

# DECADE OF ROMA

MINORITY RIGHTS CENTER INFORMATION BOOKLET

*YEARLY REPORT OF THE LEAGUE  
FOR THE DECADE 2007.*

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**Open Society Institute**



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INFORMATION BOOKLET OF MINORITY RIGHTS CENTER no. 8  
YEARLY REPORT OF THE LEAGUE FOR THE DECADE 2007**

**Prepared by** Minority Rights Center

# MINORITY RIGHT CENTER

The Minority Rights Center (MRC) is a public interest law organization devoted to the improvement of the status of Roma in Serbia. The MRC is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established with a mission to battle racism, discrimination and human rights abuses of Roma, as well as to promote right to equal treatment. Since its founding in 2001, the MRC has been engaged in advocacy for the respect of Roma rights and in policy development regarding Roma national minority. Main activities of the MRC are: systematic monitoring of respect of human rights towards Roma, providing legal aid and litigation to Romani victims of discrimination and racially motivated violence, recommending measures for the improvement of the position of Roma and publishing reports on Center's findings.

In the scope of its work, the MRC:

- Has participated in creating the most significant national policy document on Roma The Action Plans for Roma, adopted by the Government of Serbia on January 27, 2005;
- Initiated establishment of working groups for monitoring implementation of Action Plans and urging for their more effective execution. As a result of this initiative, in 2005 Boards for Education, Health, Employment and Housing were formed.
- Provides legal assistance and litigation for Romani victims of violence and discrimination;
- Researches and documents the cases of unlawful treatment by the police, violence by skinheads and other private persons, segregation at schools, discrimination at work, and other illegal or discriminatory acts;
- Recommends measures for the improvement of Roma status on the basis of the analysis of collected documents and relevant regulations;
- Raises public attention to the human rights situation of Roma in Serbia by publishing reports, creating electronic newsletter, organizing roundtables, releasing press announcements.

Main donors of the MRC are: Norwegian People's Aid, Open Society Institute, Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and Roma Education Fund.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLANS FOR IMPROVING THE POSITION OF ROMA IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND HEALTH CARE IN 2007

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In the context of monitoring implementation of Action Plans for the Decade of Roma, adopted by the Government of Serbia, the League for the Decade submits this 2007 report. This report was prepared by the Minority Rights Center.

## Activities and Goals of the League for the Decade

League for the Decade of Roma is a coalition of non-governmental organizations that deal with improving Roma position. It was created with the aim of ensuring continuous monitoring and efficient implementation of Action plans and thus improving realization of goals stipulated in the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005 -2015). Founders of the League for the Decade include following organizations: Fund for an Open Society, Minority Rights Center, Yurom Center, Roma Children's Center, Civil Initiatives, Yugoslav Association for Roma Culture and Education, Roma Student's Union, Society for the Improvement of Roma Settlements and National Council of Roma National Minority. Within the League, four boards have been organized for each Decade field – Board for Education, Board for Employment, Board for Health Care and Board for Housing. These boards consist of representatives of non-governmental organizations dealing with problems in the areas mentioned above. Boards of the League for the Decade provide advisory service to state institutions and monitor realization of the goals stipulated in the Action Plans for Roma inclusion.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLANS FOR IMPROVING THE POSITION OF ROMA IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND HEALTH CARE IN 2007

### Introduction

In January 2005, Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted National Action Plans (NAP) for improving the status of Roma in the areas of **education, employment, housing and health care**, in order that Serbia could join the regional initiative “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015“ by signing the Decade Declaration by the Prime Minister on February 2, 2005 in Sofia.

The aim behind launching the Decade was **reduction of unacceptable differences** between Roma and the rest of society through NAP implementation in the areas of education, housing, employment and health care, also including inter-department issues - anti-discrimination, gender equality and poverty reduction.

The main principle of the Decade is **inclusion of Roma community representatives** in planning and realization of all measures.

It is important to mention that the Draft of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma (Strategy) is currently being revised. The Strategy is coordinated by the Secretariat for Roma National Strategy (SRNS) established within the Agency for Human and Minority Rights (AHMR). Its adoption is planned for March 2008. In addition to education, health care, housing and employment, the Strategy will also include the areas of social care, culture, media and informing, but also inter-department issues such as anti-discrimination, position of women, availability of personal documents, position of internally displaced persons and returnees according to Agreement on Readmission, and political participation. Action Plans with clearly defined budget for all mentioned areas should also be adopted. In addition to recommendations referring to stipulated areas, the Strategy should also define mechanisms for cooperation among various sectors, as solutions to most problems depends on cooperation of different institutions. It should also secure that the issue of Roma integration/inclusion is treated as a national minority issue and realization of rights in the areas of culture, media, informing and language use, and not just as an issue of integrating one of the socially imperiled, marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Within the Strategy revision, SRNS organizes a series of consulting meetings with Roma non-governmental organizations, relevant ministries, Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) Focal Point, international organizations, representatives of other participant countries of the Decade, experts for all fields included in the Strategy, representatives of the National Council of Roma National Minority (NCRNM), parliament parties, Office for Roma Inclusion of Vojvodina and Coordination Center for Roma Inclusion City of Belgrade.

It is also highly significant to mention that crucial strategic documents, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy refer to these National Action Plans and that various sector strategies embrace the question of improving the position of Roma.

However, apart from the previously mentioned preconditions that imply strategic documents particularly treating or including Roma issues and, generally, accessible budget and donor funds, **during the past three years certain projects, programs and measures determined by NAPs were accomplished in Serbia, but established system was not set up yet which would imply the following:**

- Regular and specifically defined allotments from the State Budget for implementing NAPs;
- Allotments from budgets of local governments for funding local action plans (LAPs);
- Established structures with clearly defined authorization and mechanisms for implementing the action plans at national and local, including clearly defined mechanisms for inter-department cooperation;
- Established indicators to assess success of NAPs implementation;

- Established structures for monitoring NAPs implementation and assessing success of NAPs implementation;
- Established mechanisms for revision of adopted documents according to indicators of previous accomplishments.

## 1. State Budget

As the budget for 2005 had already been adopted at the time when the Government approved National Action Plans and budget funds could not have been allotted for these purposes, in 2005 only measures of affirmative actions in education and certain projects funded by international organizations were carried out.

In order to provide funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia for implementing NAP, SRNS suggested proposal for additional funds for relevant ministries (Ministry of Education, Health, Labor and Social Policy and Infrastructure) for realization of NAPs in 2006. Although SRNS claimed that in 2006 funds were approved for implementing all four National Action Plans, the Ministry of Health was the only one that acted transparently on the use of funds.

Reports of relevant ministries on implementation of NAPs in 2006 were published in SRNS publication “Challenges of the Roma Decade”, while Minority Rights Center published, on behalf of the League for the Decade, a yearly report for 2006. Assessment of NGOs gathered in the League for the Decade, of implementation of NAPs in 2005 and 2006 was also published within the regional initiative Decade Watch.

Funds from the 2007 State Budget for NAPs realization were approved for relevant ministries and for the Agency for Human and Minority Rights. However, the Ministry of Health was the only one, just as the previous year, that acted transparently about allotted budget funds.

Twelve million dinars were allotted to the Agency for Human and Minority Rights<sup>1</sup> for realization of special programs and, on suggestion of the Roma Party, the Union of Roma in Serbia and the NCRNM, for the period October - December eight persons were engaged to establish cooperation with local institutions in order to secure efficient implementation of NAPs and getting feedback information, which should improve planning at the central level, and to participate in development and implementation of action plans that are currently being drafted. However, the issue of selecting candidates appeared – selection was performed without set criteria or public announcement, but solely on suggestion of Roma parties and NCRNM.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the amendments to the budget draft, submitted by member of the Roma Party.

It is necessary to reactivate Working Groups (WG) for NAPs implementation and to determine precise allotment of funds from budgets of relevant ministries for implementation of these action plans. These activities should be included and in concordance with the Yearly Operational Plans (YOP) of ministries.

## 2. Budget of Local Governments

Adoption of NAPs does not oblige local governments to create their own Local Action Plans (LAPs) that would define local priorities, and consequently does not oblige them to provide funds. Therefore SRNS organized many promotional activities aimed at encouraging local governments to launch creating of their local policies, but also to become involved in programs at the national level.

It has been noticed among, both central and local, institutions that everybody is relying too much on foreign funds and sees the Decade as an opportunity for receiving grants, instead as an instrument for distributing already existing funds.

In order to improve activities at the local level<sup>2</sup> SRNS has participated, in cooperation with international organizations, in engaging local Roma coordinators in 29 municipalities in Serbia. Their duty is to assist in creating LAPs while including all relevant stakeholders – representatives of local Roma communities and local institutions/organizations. In the project that SRNS organized in cooperation with OSCE and with support of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) in 2005 and 2006, local Roma coordinators were engaged in: Bela Palanka, Valjevo, Negotin, Vlasotince, Grocka, Barajevo, Sombor, Aleksinac, Bujanovac, Pirot, Kragujevac, Vranje, New Belgrade, Novi Sad, Šabac, Koceljeva, Niš (Municipality of Crveni Krst), Kruševac, Kikinda, while in Požarevac the planned project was not realized due to political disagreements. After the project ending, job positions of local Roma coordinators were systematized in the following municipalities: Sombor, Barajevo, Grocka, Bujanovac, Pirot, Kragujevac, Vranje, Bela Palanka, Novi Sad, while in New Belgrade local Roma coordinator was hired according particular to short-term agreement. SRNS is realizing the same project, with support of SIDA, in Smederevo, Bor, Lebane, Kraljevo, Beočin, Prokuplje, Lajkovac, Zrenjanin, Čukarica and Čačak.

All municipalities are eligible to apply for small grants, with minimum participation of their own funds for realization of LAPs. In addition to funds for engaging local coordinator for one or two years and grants, municipal officials and local Roma coordinators were also provided with trainings, conducted by the European Minority Rights Center.

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<sup>2</sup> According to recommendations given by the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and OSCE



There are also other initiatives for including the issue of improving Roma position in strategic documents at the local level, such as local strategies and/or Action Plan for Poverty Reduction in Kragujevac, Bela Palanka, Bečej, Novi Kneževac, Dimitrovgrad, Golubac, Sokobanja, Kikinda, Ada, Ražanj, Sremski Karlovci and Bačka Topola, LAPs for children in Bač, Čuprija, Priboj, Trstenik, Barajevo, Bela Palanka Kragujevac, Ljubovija, Pirot, Vranje, Senta, Lebane, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Prokuplje, Valjevo and Kruševac.

LAPs for improving the situation of Roma were adopted in Beočin, New Belgrade, Šabac, Barajevo, Čukarica, Čuprija, Negotin, Prokuplje, Senta, Pirot, Valjevo, Sombor, Bela Palanka and Vranje.

Information on budgets accessible for the LAPs, as well as information on the implemented measures and its effectiveness is not currently available.

It is necessary to join all governmental and non-governmental initiatives at the local level, in order to lobby for budget funds at local level and for more adequate exploitation of the programs initiated at the national level or by international organizations.

### **3. Structures and Mechanisms for Implementation of NAPs and LAPs**

Earlier activities related to creating strategic documents, budgets, structures within the relevant ministries and at the local level, were mainly coordinated by the Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy (SRNS), established in April 2003. Until dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in June 2006, the SRNS was operating within the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights of Serbia and Montenegro, supported by the OSCE and funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction. In June 2006, the Agency for Human and Minority Rights was established, which took over some of the activities previously performed by the SRNS. To this date, mandate of the SRNS has never got official form or defined legal status although it reached consensus by all stakeholders. In July 2007, UNDP became a new partner with a support from SIDA.

One of the SRNS activities was to set up Working Groups (WG) within ministries relevant for implementation of the NAPs, whose task would be to define annual priorities, their funding, programs for their realization and monitoring methods. WG would gather representatives of the SRNS, experts from different ministries, independent experts, representatives of Roma non-governmental organizations and the National Council of Roma National Minority. Ministers' assistants would preside these WG. Working Groups were established in 2006; however, parliamentary elections and establishment of new government caused their inefficiency in 2007.

Cooperation between different departments is necessary in order to effectively implement determined priorities, and for that reason it is essential to form an inter-department body. In 2003, SRNS's attempt to establish an inter-ministry body failed due to low rank of designated members. Afterward, a proposal to found a body consisting of ministers' assistants came up. However, it is doubtful whether such body could be effective or a better solution would be, in accordance with the Government's Regulation, to form a temporary Governmental body that would have clearly defined responsibilities and authority.

At the local level, in addition to engaging Local Roma Coordinators (LRC), it is important to stress the need for continuous monitoring and supporting of the LRC, which would result in incorporating Roma issues into local policy, instead of creating a parallel system.

In order to achieve successful implementation of NAPs, it is necessary to perform further institutionalization of the structures authorized for strategy implementation:

Forming inter~department body – to consider the possibility of forming Government's temporary working body with clear authority and duties;

To systematize the Secretariat for Roma National Strategy and regulate its mandate according to the law;

To formalize working groups of relevant ministries;

To define recommendations for improvement of Roma position based on the LRC's experience and to submit them to all local authorities for policy development. To consider the role of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government in this process.

## **4. Indicators for Evaluating Success of Implementation of NAPs**

Main weakness of adopted NAPs has been identified in respect to indicators and data required for their monitoring. At the time of creating NAPs (2004), a research *Roma, life conditions and opportunities for integration*<sup>3</sup> was conducted, which provided basic data on number and position of Roma settlements in Serbia. Also, preliminary report of the Survey on Life Standard (2003) was available, which included Roma living in Roma settlements.

In addition to restrictions regarding availability of data needed for establishing valid indicators, some ministries refused to accept indicators that could point out the effects of implemented measures, i.e. whether the gap between the Roma population and

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<sup>3</sup> Jakšić B, Bašić G.

the rest of the society actually reduced and insisted on using absolute numbers (against relative quantity i.e. percentage) during evaluation process.

It is necessary to develop new indicators that would, as much as possible, point out the effects of implementing stipulated measures. SRNS is planning to include in revised documents indicators that were already set up and monitored within the Millennium Development Goals, Poverty Reduction Strategy, and DevInfo Base<sup>4</sup>. SRNS also plans to harmonize activities at the national level with those organized at the regional level within the Decade aimed at establishing joint standards in monitoring and evaluation.

## **5. Existing Structures for Monitoring NAP's Implementation and Evaluating its Success**

For all measures NAPs defined subjects in charge for monitoring, but in cases when monitoring is performed by non-governmental organizations or international organizations it is not clear how it will actually be done - who will fund these activities, which indicators shall be used or how do they relate to monitoring performed by state institutions.

## **6. Existing Mechanisms for Revision of Adopted Documents According to Indicators of Previous Realization**

It is a common belief that NAPs should not be static documents, but documents liable for revision based on previously gained experiences, achieved results and estimation of effects of particular measures.

Operational plans for all strategy areas should also be stipulated.

## **7. Participation of Roma Community Representatives**

In the process of developing strategic documents for improving Roma position, the National Council of Roma National Minority and associations of non-governmental or-

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<sup>4</sup> *DevInfo* is a database that provides tools for organizing, storing, overview and presentation of data in order to support exchanging information among governmental institutions, UN agencies and others all using same system for monitoring of social development. <http://www.DevInfo.org>

ganizations delegated their members to different working groups – in 2004 and 2005 through Delegation of young Roma leaders and in 2006 and 2007 through the League for the Decade.

Mandate of the National Council of Roma National Minority (NCRNM) expired in April 2007 and the same situation struck most national councils. However, due to delays in constituting the new Government, delegation of authority from the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights to the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and absence of the Law on National Councils, NCRNM continued to function and receive funds from the State Budget but without precise plans and visible results. In May 2006 a proposal was made for scheduling electoral assembly session. However, it was not held due to dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. It was scheduled again for 25 November 2007 and then delayed until further due to irregularities in submitted election lists.

Apart from the NCRNM and non-governmental organizations, in 2007 Roma political parties also took active role in the process of improving Roma position. Namely, due to amendments (in 2006) of the Law on Electing Members of Parliament in Serbia, election census from the previous 5% decreased to the “natural” census set for the parties and coalitions of national minorities. This affirmative measure resulted in the fact that two Roma political parties have their representatives in the Serbian Parliament – Union of Roma and the Roma Party.

Additionally, Roma representatives were temporally engaged through different projects, as previously mentioned Local Roma Coordinators in municipalities or local coordinators/assistants in different fields – cooperation with Roma families, Roma Health Mediators and Roma Assistants in schools.

The Deputy Prime Minister’s PRS Implementation Focal Point formed different clusters (children, Roma, adults, youth, etc.) of civil society organizations and chose contact organizations (Contact Organizations of Civil Society) in order to build partnership relations between government and non-government sectors in the process of implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy and wider reformation process. Roma Information Center (RIC) from Kragujevac was chosen as a contact organization for Roma issues.

Furthermore, after the official announcement for public work the Ministry of Economics and Regional Development approved NCRNM a project which refers to employing Roma administrators on collecting data for a period of 6 months.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy initiated engaging around 30 Roma on jobs in the social care field and the funds would be provided from the 2008 state budget.

The National Action Plan for Improving Health Care of Roma stipulates that monitoring shall be carried out by the Health Care Board, established by the Minority Rights Center (MRC). This Board is now a part of League for the Decade.

## 8. Implementation of NAPs in 2007

Report of the European Commission for Serbia for 2007 gives a positive estimation of state's efforts to institutionalize SRNS, to form working groups within relevant ministries and to fulfill particular measures stipulated in NAPs. However, the report also expresses certain worry about still unfavorable position of Roma national minority, particularly in accessibility to personal documents.

Parliamentary elections in Serbia were held on 21 January 2007, the Government was constituted in May and the Law on Budget was adopted at the end of June 2007. Until then only temporary funding was secured, which meant that six months were completely lost for implementation of the NAPs. Moreover, the deadline for implementing NAPs' measures, for which the funds were later approved, was very short.

### 8.1. Housing

Creating the National Action Plan for Housing was based on the draft Strategy for Integration of Roma, Poverty Reduction Strategy, previously mentioned research from 2002 according to which there were 593 Roma settlements in Serbia, with around 270 000 inhabitants<sup>5</sup>, and the Overview of Roma Settlements<sup>6</sup>.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and the UN European Economic Commission have completed the study on housing sector; the problem of informal Roma settlements was recognized as one of the biggest and should be set as a priority in future national housing policy. In November 2007 the Government of Serbia adopted the Draft Law on Social Housing and sent it to the further parliament procedure. This Draft Law gives institutional frame for creating conditions required for solving housing problems of those households that cannot acquire apartments at market values, due to social, economic and other reasons. Master Plan of Belgrade thru 2021 highlights social and affordable housing<sup>7</sup> as a special type of housing, while economically deprived Roma were distinguished as one of socially imperiled groups that need particular help in providing adequate housing conditions. Municipal housing strategies have been or are being created in seven towns/municipalities in Serbia. In these documents solving of complex and

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<sup>5</sup> Roma in Serbia, Life conditions and possibilities for integration, Center for Ethnicity Research and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Belgrade 2002, re-edited in 2005 under the title "The Art of Survival – where and how Roma in Serbia live", Jakšić and Bašić, and the Ministry of Science

<sup>6</sup> Overview of Roma Settlements in Belgrade, Association for Improvement of Roma Settlements, Belgrade, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Affordable housing is low-cost housing, with prices low enough that poor families can afford it. Social housing and affordable housing are two additional forms of housing.

difficult housing conditions in Roma settlements are highlighted as short-term and long-term goals, for which specific measures, means and stakeholders are defined.

The Ministry of Capital Investments<sup>8</sup> formed a working group<sup>9</sup> for implementation of NAP for improving Roma housing. This group established an expert team for creating Guidelines for improving and legalizing Roma settlements (Guidelines) and created budget proposal for 2007 that included financial means for creating plan documentation for Roma settlements and for advancing infrastructure. In January 2007 the Ministry of Capital Investments adopted the Guidelines that represent very detailed expert instructions to local governments on ways to improve Roma settlements.

In September 2007, after the Government and the new ministry had been established and budget adopted, the Ministry of Infrastructure and SRNS invited local self-governments to apply for grants intended for creating urban design plan of informal Roma settlements. Application requirements included submitting formal decision of local authorities to legalize a Roma settlement and providing basic data on municipality and settlement. Eighteen municipalities applied and in November a meeting was held where local representatives could receive additional information about legalization procedures and settlements for which they wish to create urban design plan. This meeting was organized by the Ministry of Infrastructure and SRNS, and attended by experts in this field.

Conclusion of the meeting was that five to of ten local governments, which bring decisions on legalization and sign agreements with construction agencies, would receive funds for realization of this measure.

In addition to the efforts of the Ministry of Infrastructure, activities of the Ministry of Health regarding improvement of hygienic conditions in informal settlements and public works program launched by the Ministry of Economics and Regional Development for improving infrastructure in Roma settlements are also significant.

Besides adopting action plans in four priority areas, the City of Belgrade founded the commission “Gazela”, in charge of all activities regarding dislocation of this settlement.

Some international organizations, such as UNHCR, UNDP and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), provide individual solutions for housing problems of Roma families. In cooperation with SRNS and the Agency for Human and Minority Rights, OSCE Mission in Serbia provided grants to local self-governments through the Roma Assistance Program supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction in 2006 and 2007. The grants were used for improving housing of Roma in

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<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Infrastructure since 15 May 2007

<sup>9</sup> On initiative of the SRNS in 2006

Bela Palanka, Kragujevac, Pirot, Kruševac, Koceljeva, Bujanovac, Barajevo and Šabac. In 2007 UNDP with a support of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), funded similar projects in Kraljevo, Čačak, Smederevo and Lebane. UN-HABITAT Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme (SIRP) implements a pilot project on improving Roma settlement Grdička kosa 2 in Kraljevo, by creating urban design plans, improving settlement infrastructure and housing conditions for several families. Settlement inhabitants and representatives of local self-government take an active part in the project.

It is necessary to precisely define funds provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure for implementing NAP for improving Roma housing, to encourage local self-governments to allot funds for these purposes and to join activities in the area of housing with activities conducted by other ministries, such as public works and improving sanitary conditions.

## 8.2. Education

Common Action Plan (CAP) for Advancement of Roma Education in Serbia is based on the draft strategy for improving education of Roma. Due to the lack of overall statistic records CAP relied on existing researches, such as the Survey on Life Standard (SLS) report from 2003, official population census and estimation of researchers that there are around 450-500 thousand Roma in Serbia.

The main problems in education that Roma national minority in Serbia is facing are recognized in numerous strategic documents of the Serbian Government – The National Strategy of Serbia for EU Accession, the National Action Plan for Children, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Strategy of the Ministry of Education in which these issues are even listed as priorities. Additionally, some local governments adopted local strategies and/or Local Action Plans (LAPs)<sup>10</sup> (Subotica, Valjevo, Kragujevac and Niš).

On the SRNS's initiative, in 2006 the Ministry of Education formed a working group for implementation of the CAP. However, due to constant changes of administration in this ministry, activities of working groups were practically disabled.

There is no available information from the Ministry of Education on CAP's implementation budget for 2007 and on proposed budget for 2008. Additionally, measures stipulated for 2007 have not been accomplished systematically. Apart from affirmative action measures during enrollment in high schools, colleges and universities, all activities mentioned in this report were carried out in cooperation with NGOs and institutions, and financially supported by international organizations. This would be less of a problem

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<sup>10</sup> Local education strategies and action plans in Subotica, Valjevo, Kragujevac and Niš

if support given by institutions would guarantee financial sustainability after successful termination of the project and considerable involvement of partnering institutions. Unfortunately, previous experience does not support this statement. There are exceptional examples which portray personal and professional responsibility of an individual employed in particular institution rather than systematic approach. Support offered by institutions often means that project realization is not obstructed or disabled.

In 2007 UNICEF, the Republic Statistics Institute and Strategic Marketing published the Research of multiple indicators on position of children and women in Serbia (Multi Indicative Cluster Survey-MICS), which again pointed out the significant disparity between Roma children and general population in relation to inclusion in educational system, dropping out rates and school achievements.

In addition to long-existing problems of insufficient inclusion of Roma children in educational system and early dropping out, inadequate and low quality level of education, discrimination and segregation, inappropriate conditions for preserving and expressing ethnic identity, in 2007 problems of pre-school education of Roma children, particularly the compulsory preparatory pre-school program and forming new segregated classes emerged as “burning” issues.

Namely, not even after 5 years the Law on Pre-School Education has not been adopted, although provision of the Law on Education System on compulsory preparatory pre-school program came into force in the school year 2006/2007. According to this provision, a child has to attend pre-school program at least six months prior to school enrollment. The Ministry of Education does not hold reliable data about the number of children included in the pre-school program. Additional problem is the lack of ethnically insightful records. MRC conducted an assessment (June/September 2007) on number of Roma children enrolled to elementary school and how many of them attended mandatory pre-school preparatory program. The survey covered 27 schools in 16 towns in Serbia. According to the MRC’s findings, in the school year 2007/08 on the sample of 27 schools, out of 585 Roma children of school age 492 were enrolled to elementary school. However 60% of those first-graders did not attend mandatory pre-school preparatory program or they had but for a very short period of time (2 weeks to 1 month) in order to obtain necessary certificate. Although legal requirement of 6 month of compulsory pre-school education was not met, Roma children were enrolled as a result of the Ministry’s recommendation or school’s own initiative.

Not attending the compulsory preparatory pre-school program can create a new administrative obstacle, but also even more serious one in respect to accessibility to adequate preparation for enrollment to the first grade of elementary school.

Although it is stipulated that the pre-school program is free, attendance of this program demands certain expenditures from parents – lunch, learning tools and participation in various activities equally important for development and socialization of children – theater plays, performance, field trips, etc.



In November 2007, in order to provide direct support to enlarging inclusion rate of Roma children in preparatory pre-school programs, and due to unsatisfying cooperation with the National Council of Roma National Minority and the Ministry of Education, Roma Education Fund (REF) announced an open call for submitting joint projects of pre-school institutions, local self-governments and Roma organizations, which should provide wider inclusion of Roma children in their local communities from January to June 2008.

Segregated classes in schools were not widespread phenomenon in Serbia, but one of the reasons for this has been exclusion of Roma children from the educational system. However, it is necessary to act on time and prevent that wider inclusion of Roma children in pre-school and elementary school programs does not lead to creation of segregated classes for whichever reason – spatial or, as in some cases, discriminatory.

Minority Rights Center is implementing the project “Protection of Children of Roma Nationality from Discrimination” in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and with a support from REF. The project aim is to promote desegregation and prevent discrimination of Roma children in Serbian educational system. Activities within this project include raising capacity of Roma organizations and Educational Inspectors to provide support to Roma children and monitoring of discrimination. MRC detected that segregated classes for Roma children exist in five elementary schools, four of them are in Vojvodina: “10. Oktobar” in Horgoš, “Žarko Zrenjanin” in Apatin, “Jožef Atila” in Bogojevo and elementary school “Temerkenj Ištván” in Tornjoš. Segregated classes are also present in elementary school “Branko Radičević” in Bujanovac. Minority Rights Center sent an official note to these schools demanding avoidance of creating new segregated classes in the school year 2007/2008 and suggesting desegregation measures for the existing ones. Only two elementary schools – “10.oktobar” in Horgoš and “Branko Radičević” in Bujanovac - acknowledged this appeal and had not formed new segregated classes. Other two elementary schools – “Žarko Zrenjanin” in Apatin and “Jožef Atila” in Bogojevo have again initiated separated classes for Roma children. In the elementary school “Jožef Atila”, in addition to separate classes, there are also different food and eating schedule and separate bathrooms for Roma and Hungarian children, what was justified by unhygienic habits of Roma. Roma have free food, but of lower quality.

The elementary school “Temerkenj Ištván” in Tornjoš had the most negative reaction to the MRC’s plea. This school desegregated Roma classes, but almost half of the children (13 out of 28 children) were sent to classes for children with disabilities.

MRC organized a meeting<sup>11</sup> with the principals of elementary schools “Žarko Zrenjanin” from Apatin and “Jožef Atila” from Bogojevo, representatives of Educational

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<sup>11</sup> Meeting was organized in December 2007

Board and several local NGOs. Participants agreed to create a desegregation plan for these two schools.

Percentage of children among Roma population included in secondary education is particularly low – 10.2% (average is 85.8%). On sample of 34 secondary schools, percentage of Roma children attending the first grade is 1.81%. The percentage of Roma students that complete high school is 0.96% which implies high dropping-out rate.<sup>12</sup>

Gender differences are significant among Roma students: portion of Roma girls enrolled to secondary schools is much lower than the proportion of boys (14 and 6 per cent), which is the opposite of the rest of the population, where the percentage of girls in secondary school is slightly higher.<sup>13</sup>

According to the records of the Ministry of Education for the school year 2005/2006, the percentage of young people that continue education after completion of high school was 79.5%. On the other hand, Roma Education Fund data from 2004 shows that inclusion of Roma students in higher education was 0.9%.

In 2007 affirmative action measures on enrollment of Roma students in high schools, colleges and public universities were fulfilled in cooperation with the Secretariat for Roma National Strategy and Ministry of Education. Affirmative action measures referring to Roma national minority have been applied since the school year 2003/2004. They are stipulated in the CAP and in conformity with the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedom of National Minorities, which stipulates obligation of state institutions to take measures aimed at improving position of members of Roma national minority, as well as with Article 4 of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities which stipulates the duty of member states to take measures for securing full and efficient equality for all members of national minorities.

Due to lack of precise regulations for realizing affirmative measures in high schools and universities, during previous 4 years criteria and selection methods have been determined in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Agency for Human and Minority Rights and the National Council of Roma National Minorities. However, due to political instability, every year it led to uncertainty whether measure would be implemented at all, to what extent and in which manner.

Enrollment of Roma children in high schools in the school years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 was conducted in accordance to the Regulation on Enrollment of Students in High Schools (Official Gazette RS, No. 45/04 and 23/05) and Announcement for Enrollment in High Schools.

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<sup>12</sup> Second report on Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation, Gov. of Serbia, august 2007

<sup>13</sup> Monitoring the situation of children and women-MICS, 2005, UNICEF

A Roma student is eligible for certain educational profile if total number of gained points is maximum 30 points lower than the average number of points for certain educational profile in particular school. Only one Roma student using affirmative action measure is eligible for a particular educational profile in particular school. When several Roma students wish to enroll the same educational profile in the same school, the advantage is given to the student with more points.

In the school year 2007/2008, 185 Roma students were enrolled in secondary schools using affirmative action measures.

Criteria set up for university enrollment included passing an entry exams and first time application to the university. Enrollment of 107 Roma students to universities around Serbia in the school year 2007/2008 was funded from the state budget.

Number of boys and girls enrolled through measures of affirmative actions at both education levels was approximately equal.

In order to implement these measures more efficiently, it is necessary to regulate selection criteria, procedures, implementation and achievement evaluation mechanisms more precisely. It is also important to initiate more activities in exchanging and spreading information on available scholarships, grants and to consider introducing mentoring program and connecting with the labor market.

Additionally, in 2007 the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia and with support of the European Agency for Reconstruction, implemented a project that introduces Roma assistants to support education of Roma children. 167 candidates applied for these positions and 54 were selected for eight-day training. After this training, 20 candidates were engaged as assistants and began to work in elementary schools. OSCE covered all training expenses and fees for engaged experts and trainers, while the Ministry of Education was supposed to provide salaries for the assistants, which they failed to do in most cases.

Another cooperation of the Ministry of Education and OSCE took place on the project “Developing Capacities of School Administrations for Realization of Local Action Plans Aimed at Improving Roma Education”. Sixteen educational consultants from 16 school administrations were trained to monitor projects on improving education of Roma.

Standards for creating curricula, textbooks and other teaching instruments or special methodologies for working with adults have not yet been developed. The project “Functional Elementary Education for Adult Roma” developed a special approach in working with Roma adults, which is not focused only on eliminating illiteracy, but also on developing intellectual skills important for their lives, basic entrepreneurship principles and professional skills. The project included 275 Roma, age 15-35, in 11 experimental classes in eight towns. Roma Education Fund supported this project for two

years, but for further sustainability it was suggested to obtain funds from the National Investment Plan. However, is still uncertain whether the Ministry of Education will launch this project or who will fund it.

In 2007, within *the School of Romology* at the University of Novi Sad, NGO “Women Studies” and two Roma student associations launched the project “Building Roma Intellectual Elite at the University of Novi Sad”, funded by the Roma Education Fund (REF) from Budapest. Goals set in this project are to raise motivation of Roma students to study through mentoring program; to research possibilities for employment of Roma graduates; creating curricula for the planned studies at the Faculty of Philosophy within a separate educational unit.

The course *Introduction to Romology* remained in the school year 2007/2008 at the list of elective subjects at the Department for Journalism at the University of Novi Sad. Financial support was provided partly by the Open Society Institute, but also by the Secretariat for Education of the AP Vojvodina.

Roma Information Center from Kragujevac implements a project aimed at finding a systematic solution to introduce Roma history, tradition and culture in educational system. This project will facilitate acquiring credentials for the training program “Roma through time” (Roma history, tradition and culture) and its implementation. Partners on this project are: Fund for development of Roma community in Kragujevac, local Roma NGOs and City of Kragujevac.

Forum of internally displaced Roma realizes the project “Roma children – internally displaced and returnees: from language barrier to social capital”. The project implies creating a model for learning Serbian as a second language, improving procedures and legislation on verification of school certificates, as well as collecting data on number of Roma children returnees and internally displaced that are outside the school system due to language barriers.

The Province Secretariat for Education and Culture, Vojvodina’s Council for Roma Integration and Association of Roma Students are doing a project on inclusion of Roma children in high schools. The project aim is to increase number of children that enroll and complete high schools, to improve school achievements and to raise motivation for further education. The project implies financial and mentor support to Roma high school students from the territory of Vojvodina.

Roma Education Center from Niš carries out a project aimed at creating conditions for wider access to secondary schools and better success of Roma students. The project includes a plan for creating a database on Roma students from Niš and Belgrade, on attendance rate, drop-out rates, school achievements and potentials for further education and professional development. This project is a result of cooperation of two NGOs and 15 schools.

Society for the Protection and Promotion of Mental Health from Niš, executive partner of UNHCR and a contact organization for the issues of children within Deputy Prime Minister's PRS Implementation Focal Point, carries out a project „Educational and Recreational Program for Refugee, Displaced and Roma Children in Serbia” with a support from UNHCR. This project is aimed at preparing children for enrollment to the compulsory preschool program and providing supplementary educational support for IDP Roma children of school age. Project has been performed in partnership with several NGOs from different towns in Serbia.

Open Society Institute, within the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, Education Support Program and Roma Participation Program, published a report „Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma”<sup>14</sup>. Monitoring report is based on all-encompassing methodology with a goal to secure comparative approach in relation to all countries where the monitoring was conducted. This report includes detailed recommendations aimed at improving the access to quality education for Roma, information on school enrollment of Roma, Government's policy and programs targeting Roma and description of problems disabling Roma to have a full access to quality education. Report for Serbia includes clear recommendations to the Ministry of Education in respect of monitoring and evaluation of educational initiatives targeting Roma, improvement of access to the education system and advancement of the quality of Roma education.

It is necessary to reactivate the working group for implementing CAP and to plan priorities and budget lines clearly and on the annual level. Additionally, it is needed to introduce Annual Operational Plans and to coordinate activities within different sectors of the Ministry of Education, but with other ministries as well – the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Economics and Regional Development and the Ministry of Infrastructure.

### 8.3. Employment

Roma Employment Action Plan (REAP) was based on preliminary records of SLS from 2003. According to one of the latest researches on employment among Roma population, conducted by Roma Information Center (RIC) in 2006, 60% of Roma population was unemployed which classifies them as the most imperiled ethnic community at the labor market. The lowest unemployment rate is among population over 50, while most of Roma have been searching for a job for more than five years (51%). Yet 64% of population has never been employed. Two thirds of Roma included in the research are low qualified or unqualified labour. Approximately half of them have indefinite labour contact, while around 20% have not signed any kind of employment contract. Only one third of employed Roma found jobs through the National Employment Serv-

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<sup>14</sup> “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma “, Fund for an Open Society and Open Society Institute, Budapest, 2007. [www.eumap.org](http://www.eumap.org)

ice. Only 2% of the interviewed launched their own businesses, while 13% launched business with assistance of the National Employment Service. A reason for such low self-employment rate lies in deficiency of financial resources.

The National Employment Strategy 2005-2010 and the National Action Plan for Employment 2006-2008 point out the members of Roma national minority as particularly vulnerable group.

After the new Government had been established in June 2007, the Ministry of Economics and Regional Development (MERD) was assigned to implement the Roma Employment Action Plan.

Formally, there has been a working group whose members participated in commissions in charge for implementing some of the active employment measures in 2007.

There are no official data that the MERG allotted funds particularly for REAP, but the ministry decided to apply measures of affirmative actions within their active employment policy. All measures have been executed through the National Employment Service.

Consequently, in 2007 public works were launched and improving Roma settlements was stipulated as one of priorities. In order to inform potential beneficiaries in a larger number, the Secretariat for Roma National Strategy and MERG held a meeting in July 2007 with Roma NGOs, where all measures implemented by the MERG and National Employment Agency were presented, particularly in relation to conditions and methods of conducting public works. In 2007 the Ministry approved 77 projects in total, whereas 20 projects were focused on improving Roma situation. These projects would be performed by Roma NGO or the NCRNM in partnership with local self-governments and other municipal institutions. Projects would deal with settlement infrastructure, collecting data or culture and would engage around 400 Roma for a period of 6 months.

Roma are defined as a priority category in the self-employment program. This program determines a possibility for an unemployed person to receive subvention of 130 000,00 dinars to initiate self-employment and provide basic equipment and create work conditions, providing that a person has met the requirements set by the National Employment Service.

It is necessary to clearly define funds particularly for implementing the Roma Employment Action Plan (preferably within funds set up for vulnerable groups) and to reactivate the working group.

## 8.4. Health Care

The National Health Care Action Plan for Roma was based on the Draft Strategy for Roma Integration, Poverty Reduction Strategy and preliminary data from SLS in 2003.

Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women – MICS report emphasized significant differences in indicators of health condition of women and children between general and Roma populations.

The Ministry of Health is the only ministry that has allotted funds in 2006, 2007 and 2008 exclusively for the Health Care Action Plan (HCAP) implementation. In order to achieve the goal set in the HCAP - Improving health care for the entire Roma population, which implies realization of public health promotion projects, the Ministry of Health formed a Selection Commission to review project applications, approve and evaluate them. This commission consists of all interested parties – representatives of the Ministry of Health and representatives of Roma civil sector.

On suggestion of SRNS, the Ministry of Health constituted a working group. In 2007, this WG submitted a proposal to initiate implementation of the fourth goal set in the HCAP – Living Environment in Roma community, through realization of the following measures: 1. Analyze hygienic and epidemiological conditions in Roma settlements; 2. Improve housing conditions by ensuring drinking water supply, sanitary facilities and keeping off farm animals through evaluation of current situation by the Public Health Institute; 3. Suggestions given by the Institute for necessary dislocations of settlements, in which life conditions are very bad and cannot be included in improvement process, after institute's evaluation.

The reason for initiating implementation of the fourth goal was weak response and low quality projects submitted by health institutions and Roma NGOs and inability to spend budget funds, which led to decrease of those funds in 2007 comparing to 2006, and even larger decrease in 2008.

The Ministry of Health accepted suggestion of the working group and, according to the Law on Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2007 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 58/07) made public announcement for submitting projects intended for preserving and improving Roma health in 2007. There would be two components:

### Component A

1. Project proposed within the component A should directly contribute to achieving the goal: *Improving health care for the entire Roma population* stipulated in the HCAP.

Only projects, submitted by health institutions in partnership with Roma NGOs, that would make visible effect on health protection among Roma population would be financially supported. Priority areas are the following:

- Reproductive and sexual health;
- Chronic noninfectious diseases;
- Immunization;
- Specific problems in local community regarding health care of Roma;

### Component B

2. Projects proposed within the component B should directly contribute to reaching the goal: *Improving environment conditions in Roma community* through analysis of hygienic and epidemiological conditions in Roma settlements.

Financial support is intended for projects proposed by public health institutes that would deal with analysis of hygienic and epidemiological conditions in Roma settlements and that will be implemented in partnership with Roma NGOs. Outcome of these projects would be recommendations/proposals of the institutes for taking specific measures to eliminate the source of infectious and other diseases. All relevant service units in local community and state administration would be mobilized so that health conditions of population in these settlements could be improved.

Ministry of Health set up the following requirements that health institutions are obliged to meet:

Health institutions must be in the network of health institutions of the Republic of Serbia;

The project proposed by a health institution must address real health needs of Roma in the community in which project is implemented and it must be based on previous results and good practice;

Health institution is responsible for project implementation and ready to take public responsibility for performing tasks in that area;

Submitting monthly reports on project activities to the Ministry of Health;

After completion of the project, health institution must submit final expert and financial reports and suggest estimation of further funding after expiration of one-year funding agreement;

Health institution must submit lists of members of administrative and supervising boards and records on experts that monitor its work in the area of proposed project.”



Health institution is in charge for project implementation and received approved funds for that purpose. However, in the project application cooperation between health institutions and an organization dealing with Roma health issues must be clearly defined. Role of an NGO must be visibly stated in project proposal and health institution is obliged to transfer part of the funds to the account of an NGO, according to the project activities.

Each project would be allotted 500 000 to 750 000 dinars.

All relevant information had been available on the Ministry of Health website [www.zdravlje.sr.gov.yu](http://www.zdravlje.sr.gov.yu) which enabled the whole process to be transparent. Information posted on-line refer to application documentation and deadlines, contacts in the Ministry of Health, criteria for selecting projects and project duration, decision on founding the Selection Commission, etc.

In 2007 Ministry of Health approved 36 projects that will be performed in Opovo, Novi Bečej, Lazarevac, Doljevac, Kragujevac, Zaječar, Bor, Grocka, Barajevo, Kruševac, Indija, Bač, Loznica, Gračanica, Pećinci, Voždovac, Niš, Koceljeva, Ruma, Priština, Kosovska Mitrovica, Velika Plana, Sombor, Zrenjanin, Vrnjačka Banja, Kikinda, Čačak, Sremska Mitrovica, Požarevac, Subotica, Kraljevo, Trstenik, Pančevo and Priboj. Around 23 million dinars was allotted to the approved projects.

Minority Rights Center conducted a survey on implementation of the health projects approved by the MH in 2006 and carried out during 2006 and 2007. In 2006, Ministry of Health approved 64 health projects and total amount of 35.071.179, 00 dinars. These projects were implemented in 40 different towns throughout Serbia. On sample of 46 projects, MRC has determined, according to preliminary results, that 13 projects were focused on reproductive and women's health, 13 projects were focusing children, 19 projects were general – basic health check, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, epidemical and chemical analysis, elderly care, etc. and only 1 project was targeting youth. Within 46 projects, 15 340 health checks and 979 dental services were provided to project beneficiaries. Project activities were mainly carried out both in Roma settlements and in health institutions, while 13 projects were performed solely on the field. Twenty-eight projects, apart from medical check, included educative workshops, whereas 2 projects had only educational purposes. According to the statements taken from the project coordinators from health institutions and representatives of partnering NGOs, main problems which have occurred during project implementation are initial lack of trust among Roma population, weak response if the doctor is not coming to the settlement and transportation is not organized, cooperation between health institutions and NGOs, migration of season workers so that sometimes control health checks could not have been completed, accepting mainly female doctors, etc. A brief survey was conducted in Roma settlements included in these projects. Most respondents were familiar with the project activities in their neighborhood through the NGO's work, and as a main disadvantage they named lack of hygienic packages supply. According to them, crucial health problems of Roma are: personal documents, bad treatment from medical staff, bad housing conditions and poverty.

In cooperation with OSCE Mission and supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction the Ministry of Health began realization of the project of training and introduction of Roma Health Mediators (RHM). The project will be continued in 2008 as well. The European Agency for Reconstruction covers training expenses, while honorarium expenses RHM will be covered by the Ministry of Health from the National Investment Plan.

Overall, the Ministry of Health was the only ministry that took an active part in implementing Action Plans, which included organizing how-to-write-project-proposal workshops for health institutions and Roma NGO and visiting health institutions in order to inform them on activities carried out within the Decade of Roma and Health Care Action Plan and mobilize them “on board”.

A challenge for the future is evaluation of projects implemented in 2006 and 2007 and providing timely and efficient spending of all available funds.

## 9. Inter-department Issues

Apart from implementing National Action Plans in four priority areas of the Decade and initiating inter-department issues such as **gender equality, anti-discrimination and poverty reduction** in Serbia, it is necessary to consider particular issues that refer to the position of **internally displaced Roma and returnees according to the Agreement on Readmission**, and to the issues of **personal documents availability**.

While implementing most of the above mentioned projects, different issues such as gender equality and prevention of discrimination were taken into account, but unfortunately it is still insufficient. After adoption of the revised Strategy for Roma Integration it is necessary to begin realization of the Action Plans that refer to these issues. SRNS agreed with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy to form a working group for the Action Plan on Roma Women.

Deputy Prime Minister's PRS Implementation Focal Point recognized the issue of reducing poverty among Roma population as one of the issues that should be included in all activities and researches, realization of projects/programs, monitoring and reporting.

Under Serbia's presiding the Council of Europe, Serbian Parliament, Agency for Human and Minority Rights and Council of Europe organized the conference “Permanent solutions for Roma refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in the Balkans” on 29 and 30 October.

## 9.1. Returnees According to Agreement on Readmission

So far the Republic of Serbia has signed 15 agreements on readmission with 17 Western European countries. The General Agreement on Readmission between the European Union and the Republic of Serbia was signed in September 2007 and it comes into force on 1 January 2008. Bilateral agreements and the General Agreement on Readmission regulate conditions and instruments for returning to Serbia people who no longer have legal residence in any of the states signatories. The Agency for Human and Minority Rights of the Serbian Government (former Ministry of Human and Minority Rights) formed the Office for Readmission, located at the airport “Nikola Tesla” in Belgrade. Data collected by this Office show that at least 65-70% of people, who returned according to the agreement on readmission, are members of the Roma national minority.

The exact number of people who returned or still waiting to be returned from the Western European countries is unknown. However, considering overall life conditions of most members of Roma population in Serbia, particularly of Roma IDPs from Kosovo and Metohia, reintegration of Roma returnees represents a challenge to all parties involved in the matter. The Strategy for Roma Integration also contains a part that refers to integration of Roma returnees according to the agreement on admission. In addition to the readmission office at the airport, there is also the Office for Integration of Returnees within the UNDP Support Service and the Embassy of the Netherlands, which created the draft strategy for integration of returnees and emphasized particularities of returnees’ position from the human rights perspective, which were not recognized in the last couple of years. At the end of 2007 the Government of Serbia formed the Council for Integration of Returnees.

## 9.2. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)

According to the data of UNHCR and Roma NGOs dealing with IDP issues, internally displaced Roma are one of the most imperiled groups. Their position is the consequence of general policy on Kosovo and Metohia, the policy of Serbia, but also the policy of temporary authorities of Kosovo and international community. Roma have not participated in negotiations on the status of Kosovo and Metohia and have not had the chance to advocate realization of their rights. The official policy in Serbia does not support integration of internally displaced Roma that live in collective centers, and life conditions of those internally displaced Roma that do not live in collective centers, but in informal settlements, are below minimum.