 interviewees who stated that they had experienced discrimination in access to employment:

- 27 (43%) were reportedly rejected by business owners because “Roma are not appropriate for the job.”
- 22 (35%) experienced discriminatory working conditions: They reported either being forced to work longer hours than non-Roma or being transferred to other positions with lower salaries and possibilities for career development.

Discrimination and related harms in access to health care:

Out of 113 interviewees who stated that they experienced discrimination in the health system:

- 65 described mistreatment and insults by doctors; and
- 48 reported being insulted by other medical personnel (including nurses, cleaners, etc.).

Violence (including domestic violence and abuse by police and/or other public officials):

Out of 166 interviewees who stated that they had been victims of domestic violence:

- In 120 cases, the perpetrator was the husband;
- In 40 cases the perpetrator was a member of the husband’s family (father-in-law, mother-in-law, his sisters or brothers); and
- In 16 cases, the perpetrator was the interviewee’s own parents.⁸

- In 34 cases, the woman reported the violence to law enforcement officials. In 20 of these, law enforcement officials subjected the woman to further degrading treatment on racist grounds, usually in the form of insults about the “Gypsy” origin of the victim.

2.3 Article 10:

DE JURE Situation:

⁷ With reference in particular to Article 1 of the Convention, the practice of preferential treatment of Romani boys over Romani girls have long term debilitating effects on the ability of Romani girls, and subsequently Romani women in their adult life, to realise the rights guaranteed under the Convention.

⁸ In some cases, there was more than one perpetrator. For this reason the sum of types of perpetrators adds up to more than the 166 victims total.

The Constitution of Macedonia guarantees the right to education. The legislation on primary, secondary and higher education includes declaratory provisions guaranteeing non-discrimination for both students and staff members. Primary education is compulsory.

Research Findings:

Out of 237 Romani women interviewed:

- 144 have no or incomplete elementary education.
 - 71 Romani females have never been to school;
 - 48 dropped out in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade;
 - 25 dropped out in the 5th, 6th, 7th or 8th grade;
- 63 have finished only elementary school;
- 2 have completed vocational school;
- 17 have finished and 7 are currently enrolled in secondary school;
- 1 finished 2 years of advanced secondary school; and
- 1 finished and 2 are currently enrolled in university.

2.4 Article 11:

DE JURE Situation:

According to the Constitution, everyone has the right to employment, to freely choose a job, to protection at work and to material support while temporarily unemployed.

Research Findings:

Out of 202 Romani women aged 18-54 interviewed:

- 98 (51%) are unemployed;
- 16 (8%) are employed in state institutions, 12 as cleaners and 4 as machine workers in state-owned factories (with all social benefits);
- 11 (5%) are employed in private firms (without social benefits);
- 8 (4%) are self-employed with social benefits; and
- 69 (34%) work on the black market (without any security).

Out of 7 women aged 55-65, only 3 receive pensions.

2.5 Article 12:

DE JURE Situation:

The Constitution guarantees all citizens access to health care. In addition, every citizen has both the right and the duty to preserve and promote his/her own health and the health of others.

Research Findings:

Out of 237 Romani women respondents, 22 do not have any health insurance. Seven of them do not have citizenship, a basic requirement for all state benefits.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The partners urge the Committee to recommend to the Macedonian government the following necessary and urgent measures to begin to redress of the current worrying situation of Romani women in Macedonia:

- In close cooperation with Romani non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders, and taking as a basis existing relevant data, systematically collect and make available in a form readily-comprehensible to the public data disaggregated by sex and ethnicity in areas of relevance to the social inclusion of Romani women;
- Take concrete and effective steps to prevent multiple and/or intersectional discrimination faced by minority women and, especially, Romani women;

- Undertake comprehensive research on the multiple forms of discrimination faced by vulnerable groups of women, and especially Romani women, in order to improve their socio-economic status and to ensure their access to education and health as preconditions for employment;
- Without delay, adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination law, both in line with European Community law, and addressing in particular the effects of multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women from minority groups; particular attention should be placed on providing mechanisms to ensure real and effective remedy in cases of discrimination against Romani women, including effective and dissuasive sanctions for perpetrators and adequate damages for victims;
- Ensure that all existing laws and policies -- as well as future laws and policies -- for gender equality include provisions for preventing and addressing the multiple barriers female members of minority groups face in exercising their fundamental human rights;
- Amend the 1999 National Plan for Gender Equality Promotion to adequately address the specific needs of female members of minority groups, and particularly Romani women, as well as to ensure adequate financial and human resources to effectively implement all measures detailed in the Plan;
- Ensure that all aspects of the Committee's General Recommendation 19 are implemented in full and extend in practice to Romani women. In particular:
 - Ensure that measures to operationalise the recent amendments to the Family Law and Criminal Code in Macedonia (which defined and recognised domestic violence as a criminal act), and to provide protection to domestic violence victims in terms of intervention, investigation and assistance, should take into account the specific challenges and situation of Romani women. The government must ensure that Romani women are not bypassed by the application of any such measures but are allowed, encouraged, and supported to use them as a way to ensure protection of their rights;
 - Support initiatives that deepen knowledge and data on the situation of Romani women in the family, particularly in terms of attitudes towards and incidence of domestic violence;
 - Ensure that the development and implementation of policies aimed at addressing the inferior status and discrimination faced by Romani women should be accompanied by direct dialogue and cooperation with Romani women and organisations that have the knowledge and expertise relevant to the policies under consideration;
- Without delay, adopt and implement measures, including but not necessarily limited to codes of conduct and job performance reviews for the prevention of discriminatory and degrading treatment of Romani women by public officials, including teachers, doctors, medical personnel and police officers and other law enforcement officials;
- Without delay, introduce and adequately financially support measures to end all discriminatory practices against Romani children, and in particular Romani girls, in access to education and to equalise the educational status of this vulnerable group with the rest of society. Such programmes should address all levels of education, but particular attention should be placed on the pre- and elementary school levels at which the drop-out rate of Romani girls is highest;
- Adopt vocational programmes for Romani women, and particularly elderly and illiterate Romani women, as well as women in similar situations from other minority groups, to address their particular needs and in order to improve work opportunities for these vulnerable groups. Such programmes should be free of charge;
- Make available scholarships for marginalized and poor families, with special attention to the excluded and most vulnerable Romani families;
- Proactively seek Romani teachers, and particularly Romani women, for employment in both in mainstream schools and in schools with significant number of Romani children;
- Financially and technically support all non-governmental organisations and donor initiatives for improving the educational level of Roma;

- Give effect to the action plan for education within the Decade of Roma Inclusion, adopted by the Government in February 2005, with special attention to Romani girls;
- Take steps to ensure that the most vulnerable groups, including Romani women, are incorporated into the state welfare system, including ensuring access to state-sponsored health insurance;
- Take all necessary steps, policy and financial, to improve the housing conditions of Romani families which have a detrimental impact on the health of Romani women and children; and
- Without delay, end all policies and practices of forced eviction of Roma and provide remedy to victims, in accordance with Macedonia's international law obligations.

4. The Need for a Shadow Report on Romani Women in Macedonia

- 4.1 The special conditions, needs, concerns and human rights of minority women are increasingly a matter of international concern. Minority women are vulnerable both as women and as members of minorities. They suffer a "double disadvantage", first by virtue of their gender and second by virtue of their membership in a minority group.⁹
- 4.2 The majority of Romani women in Macedonia are excluded from all segments of public and economic life, and constitute among the most vulnerable groups in Macedonia, if indeed not the most vulnerable group. As documented in this submission, they face serious problems with regard to their status within the family, access to education and employment, housing conditions, health status and violence.
- 4.3 In general, members of the majority society – and in particular decision-makers and other persons in positions of power – tend to believe that this is a consequence of patriarchal and cultural values, which determine the Romani women's status within both the community and society.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the lack of opportunities for Romani women in Macedonia to improve their education, housing, health conditions and economic situation is not recognized as exclusion and discrimination but is rather more frequently seen as a result of "tradition". This is conveniently used as an excuse and justification for the government's lack of will and effort to ensure that the right of all citizens are de facto equally exercised and ensured.
- 4.4 The absence of analysis or mention of measures to address the situation of minority women, particularly Romani women, in the State report, despite abundant indications that Romani women comprise amongst the most vulnerable groups in Macedonia, is indicative of the lack of interest and will on the part of Macedonian authorities to address the problems of minority women in general, and Romani women in particular. Furthermore, it makes apparent the failure of the Macedonian government to undertake all necessary measures to address multiple forms of disadvantage and discrimination experienced by Romani women. Existing Macedonian legislation does not provide protection against intersectional discrimination; it does not take into consideration the effects of both gender and ethnical or racial discrimination as important factor for vulnerable minority groups such as Romani women. Indeed, an anti-discrimination legal framework cannot be meaningfully said to exist at all at present.
- 4.5 The need for a specific shadow report on the problems experienced by Romani women in Macedonia also arises from the necessity to include and to mainstream Romani women's issues into both state policies related to women in Macedonia and state policies for Roma. The inclusion

⁹ Akermark, Athanasia Spiliopoulou. *Human Rights of Minority Women, A Manual of International Law*. Aland Islands Peace Institute. Finland, 2000, p. 204.

¹⁰ OSI NWP Roma Women's Initiative. Excerpted presentations from the July 2003 Romani Women's Forum. Available online at: www.romawomensinitiatives.org.

of Romani women's issues in state policy should be accompanied by concrete and urgent measures, matched with adequate financial commitments for improvements in all spheres of life.

4.6 The primary purpose of this shadow report is to address the multiple barriers faced by Romani women in regard to their educational, economic and public participation and especially their status within both their communities and society, insofar as these are relevant for the current review of Macedonia's compliance with the Convention.

4.7 This report does not constitute a comprehensive assessment of all issues facing Roma in Macedonia; its sole purpose is to assist the Committee in arriving at a more complete assessment of Convention matters than the government has presented in its report, as well as to provide suggestions as to possible recommendations to the Macedonian Government by the Committee.

5. Background: Roma in Macedonia

5.1. Demographics – Facts and Myths

5.1.1. According to the official census of 1991, 52,103 Roma lived in Macedonia, constituting 2.5% of the total population. In 1994, census data documented 47,408 Roma, or 2.28% of the total population. According to the last census in 2002, there are 53,879 Roma living in Macedonia. If accurate, these figures indicate that Roma comprise approximately 2.6% of the total population of Macedonia.¹¹

5.1.2. Demographic data about the number of Roma based on the official census usually indicate lower numbers of Roma than empirical observation would suggest. Moreover, in terms of the number of Roma, there are significant disparities between official data and studies conducted by non-governmental sources.¹² Other studies, based on various research techniques, indicate a Romani population in Macedonia of approximately 80,000-135,000.¹³

5.1.3. The lack of accurate reliable statistical data and the notable difference between official and unofficial data has been explained by observers to be a result of factors including, most notably, the following:

- A considerable number of Roma in Macedonia declare their ethnicity and mother-tongue to be other than Romani due to the stigma attached to the Romani identity, socio-linguistic and political reasons, as well as the lost roots of Romani individuals; and
- Pressure placed upon Roma by larger ethnic communities to declare themselves as members of other groups.

5.1.4. Information about the size and purported growth rate of Albanian and Roma communities in Macedonia has been used in the recent past to draw alarmist conclusions or to incite racial hatred in Macedonia against these communities. Although the latest version of the State

¹¹ Due at least in part to the threat of inter-ethnic conflict, demographic data on ethnicity is highly politicised in Macedonia. As a result, two of Macedonia's censuses have been internationally supervised (see: http://www.delmkd.cec.eu.int/en/whatsnew/Census_2002/Census_2002.htm). Certain key issues, such as rights to mother tongue education and entrance quotas at university, are calculated on the basis of official census data. Two percent of university places in Macedonia are reserved for Roma, however this number is not based on the most recent census information. There have been complaints that some of the persons benefiting from these reserved places may not in fact be Romani.

¹² Lakinska, Prof Divna, Zaklina Durmis, Azbija Memedov and Ljativ Demir. *Needs assessment for the Roma Education Fund*, Macedonia. World Bank, November 2004, p. 5.

¹³ Ibid.

report submitted to the Committee¹⁴ does not contain information on the national birth rate disaggregated by ethnicity, this issue was prominent in its previous version distributed in Macedonia in English. The previous version included statements about the growth rate of the Romani community as the highest among all groups in Macedonia based, as noted above, on statistical data which itself is inadequate. These statements are at best unfortunate and in any case indicate regard for the Romani community as a “problem” for Macedonian society. They are therefore indicative of an underlying contempt for Roma which burdens policies that, by law, should be neutral and uninfected by racial animus.

- 5.1.5 Alarmist statements by public officials and others in Macedonia are reflections of the hostility, suspicion and contempt with which the wider society tends to view Roma. They also reflect the commonly held view that ethnic minorities in Macedonia are of lesser value to society than the ethnic majority. Such statements contribute to a climate of hostility against ethnic minorities and, in particular, Roma, which leads to difficulties in exercising rights by members of said groups as demonstrated by the data presented below.
- 5.1.6 A particularly extreme (although by no means exceptional) example of high-level expressions of such views occurred several months ago when prominent professors and members of the Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts (MANU) called publicly for introduction of a so-called “special population policy” to enforce regulations to encourage ethnic Macedonians to have more children, while at the same time discouraging others from reproducing.¹⁵
- 5.1.7 Some aspects of available demographic information about Roma are in fact alarming. For example, according to unofficial data, Roma in Macedonia have a lower life expectancy than do non-Roma and the proportion of Roma to the total population drops after age 40.¹⁶

5.2. Citizenship/Statelessness

- 5.2.1 Due to an exclusionary law adopted in the context of the break-up of Yugoslavia, statelessness is a problem in Macedonia, particularly amongst ethnic minorities.¹⁷ The Romani community is one of the minority groups most affected by a lack of citizenship in the country. As a result, many Roma are prevented from accessing basic human rights such as education, employment, health care, housing and the peaceful enjoyment of one’s possessions.

¹⁴ Available on the Internet at:
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/463/31/IMG/N0446331.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹⁵ In another example, on October 17, 2005, the national daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik devoted space to using recently published data by the State Statistical Office to present an alarmist picture of demographic growth by Roma and ethnic Albanians, apparently because this is deemed a threat to the integrity of the Macedonian state.

¹⁶ Friedman, Eben. *Integration of the Roma in Slovakia and Macedonia*. Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation. Skopje, 2005, p. 66.

¹⁷ Upon gaining independence, Macedonia enacted legislation under which only those individuals with Macedonian republican citizenship were automatically eligible for citizenship in the new state. A large number of Roma were not holders of Macedonian republican citizenship under the 1977 citizenship law, and, consequently, were not among those included in the initial body of citizens of the new state. As a result of international pressure, Macedonia has recently undertaken amendments to the law. ERRC analysis, however, indicates that despite the involvement of several intergovernmental agencies in the process of amending the citizenship law, legal provisions regulating the status of persons who should by right have access to citizenship in Macedonia, as a result of their real and effective ties to Macedonia and the particular circumstances of Macedonia’s succession from the former Yugoslavia, are not yet in conformity with international law, and in particular with the European Convention on Nationality’s chapter on citizenship in the context of state succession.

- 5.2.2 According to the 2002 census, out of a total 17,652 individuals without citizenship status, 734 were Roma. Bearing in mind the number of citizenship status seekers provided by NGOs specialized in dealing with this issue, the official numbers are likely underestimated. NGOs working on this issue under the auspices of UNHCR in Macedonia report that in the last 5 years they administered more than 1,000 applications for citizenship by Roma.¹⁸ According to the same reports, about 500 of such persons were Romani women.
- 5.2.3 While the number of Romani women interviewed during our research phase indicating a lack of personal documents was not significantly high, the partners are concerned that the extent of the problem is beyond the scope of our research and deserves special attention by the State.
- 5.2.4 Problems arising from the failure to register Romani newborns are also evident. In its Concluding Observations on the Macedonian government's report in 2000, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern that the highest percentage of unregistered newborns were Romani, acknowledging that the birth certificate is the basic document for effecting the child's right to a name, nationality and all state benefits.¹⁹

5.3. Socio-Economic Status and Position in Society

- 5.3.1 The basic features of the position of Roma in Europe are present in Macedonia such as: **high poverty rate, unemployment, marginalized and poor settlements, lack of security of tenure, substandard infrastructure, low health status, low level of education and inadequate levels of political and public participation.** According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP):
- 22% of Romani men and 39% of Romani women have no or incomplete education (compared to 8% of non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma²⁰),
 - 65% Romani men and 83% Romani women have never been employed (compared to 50% of non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma);
 - 27% of Romani men and 31% of Romani women suffer from chronic illness (compared to 23% of non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma).
 - 89% of Roma live under the relative income-based poverty rate (compared to 39% of the majority population in close proximity to Roma) and 79% (compared to 34%) live under the relative expenditure-based poverty rate; and
 - In terms of the absolute poverty line of \$2.15 (PPP) per day, 22% of Roma (compared to 4% of non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma) fall below this line based on income,

¹⁸ According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), there are a number of Roma who have lived in Macedonia for long periods of time – in many cases years or decades before Macedonian independence – who have not yet managed to secure Macedonian citizenship. Such non-citizens, often qualified as “long-term habitual residents”, are frequently individuals born in other parts of the former Yugoslavia, but lived in Macedonia for considerable number of years, who after the break-up of the country found themselves without proper documents, and afterwards have not been able to acquire them. Various estimates exist, and while the UNHCR has estimated this group of Roma to include some 1,000 people based on an informal survey and census data, the actual number may be higher. OSCE recommends to the Macedonian Government to “establish the actual number of the non-citizens, as well as the number of the Roma citizens lacking identification documents, so that adequate measures can be taken to ensure they possess relevant documents” (*OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Final Report, June 2005*, pp. 17 and 26).

¹⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. 23/02/2000*. Available online at: [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/c13254ef72f7024a8025687f005bf2f1?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/c13254ef72f7024a8025687f005bf2f1?OpenDocument).

²⁰ “Non-Roma living in proximity to Roma” is defined as group that faces similar socio-economic challenges as Roma; the target group involved people from all nationalities living in Macedonia.

while 9% of Roma (compared to 1% of non-Roma in close proximity to Roma) based on expenditure.²¹

- 5.3.2 According to the same source (UNDP), out of 379 Roma and 377 non-Romani respondents, 65 Roma live in one room (compared with 8 non-Roma), 146 in two rooms (compared to 94 non-Roma), 96 in three rooms (compared to 122 non-Roma), 52 in 4 rooms (compared to 76 non-Roma), and 20 in 5 rooms and more (compared to 77 non-Roma). While the national average of metres squared of living space per household member is 19.72, among non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma the average is 26, while amongst Roma the average is 12 metres squared per household member.
- 5.3.3 As in most countries in Europe, all other ethnic groups in Macedonia display high levels of prejudice against Roma. Although Roma in Macedonia are constitutionally recognized as equal citizens with all other national communities, there are cases of open discrimination against Roma in all segments of public life. Indeed, while conducting research in preparation for this submission, one of the Romani female researchers, Ms Sermina Jasareva of Stip, was asked to leave an Internet café during her field work in June 2005 because of her ethnicity. A worker at the café told Ms Jasareva, “We don’t want Gypsies here”. This case is by no means unique.
- 5.3.4 The results of a 1996 survey indicated that 59% of ethnic Macedonians and 60% of ethnic Albanians expressed an aversion to Roma. Studies of primary and secondary school students in Macedonia offered similar findings: 79.95% of those polled applied “negative stereotypes” to Roma, with 10.10% considering Roma to be lazy and 15.91% considering them dishonest. A 1998 study of secondary school students, on the other hand, provides results by ethnic group, revealing that whereas 55.93% of ethnic Macedonians in the sample displayed negative attitudes toward Roma, 64.09% of Vlachs, 72.25% of Serbs, and 79.18% of ethnic Albanians surveyed shared such attitudes. A survey conducted in 2000 of 260 primary and secondary school teachers of Macedonian (61%), Albanian (27%), and Turkish (5%) ethnicity in Macedonia asked respondents to identify characteristics typical of Roma. Of the attributes cited, the most frequent were laziness (16%), ignorance (14%), secrecy (13%), and destructiveness (13%). Less frequently cited were dishonesty (9%) and cleverness (8%).²²

5.4 Approach of Public Institutions

- 5.4.1 The high level of racism and discrimination faced by Roma in Macedonia infects the manner in which state institutions and governmental officials of all levels approach Romani issues in their area. This, by extension, impacts the ability of Roma, including Romani women, to equally exercise their basic human rights.
- 5.4.2 The lack of political will and the absence of any significant governmental action to improve the situation in the past decades were, at a symbolic level at least, ended in 2003 when the Macedonian Prime Minister signed a declaration and committed his government to improve the condition of the Romani community during the proclaimed “Decade of Roma Inclusion

²¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope. Vulnerability Profiles for Decade of Roma Inclusion Countries*. Bratislava, 2005. Available online at: <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>. The survey applied majority booster samples (representative of the majority population living in settlements with Romani populations “average and above”, not for the total majority in the country). This approach enables distinguishing various vulnerability factors, in particular those that are related to minority status (and hence can be attributed to various forms of discrimination) from those due to regional disparities or depressed local economies.

²² Friedman, Eben. *Political Integration of the Roma Minority in Post-communistic Macedonia*. Southeast European Politics. November 2002, pp. 186-187.

2005-2015”.²³ That said, since the official adoption of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the Macedonian government has not taken any actions to meet its stated commitments.

- 5.4.3 At the same time as government officials in Macedonia are rushing to adopt strategies and policies for the inclusion of Roma at the prodding of the European Union, the World Bank and other international institutions, the reality on the ground for many Roma is that the government is not meeting its commitments with actions and, in some instances, acts completely out of line with its own rhetoric.
- 5.4.4 For instance, while in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, discussions as to how to address the substandard housing conditions prevailing in a number of Romani settlements in Macedonia, very recent actions by government officials indicate the hollowness of this discussion to date: Local authorities in the municipality of Aerodrom, a majority ethnic Macedonia area, recently evicted 22 Romani families who had lived in the area for more than 5 years from their improvised houses. The mayor of the municipality was quoted in the media as having stated that the reason for eviction was “to clean the municipality and to build buildings”.²⁴ No government authority undertook any action to provide alternative accommodation for the evicted families that total more than 60 people, more than half of whom were women and children; the families have been left to their own. This is only one such case: the partners are aware of similar incidents in other areas of Macedonia in recent months.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 In light of the prevailing lack of information of relevance to the current review of Macedonia’s compliance with the Convention, beginning in early 2005, the partners have undertaken to design and implement a modest research project aimed at gathering materials for use by the Committee. This research cannot substitute for a comprehensive survey by Macedonian authorities on the situation of Romani women in Macedonia. However, since such a survey is currently lacking, it is our hope that the materials gathered may begin to shed preliminary light on the very worrying situation of Romani women in Macedonia.
- 6.2 The research was from the outset designed as a measure to include Romani women in documentation of the situation of Romani women in Macedonia, and thereby to provide a model for policy-makers for Roma inclusion. In addition to matters raised above, the partners emphasised the participation of Romani women researchers in the process of collecting and analysing the data as one of the basic preconditions for establishing trust with the interviewees and for a better understanding of the relationships between Romani women from various age groups and backgrounds.
- 6.3 A group of Romani women were trained by the partners, as well as by UNIFEM staff, at a workshop in Skopje in early April 2005. From the trained group, a narrowed set of the most promising potential researchers were chosen to engage in the field research component.²⁵

²³ The Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005-2015, is an initiative adopted by eight countries in Central and Southeast Europe (including Macedonia), and supported by the international community. An action framework for governments, the Decade will monitor progress in accelerating social inclusion and improving the economic and social status of Roma across the region. More information about the Decade and country-by-country action plans can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.romadecade.org/en/index.php>.

²⁴ Information from the national daily newspaper Vecer. September 30, 2005.

²⁵ Edija Ali (Bitola), Elma Bajram (Skopje), Enisa Eminova (Skopje), Elvira Sakipovska (Skopje), Elvira Skenderovska (Kumanovo), Irmela Bajramovska (Kumanovo), Nesime Salioska (Prilep), Sabina Salimovska (Kriva Palanka), Songul Saban (Skopje), Suzana Sabanovska (Skopje) and Sermina Jasareva (Stip) were selected by the Partners based on their interest, education and previous experience working on Romani women’s issues in Macedonia.

Following design of a detailed methodology by the partners, implementation of research was supervised by the Roma Centre of Skopje, with supplementary assistance and guidance by the other partners and UNIFEM.

6.4 Two hundred and thirty seven interviews were conducted with Romani women aged 14-65, who self-identified as Romani. A survey questionnaire was used to guide the interviewee through her life story, focusing on issues related to her status in the family of her parents and her husband, access to education (hers and her children's), employment, health care and illnesses, personal documents, housing, property ownership, domestic violence and cases of discrimination in all respective fields. The interviewers separately noted information about each of the interviewed woman related to her physical look, clothing and the infrastructure and sanitation in her home.

6.5 The sample was non-randomly selected from settlements where the Romani population is proportionally higher than or equal to the percentage of Roma nationally. By using a combination of quota and snowball sampling,²⁶ the population was first segmented into mutually exclusive sub-groups and then judgement was used to select the subjects or units from each segment based on the following criteria:

- Regional diversity within Macedonia;
- Diversity in age;
- Diversity in marital status;
- Diversity in level of education; and
- Diversity in socio-economic status.

6.6 The field research took place between May and September 2005 in 7 towns in Macedonia with significant Romani populations (Skopje, Kumanovo, Bitola, Prilep, Kriva Palanka, Stip and Kratovo).²⁷

Table of Interviewed Romani Women in Macedonia by Geographical Location		
<i>Place</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Skopje	96	40.51
Kumanovo	40	16.88
Stip	20	8.44
Bitola	30	12.66
Prilep	30	12.66
Kriva Palanka	17	7.17
Kratovo	4	1.69
Total	237	100.00

6.7 Interviews were conducted in the language most comfortable for the interviewee. More than half of the interviews took place one-on-one while, in the remainder, their children, husbands or another family member, accompanied the interviewed women.

6.8 While the partners are aware of the limitations of sample-based research, the research covered municipalities in which 70% of Roma live in Macedonia. The sample from which the partners' conclusions have been drawn provides quantitative data and a unique set of information about Romani women in Macedonia, which is more than consistent with other sources of information about this vulnerable group.

²⁶ "Snowball sampling" relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects, or each person interviewed was asked to suggest additional people for interviewing.

²⁷ According to the 2002 census, 23,202 live in Skopje, 4,256 live in Kumanovo, 2,594 live in Bitola, 4,433 live in Prilep, 668 live in Kriva Palanka, 2,165 live in Stip and 151 live in Kratovo. In the largest Romani settlement in Europe, Skopje's Suto Orizari, 13,311 Roma are officially registered. (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia, 2003, State Statistical Office)

6.9 Although the literature currently available on Roma in Macedonia and especially on Romani women is insufficient, other recent analyses and research findings on Roma in Macedonia have been consulted (such as UNDP, ECMI, UNICEF). The partners drew also upon their own work and experience with Roma as activists and researchers throughout the region, particularly in Macedonia.

7. Romani Women in Macedonia: Issues Related to Government Implementation of the CEDAW

In the passages of this report that follow below, the partners provide results of the fact-based research detailed above, as well as other materials at our disposal related to Convention matters as they relate to Roma in Macedonia.²⁸ This section of the report focuses on issues related to Romani women and girls in Macedonia and rights guaranteed under the Convention as indicated by the research undertaken by the partners.

The core element of issues facing Romani women in Macedonia is intersectional discrimination based on race and ethnicity. These issues affect all aspects of Romani women's lives, in many cases from a very early age. For the purposes of clarity, this submission focuses on four key elements: (i) domestic violence and inadequate responses by state officials to reports of domestic violence; (ii) discrimination in the field of education; (iii) discrimination in the field of employment and work; and (iv) discrimination in the field of health and health care. The partners to this submission do not believe that these four thematic areas exhaust the Convention issues facing Romani women. However, they are the matters of focus of this submission. All issues in these four areas are the result of systemic discrimination ingrained through the repeated failure by authorities to address them. For organisational purposes, the partners address domestic violence issues here, under Articles 1 and 2 matters, and then education, health and employment matters under the substantive Convention article relevant for each, Articles 10, 11 and 12, respectively.

From a total of 237 interviewed women:

- **143 have experienced discrimination in the educational system (60%);**
- **63 in access to employment (25%), and**
- **113 in access to health care (48%),**

7.1 Romani Women and Practices of Discrimination: Preamble, Articles 1 and 2

7.1.1 The preamble of the Convention affirms “the principle of inadmissibility of discrimination, proclaiming that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and emphasises that the eradication of all forms of racism, racial discrimination “[...] is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women.”

7.1.2 Article 1 of the Convention states, “For the purposes of the present Convention, the term 'discrimination against women' shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” At Article 2 of the Convention, State Parties “[...] condemn discrimination against women in all its forms [...]” With reference in particular to Article 1, the matters detailed throughout the passages which follow indicate that, at present, massive systemic frustrations of the rights of Romani women, as set out under the Convention, currently prevail in Macedonia.

²⁸ The Macedonian legal framework, as elaborated in both the State Report and the Shadow Report on Women in Macedonia by the non-governmental organisation ESE, has been assessed by the partners to draw conclusions for improving the situation of Romani women in Macedonia.

- 7.1.3 All citizens are equal under the constitution of Macedonia and its laws. Gender equality is emphasised in the Family Law and the Law on Inheritance, which clearly state that married couples have equal rights and obligations in family matters. In practice, however, women, especially those living in rural areas and women of ethnic Albanian and Romani origin, do not benefit from the protections included in these laws.²⁹
- 7.1.4 There is an absence of official data in Macedonia based on gender and ethnicity in regard to practices of discrimination against women and girls by authorities, institutions, individuals, organisations or enterprises as required under Article 2(d) and 2(e). Indeed, no such data is presented in the State Report.
- 7.1.5 The many documented instances of gender and/or ethnic discrimination against Romani women detailed in this report indicate a state of affairs not at all addressed in Macedonia. The absence in the State Party Report of material on discrimination against Romani women and other human rights issues of relevance to the Convention is not a mere oversight in the government's reporting: It reflects instead the complete inadequacy of policy in these areas in Macedonia. There is now an urgent need for actions for the implementation of and the reinforcement of legal provisions and policy measures to provide equality for all women in Macedonia, as well as for particular actions to strengthen the current weak position of Romani women in Macedonia.

➤ **Domestic Violence against Romani Women/Inadequate Responses by Authorities to Reports of Domestic Violence by Romani Women, Exacerbated by Contempt for Romani Women as a Result of their Gender and Ethnicity**

- 7.1.6 **Of 237 Romani women interviewed, 166 (70%) women stated that they were victims of domestic violence.**
- **In 120 cases, the perpetrator was the woman's husband;**
 - **In 40 cases, the perpetrator was a member of the husband's family (parent/s or sibling/s); and**
 - **In 16 cases, the perpetrator was the woman's parent/s.**
- 7.1.7 Some women reported having experienced violence at the hands of multiple perpetrators. Most indicated that they waited a long time before deciding to ask the police for assistance. One commonly stated reason, particularly where domestic violence was at issue, was the "shame" of the community and fear of damaging the family's reputation, as well as a lack of trust in the police. Some examples of testimony related to seeking assistance following abuse by a close family member (most typically the husband) follow here:

"I have never called the police, nor have I gone to a doctor because of the shame and fear..." (38-year-old N.L, Kumanovo)

"If I call the police, my husband will kill me and my children [...]" (36-year-old Dj.R. Skopje)

"How could I leave my husband? What would people say?" (35-year-old S.Z., Kratovo)

- 7.1.8 While domestic violence is also a problem among non-Roma in Macedonia, domestic violence matters amongst Roma in Macedonia are seriously exacerbated by the contempt expressed by the public officials charged with providing protection and redress to victims of domestic violence for Romani women as a result of their gender and ethnicity. This contempt precludes any effective remedy for domestic violence, and causes patterns and practices of

²⁹ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. Women 2000 - An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States. Available online at: http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewdocument.php?doc_id=2065. P. 298.

domestic violence to become ingrained. Evident high levels of racism and prejudice amongst police authorities influences their “interventions” when a Romani woman seeks assistance in cases of violence. **Of 34 cases in which Romani women reportedly informed the police in cases of domestic violence, 20 -- or 59% -- of women stated that the police subjected them to racial prejudice and degrading treatment: In only 5 out of 34 reported cases (15%) did the police actually intervene.** When 43-year-old D.D. from Stip sought police assistance after having been beaten by a member of her family, the police official to whom she turned reportedly stated, “You Gypsies fight amongst yourselves all the time. You have to solve your problems among yourselves.”

7.1.9 In the 15% of cases in which the police actually intervened when Romani women reported instances of domestic violence to police authorities, the strongest action the police reportedly undertook was to issue a “warning” to the violator or place them in “custody for one night in the police station.” Samples of testimony from the documentation project toward this submission follow here:

“I told the police that my husband had been abusing me for a long time. They did not do anything and told me, ‘He is your husband. You will resolve the problems soon and everything will be fine.’” (52-year-old I.A., Bitola)

“My son-in-law had been beating my daughter for some time. I finally called the police. The police went to see my son-in-law but they only warned him not to harm her anymore. The police also told me to stay out of their marriage [...]” (52-year-old D.T., Skopje)

“The police do not take domestic violence seriously. If we report the crime, they just write a report and then leave [...]” (25-year-old A.F., Prilep)

The current abandonment of Romani victims to perpetrators of domestic violence, an abandonment conditioned by contempt for Romani women as women and as Roma, is among the most significant forces shaping Romani exclusion in Macedonia, and fits into a wider pattern in which Roma are viewed as entirely outside the protections to which fully enfranchised persons legitimately benefit.

7.2 Article 10: Romani Women and Girls and Education

➤ **Systemic Discrimination in Access to Education**

7.2.1 Romani children often face prejudice, exclusion and abuse at the hands of their teachers and by other children.³⁰ Often, the first instance of exclusion occurs on the first day of school, when teachers seat Romani children in the last rows of classrooms. Because declaratory provisions on non-discrimination included in laws governing education in Macedonia are not accompanied by effective instruments for protection and remedy, such cases occur unabated and

<p><u>Discrimination in Access to Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 57 women (or 40%) reported cases of discrimination by their teachers; ✓ 30 women (or 21%) experienced prejudice and exclusion at the hand of their classmates; ✓ 15 women (or 11%) reported discrimination by other school staff; and ✓ 41 women (or 29%) reported unequal treatment by their parents, especially the selective promotion of Romani boys, and relegation of Romani girls to subordinated/subjugated roles.
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³⁰ With exception of one elementary school in Suto Orizari (Skopje), Romani children go to school together children of all other ethnicities.

unchecked by any authority.³¹ Existing prejudices and stereotypes held by teachers towards Romani children influence their experiences in the classroom and very often form one of the main systemic incentives for dropping out of school.

- 7.2.2 This was confirmed by 57 interviewees involved in the documentation project in preparation for this submission, women whose lives were very much affected by their teachers' attitudes. For example, 48-year-old A.M. from Suto Orizari in Skopje who was interested in biology was, according to her teacher, "asking a lot of questions" during class. A.M. recalled her teacher telling her on one occasion, "You are not different than the other Gypsies in your class so don't learn too much because you will not get far [...]." A.M. reported that, "[...] she [the teacher] gave me a lower mark than I deserved, so I decided not to learn as much as I had before and did not pay attention to my marks anymore [...]." A.M. did not continue her education in high school and ended her school career following completion of primary education.
- 7.2.3 Ninety percent of the Romani women who reported that they experienced discrimination in school stated that other children in their class called them "Gypsies" and did not want to communicate with them. Teachers reportedly did not take any measures to improve the relationships in the class, nor did they prevent Romani girls from leaving school. Twenty-year-old F.S. from Kumanovo, the only Romani pupil in her class, was beaten and mistreated by her ethnic Macedonian classmates "every day". She reportedly always sat alone without a single friend. F.S. told the partners that she dropped out of school in the second grade.
- 7.2.4 More than 10 women reported that their teachers beat them as a method of discipline: "[...] I was in the 6th grade when my teacher hit me with a stick on my shoulder because I didn't do my homework [...]", said 18-year-old A.S. from Skopje, currently in high school.
- 7.2.5 In several cases in which Romani parents complained about such behaviour to school directors or teachers, their remarks were not taken seriously. "When I was in the 5th grade, our classmates called us ugly names and always made fun of us. We went to the school director with our parents but he told us that he did not have time to deal with our stupid problems", said 17-year-old D.N from Prilep, who dropped out of school in the 5th grade.
- 7.2.6 The matters described above are far from exceptional and are part of a body of testimony gathered in the course of the partners' documentation toward this submission. A sample of further testimony from this database follows here:

"We were 5 Roma among 30 Macedonian students when I started 1st grade; all of us were placed in the last rows of the classroom [...]." (16-year-old S.I, Kumanovo, dropped out in the 5th grade)

"Some of my mother's friends helped me to enrol in a high school specialising in chemistry [...] I remember one of my professors asking me, "What is Gypsy girl is doing in this school? You Gypsies do not learn properly [...]." (29-year-old N.P., Skopje, finished high school)

"When I was in the 4th grade my teacher Neda used to tell me 'You Romani girls are used to getting married very early and that's why you are not interested in learning [...].'" (15-year-old S.I., Skopje, dropped out in the 5th grade)

"I was 13 when I started first grade. Everyone made fun of me and my teacher did not do anything to help me [...] When we had lectures, my teacher sent me to one of

³¹ As a result of co-operation established between certain schools and Romani non-governmental organisations, and within the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the situation whereby Romani pupils are placed at the back of classrooms has recently changed in some schools. This change, however, is by no means systematic or decreed by the government.

her young relatives to help her get to school [...] after some time I told my mother and she went to talk to my teacher. The teacher was very angry with me after this and yelled at me all the time [...] after a while I stopped going to school [...]." (48-year-old Z.S., Bitola, illiterate)

- 7.2.7 The impact of these practices is evident from the data gathered during research for this submission, as well as from a range of other available data; generations of Romani women and girls experience school in an alien and hostile environment in which realisation of the right to education is impossible, due to the impact of humiliating treatment experienced at school. All but the most durable abandon school before securing an education equipping them for a life with dignity in a democratic society, skilled for meaningful and adequately remunerated work.
- 7.2.8 In a number of instances, school officials have erected barriers to the enrolment of Romani children in school. Two profiles of exclusion are particularly noteworthy: (i) failure to recognise the school credentials of Roma who have been abroad – most frequently in Western European countries – and who return with school-age children; and (ii) failure to enrol children in school because they lack personal documents. To the first issue, 20-year-old F.S. from Kumanovo told project researchers: “We were in Germany for 5 years. When we returned I was supposed to continue school in the 8th grade. The school I was to attend did not recognize my education from Germany and wanted me to instead enter the 3rd grade because when I left Macedonia I had finished the 2nd grade. I did not want to go into a class with children of 8 when I was 13 [...]. I never went to school again.” As to the matter of exclusion from schooling due to a lack of the relevant documents, 15-year-old S.L. from Skopje told project researchers that she did not go to school because she did not have any personal documents. Her mother died when she was very young and her father is in jail, She lives allow with her 1-year-old daughter who also does not have any personal documents.
- 7.2.9 According to research by the partners, the participation of Romani children in pre-school is very low due to poverty and the lack of state instruments to include all children in this level of education. Pre-school is neither mandatory nor free-of-charge in Macedonia, and as a result, in general children of elite families tend to benefit more frequently from pre-schooling arrangements than children from poor or excluded families. Insofar as Roma are disproportionately represented among Macedonia’s poor, poverty issues are multiplied by the school system. Lacking pre-school education, Romani girls are often ill prepared for an effective start in elementary education on an equal footing with their non-Romani peers.

➤ **Other Factors Contributing to the Exclusion of Romani Women and Girls from Education**

- 7.2.10 Despite alarming data about the educational status of the Romani community – and especially Romani girls – in Macedonia, during 13 years of independence, state institutions have not proposed or implemented any specific programmes for the advancement of the educational level of this population group, especially at the pre-school, primary and secondary school levels.³²
- 7.2.11 The State Report notes, at page 45, that the 1999 National Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion includes various activities with respect to women and education with the aim of achieving gender equality, and that, in the coming period, the inclusion of as many female students as possible from rural areas in secondary education, particularly from ethnic Romani and Albanian communities, will be a priority.

³² The quota system at the university level whereby some 2% of school seats are made available to Romani students is not specifically intended to increase the educational level of Roma, but is rather part of a general system of ensuring a certain percentage of places in schools for all ethnic groups, and does not address the root problem that most Romani students do not make it to this level of schooling before dropping out or that most Romani students can not afford the costs associated with this level of education.

- 7.2.12 The partners note that nearly all efforts to improve the situation of Romani girls and women in education have, to date, been implemented outside of the education system by Romani non-governmental organisations. In the past 5 years, the number of Romani students has increased significantly as result of scholarship opportunities for Romani high school and university students, mainly provided by the Open Society Institute and the European Roma Rights Centre. The partners are concerned that, given the lack of attention, actions and resources devoted to improving the situation of Romani females by the Macedonian government in the past, the priority noted in the State Report will remain an empty commitment, unimplemented through any significant concrete actions.
- 7.2.13 A range of other forces also conspires to ensure exclusion of significant segments of the Romani community from effectively realising the right to education and enrolling in and remaining for adequate periods of time in the Macedonian school system. These forces include, but are not limited to poverty, language and a lack of positive role models.
- 7.2.14 One internal community reason for the extremely low level of education amongst Romani women is the level of poverty from which reportedly as many as 90% of Romani families in Macedonia suffer, as well as the stagnant traditional role of Romani women, a format which has not changed in large part because of the lack of positive models in marginalized and excluded Romani communities. As an example, in the two elementary schools in Suto Orizari, Skopje, where the majority of children are Romani, only two teachers (one male and one female) are Romani. In Macedonia, the total number of Romani teachers is between 3 and 5.
- 7.2.15 Another internal community barrier faced by Romani women in access education, which is exacerbated by the lack of positive models for children and youth within the Romani community, is parents who force their daughters to leave school or drop out at the end of elementary school due to fear that the child would find a boyfriend and get married.
- 7.2.16 According to a needs assessment published by the World Bank, many of the women who dropped out and did not finish elementary school reported that they had language problems.³³ While non-Romani pupils were learning substantive elements of the curriculum, Romani children reportedly learned the Macedonian language and failed to gain the basic knowledge required for higher classes. Thus, the highest drop out rate of Romani girls is noted in the 5th grade.³⁴
- 7.2.17 Romani women interviewed by the partners who had never been to school indicated that they did not attend school because they had to stay home to take care of smaller siblings, to clean or to work from a very young age; mainly to clean houses with their mothers or close relatives. For example:

“There were 9 children in my family. My parents did not have money to send us to school [...]” (39-year-old S.D., Skopje, never attended school)

“There were 6 children in my family and we did not go to school. Our parents did not have money. We all had to work in agriculture.” (32-year-old M.H., Kratovo)

³³ Lakinska, Prof Divna, Zaklina Durmis, Azbija Memedov and Ljativ Demir. *Needs assessment for the Roma Education Fund*, Macedonia. World Bank, November 2004.

³⁴ In Macedonia, primary education classes are held in 4 languages: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian. Disaggregated information as to the number of ethnic Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serb pupils who learn in their mother tongue is available by regions and localities, but for Roma, Vlach and other minorities there is no such data. Nevertheless, existing information points to that fact that that majority of Romani primary school students attend classes held in the Macedonian language.

“All of my sisters went to school except me. I was the oldest child and had to stay home to take care of them [...]” (37-year-old M.I., Kriva Palanka)

7.2.18 As a result of a range of exclusionary forces including those noted above, school attainment, rates of literacy and numeracy, and other indicators of the state of education indicate an emergency in the Macedonian education system where Roma are concerned, and in particular where Romani girls and women are at issue. The Macedonian government has failed to provide adequate data on this matter in the State Party Report (or anywhere else for that matter).³⁵ The partners therefore provide below some available data, as well as research results arising from its own documentation.

7.2.19 Research by UNICEF from 1997 indicates that of 96 Romani mothers (aged 15 and above), 41% did not have any formal education, 5,3% had completed some primary education but could not read, 50% had completed primary education and could read and 4,3% had made it to secondary and higher education.³⁶

7.2.20 A recent UNDP study³⁷ confirms that Roma experience the highest rate of exclusion from the educational system in Macedonia. The data points to the fact that the level of exclusion is higher amongst Romani women than Romani men:

- **Of 210 women (aged 6-22) who do not attend school, 39 are non-Romani and 171 are Romani;**
- **Of 197 men (aged 6-22) who do not attend school, 37 are no-Romani and 160 are Romani;**

7.2.21 According to the same study,³⁸ 82% of Roma compared to 97% of non-Roma (who live in close proximity to Roma) can read and write. Of the Roma who can read and write, 90% are men and 75% are Romani women. The UNDP also found that 31% of Roma compared to 8% of non-Roma have no education whatsoever or inadequate education. Of the total number of Roma surveyed, 22% of Romani men and 39% Romani women had no education whatsoever or incomplete elementary education.

The partner’s research findings are in line with the findings of the UNDP. Of 237 Romani women:

- **144 have no or incomplete elementary education**
 - **71 have never been to school;**
 - **48 have dropped out in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade and;**
 - **25 have dropped out in the 5th, 6th, 7th or 8th grade.**
- **63 finished only elementary school;**
- **2 have completed vocational school;**
- **17 have completed and 7 are currently enrolled in secondary school;**
- **1 has completed 2 years of upper high school; and**
- **1 has finished and 2 are currently enrolled in University.**

³⁵ The State Report provides data disaggregated by ethnicity on the participation of Romani girls in secondary and high school while not providing similar information about their participation in pre-school and elementary school. Also missing is any reference as to the level of Romani females falling outside the education system or dropping out at early ages. The partners are concerned about the Macedonian government’s lack of detailed analysis of the situation of Romani girls and women in accessing education in Macedonia. A lack of data in this area, as in other areas, reflects an evident a lack of interest and political will to address the situation of minority women and to provide in practice equal education as basic right for all.

³⁶ Najcevska Mirjana, Violeta Petrovska-Beska, and Aloui Lazhar. *Situation Analysis of Romani Women and Children in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. UNICEF, March 1997.

³⁷ UNDP. *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope: Vulnerability Profiles for Decade of Roma Inclusion Countries*. Bratislava, 2005. Available online at: <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>.

³⁸ Ibid.

7.2.22 The UNDP found that the main reasons cited by women for not attending school were the following:

- 52% of Romani females reported the high costs for education (fees, transport, books etc), compared to 31% non-Romani females;
- 2% had problems with language, compared with 0% of non-Romani females;
- 8% had married, compared to 5% of non-Romani females;
- 4% lacked motivation, compared to 3% of non-Romani females;
- 5% were prohibited by their parents, compared with 15% of non-Romani females; and
- 12% did not know or refused to answer, compared to 18% of non-Romani females.

7.2.23 A sample of testimony by Romani women who abandoned school gathered in the course of the documentation project follows:

“I was going to school but when my grandfather died my family did not have any income. I had to leave the school and started to clean houses with my mother.” (28-year-old E.S., Skopje)

“I did not know how to read and write. I was ashamed and left the school in the 5th grade.” (27-year-old E.S., Bitola)

“I finished elementary and wanted to continue in secondary school but my parents did not allow me to do so because they thought that I might find a boyfriend and get married.” (57-year-old R.I., Skopje)

7.2.24 In the partners’ research, patterns of enrolment, school abandonment and education level of the children of the interviewees are very similar to that of the interviewees: Of a total of 377 children (male and female) above 6 years old, 33% are currently attending school, 42% have no or incomplete elementary education, 14% have finished elementary and less than 1% have attended secondary school.

7.2.25 The results of the UNDP study and the partners’ research are in stark contrast to the widespread belief in Macedonian society that Roma are not motivated to study and therefore do not attend school, or that Roma, and particularly Romani females, do not attend school for cultural reasons (i.e. that education is purportedly not valued in Romani culture).

7.2.26 On the contrary, the reasons for the dismal situation of Romani girls and women in realising the right to education, the basis for involvement in public life, are multiple and require systematic, cross-sectoral actions by the government in order to adequately address the situation. Practices of discrimination against Romani girls in the educational system significantly influence the position of Romani girls in society. Feelings of inferiority and worthlessness instilled in a Romani girl as early as her first contact with school render it highly unlikely that all but the most accustomed to abuse will choose complete their education. This fact, in turn, determines her future position in areas of public and social life.

7.3 Article 11: Romani Women and Employment

➤ Systemic Discrimination in Employment

7.3.1 In access to employment, a needs assessment published by the World Bank confirmed that the name, surname and ethnicity of job seekers significantly affect decisions to hire or not to hire.³⁹ In the case of Romani women, physical appearance and manner of dress constitute an additional discriminating factor.

³⁹ Lakinska, Prof Divna, Zaklina Durmis, Azbija Memedov and Ljativ Demir. *Needs assessment for the Roma Education Fund, Macedonia*. World Bank, November 2004, p. 20.

7.3.2 A 2003 survey on the employment status of Roma in Macedonia (750 Roma were interviewed) showed that almost 50% of Roma believe they were discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity when applying for jobs.⁴⁰

7.3.3 While in the past year cases of discrimination against male Romani employment seekers have been documented, such data has to date been lacking with respect to Romani women. Our research reveals patterns of intersectional discrimination against Romani women seeking work. A sample of testimony from the research database follows here:

“[...] Lots of Romani women were applying for work in a textile factory [...]. I was among them. The manager told us: ‘We don’t employ Romani women because our employees do not want to work with Roma [...].’” (30-year-old J.A., Prilep)

Of 63 interviewees who stated that they experienced discrimination in access to employment,

- **27 (43%) were reportedly refused employment by business owners because “Roma are not appropriate for the job”; and**
- **22 (35%) experienced discriminatory working conditions: They reported either being forced to work longer hours than non-Roma or being transferred to other positions with lower salaries and possibilities for career advancement.**

“I went with seven other Romani women to apply for seasonal work [...]. When the manager saw us he said, ‘You Gypsies always seek work here but the positions have been filled – go home [...].’” (26-year-old V.A., Prilep)

“When I applied for work at a private tobacco factory, the manager told me, ‘We do not hire Gypsies’”. (41-year-old A.F., Prilep)

“I went to ask for any kind of work in a local factory [...] a worker there told me, ‘Gypsies are not allowed to work here [...]. You are the biggest thieves in the world and you need to be put in a gas chamber.’” (27-year-old, R.J. Stip)

“Several months ago I applied for cleaning work in a medical centre in Stip [...]. They told me, ‘Why have you come here? We’ve become a place for gathering Roma [...] When we enter the building, we always see ugly Gypsy faces.’” (19-year-old M.J., Stip)

“When I asked for a job, the owner of a private food store expelled me from his office and said, ‘You will infect the food here and all of the people who will buy our products could get sick [...].’” (24-year-old S.R., Stip)

“I was working as a mechanical worker in a tobacco factory for 10 years [...] My boss did not like Gypsies and he placed all us Roma in another department with much more and harder work and with lower salaries [...] I complained but without any success. I had to work and couldn’t resign [...].” (49-year-old B.M., Prilep)

7.3.4 The impact of these systemic exclusionary forces, underpinned by racism and combined with the failures of the Macedonian government in the field of education noted in the section

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 20-21.

preceding, result in massive unemployment in the Romani community, and in particular amongst Romani women. These matters have not yet been adequately addressed by government policy, and indeed, in its report to the Committee, the government appears intent on downplaying them.

- 7.3.5 In its report to the Committee, the Macedonian government states, at pages 86-87 that the unemployment rate for women in Macedonia is 32%. However, research undertaken by the partners, as well as studies published by intergovernmental organisations indicates that the extent of unemployment amongst the Romani female population of Macedonia is much greater than the 32% unemployment rate noted by the Government in its Report.
- 7.3.6 Indeed, at pages 8 and 9 of the State Report, according to statistics by the State Office of Statistics, as recently as 2000, 76% (9,776 of 13,364) of the Romani workforce was unemployed, while 80% (3,868 of 4,821) of Romani female workforce was unemployed. This is more than double the unemployment rate for women in Macedonia noted at page 86-87 in the discussion of Article 11 issues. Additionally, for all other ethnic groups aside from ethnic Albanian women in Macedonia, the level of employment was greater than the level of unemployment.
- 7.3.7 The lack of reference to any programmes to address the exceedingly high level of unemployment of Romani women, or Albanian women, in this section of the Government's Report is very worrying.
- 7.3.8 According to a needs assessment published by the World Bank in 2004, of a total number of persons registered as unemployed in 2000, 247,304 persons (67,7%) were ethnic Macedonian, 71,974 (19,7%) were Albanian, 14,647 (4,0%) were Turkish, 15,464 (4,2%) were Romani, 3,849 (1,1%) were Serb, while the other 11,973 (3,3%) belong to other ethnic groups in Macedonia.⁴¹
- 7.3.9 Research undertaken by the partners indicates that, of 202 Romani women aged 18-54:**
- **98 (51%) are unemployed;**
 - **16 (8%) are employed in State institutions, 12 as cleaners and 4 as machine workers in state-owned factories (with social benefits);**
 - **11 (5%) are employed in private firms (without social benefits);**
 - **8 (4%) are self employed with social benefits;**
 - **69 (34%) work on the black market (without any form of security);**
- 7.3.10 Our research findings are broadly consistent with existing studies in this area. For example, a 1997 survey by UNICEF of 96 Romani mothers in 8 Macedonian cities found that 97.7% of women were not engaged in any income generating activity. Of the remaining 7 women (or 2.3%) who had jobs, two were involved in salaried work, three were employed as household servants and two were engaged in trade on the black market.⁴²
- 7.3.11 UNDP research from 2005 indicates that 74% of Roma and 50% of non-Roma have never been employed in Macedonia. Data specific to Roma states that 65% of Romani men and 83% of Romani women had never been employed.⁴³

⁴¹ Lakinska, Prof Divna, Zaklina Durmis, Azbija Memedov and Ljativ Demir. *Needs assessment for the Roma Education Fund*, Macedonia. World Bank, November 2004.

⁴² Najcevska Mirjana, Violeta Petrovska-Beska, and Aloui Lazhar. *Situation Analysis of Romani Women and Children in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. UNICEF, March 1997.

⁴³ UNDP. *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope: Vulnerability Profiles for Decade of Roma Inclusion Countries*. Bratislava, 2005. Available online at: <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>.

- 7.3.12 According to a letter from the Ministry of Finance to the Roma Centre of Skopje dated July 1, 2005, there are 71,018 persons employed in the public administration in Macedonia of which 31,069 are women. According to the same letter, of the total number of employed women in public administration, only 183 are Romani women (or 0.6%).⁴⁴ Most Romani women employed by the State are in low-level positions earning low wages, but with social benefits.
- 7.3.13 While 51% of the Romani women interviewed during the course of the partner's research are not employed, 76% of those Romani women earning some form of income work on the black market and do not enjoy the benefits associated with formal employment such as a secure labour contract, decent working conditions and social security benefits. No government programmes exist to formalise activities undertaken by some Roma – such as informal recycling of metals and other resources via gathering at dump sites – to recognise this as legitimate work benefiting society, and to provide persons undertaking such activities with a decent wage and the benefits to which persons integrated in the mainstream workforce are entitled.
- 7.3.14 Failures of inclusion in the world of formal work have pernicious effects outside the field of employment. For example, of seven women aged 55-65, only 3 stated that they receive a pension.

7.4 Article 12: Romani Women and Health Care

➤ Systemic Discrimination in Access to Health Care

- 7.4.1 The Macedonian government states, at page 101 of its Report that, “the health care system in Macedonia is well founded in terms of protection of the right to health. The system is being reformed, regarding the legislation and practice in the direction of achieving improved meeting of the population's health needs, particularly the vulnerable groups.”
- 7.4.2 The partners' research, as well as other research undertaken in recent years in Macedonia, indicates that, where Romani women are concerned, these claims are overly optimistic at best. For instance, the 1998 ERRC Country Report “A Pleasant Fiction: The Human Rights Situation of Roma in Macedonia” includes testimonies of Romani men and women claiming that medical professionals treat Romani patients less favourably than non-Roma as a result of discrimination.⁴⁵
- 7.4.3 **Our research is consistent with the results of this previous research: Of 113 interviewees who reported having experienced discrimination in access to health care, 65 described mistreatment and insults from doctors, while 48 described such treatment by other medical personnel, including nurses and cleaners.**
- 7.4.4 In the course of the current research, racial discrimination in access to health care and other failures of the medical system to provide basic care with dignity were documented extensively in Kumanovo, Bitola, Stip and Prilep, where Roma comprise the largest ethnic minority. A sample of testimony by women interviewed in the course of the documentation project follows here:

“When I gave birth to my (only) child, the medical personnel insulted me entire the time, saying, ‘You Gypsies have too many children and your breath smells from hunger.’” (15-year-old M.T., Stip)

⁴⁴ Official letter from the Macedonian Ministry of Finance to the Roma Centre of Skopje, July 1, 2005.

⁴⁵ European Roma Rights Centre. *A Pleasant Fiction: The Human Rights Situation of Roma in Macedonia*. Budapest, 1998. Available online at: <http://www.errc.org/db/00/11/m00000011.pdf>.

“I had a high fever and low blood pressure. I went to a doctor and he told me, ‘You Gypsies are very strong and resistant to illnesses. How could you come here with just with a high temperature?’” (40-year-old, S.S., Stip)

“I was the only Romani person in the hospital room. The medical personnel regularly changed the sheets of the other but not mine. When I complained, they told me that I don’t have clean sheets at home and I sleep on the floor. Therefore, I’m not allowed to ask for more than I deserve.” (27-year-old I.A., Kumanovo)

“Four years ago I had a very hard pregnancy. One night I had strong pains and went to the hospital where I was admitted. That night the pain was severe but no one came to help me. I asked the nurse to give me some medicine to ease my pains but she said that I complain too much. That night I miscarried.” (30-year-old F.A., Kumanovo)

- 7.4.5 In addition, a number of Romani women in Macedonia are not eligible at all for state-provided medical insurance, because (i) they lack Macedonian citizenship, (ii) because they do not qualify for state medical insurance because they are listed neither as employed nor as officially unemployed, a pre-condition for inclusion in the state-provided medical insurance protection system; (iii) because they have not managed to keep their medical insurance booklets updated through regular procurement of relevant stamps; or (iv) for other arbitrary reasons.
- 7.4.6 A 2000 report published by UNICEF found that of 3,122 interviewed Romani families, 574 (18,39%) did not have health insurance while 2,421 (77,55%) were covered. Of those families with coverage, 127 (4,07%) families had only partial health coverage (only some of the family members, predominantly children and elderly).⁴⁶ According to a 2005 UNDP study, of 1,836 Romani and 1,399 non-Romani respondents, 204 (11.1%) Romani women and 198 (10.7%) men were denied medical service due to lack of proper documents, compared to 63 (4.5%) female and 61 (4.4%) male non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma.
- 7.4.7 The partners documented 22 Romani women who did not have any form of state health insurance. Seven of these women did not have citizenship; the basic requirement for all state benefits. Twenty-six-year-old M.K. from Stip told researchers working on the partners’ documentation project, “I do not have health insurance and I have to pay for all medication. I go to a doctor only when my children are very sick. I don’t have money and save just for them [...].”
- 7.4.8 Numerous women who received health insurance through their husband had separated from their spouse some time earlier and, at the time of the interview, were without health insurance because they were not eligible for registration with the State Employment Bureau via which state-sponsored medical insurance is administered. In order to register, a person must have completed at minimum a primary education. While contradictory, although this provision is applied in practice, "the educational criteria" is not present in Macedonian legislation concerning employment or health care.
- 7.4.9 The above complex of issues (exclusion from coverage under the state-sponsored medical insurance system, combined with racial animosity among medical practitioners and other persons working in the health care system) results in degrading treatment of Romani women in the provision of health care in Macedonia. For example, in one case documented under the current research, in October 1999, a 17-year-old Romani girl delivered her baby in the hospital without medical assistance because she did not possess health insurance and did not

⁴⁶ Lakinska Prof Divna. *Vulnerability of Romani children in the Municipality of Suto Orizari*. UNICEF and World Bank. Skopje, 2000.

have any money. The hospital administrator reportedly refused to admit her to the hospital or to call a doctor. After two hours of pleading, the young Romani women delivered her child at the hospital's reception desk.⁴⁷

7.4.10 As a result of the foregoing, there are serious indications that many Romani women seek medical help only when they are very sick or when they give birth. A significant number of our interviewees reported that they did not trust doctors and that they believed all doctors treat Roma differently than non-Roma. Several women indicated to the partners that they reported the mistreatment to higher-level official/s in the medical institutions or to the police. Reportedly, the strongest punishment that doctors or medical personnel have received was a "warning not to repeat the mistake".

7.4.11 The partners are deeply concerned by the common practice amongst interviewees of visiting a doctor only when seriously ill due to a reported lack of financial means and of trust in medical personnel:

"I don't trust doctors. They do not like poor people and I don't go no matter how sick I am. I have only been in a hospital to give birth to my child." (29-year-old S.Z., Skopje)

"My baby died because the doctors did not take care of him. Since then I haven't gone to a doctor." (48-year-old A.M., Skopje)

7.4.12 During interviews with the Romani women interviewed by the partners, shame was also noted as a reason for rarely undertaking regular gynaecological exams:

"Since my last delivery I have not gone to a doctor [...]" (35-year-old R.A., Kumanovo)

"I am a widow. I do not go to a gynaecologist because I'm ashamed of what people may think about me. I have not gone for a check up for 20 years." (48-year-old G.M., Kumanovo)

However, 95% of the Romani mothers interviewed noted that they had gynaecological check-ups when pregnant

➤ **Other Factors Contributing to the Exclusion of Romani Women from Health Care**

7.4.13 In addition to direct discrimination, systemic exclusion and the legacies of such exclusion, a number of forces also have serious detrimental impact on the ability of Romani women and girls to realise the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.

7.4.14 At page 100 of its Report, the government notes that the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences is working towards a long term strategy for the development of the health system, focusing on the following: "Interdisciplinary approach; Inter-sectoral approach; International collaboration; Inclusion of the Non-governmental sector; and the Development of local initiatives." The partners note the omission of specific reference to ethnic considerations in the strategic priorities, which, as indicated above, greatly impact the ability of Romani women to access health care. The partners are concerned about the apparently unchanging health status of Romani women in Macedonia as a result of their difficult access to the health system and their health conditions which are closely related to their housing and economic situation.

⁴⁷ Lakinska, Prof Divna, Zaklina Durmis, Azbija Memedov and Ljativ Demir. *Needs assessment for the Roma Education Fund*, Macedonia. World Bank, November 2004, p. 25.

7.4.15 Research conducted by the partners indicates that poverty, dysfunctional family relations and substandard housing conditions are amongst the main reasons for the 63% of the interviewed Romani women who suffer from one or several illnesses. Two percent of interviewed women could not state whether or not they were in good health. The most common illnesses suffered by Romani women in Macedonia include:

- 16% have heart problems;
- 17% have problems with blood pressure;
- 20% have nerve-related pain;
- 11% have bronchitis, asthma and similar related respiratory illnesses;
- 2% have different kind of allergies;
- 2% suffer from tuberculosis; and
- 33% have other illnesses (most common are hepatitis, gynaecological problems, arthritis and anaemia).⁴⁸

7.4.16 The substandard living conditions faced by Romani women often lead to the transmission of communicable diseases that disproportionately affect Romani children. Research conducted by the partners revealed that of 237 interviewed Romani women, only 13 (around 6%) possess property titles. Almost half of the women live in substandard housing conditions: Improvised houses without sanitation, infrastructure and very often without water and electricity.

7.4.17 A number of Romani women interviewed during the course of documentation toward this submission similarly reported failing to access health care because of being forced to pay for medical services on their own:

“I have heart problems as well as several other illnesses. I was saving money to have some exams done but it is very hard because we earn only 1,000 Macedonian denars (15 EUR) in social assistance from the state per month. [...] I don’t know when I will be able to save the money [...]” (23-year-old M.S., Kriva Palanka)

“In 2004, my baby was born prematurely in the 7th month of pregnancy and had to stay in an incubator for 2 months. On the second day, the doctor told me that I had to leave with my baby because I didn’t have money to pay for the hospital costs. They discharged my baby, who died a few hours later in my home.” (18-year-old B.K, Stip)

7.4.18 In addition to the foregoing, most of the 215 Romani female respondents who have access to state health care reported facing serious problems in affording the required participation fee for almost all medical exams, hospitalisations and, especially, medication. Sample testimony from the project database follows:

“I always have difficulties buying the medication doctors prescribe me because they are not covered by social insurance. [...] I buy medicine only when my children are sick. I also had to have an abortion and for that I had to borrow money which I am still repaying [...]” (36-year-old M.Z., Kratovo)

“I have high blood pressure and meningitis. I don’t go to a doctor because I don’t have money to pay for medication. My insurance does not cover all the expenses.” (37-year-old M.I., Skopje)

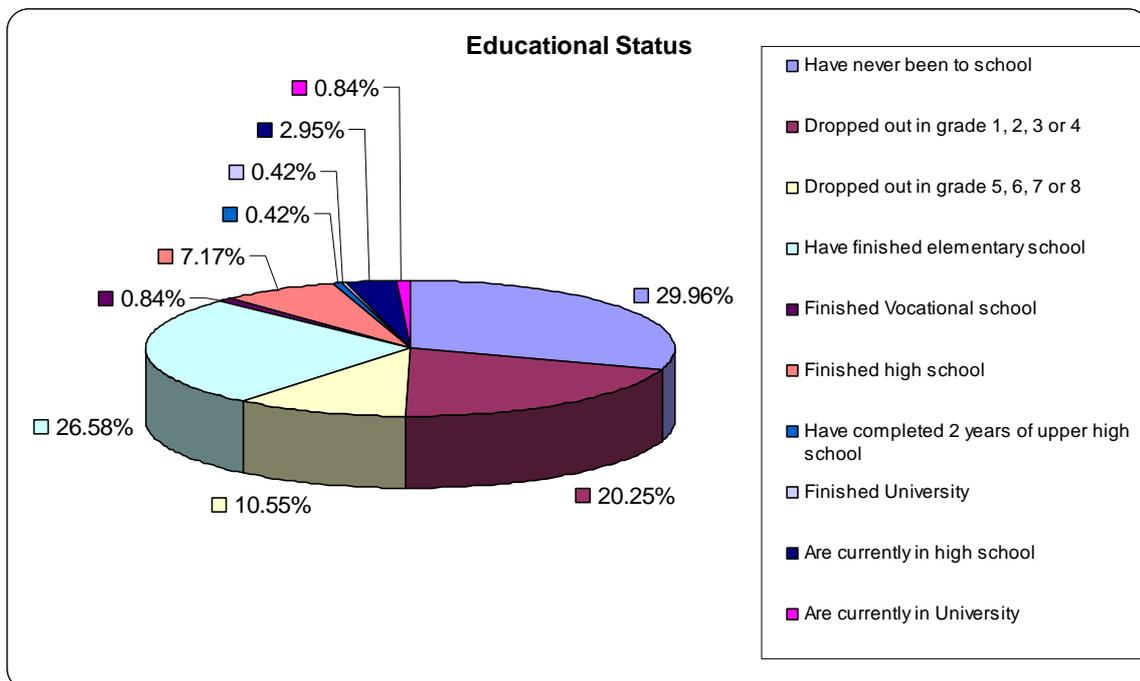
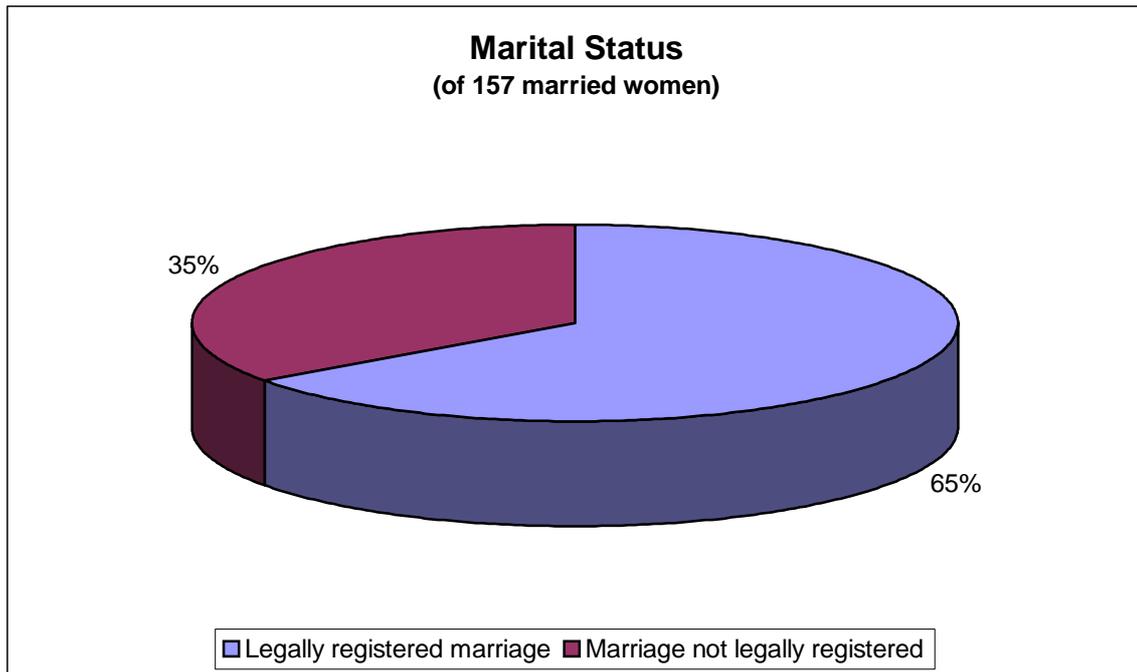
⁴⁸ According to the UNDP, 23% of non-Roma compared to 29% of Roma (27% of Romani men and 31% of Romani women) suffer from chronic illness. See: UNDP. *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope: Vulnerability Profiles for Decade of Roma Inclusion Countries*. Bratislava, 2005. Available online at: <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>.

7.4.19 Finally, for reasons made significantly more complex as a result of the issues above, there are indications that major public health risks are going unaddressed in Romani communities. For example, in April 2005, the ERRC interviewed Ms R.P., a 25-year-old Romani woman, in the Suto Orizari municipality of Skopje who had been diagnosed the previous December with tuberculosis. Two of the 5 children in her care⁴⁹ had also been diagnosed with tuberculosis in December 2004. She had not yet taken the other children in her care for medical examination because “they are not coughing too much yet.” Ms R.P. was not receiving any treatment as of the date of the interview (April 2, 2005), and it was unclear whether she could be admitted for treatment in Skopje’s tuberculosis treatment facility in the Vodno neighbourhood, because her medical insurance booklet had not been updated since Autumn 2004. A nurse at a walk-in clinic in Suto Orizari told the ERRC that there was no major risk of a tuberculosis epidemic in Suto Orizari. However, she wore a mask throughout the interview (which took place in the presence of Ms R.P.), and at several points during the interview left the building, apparently for fresh air and in evident fear of contracting some form of contagious disease.

8. Appendices

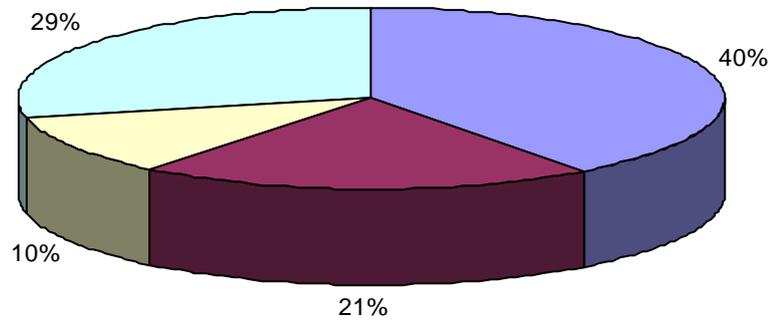
⁴⁹ Ms R.P. was at the time caring for a one-and-a-half-year-old son, three of her half-sisters, and the son of one of the half-sisters.

8.1 Appendix 1: Graphical Presentation of Key Information Related to Romani Women in Macedonia⁵⁰

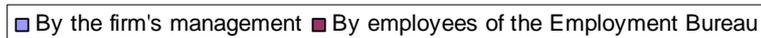
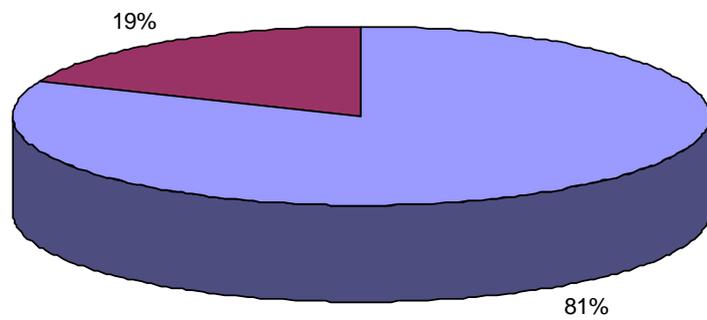


⁵⁰ Graphs formed on the basis of the partners' research results. Unless otherwise stated, the sample size is 237.
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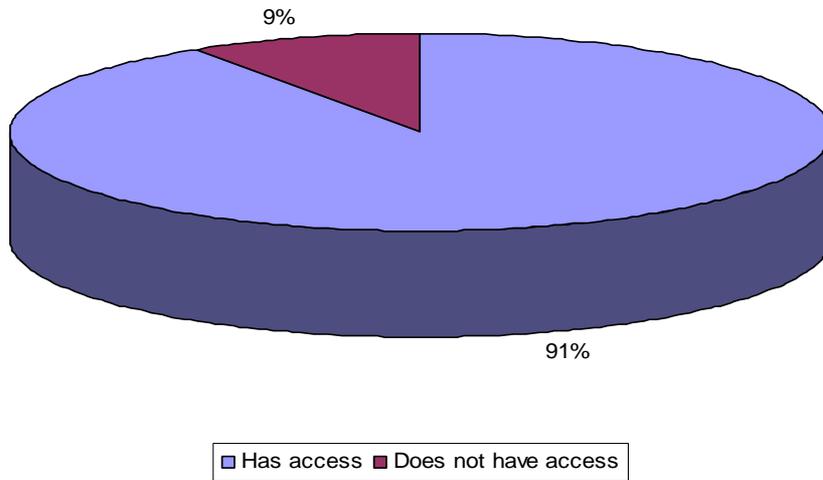
Discrimination in Access to Education: Practices
(of 143 women having reported discrimination in access to education)



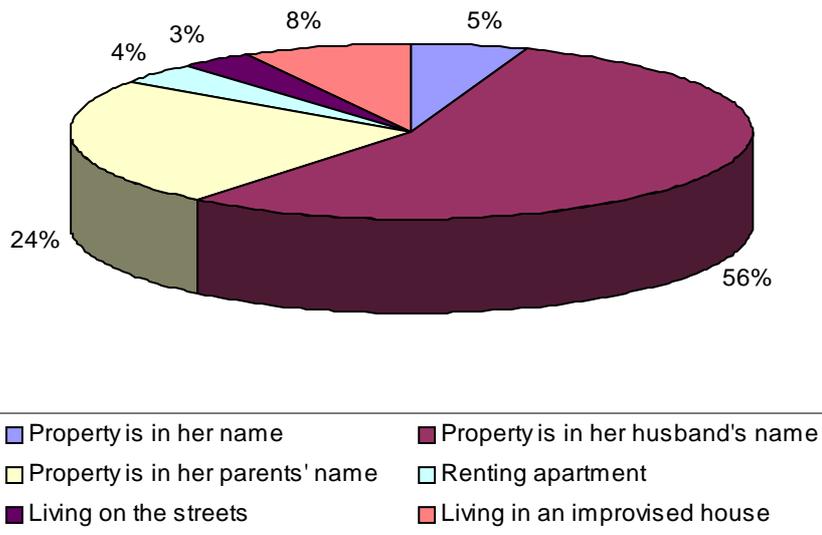
Discrimination in Employment: Practices
(of 27 women reporting discrimination in access to employment)



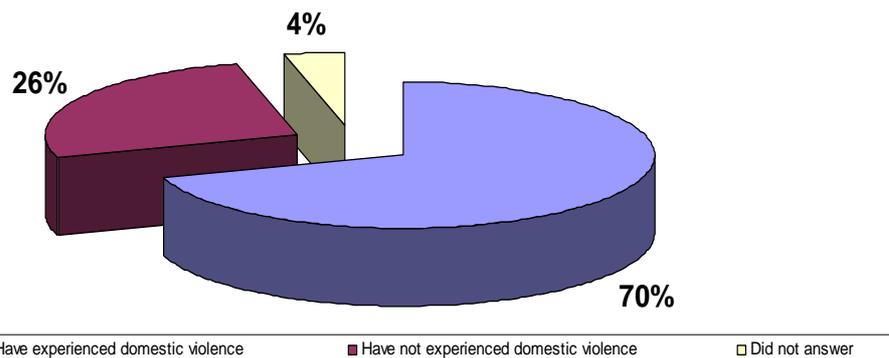
Access to Health Care



Property Status



Romani Women and Domestic Violence



8.2 Appendix 2

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