Policy brief

Monitoring the Implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plans for the Improvement of Roma in the context of Serbia’s EU accession and the Anti-Discrimination Law

Standing Conference of the Roma associations of the citizens (SKRUG) - the League of Roma

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ABSTRACT

The document on public policies in the addendum provides a summary of 12-month-research outcome on sectorial policies that improve the position of the Roma community. During the preparation of this document, the first in a row that SKRUG will report periodically, we set up two goals. One goal is to develop SKRUG’s research and analytical capacity to thoroughly analyze public policies and their effects on the socio-economic situation of Roma in Serbia, and the other is that, in a new way, it actively deliberate the directions of public policies development and measures specifically designed for improvement of the position of Roma as well as to conceptualize basics for defining policies in the field of poverty, inequality, social policies and social innovation in Serbia. This document defines important recommendations in the field of the use of the EU funds in four key sectors: employment, education, housing and health. The European Commission, in communication with the Member States, invited on usage of existing European financial mechanisms, particularly the Structural Funds for improving the situation of Roma. Most of EU members have failed to use existing funds in a good way so far. Serbia, as an EU membership candidate, has IPA funds which are certainly insufficient, but the available IPA funds are actually a catalyst for generating additional funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, and a kind of mechanism for synchronization of the negotiation process and criteria with strategies, laws and public policies that regulate the position of the Roma community. Moreover, the use of EU funds for improving the position of Roma is a mean for establishing sustainable systems that will be able to establish that complex relationship between policies and funds, increase the momentum towards achieving the vision of the integration of the Roma community, avoid segregation at any costs and allow active participation of Roma civil society organizations in the future.
INTRODUCTION

Within the project “Strengthening the capacity for public advocacy”, besides acquiring new knowledge and skills in advocacy of Roma community interests, Standing Conference of the Roma Associations of the Citizens (SKRUG) - the League of Roma has envisaged to promote periodical reports in a new form that should provide a brief, comprehensive and precise review of the state of affairs in the implementation of public policies. The project has been supported by the Foundation for an Open Society in Budapest. This document, being the first in the series of reports on monitoring the sectorial public policies that explicitly refer to the Roma community, particularly focuses on those segments of public policies that have a significant impact on the visibility of Roma position. The monitoring of four public sectors with the highest needs has been done. These sectors are employment, health care, education and housing.

This paper aims at providing an overview, based of publically available information, of various sectorial inclusion programmes carried out in Serbia, through an analysis conducted by using the relevant social and economic data, the available statistics and various political frameworks dealing with the Roma. The Project’s and this document’s main goal is to understand the impact of key policies, through their various programmes in practice, on the Roma, by using various sources of the data, to emphasise their strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations for the improvement of the existing framework.

Sectorial policies have been analysed on the basis of publicly available information, and the research framework has been developed in such a way as to focus on three broad categories:

1) fundamental concept being analysed (2) monitoring and evaluation procedure and (3) outcome and external validity. For the purpose of this analysis, only publicly available information has been used: evaluations, studies, field reports, CSO’s data, direct monitoring of concrete projects, information on official web sites, etc.

Despite some results that have been achieved in the field, the Roma situation is still critical. The Roma are still lagging behind in education at pre-school, primary, secondary and university level as compared to the non-Roma. Consequently, the Roma are facing fewer employment opportunities than the non-Roma with similar qualifications. Most of the Roma are still living in severe poverty, without access to the formal labour market. Some progress has been made in the field of informal employment but there is a lack of Government’s measures and support. Although the right to an adequate and safe housing is a fundamental human right, the Roma are still living in peripheral settlements (sometimes in camps), in unsanitary conditions and with a difficult access to local infrastructures. Housing conditions are frequently very poor, which contributes to unhealthy living conditions.
conditions and spreading of diseases. Despite the general discrimination in all spheres, this research focuses on structural aspects of the problems and on possible policy measures.

The prevailing framework in Serbia is still the European agenda and pre-accession negotiations which define the criteria for meeting the membership conditions. The adaptation of public policies to the European political framework for the Roma, Decade of Roma inclusion and the National Roma Inclusion Strategy - NRIS, is of vital importance.

Without adequately designed public policies that explicitly, but not exclusively, include Roma measures, it will not be possible to implement policies, programme goals and project activities for the financial period 2014 - 2020.

IPA funds and the European Structural Funds in near future are an opportunity for making an essential change because they establish a stronger regulatory framework that enables various options for drafting and implementing Roma community inclusion measures. Three key elements have been defined within the framework.

First of all, these refer to the horizontal partnership principles and multilevel governance. The multilevel governance is a particularly complex issue since it involves overlapping and interdependence of several levels of government and managerial structures, particularly in the context of Roma community inclusion, having in mind that these sectors are not well mutually coordinated on these issues.

Another element refers to horizontal principles of non-discrimination and equality that should be included in all norms. Equality principle should be an integral part of all public policy segments. The third element, or principle, refers to an inclusive approach applied in sectorial strategies and public policies, but also in programme documents related to IPA funds, accordingly.
I HOUSING

**Context and significance of the problem**

It is estimated that around 70% of Roma in Serbia live in Roma settlements. The 2002 survey in Serbia registered 593 Roma settlements with more than 100 inhabitants, 58% of which originate from before 1945, including 47% of the settlements that originate from before the beginning of the twentieth century. The 2015 survey mapped 583 so-called substandard Roma settlements, the majority of which originate from more than 45 years ago. Thus, in the Vojvodina region, 65% of the settlements is over 45 years old, in Southern and Eastern Serbia 61%, in the region of Sumadija and Western Serbia 53%, while this percentage is the lowest, 33%, in the Belgrade region.

There is a significant difference between the housing conditions of Roma and common population. Researches have shown that around 37% of households in Roma settlements did not have adequate access to drinking water compared to 8% of households in common population. Around 67% of Roma households resided in houses that were not connected to the sewage system, compared to 37% of households of majority population. There is a significant difference regarding possession of connectors for electrical energy where 11% of Roma households did not have electricity, compared to 0.1% of the general population. The difference can also be seen in the spatial features of housing units and residential comfort. Average number of rooms per a family member was 0.63 in cases of Roma households, which is almost twice less compared to 1.13 in cases of the general population. Also, 79% of Roma households, as compared to 61% of households of general population, is forced to reduce the heating of their apartments due to insufficiency of income. Although 88% of Roma households and 72% of others use wood for heating their apartments, the situation is significantly different when using wood as energy source for cooking, which is done by 49% of Roma households as compared to 12% of the general population. Moreover, 39% of Roma families lived in very bad apartments and in disordered settlements, compared to 10% of households of general population. Comparison of housing conditions shows that about 73% of Roma have less than 10 m² per a household member as compared to about 26% of the non-Roma, while almost 54% of Roma households do not have a bathroom in the house, as compared to a little less than 10% of non-Roma households.

Serbia has adopted several laws, national and local strategic documents which introduce affirmative measures or they are specifically related to improving Roma housing conditions. Law on Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for 2010 - 2020 emphasises Roma settlements (the term used is Roma enclaves) as the most vulnerable category of settlements, sets goals and provides models for their social and economic integration and improvement of living conditions of their inhabitants. Spatial and urban planning, development and use of construction land and construction of buildings are the issues regulated by the Law on Planning and Construction. Of particular importance to the problem of Roma settlements and housing of Roma is the procedure and method of urban planning, land development, licensing for building constructions. The line ministry in cooperation with the OSCE has
developed Guidelines for the Improvement and Legalization of Informal Roma Settlements that provide local governments with technical instructions in urban plans development, resolving the issues of legalization and improvement of informal settlements. The Law on Legalization of Buildings provides the possibility of subsequent obtaining of construction and use permits for illegally built facilities, but the deadline for submitting applications expired in early 2014. The Law stipulates that local governments can provide facilities in the legalization process to those owners of illegally built facilities, which enabled them to solve their housing problems.

The Housing Law provides exceptions according to which it is possible to carry out forced evictions without a court decision. This refers to the cases in which a person moves into an apartment or common rooms of a building without any legal basis or uses an apartment without a signed contract or the legal basis on which the contract was concluded has been annulled. In such cases, the apartment owner or a person that has legal interest may request their eviction from the municipal body responsible for housing. Such procedure is defined as "urgent" and an appeal against the decision on moving out of the apartment does not delay its execution.

The Social Housing Law defines social housing as housing of an adequate standard intended for households that cannot provide appropriate apartment lease or property under market conditions due to social, economic and other reasons. The Law defines the right to meeting housing needs in line with the basic criteria: housing status, income, health status, invalidity, number of household members and assets. Additional criteria for realization of benefits are identified for vulnerable social groups that include, among others, the Roma, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and others. The Law on Social Protection is the legal framework within which local government units provide the service of “social housing in a supportive environment.” So far, the construction of these apartments has been funded through donor programs and was primarily aimed at solving the housing problems of refugees and displaced persons accommodated in collective centres and, to much lesser extent, problems of other vulnerable groups.

The Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma emphasises the improvement of housing conditions of this minority as one of the priorities. Basic principles set by the Strategy in the field of housing are related to poverty reduction; application of integrated approaches to solving the housing problems of Roma; equal treatment of Roma settlements; full participation of Roma and coordinated participation of relevant ministries, local authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the majority community in drafting and implementing housing programmes; transparency and diversity of sources of housing programmes’ funding, as well as responding to the needs of women and children and the preservation of ethnic and cultural identity of the Roma. The Strategy’s main goal is “to ensure the legal use of housing and property in all aspects, enabling healthy life of family and individual, making the life of woman and child easier, providing adequate conditions for the way of life that is acceptable to Roma as well as fostering the housing culture that is accepted in the entire society”. The Strategy’s main goal is also the integration of Roma settlements through the "provision of basic facilities and equal access to social services, departments and infrastructure", stressing that the improvement of living conditions in Roma settlements should be seen as a prerequisite for integration and inclusion of their inhabitants into the general social system.

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The National Social Housing Strategy sets basic directions of activity in the housing sector through: the establishment and development of social housing institutions; increasing the volume and diversity of housing solutions; increasing the affordability of housing for low-income households through the introduction of subsidized housing allowance; setting standards of a housing construction and improvement of existing housing fund; establishing instruments for the prevention and reduction of homelessness; improvement of living conditions of inhabitants of informal (substandard) settlements. Action Plan for the implementation of the Social Housing Strategy includes aforesaid activities, estimated financial resources for the implementation, potential financial sources, and specified institutions responsible for the implementation of the envisaged measures. Regulation on the standards and norms for planning, design, construction and conditions for usage and maintenance of social housing has been drafted and it stipulates the general and technical requirements, including apartment surface norm with regard to the size of the household, as well as the terms of use and maintenance of apartments, etc. The National Strategy for Resolving the Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for 2015 - 2020 particularly emphasizes the Roma who are internally displaced persons. The Strategy points out that housing conditions of Roma IDPs are much worse than in other members of this group, which is why special measures aimed at resolving these issues are provided for. There has been no precise data on the number of refugees and internally displaced Roma, while at the same time the access to information and the exercise of rights have been disabled. Roma and non-Roma NGOs have pointed at this problem so far and continue to actively advocate their rights at the political and technical level in this process. The issue of Roma housing is also elaborated in the Strategy for the Reintegration of Returnees under the readmission agreements.

Several by-laws considering costs associated with housing have been adopted.

Some local governments have adopted comprehensive Action Plans for the improvement of the Roma position including the improvement of their housing conditions. Several local government units have adopted Housing Strategies containing goals and measures for the improvement of the Roma settlements in their areas. Only 10%, out of the total of 120 municipalities in Serbia that declared they had Roma settlements on their territory in the 2015 survey, have actually drafted local action plans for improvement of Roma housing. The largest number of Local Action Plans (LAP) for improving the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons also include measures aimed at improving the housing conditions of the Roma belonging to these groups.

Under the Social Housing Law of 2011, the National Housing Agency (NHA) was established with a view to creating the institutional framework for sustainable development of social housing and the provision and use of funds for the development of social housing. In the previous period, NHA mostly did not address the issues of improving Roma housing, and its significant involvement in this field is expected in the forthcoming period through the housing programmes financed from the IPA funds.
Criticism of the present policy

The current rate of application of measures envisaged by national or local documents and action plans in the field of improving Roma housing has been very low, fragmented and uncoordinated. Underdeveloped institutional mechanisms for the implementation contribute to this, as well as the fact that competent authorities and institutions at all levels of government refuse to implement the measures which they are responsible for and to tackle the issues of improving the housing conditions of Roma. Consequently, the funds for the implementation of adopted measures allocated in national and local budgets have been very small. Moreover, representatives of local governments are very poorly informed about the measures for improving Roma housing provided for in national documents, and according to a survey carried out by the Ombudsman, about 80% of the examined Roma was not aware of the possibilities of solving the housing problem in their place of residence.

There were few executed social housing programs in the past period, and the set of criteria and scoring system for the selection of the occupiers were unavailable to poor families, particularly the Roma ones. Furthermore, for solving the housing problems of refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia, with great financial support by the international community, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration has conducted multiannual housing programmes, but the coverage of Roma IDPs with these solutions is very low, and the number of such programs aimed at improving the housing conditions of Roma is negligible as well.

At the level of local governments, Roma housing issues are dealt with by different departments, mainly the Social Affairs Departments and to much lesser extent, by the Urban Planning and Housing Affairs Departments, Directorates for Construction, Housing Agencies, etc. A major problem is the displacement of informal Roma settlements and eviction of individual families, which is often conducted by force. Reports of national and foreign institutions and organizations highlight the inadequacy of the procedures that are applied during eviction and displacement and non-compliance with the commitments arising from international documents on human rights signed by Serbia. Discriminatory practices of accommodation for displaced Roma in so-called "mobile units", which are actually non-residential metal containers are particularly criticized.

Recommendations

1. It is necessary to improve the living conditions of the Roma national minority in Serbia by providing legal security of property (legalization of settlements), the availability of services, materials, facilities, infrastructure, affordability, habitability and adequate accessibility, adequate location and cultural adequacy, as defined by the international standards on the right to adequate housing, ratified by the Republic of Serbia;

2. It is necessary to initiate the development of Local Action Plans for improving housing conditions of Roma;

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3. It is necessary to educate representatives of Roma civil society organizations and associations on the subject of discrimination in housing, the exercise of rights in the field of housing and the provision of free legal aid to residents of the settlements;

4. Local governments should ensure the full participation of Roma and civil society in the process of developing and implementing Local Action Plans;

5. National Housing Agency should provide technical and financial support to poor local governments in the development and implementation of Local Action Plans for the housing of Roma and to provide direct national and international financial support for the implementation of LAPs;

6. Local governments with the assistance of the competent ministries should develop urban-planning documentation for Roma settlements in order to create a basis for improving housing and meeting settlement utility requirements;

7. It is necessary for local self-governments to review urban plans which provide for displacement of Roma settlements from the existing location and revise these plans or justify the envisaged displacement;

8. Legalization of Roma settlements that are older but sustainable, must be conducted in order to solve the problem of land ownership at about 300 old Roma settlements. To provide funds for subsidizing the high cost of legalization, as high construction specifications set for facilities that are inhabited by the poorest, as well as the high costs of legalization (for technical documentation, surveying services, payment of fees, etc.) that many Roma families cannot pay by themselves;

9. It is necessary that the line Ministry initiate the process of amending the Law on Legalization of Buildings and add the measures that will enable subsequent application of facilities, simplifies the procedure of legalizing facilities and in cooperation with local governments, provides cost reduction of processes for facilities that have been built by vulnerable Roma families;

10. It is necessary, in cooperation with the SEIO, competent ministries and local governments to start planning, identifying and project drafting that will be included in the IPA programming housing documents;

11. It is necessary that the line Ministry supports the adoption and implementation of the sustainable legalization of Roma settlements, proposed by the League of Roma, which offers the possibility to legalize over 50-year-old Roma settlements. The Law provides that the urban, social and economic integration of informal settlements in the entire city structure will be a key factor in preparing for the EU accession; ¹ ²

¹ http://www.danas.rs/dodaci/uploaddocumentsdodaci2013biltenpdf/zasto_nam_potreban_lex_specialis_o_legalizaciji_romskih_naselja_u_srbiji.1117.html/news_id=290378
² http://www.gradjanin.rs/liga-roma-predlaze-legalizaciju-romskih-naselja/

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II EMPLOYMENT

Context and significance of the problem

In the period from 2009 to 2015, Roma employment policy in Serbia did not get sufficient attention, both in terms of institutional and organizational structures and serious commitment to that particular issue, or in terms of funding and monitoring.

Proof of this is the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia from May 2015 according to which the number of Roma with personal income in 2011 decreased by 51% compared to 2002.

Key reason for Roma poverty, emigration of Roma from Serbia to the EU countries and social exclusion is their mass unemployment. The position of the Roma population, as one of the most disadvantaged ethnic group, is extremely unfavourable in both labour market and in society. It is characterized by a low level of economic activity, a large share of labour in the informal sector, high unemployment rate, performance of the most difficult and least paid jobs, lack of inventive and effective system at the state and local level in the implementation of plans. The reasons that cause this unfavourable position at the labour market are: low level of education, discrimination and exclusion from the general population. In socio-economic terms, the Roma live in poverty and most of them are on the verge of existence.

Many data indicating the scope and type of Roma unemployment also indicate the existence of this burning social problem, which coincides with the breakup of ex Yugoslavia and the emergence of nationalism, xenophobia, chauvinism and overt discrimination. On this occasion, we will highlight continuous monitoring of the workforce and the results of the population census of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the comprehensive research of the UNDP on poverty of Roma from a human development perspective (Ivanov, Kagin 2014), as well as sociological research on social and cultural potential of the Roma in Serbia (Sokolovska, 2014). Furthermore, a wide range of experience in the field, case studies and research results point at systemic discrimination of Roma primarily by the Government of Serbia in the field of Roma participation in the bodies of state administration, public sector, as well as in the labour market.

As stated in the 2014 Progress Report for Serbia: "Some 30 % of the unemployed included in active labour market measures in 2013 belong to the most vulnerable groups and to groups with high incidence and persistence of unemployment, including Roma. Roma will continue to benefit from specific programmes in addition to regular active measures. The 2014 budget earmarked for active
labor market measures is less than 0.1 % of GDP, which is very low but nevertheless an increase from the previous year.” (European Commission 2014, p. 62-63)

In order to improve the situation at the labour market, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has adopted the National Employment Strategy for 2011-2020. This document is based on and complies with the European Strategy ‘Europe 2020’.

Recently finalized process of drafting the Programme of reforms in employment and social policy that identifies priorities in the areas of employment, education and social protection is of great importance and it will closely monitor the European Integration Process. For the first time one programme is a sort of connective tissue that unites the three key sectors with the aim to reduce inequality and stimulate new dynamics at the employment market.

Most Roma households have limited sources of income (mainly income from seasonal work in agriculture and construction, work in the informal sector, collecting secondary raw material, remittances from abroad and social assistance from the state). Two main factors contributing to the unfavourable position of the Roma at the labour market, which also restrict most Roma to low-paid and temporary jobs are: 1) low level of education and vocational training and 2) discrimination by potential employers. (Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, p. 21).

On the other hand, the 2011 analysis of economically active against economically inactive Roma in Serbia indicates the great burden of the Roma population who have incomes based on work, pensions and income from property. The total percentage of Roma who have such income is 17.38%, and they support a total of 69% of Roma who has no source of income (unemployed, children, students, and housewives). Table 1 presents the data on the economic activity of Roma in Serbia, collected during the population censuses of 2002 and 2011. Based on the very difference of participation in certain categories it can be seen that in 10-year period the percentage of employed Roma significantly decreased by 5.95%, while an increase was recorded for persons who perform only housework in their household (housewives) by 2.19%, as well as for the persons of category of others, by 3.57%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Economically active</th>
<th>Economically inactive</th>
<th>Others3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons with personal income</td>
<td>Dependents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 In order to compare the results of two censuses, the category Other includes: persons with other personal income (category "persons with personal income"), as well as unable to work and others that do not perform profession from the category "dependent population".

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Much more than the majority of the population, Roma rely on informal borrowing from friends, relatives or informal lenders (Ivanov, Tursaliev 2006) and due to low revenue sources (coming from informal employment) they have limited access to banks. In this way, they are unable to start their own entrepreneurial business, and the possibility of self-employment and employment of the members of their households is reduced. Furthermore, profits made are mainly focused on survival on a local basis and they (as shown in Table 2) largely come on the basis of social benefits for the unemployed persons and dependents. These unfavourable circumstances lead to a vicious cycle of poverty from which the output, besides being long-term, must be clearly formulated, adjusted to Roma population and institutionally supported.

Table 2 - The Roma population according to the sources for living in 2010, by region (%)

|---|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wage or and other income deriving from work</th>
<th>Belgrade region</th>
<th>Vojvodina Region</th>
<th>Sumadija region and Western Serbia</th>
<th>Southern and Eastern Serbia region</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pension</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>income from property</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social income</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>16.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholarship for pupils/students, student loan</td>
<td>0.00⁴</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00⁵</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ⁴ Very little participation, since the absolute frequency counts only 9 recipients of scholarship for pupils/students, student loan |
| ⁵ Very little participation, since the absolute frequency counts only 7 recipients of scholarship for pupils/students, student loan |
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| loan, savings | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.13 | 0.28 |
| Financial compensation for the unemployed persons | 0.05 | 0.09 | 0.03 | 0.10 | 0.27 |
| dependents | 11.27 | 16.16 | 7.64 | 21.95 | 57.02 |
| other | 1.89 | 2.64 | 1.37 | 4.38 | 10.28 |
| TOTAL | 18.52 | 28.71 | 13.99 | 38.78 | 100.00 |

*Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*

Status of Roma at the labour market is characterized by disproportionate rates of temporary and informal jobs. Those are mainly jobs in the informal sector that are poorly paid. However, informal employment sector is not very different from the formal one. Results of aforementioned UNDP survey show that in 2011 the highest percentage of employed Roma was unskilled labour (59%), 11% were semi-skilled and 13% were skilled workers. In accordance with this structure, 21% of Roma is employed in the utility service companies, 30% in industry and construction and 10% in agriculture.

Initiative for small social microcredit that offers a solution for a large portion of the unemployed Roma is known among the public. Besides the fact that most of the Roma live in multi-generational and multi-membered households, which is favourable for launching family businesses, results of the research ‘Social and Cultural Potentials of the Roma Community in Serbia’ show that 76.9% of Roma in Serbia would like to do trade and provide services. The wish to start micro family businesses, but also a sense of commerce and specialized services, also have a profound cultural background related to the traditional life of the Roma. A smaller part of the Roma (13.8% of them) would like to deal with the production occupations. They require skilled labour force and at least secondary level of education, thus lower interest in these occupations may be linked to the educational structure of the Roma.

**Table 3 - The wish to start up their own business**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type of occupation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trade and service occupations</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production occupations</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old, traditional occupations</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Source: The project Social and cultural potentials of the Roma ethnic community in Serbia

Criticism of the present policy

The causes of this position at the labour market are often cited. As the most important, we highlight discriminatory policies, low educational level, which also results in adverse social networks as one of the key preconditions for access to information of relevance for employment.

"Besides the lack of monitor mechanism (monitoring) and evaluation (indicators), insufficient and undirected budget allocations are still a significant problem. The Republic of Serbia significantly relies on foreign funds (donations, loans or other financial instruments). The difficult economic situation which is facing the Serbian society and economy and high unemployment rate, deepens the already deep marginalization of certain groups, including the Roma community, which is in the most difficult position. In 2014, the implementation of the Strategy was not supported by the budgetary funds specifically earmarked for the Roma. (Monitoring done by the Civil Society, 2014).

Measures for promotion of Roma employment in terms of non-discrimination during employment, as well as the prohibition of all discriminatory practices in the labour market affecting members of Roma communities, and affirmative actions aimed at employers, do not give the expected results. There are neither special budgetary resources nor special measures of local authorities aimed at promoting the employment of Roma in the local self-government, public administration, and in private companies.

Relevant ministries should adopt and implement, whenever possible, at national or local level, special measures in favour of Roma men and women in employment, such as public works and other activities or special measures for training Roma in various professional qualifications and professions.

The state of affairs has been well described in the Employment Strategy: "The data on the total number of employed Roma in state and local administration indicate institutional discrimination. There are almost no Roma in public and state companies. Employment services have no records of the employed Roma. Neither on the national nor on the provincial nor on the local level are there any special funds for the development of entrepreneurship among the Roma. Public funding that the Government of the Republic of Serbia got in different ways from international organizations are not enough for poverty reduction and employment of Roma. Roma Employment Action Plan within the Decade of Roma, which has been adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, is still not implemented in the systematic way and there is no clearly defined line in the budget from which the planned measures would be financed. There is no institutionalized cooperation between Roma civil associations and state authorities.

The area in which the Roma are most frequently engaged is in grey economy. Low rate of economic activity of the majority of Roma is the consequence of economic culture, socioeconomic underdevelopment, extreme political barriers in employment and specific set of demographic factors. Most Roma are outside the employment system, they are not legally economically active and most of them are registered as unemployed. When they are at the labour market, they work the
hardest and most dangerous jobs at the lowest price. Collectors of secondary raw material constitute
one of the largest and most exploited groups of workers, with the lowest labour costs. Although the
registered **State Union of Secondary Raw Material Collectors** has existed for five years, and despite
that about 75% of total collected waste in Serbia is collected by individual collectors, mainly Roma, it
was not invited nor involved in the process of drafting new Waste Law. The government must
recognize this kind of work as a legitimate type of activity, consider proposals from Roma NGOs and
in accordance with the principles of sustainable development offer viable system solutions for
furthering social and economic status of these workers.

The Serbian Government should develop a clear practical Roma employment policy and anti-
discrimination policy, and also define the consequences for not abiding by it, which can be expected
at the labour market, as well as the institutional framework for supporting the implementation and
enforcement of this policy (the Agency for Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the
Status of Roma and a special trust fund for Roma Inclusion).

**Recommendations**

1. Establish a coordinating body for activities in Serbia in the field of employment, social
   protection and inclusion. (Agency for implementation of the Roma Strategy) which will
   include the representatives of the European Commission, the OSCE and the Council of
   Europe as observers and advisers in its work;

2. Establish a trust fund for employment and economic empowerment of Roma, in order to
   increase the availability and accessibility of microfinance to Roma men and Roma women
   through increased funding of social and family entrepreneurship. Representatives of the
   European Commission and donors should be on the management board of this Fund;

3. Adopt clear indicators and precise organ or institution of the Government of Serbia, which
   will be responsible for monitoring and reporting of the bodies and institutions established in
   the process of fulfilment of the conditions for Serbia's EU accession process;

4. Active implementation of the ESRP program. Actively include CSOs in drafting project
   proposals and represent experiences from EU outsourcing initiatives and measures for
   employment in the NGO sector;

5. Employ highly educated Roma in state institutions in the public sector in line with the
   percentage of participation of Roma in the total population of Serbia (2.05%);

6. Develop specific measures to stimulate employment of young Roma, to develop social
   entrepreneurship and cooperatives, do the ex ante evaluation of past measures and labour
   market performance (NGO initiative in southern Serbia, the activities of the Office for Roma
   integration, etc.);

7. Modernize social services for the Roma at the local level, accredit new programmes of social
   protection that will be adapted to specific features of the Roma community;

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*Monitoring the implementation of national strategies and action plans for improving the position of Roma in the context of Serbia's EU accession and the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination*
Anti-discrimination recommendations

1. Establishment of a special body within the Agency for implementation of the Strategy which will deal with monitoring the implementation of anti-discriminatory measures by all relevant bodies and institutions;

2. Establishing responsibility for the implementation of anti-discrimination measures;

3. Application of the participation principle for the Roma community in the process of developing, implementing and evaluating programmes of active employment policy;

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III EDUCATION

Context and significance of the problem

We must approach to the right to education, as a basic human right, through the standards and principles that promote anti-discriminatory practices by encouraging the active participation of stakeholders, without neglecting the specific needs of children, adults, people with disabilities or women as equal members and members of the same social group. The close and inseparable link between education and community development is an additional reason for approaching to the right to education primarily as one of the possibilities for overcoming the general deprivation of certain social group, but also of individuals who belong to it.

Investment in education with a view to combating poverty of the Roma community, as one of the results of social exclusion and deprivation, should lead to the eradication of inequalities and achievement of equality, solidarity and social justice.

Strategic documents in the field of education that accompanied the Decade proposed a series of detailed measures and actions which aimed at the inclusion of the Roma community in the education system of continuous and quality education, respect for diversity and the development of diversity and multiculturalism.

In the same spirit, the Strategy on Adult Education Development in the Republic of Serbia by 2020 sets the social objectives pursued by the Republic of Serbia: improve the quality of education, cover the population at all levels by educational policies, achieve relevance and effectiveness of education. The problems that Roma children face in education are singled out in parts of this Strategy, which are devoted to primary and secondary education, and strategic measures are planned to overcome them - greater coverage, better achievements in teaching, support, linking education with active measures of employment policies and other.

However, besides investments, primarily by the international donors, progress in the field of education is not at the expected level. Particular attention is drawn to education of girls and women. National Census from 2011 recorded more noticeable illiteracy in Roma women than among Roma man, so that the structure of the total number of illiterate men, illiterate Roma account for 31% and 69% of women are illiterate. Roma women organizations in the last 20 years or so have been warning about this phenomenon, as well as the occurrence of regression in the educational profile

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7 "Official Gazette" No.107/2012.

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of Roma women which is reflected in higher level of education of mothers compared to their daughters. Even 8.2% of young Roma men and women, aged 10-19, is in a group of illiterate persons (this is one of the data which is important and for which we do not have full-disaggregated structure, although it can be assumed that the majority are female children). The reasons for such situation have been discussed several times and are reduced to the aforementioned bad legislative implementation, but also clearly indicate the position of women and female children in a Roma family. At the same time, this has a significant impact on the structure of the labour force and the employed, social migration, political and public participation in decision-making. Due to the fact that the changes in the educational structure can affect social position, it is clear why education is crucial in the process of integration of the Roma community, particularly Roma women.

Table 1. Illiterate Roma, 10 years old and over, by sex, 2002-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL Roma</th>
<th>Illiterate Roma</th>
<th>Share in total population %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>84361</td>
<td>42408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>114355</td>
<td>58118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ROMA IN SERBIA, National Statistical Office, 2015

Roma without education participate with 66.6% in the total population, with primary education 43.9% and with secondary education 30.4%. In the population of Serbia at all levels (except for secondary education, where women make up 46.5% of total persons with secondary school) shares indicate that women are in advantage and it ranges from 81.4% (without school) to 51.8 % (high and higher education).

Table 2 The total population and Roma aged 15 and over, according to sex and educational attainment, by regions, Population Census 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sex</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>Without school</th>
<th>incomplete primary school</th>
<th>Primary school</th>
<th>secondary school</th>
<th>higher and high education</th>
<th>unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SERBIA</td>
<td>6161584</td>
<td>164 884</td>
<td>677 499</td>
<td>1 279</td>
<td>3015092</td>
<td>1000569</td>
<td>24 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>2 971</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>30 628</td>
<td>241 226</td>
<td>593 463</td>
<td>1 613 356</td>
<td>481 956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOMEN</td>
<td>3 189</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>134 256</td>
<td>436 273</td>
<td>685 563</td>
<td>1 401 736</td>
<td>518 613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMA COMMUNITY</td>
<td>100 126</td>
<td>19 538</td>
<td>34 251</td>
<td>33 372</td>
<td>11 552</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>50 850</td>
<td>6 534</td>
<td>16 745</td>
<td>18 716</td>
<td>8 042</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Monitoring the implementation of national strategies and action plans for improving the position of Roma in the context of Serbia’s EU accession and the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination
According to the Census 2011, although men dominate in the Roma population over 15 years of age (51.0%), women are less educated. Of the total number of those who have not finished school, women make up 66.5%, slightly more than 51% make Roma women with incomplete primary education compared to male members of their communities. 44% of Roma women, compared to 56% of the Roma men have primary education, according to the Census 2011. Drastic educational gap occurs in high schools, so from those who have completed high school (11.5% of the total number of Roma over 15) only 30% are girls. These data are consistent of the estimates of the Roma women's organizations of civil society that the first drop-out of Roma girls in recent years happens in transition between eight years of compulsory education and secondary education (which is not mandatory in Serbia). 32% of Roma women have reached high education, while twice as many (68%) young Roma men have completed high education.

Results of MICS 5 research by UNICEF and the National Statistical Office indicate that only 80% of children from Roma settlements who have attended the first grade of primary school attend pre-school preparatory programme (in the general population the coverage is 98%), while only 69% of Roma children attend first grade of primary school (in the general population the coverage is 97%), 64% of Roma children complete primary school (in the general population it is 93%), and finally, only 22% of children of Roma origin attend secondary school (in the general population it is 89%).

Perhaps more than in other areas, it is important to underline the gender aspect of the problem of early school drop-outs. As many as 43% of Roma girls in this age group drop out of school to get married and start families between the age of 15 and 19. With girls of the same age in the general population, this percentage is 4%. Consequences such as an increasing "feminization of poverty" and violence in the family and intimate relationships are certainly closely associated with poor educational, and thus potentially weak economic profile of Roma women.

Affirmative action measures in education were reduced to enrolment in secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. Measures for promoting full and effective equality were first introduced in the domestic legislative framework through the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities (2002), which in Art. 4. envisages measures to ensure the full and effective equality between persons belonging to national minorities and the majority population. Affirmative action measures for the enrolment of pupils of Roma nationality in secondary schools and schools of high and higher education and universities have been implemented since the school year 2003/04. Every application of affirmative measures has the limit in respect of the rights of others, therefore, application of this measure is not at the expense of other citizens. This measure is one of the successful measures that in the long term offers a viable mechanism for the improvement of the educational structure of the Roma population.

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**Criticism of the present policy**

The new Roma Inclusion Strategy that will define the effort for the next 10 years (2015-25) should take into account, above all, the lessons learned from the implementation of previous policies and strategic documents.

Along with the fight against discrimination and for equality, and therefore adequate treatment of the Roma community by the society and institutions, civil society will face the fight to defend affirmative actions as well as additional measures in public policies that support the community as a whole, but also individuals on an individual level will struggle to overcome obstacles that, due to the long-lasting unfavourable position, cannot be solved by themselves.

From the constitutional, legislative and international perspective, affirmative action is not questionable. The goal of these measures is clear: inclusion in mainstream society means moving from the margins of society, encouraging the active participation by eliminating passivity, providing equal access to human rights and the abolition (at least decrease) of Structural Discrimination.

Inclusive public policies in the Republic of Serbia often reach for the establishment of affirmative action as a major trump / strategic measure that should meet the overall objective of educational policy: inclusion and remaining in the education system.

The truth is that the affirmative measures for the Roma community were more talked about than actually applied. Each of these measures in various fields (education, health care, housing, participation in public life) has began as a project either by local civil society organizations, or as a project of international organizations.

The necessary preconditions for the success of affirmative measures:

- Economic support for measures of affirmative action.
- The social consensus on the need of implementation of affirmative measures in certain area and for certain social group.
- Established model for monitoring and assessing the adequacy of affirmative measures and their effect on the social group that uses the measures, and monitoring the effects on society as a whole.

It seems that none of the preconditions is completely filled.

*Economically*, the most difficult prerequisite is certainly difficult to meet in the years in which salaries and pensions have been reduced and employment in the public service is prohibited, although in the long-term, by supporting education, and later employment, the state budget has benefits, new employees pay taxes, electricity, apartments, and purchasing power is raised.

Agreement on the necessity of initiating affirmative measures for a particular social group has never existed for the simple reason that none of the officials have ever clearly explained the reasons to the
wider public for the implementation of these measures and the potential benefits to society as a whole, not just for the Roma community.

And in connection with the third prerequisite it must be noted that not only a system of monitoring and evaluation has been established, but the importance of establishing instruments in this field has not been recognized. The consequences are clear: we do not know how much the implementation of affirmative measures costs, we do not know how many Roma ended a cycle of education, in which areas, what problems they have encountered or whether this cycle initiated by an affirmative measure, ended up in finding a job. Additionally, we draw attention to the fact that the implementation of these measures is not regulated by any documents, for example a rulebook that would ensure implementation of affirmative measures regardless of the political climate in the country. It is particularly important to define a minimum percentage of participation of girls and young women who use these measures. For now the percentage is favourable for Roma women, however, this issue should not be left to the discretion of those who carry out this activity.

**Recommendations**

1. Regulate the methodology for collecting data that are sexually and nationally segregated in order to design adequate policy measures for complete and sustainable inclusion of Roma;

2. Establish instruments for the implementation and monitoring of effective policies of discrimination in education with strict observance of the gender dimension;

3. Continuity in investing in the education system at all levels with an aim of improving the educational outcomes of Roma students at all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education and to preventing early school drop-outs, focusing on Roma girls;

4. Define affirmative actions as measures for supporting pupils and students, but also their families, by increasing access to the education system, and also access to other measures such as student standard, establishing a mentoring system;

5. The development of new curricula that will encourage a more flexible organization of teaching as a prerequisite for the implementation of a new model of practice in vocational training;

6. Systematic tackling of the position of Roma teaching assistants in the education system, defining the area of their work with the specific task of establishing measurable indicators of the quality of pedagogical assistants;
IV HEALTH CARE

Context and significance of the problem

Besides significant efforts invested by the Ministry of Health, health care of the Roma community, especially children and women is still at unsatisfactory level. Approach to the primary health care is advanced, but in certain parts of the Republic of Serbia is still insignificant, while the approach to the secondary and tertiary health care is difficult, and the right to pharmacy health care’s approach, i.e. to list of essential medicines faces obstacles. There are unsolved issues like insurance coverage of undocumented persons and insufficient budgetary funds allocated. Despite the work of Roma health mediators who have significantly brought health care closer to the Roma community, coverage of the health care system is still inadequate. We have records of Roma men, and primarily of Roma women who remain outside the system, because the programmes and measures of public health often cannot reach all of the members of the Roma community, but also because these measures are inadequate and do not follow specific local needs of individuals.

New Roma Inclusion Strategy for 2015-25 in the field of public health raises the problem of keeping statistics and data collection, but also the need to develop different types of programmes for reaching a differentiated and isolated health parameters in order to come up with the relevant data on the state of health of the Roma community, with a special focus on women’s health and the health of children and elderly persons.

Strategically speaking, health care is one of the priority areas of the Roma Decade (2005-15) and in the new Roma Inclusion Strategy, which will refer to the period until the year of 2025, this area has not lost its strategic importance. National strategic documents such as the Public Health Strategy and the Strategy on Permanent Quality Improvement of the Health Protection and Patients Safety emphasise that specific measures must be taken towards the most vulnerable categories of the population, which are essentially affirmative and supportive. An important advantage that should be repeated in the new Roma Inclusion Strategy 2015-25 is the fact that the most common diseases are directly related to the degree of social and economic inclusion in society. The strategic guideline is also an obligation for improving cooperation among related ministries (Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Issues) with a goal for improving the quality of accessibility and affordability of health care, and above all, its adequacy for certain vulnerable groups within the Roma community, as children, women, persons with disabilities, children with disabilities, and old people. The living conditions and health of the population, especially women’s health are closely related. Ministry of Health estimates that the local water supply is used by about 68% of Roma families and slightly more than 57% of them have in-house toilets.

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The census data (2011)\(^{14}\) found that changes in relation to the understanding of reproduction and easy adjustment to more modern demographic trends could be seen. The facts show that the younger generation of Roma women give birth to fewer children than the elderly Roma women. Thus, the average number of live births in 2011 of the female population in the Republic of Serbia was 1.46, while for Roma women of Islamic religion that number is 3.56, for the Orthodox it is 2.72, for the Catholics 2.74, and 2.59 for the Protestants. The data also show that Serbia is dominated by the women who have given birth to one or two children, while more than one fifth of Roma women (21.6\%) and only 2.2\% of the total of other women gave birth to five or more children. Again, a close link between education and early childbearing is established, as well as giving birth to more children.

Differences at the level of fertility are, however, not to be interpreted solely under the influence of educational factors, but also under a number of other factors that are intertwined with the economic situation in the family. Thus, the Roma women who have not finished school give birth to 1.4 children on average more than Roma women with secondary education, while the lowest average number of live births is typical for Roma women with high and higher education. The relation between the level of education and the number of live births is confirmed at all Serbia’s regional levels. The highest average number of live born children is recorded in Roma women who have not finished school, as well as Roma women with lower education (incomplete primary education and primary school). The average number of live births decreases with increased levels of education, and the smallest differences are expressed among Roma women with high and higher education. But Roma women with high and higher education accounted only for 0.5\% of the total fertility contingent, and more than half of them (57.0\%) did not participate in reproduction, or they gave birth to one or two children (92.1\%). Considering the economic activity, in 2011 the active Roma women accounted for 32.0\% and inactive Roma women for 68.0\% in the reproductive period. The average number of live births in active and inactive Roma women shows relatively small differences. However, when differences in fertility are observed within the certain categories of activity, the average number of live births is the lowest among the employed (2.44) and among Roma women who have previously worked (2.37).

The average age of the population of the Republic of Serbia in 2011 was 42.2, and of Roma 27.8 years. The study which has been carried out within the project "The mobilization of the Roma community in monitoring the exercise of human, minority and women’s rights"\(^{15}\) records that even 95\% of women from the Roma settlements have heard of some kind of contraception, most usually the traditional methods, and they heard of them mainly from their mothers and elder sisters. Even young Roma women who are acquainted with modern contraceptive methods (6\%) report that they have heard about contraception in their immediate family, and not from the experts. Traditional methods of contraception, “withdrawal”, prevails, followed by the male condom, which is used in only about 2.5-3 per cent, mainly among married women (or cohabiting). Again, the level of

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\(^{15}\) “The mobilization of the Roma community in monitoring the exercise of human, minority and women’s rights”, project which is financed by the Foundation for the Open Society. In the realization of activity participated: Women’s space, Niš, Romani cikna, Krusevac, Roma Women Center Veliki Crljeni, Lazarevac, NGOs Ternipe, Pirot, Roma Association Novi Becej and BIBIJA Roma Women’s Center, Belgrade.
education is associated with the use of contraception. Out of the 610 Roma women who participated in our study, it is the use of modern contraceptive methods that coincides with the three-year and four-year education 2.8%. However, our respondents referred to abortion as the most common contraceptive method, each of the 700 participants of this study had at least one abortion, 50% of them more than three, 30% more than five, and about 20% more than eight.

The work of Roma health mediators, which proves to be a good practice, does not reach every Roma settlement, because not all local self-governments are covered by this measure. Only 60 local self-governments of the 120 LGUs, the number which Roma population is estimated to live in, have recruited Roma health mediators. From 2009 to 2014 In the field work over the years, work with families in their homes, mediation and assistance in accessing and using the services of local health care facilities, educational workshops, Roma health mediators have shown the following results:

1) 37,502 first visits carried out to the families and 140,408 citizens, out of which 50,754 children, have been covered and recorded during these visits;
2) identity documents and health booklets provided for 16,330 citizens who chose their doctors; 30,018 children were vaccinated; 2,719 adults were vaccinated (Te-Al);
3) health control for 4500 pregnant women and women who just gave birth;
4) medical check-up for 12,617 women who chose their gynaecologist;
5) 1144 mammography carried out, etc.

**Criticism of the present policy**

It is important to note that discrimination in access to health care remains a problem that is slowly detected and solved even more slowly. During 2013 and 2014 there was a significant number of complaints to the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Protection of Equality for Roma people who, due to legal uncertainty, were unable to exercise their right to health care.

The Ombudsman states that the health workers, while talking with them, made a series of discriminatory attitudes towards the Roma minority, but they refused to cooperate with the Ombudsman, “because they did not make all the information they have available, they refused to talk with the authorized persons of the Ombudsman and tried to prevent authorized persons of the Ombudsman to perform a direct supervision”\(^{16}\). This is one in a series of cases of discrimination in the field of health care.

**The health consequences of violence against women in the family and intimate relationships** have not been recognized for a long time, neither by the society, nor by health workers. The study, which

\(^{16}\) “The mobilization of the Roma community in monitoring the exercise of human, minority and women’s rights”, project which is financed by the Foundation for the Open Society. In the realization of activity participated: Women’s space, Niš, Romani cikna, Krusevac, Roma Women Center Veliki Crljeni, Lazarevac, NGOs Ternipe, Pirot, Roma Association Novi Becej and BIBIJA Roma Women’s Center, Belgrade.
Monitoring the implementation of national strategies and action plans for improving the position of Roma in the context of Serbia's EU accession and the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination was conducted by BIBIJA within the project "The mobilization of the Roma community in monitoring the exercise of human, minority and women's rights", brings the following results:

**Physical consequences of violence:**

- head injuries 28.5%
- bruises, cuts 34.9%
- broken nose, jaw, hand 34%
- limb injuries 2.6%

The emotional consequences of violence are the most difficult to see, but they last long and are hardly curable. The results of this research led to the following consequences: on the first place the participants mentioned depression, insomnia and problems with sleep. Next are the loss of confidence, difficulties in concentration and problems in establishing close relationships with people. Almost of the same intensity are frequent conflicts with others, conflicts with their own children and excessive irritability and aggressiveness. Grudge or sudden changes in mood, panic attacks, anxiety, fears follow. A number of participants stated they often experienced loneliness, and at least 32% of participants said that through prolonged violence had sexual problems - lack of interest in sexual intercourse. Almost all participants mentioned the problems in feeding, choking, headaches and a tendency towards excessive use of tranquilizers.

**Recommendations**

1. Provide Roma health mediators with proper education, make jobs in health centres part of the job classification scheme, as medical staff in Visiting Nurse Service;
2. Link health mediators with the work of other levels of health care (hospitals, clinical centres);
3. Submit the collected data (gender-specified) about the health of the Roma community from the health centre to the competent Institute for Public Health and institutes send necessary data to the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Serbia;
4. Improve the quality of health care provided for the Roma community, particularly pregnant women, women who recently gave birth and children;
5. Document, improve response and prevent cases of discrimination against Roma men, women and children;
6. Improve and specifically instruct protectors of the rights of insured persons with respect to working with complaints by the Roma patients;

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*Monitoring the implementation of national strategies and action plans for improving the position of Roma in the context of Serbia's EU accession and the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination*
7. Edit the Plan for health care from the compulsory health insurance in the district of priorities by the insured in point three. Health protection of vulnerable groups of the population by introducing - the promotion and preservation of health of the Roma;

8. In the chapter of Primary Health Care in the part of health care for infectious diseases introduce the immunization coverage in Roma settlements and Roma children settlements of at least 90% with the introduction of mobile teams consisting of paediatricians and public health nurses;

9. In the part of women health care it is necessary to include women from 15 to 25 years old by making mobile teams of gynaecologists and visiting nurses;

10. In the chapter on health care of pregnant women, it is necessary to separate the visit to pregnant women in Roma settlements by public health nurses;

11. Amendment to the Rulebook on the contents and scope of rights to health protection under the compulsory health insurance, and participation in the planning year under an amended plan of health care from the compulsory health insurance.

We highlight the case of a woman B.B. from Belgrade who gave birth at the beginning of January 2015 at the Clinical - Hospital Center Zemun. The Ombudsman in the process of controlling the legality and regularity of the work found a number of deficiencies in the work:

- "After the provision of health service - delivery - patient belonging to a particularly vulnerable population group, and has no medical document, the institution tried to charge provided service on the way which is not in accordance with the law, using the dependable position of the woman in labor.

- The patient and her family members were denied timely and complete information on the rights of health care insurance and the procedures for the exercise of such rights;

- Clinical - Hospital Center Zemun has not provided adequate information and training of health workers about:
  - Powers and obligations in case that the professional attitude and perception of the health workers on the best interests of the child find itself in conflict with the decisions and demands of parents;
  - Obligations of health facilities and health workers in relation to patients who belong to particularly vulnerable population, especially when they do not have health documents;
  - Powers and responsibilities of the Ombudsman and obligations of employees in the bodies that are subjected to the control powers of the Ombudsman."
CONCLUSION

When drafting this document, the SKRUG team had two goals. The primary goal was to conduct a careful screening of public policies which are relevant for the Roma community inclusion. The second one was to define a direction in which institutional and legal framework should develop, as well as bylaws that essentially regulate the issues that are pivotal for the Roma community in the field.

This document aimed at examining public and ideological, political, and institutional contexts in which the inclusion of the Roma community is happening, and at connecting with the ongoing Serbia - EU accession negotiation process. In Serbia, there is a tendency to design public policies in line with the needs of particularly vulnerable communities. This is primarily advised by CSO when providing their recommendations for legislative processes. However, the laws and bylaws still insufficiently cover some sectors, particularly in the part which regulate the position of the Roma community. It is the fact that there is a deficit in the very number of public policies, in capacities to design them, and in the political will to implement them. The conclusions in each sector predominately indicate that the European integration and the European funds can significantly affect the inclusion, both at the political level and by using the available financial support on this path. The recommendations indicate the framework in which the inclusion is conducted. This process which is very complex due to the critical situation, urgency and correlation between various actors, often seems like a labyrinth consisting of regulations and those who are responsible for the implementation of these regulations through operational activities. However, the conclusion is that besides the enhancement of institutions, human capacities, innovation, social and economic policies, it is necessary to enhance CSOs and entrust them with the responsibility of being the holders of the process. Building up the capacities of Roma organisations and establishing an alliance that would include all the organisations dealing with the Roma community inclusion is a mechanism that could really make some visible changes.

Stefan Fule, former European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy, pointed out the key role that civil society organizations play in contributing to the success of Roma integration policies: "They are the eyes and ears of society and therefore are essential in building bridges between the government and the Roma community".

Policy brief
Monitoring the implementation of national strategies and action plans for improving the position of Roma in the context of Serbia’s EU accession and the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination
The analysis of direct impact of active measures included in various sectorial policies and how they directly bridge the gaps within the Roma community has been conducted. For the purpose of completing the results of the analysis of the efficiency of the measures implemented by the state through public Roma policies, a detail list of recommendations has been drafted and they could be classified in several segments, including political ones, definitions of concrete measures and proposals on how to establish an active dialogue between the government, various agencies and organisations, donors and civil society organisations.

Furthermore, in the conclusion of this document, we could emphasise the progress made in building up the SKRUG capacities, in two aspects. When defining the methodology and research, SKRUG members showed a high level of participation and an active team work. In addition, for analysing and designing public policies related to the Roma, SKRUG experts used their own resources and experience. In this manner, SKRUG is developing its own methodology circle that covers the whole process from the field research to proposing practical policies that should unblock and facilitate the Roma community inclusion process. We have already implemented this model in the housing sector by submitting the *lex specialis* on housing for adoption. The results of the analysis of the impact of sectorial policies and measures will be presented to all relevant national and international institutions.