



Roma and Travellers in Public Education

An overview of the situation
in the EU Member States

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EUMC

Rahlgasse 3, A-1060 Vienna

Tel. (43-1) 580 30-0

Fax (43-1) 580 30-91

E-mail: information@eumc.eu.int

Internet: <http://eumc.eu.int>

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Foreword

The objective of this report is to present an overview of the situation regarding access to education of Roma and Traveller pupils in the European Union focusing on primary and secondary public education. The report examines a range of available data and information on the education of Roma and Traveller pupils, as well as national educational strategies and policies in place, highlights problems of discrimination, exclusion and segregation, outlines the main relevant legal and policy initiatives, as well as perspectives and activities of other major actors, and presents conclusions and opinions addressing policy makers in the EU institutions and the Member States.

The national studies¹ and other sources which form the background material for this report show that there is very little up to date official data on the education of Roma and Travellers. While acknowledging and respecting concerns regarding data collection on ethnic identity and descent, the EUMC considers such data collection important for the development of appropriate and effective strategies at national and EU level. Such data can be collected anonymously and with adequate safeguards protecting any private and sensitive information.

Despite the overall paucity of official data, a variety of information from official and unofficial sources shows that, although education levels vary across countries and regions and across different Roma and Traveller communities, access to education by Roma and Travellers remains a serious problem. Some Member States have during recent years addressed the issue with varying degrees of success, but the situation remains unsatisfactory. Much remains to be done, particularly regarding segregation, which, in all its forms, remains the major obstacle for Roma and Traveller children in the education system. The Community and its Member States need to move forward towards a more comprehensive and coordinated approach addressing Roma and Traveller education and the complex array of factors influencing it.

The multiethnic European landscape requires the development of national education strategies that combat discrimination and prejudice, while encouraging cultural exchange and enrichment in order to strengthen social cohesion, improve equality of opportunities and

¹ The national studies were drafted by the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the EUMC's RAXEN network. NFPs are organisations in each Member State of the European Union contracted by the EUMC to collect objective, reliable and comparable data on racism and xenophobia.

develop social capital. This is not only necessary for improving the productive capacity of human capital and achieving greater economic prosperity, but primarily because equality of opportunity and access to services is a fundamental right and key value of the European Union.

Combating direct and systemic discrimination against Roma and Travellers and improving their education effectively presents a difficult challenge. However, strong and determined leadership, better and more coordinated efforts with active involvement of Roma and Traveller communities can bring about the necessary systemic changes in the national education structures that will improve Roma's and Travellers' education, which so crucially affects their future life chances.

Roma and Travellers emerge as the group most vulnerable to racism in the 2005 Annual Report of the EUMC. They face discrimination in employment, housing and education – as well as being regular victims of racial violence in all EU member states. The European Parliament Resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union, adopted in 2005, sent a strong signal to all of us. The Resolution represents a vision of a new partnership based on consultation, cooperation and collective action. It is a partnership united by principle and the rule of law and supported by an equitable sharing of both, cost and commitment.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the preparation of this report, particularly Anastasia Crickley, Chair of the Management Board of the EUMC.

Beate Winkler

Director

Executive Summary

A key European value is equality of opportunity². This applies particularly in education, which influences future life chances and acts as the main vehicle for social mobility. It is therefore essential to ensure that educational systems are equitable so that their benefits can be enjoyed by all without any discrimination.

Education is a key instrument for promoting social cohesion, which is one of the main three objectives of the 2000 Lisbon strategy aiming at making the EU "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy", because, apart from providing knowledge and developing skills, education shapes attitudes and empowers young people to adapt to rapidly changing social and economic conditions. As the European Commission has stressed, efficiency and equity are mutually reinforcing.³

This report shows that the educational situation of Roma and Traveller pupils remains unsatisfactory despite efforts by the Community and the Member States, thus largely corroborating earlier report findings by other bodies, such as the Council of Europe. The present report, however, goes further and provides added value by bringing together available evidence from all Member States of the European Union in order to present an overview of the current situation and propose concrete measures.

Roma and Traveller pupils continue to be subject to direct and systemic discrimination and exclusion in education resulting from a variety of interrelated factors including poor conditions of life, especially high unemployment, substandard housing conditions and poor access to health services. While some Member States have introduced elements of cultural or intercultural education strategies and initiatives addressing minorities and migrants, including the Roma and Travellers, it is clear that more systemic changes have to be introduced to remedy the present situation.

The report also shows that the availability of official statistical data regarding Roma and Traveller education is poor. Most Member

² The European Commission has designated 2007 as the European Year on Equal Opportunities.

³ European Commission (2005) *Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe*, Brussels, 30.11.2005 COM(2005) 549 final available at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

States need to improve or develop data collection structures and mechanisms covering education, ideally in collaboration with the European Commission and EUROSTAT in order to improve data comparability by establishing common indicators. This will allow an effective and accurate assessment of the impact of policies, measures and initiatives taken at Community, national and local level. The EUMC acknowledges concerns voiced in different fora regarding the collection of ethnic data, but stresses the crucial importance of the collection and statistical elaboration of objective, reliable and comparable ethnic data that will allow robust and objective analyses supporting effectively the development of appropriate and effective strategies and measures at both national and EU level. Such data can be collected anonymously and with adequate safeguards protecting the identity of individuals and any private and sensitive information.

Although Member States provide detailed educational statistics for the general population, there is a marked absence of ethnically differentiated data on Roma and Travellers on basic indicators, such as school enrolment and attendance, as well as on school performance and attainment. The available demographic data may also under-record Roma and Travellers especially when group affiliation is established through ethnic or linguistic self-identification, because the social stigma and negative stereotypes associated with the Roma and Traveller identity can lead to refusal to identify openly with the group. Furthermore, educational statistics are not directly comparable between countries due to the different data collection methodologies employed and given the different structures of the educational systems.

Therefore, the EUMC considers as particularly commendable the recent decision taken in January 2006 by the government of the Czech Republic approving a new monitoring system for the collection of anonymous data on the Roma and Traveller community which covers the areas of education, school attendance, birth rate, migration, wages, unemployment and its length and the age of jobless people, business and shadow business activities of Roma and Travellers, their housing conditions, the equipment of their households and their debts.

1. Findings on enrolment and attendance in primary and secondary education

The existing data show that enrolment and attendance in primary education is low in most countries, although in some countries there are marked regional, lifestyle and other variations between different Roma and Traveller groups (e.g. in Belgium, France and Slovenia), while

absenteeism is a persistent, common and serious problem affecting all Roma and Traveller pupils. Low attendance and high absenteeism rates could indicate on the one hand that pupils and parents are not convinced of the importance of education and on the other hand that schools tend to have a more permissive attitude towards their attendance. It could also indicate that a number of Romani and Traveller children from poor families might have difficult access to schools. In many countries enrolment, especially in primary education, has reportedly improved in recent years, while in others it remains critical.

The available evidence indicates that transition to secondary education is low and that dropout rates increase with age, as a result of an effort to find gainful employment or because of low performance, possibly a combination of both. Statistical data on the educational performance of Roma and Traveller pupils especially in reference to the national average are particularly scarce, but the available evidence, mostly from surveys, indicate that they perform worse than average and thus have a lower chance of attaining an educational qualification leading to worthwhile employment opportunities.

2. Findings on segregation practices in Member States

Formal and informal practices of segregating Roma and Traveller pupils persist, despite strategies and policies that have been developed to combat them. Although systematic segregation no longer exists as educational policy, segregation is practised by schools and educational authorities in a number of different, mostly indirect, ways sometimes as the unintended effect of policies and practices and sometimes as a result of residential segregation. Segregation has taken place within a classroom by sitting Roma pupils in a different part of the room. Arrangements have also been made to instruct them in separate classrooms within the same school (following the same curriculum or a “simple version”). Schools and educational authorities may segregate pupils on the basis of a perception of “their different needs” and/or as a response to behavioural issues and learning difficulties. The latter could also lead to the frequent placement of Roma pupils in “special schools” for mentally handicapped children, which is still a worrying phenomenon in Member States like Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. However, steps are being taken to review testing and placement procedures taking into account the norms and behavioural patterns of the Roma and Traveller children’s social and cultural background.

3. Findings on factors influencing access to education and attainment

Access to education and the educational attainment of Roma and Travellers is affected by direct and systemic discrimination and exclusion in education and influenced by their overall conditions of life, which are invariably characterised by high unemployment, substandard housing and poor access to health services creating a vicious circle of poverty, exclusion and marginalisation that affects their ability to participate in and benefit from education. However, other factors are also critically important for educational attainment:

- Forms of exclusion related to the documentation required for enrolment or the direct and/or indirect costs of education;
- Forms of school or classroom segregation, including wrongful assignment to special education for the mentally handicapped;
- Absence of Roma and Traveller related material and information in curricula (particularly history and social science curricula) and lack of resources relating to pupils' experiences;
- Teachers, who are not properly trained to deal with ethnically mixed classes, not sufficiently supported in their work by intercultural mediators and not adequately paid risking early burnout and developing an indifferent attitude;
- Prejudice expressed in harassment, racial slurs and scapegoating at school;
- Lack of pre-school education crucial for early assimilation of school norms and expected behavioural patterns, but also for developing proficiency in language;
- Low educational level of parents affecting their ability to support their children in learning and lowering their aspirations;
- Parents' experiences of discrimination and prejudice preventing them from realising how formal educational qualifications can be translated into improved life and employment chances.

4. Challenges faced in a process of policy change

In their efforts to address these issues some Member States have taken steps to reform their educational provisions, as well as their overall Roma strategies. However, the evidence suggests that progress is often slow and difficult mainly due to resistance by local government and pressure of non-Roma parents. There are several reports of strong negative reactions by parents, as well as by school and local authorities (e.g. in Hungary, Slovakia, Greece, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Spain)

to an increase in the number of Roma pupils in mainstream schools. Where government policies on Roma and Travellers do exist, at times, lack of adequate budgetary planning leads to delayed or inadequate implementation of targeted educational measures. Member States differ in their approach to education policies for Roma and Travellers: some have developed and implement a variety of education policies specifically targeting Roma and Traveller pupils, while others address them within a wider anti-discrimination or intercultural education policy framework. In both cases, however, the information available regarding measurable impact and sustainability of these policies is very limited. A variety of innovative projects have also been implemented in several Member States often with EU Community financial support. In particular the PHARE programme was extensively used during the accession phase of the ten “new” Member States with some positive results, which eventually influenced policy decisions.

The European Union and its Member States face a difficult challenge in combating discrimination against Roma and Travellers and improving their equal access to education. However, more balanced, sufficiently resourced policies with active involvement of the Roma and Traveller communities can bring about the necessary systemic changes in the national education structures and improve their education, which so crucially affects their future life chances.

5. EUMC Opinions

The opinions of the EUMC, addressing the major factors influencing the situation of Roma and Travellers in education and highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and focused action at national and local levels with the active participation of representatives from Roma and Traveller communities are mainly⁴:

General policies and measures

- Member States and local authorities should address factors affecting Roma and Travellers in areas such as education, housing, employment, health, and the attainment of personal documents in a comprehensive manner through the implementation of action plans targeting these groups. The National Equality Bodies should be responsible for monitoring the situation systematically;

⁴ A detailed presentation of the EUMC’s opinions is available at the end of the report.

- Member States should develop specific policies and measures promoting respect and appreciation of Roma and Traveller history and culture particularly by involving journalists and the media.

Educational policies and measures

- Member States must also ensure that the legal measures expressly prohibiting any form of direct or indirect segregation into different schools or classes with effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions are in place and implemented by the relevant authorities.
- Member States should deploy specific desegregation measures where segregation of Roma and Traveller children exists ensuring that desegregation measures are properly implemented at the local level.
- Member States should actively encourage Roma and Travellers to enrol by removing unnecessary administrative barriers and ensuring that they are provided with the necessary documentation.
- Member States must ensure that schools with Roma and Traveller pupils receive the appropriate, if necessary additional, funding that allows them to provide education of equal quality as all other public schools.
- Member States should provide practical incentives such as additional social benefits to Roma and Traveller families to promote enrolment to pre-school education, which indirectly also supports the development of women's employment opportunities.
- Education authorities should ensure that all Roma and Traveller pupils have free access to compulsory and post compulsory education, including higher education, meaning that costs (e.g. tuition fees, cost of books, other educational material, transportation, etc) should be covered by scholarship and tuition fee support schemes.
- Education authorities should establish special disengagement programmes in order to transfer and integrate Roma and Traveller pupils to regular education.
- Education authorities should ensure that pupils of travelling communities be supported by special pedagogical measures designed to integrate them into the local schools of their temporary residence, to monitor their progress systematically, and to promote the use of distance education.

- Education authorities should consider making Romani language classes available as an optional course for all pupils in areas with a particularly high concentration of Roma. The Roma community should be consulted regarding the use of Romani in school, since opinions are sometimes divided.
- Educational authorities should design and implement awareness raising campaigns promoting pre-school education at local level, involving Roma and Traveller representatives and local authorities. The focus should be on concrete measures to involve Roma and Traveller parents in pre-school education in order to alleviate fears of assimilation or harassment.
- Educational authorities should ensure that any discriminatory practices that result in the placement of a disproportionately high number of Roma and Traveller pupils in special education are replaced by assessment procedures and psycho-pedagogical testing, which take into account language issues and different socio-cultural norms, and are developed involving Roma and Traveller representatives.
- Educational authorities should ensure that assessment procedures and psycho-pedagogical testing are systematically monitored with the direct involvement of parents.
- Educational authorities should ensure that Roma and Traveller history and culture are included in textbooks with particular consideration given to the experience of Roma during the Holocaust. Material on important contributions Roma and Travellers made in individual countries and Europe should be provided.
- Educational authorities should ensure that teachers working in ethnically mixed classes receive special training, be adequately paid and supported by experts and intercultural mediators. Teachers should also be made aware that they need to engage Roma and Traveller pupils more in class and not de-motivate them by placing lower demands upon them.
- Schools should monitor systematically non-attendance or truancy and involve actively the parents in ensuring that children attend school regularly. Thus schools will also come to understand the reasons for non-attendance and develop appropriate responses.
- Schools should highlight successful educational attainment by Roma and Traveller pupils, and relevant authorities should ensure that qualified individuals are supported in their search for appropriate

employment in order to show the link between educational attainment and improved life chances.

- Schools should make strong efforts to engage Roma and Traveller parents in school related activities in order to enhance mutual understanding. Schools must attract parents by respecting their values and culture and acknowledging their contribution to the education of their children.
- Local authorities need to provide travelling communities with facilities to improve their standard of living. Schools need to develop pedagogical measures to integrate them into the school population by acknowledging nomadism as a legitimate and respected lifestyle.

Monitoring and data collection

- Educational authorities should collect systematically ethnically differentiated statistical data on the educational situation of Roma and Travellers which also gauges the impact of policies and measures.
- Member States should consider in this respect cooperating with the European Commission and Eurostat in order to develop common statistical indicators for monitoring effectively the education of Roma and Traveller pupils.

1. Introduction

“Education is a critical issue and one that I take most to heart. The situation as regards education is very similar in all countries irrespective of the size of the Roma population; even in Finland, where, if I am correct, there are less than 10,000 Roma, most of the Romani children attend special schools intended for those with learning difficulties. In Hungary, 30 per cent of children aged 6 – 14 are in special schools. In my view, this is a mental holocaust for those graduating from these schools: they receive a low standard of schooling which effectively denies them the opportunity to receive further education. In turn, they will find it difficult or impossible to find a job and will end up living on social benefits. The fact that so many Roma are unemployed is due partly to the social situation and discrimination but to an important extent it is due to a lack of education.”

Viktória Mohácsi, Member of the European Parliament

(European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, *Annual report 2005: Equality and non-discrimination* (2005))

The Treaty establishing the European Community provides that the latter shall contribute to the development of quality education by supporting and supplementing the action of Member States, while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity under the principle of subsidiarity. The role of the European Commission is then to create a system of cooperation between Member States while preserving their rights in terms of the content and organisation of education and training systems.

According to UNESCO⁵ education should be a means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies. Learning should therefore also focus on values, attitudes and behaviours, which enable individuals to learn to live together in a world characterised by diversity and pluralism. In this respect non-discrimination and respect for others should be essential elements of teaching and classroom interaction in the multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic European societies in order to improve

⁵ For more information, http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2466&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (12-10-2005)

access to education and equality of educational opportunities that will strengthen social cohesion.

In March 2000 the European Council meeting in Lisbon⁶ concluded that a radical transformation of the European economy will require the modernisation of education systems, mainstreaming the promotion of social inclusion in Member States' education and training and developing priority actions addressed to specific target groups, e.g. minority groups. In 2002 the Council and the European Commission underlined the wider significance of education in the context of the Lisbon process stressing that “while education and training systems need to change in view of the challenges of the knowledge society and globalisation, they pursue broader goals and have broader responsibilities to society. They play an important role in building up social cohesion, in preventing discrimination, exclusion, racism and xenophobia and hence in promoting tolerance and the respect for human rights.”⁷

In response to these concerns the EUMC examined aspects of racial and ethnic discrimination in the education systems of EU Member States and noted in its Annual Report: “The most vulnerable group experiencing racism and discrimination in education are the Roma... In reports on educational inequality, two of the main concerns are those of segregation, and the over-representation of certain groups in ‘special education’. Whilst several Member States report these as issues for various migrant/minority groups, by far the largest number of references to these problems specifically concerns the Roma. Disproportionately high concentrations of Roma pupils in certain classes, and an over-readiness to label Roma children as educationally disabled and with learning difficulties, were reported in several Member States.”⁸

In 2004 the EUMC published a report⁹ on educational measures for migrants and minorities based on studies drafted by the RAXEN National Focal Points.¹⁰ A complementary report¹¹ on national strategies for minority schooling based on national studies and covering the then

⁶ Text available at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm (12-10-2005)

⁷ Council (Education) (2002) *Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and training systems in Europe*, OJ C 142/01

⁸ EUMC (2005) *Annual Report, Part II*, p. 13

⁹ EUMC (2004) *Migrants, minorities and education: Documenting legal measures and remedies against Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, Vienna, EUMC

¹⁰ The RAXEN network is composed of contracted consortia of organisations (research organisations, NGOs, special bodies, social partners, etc) in each Member State of the European Union that function as the EUMC's National Focal Points with the task to collect objective, reliable and comparable data on racism and xenophobia.

¹¹ EUMC (2005) *National Strategies for Minority Schooling: A comparative analysis*, Vienna, EUMC

eight Central and East European accession states and the candidate countries of Bulgaria and Romania was also published with PHARE financial support. Both reports paint a bleak picture of the educational situation of Roma and Travellers, despite measures to improve it including new or amended legislation, school policies, infrastructural improvements, and a wealth of projects and initiatives.

In view of these worrying findings the EUMC, after the extension of the RAXEN National Focal Point network covering the 25 Member States in 2004, asked its National Focal Points to collect all the latest available data and information and report on the situation of Roma and Travellers in education. The present report is based on these 25 studies delivered in November 2004, an analysis provided by the Kurt Levin Foundation and other material collected by the EUMC.

The term 'Roma' is an endonym and refers to persons describing themselves as Roma, Gypsies, Manouches, Kalderash, Machavaya, Lovari, Churari, Romanichal, Gitanoes, Kalo, Sinti, Rudari, Boyash, Ungaritzza, Luri, Bashaldé, Romungro, Yenish, Xoraxai and other groups perceived as 'Gypsies'. The term Traveller refers specifically to Irish Travellers who are not Roma and are native to Ireland. In France the term "Travellers" *-gens du voyage-* is also used. The terms 'Roma and Travellers' is used in this report as shorthand only and is not intended to minimise the diversity within these communities or to promote negative stereotypes.

Measuring a diverse population

The precise number of Roma and Travellers in the enlarged European Union is difficult to establish with any degree of accuracy. This situation reflects a general absence of data collection disaggregated by ethnicity in the majority of EU Member States, along with a lack of focused attention on Roma and Traveller communities that are characterised by a very diverse range of languages, ethno-cultural identities, religions and social classes. The latest European Commission report on “The situation of Roma in an enlarged European Union” indicates a range of between 2.7 million and 5.6 million with an additional one and a half million after the accession of the ten new Member States in May 2004¹². The (mostly unofficial) figures provided for each Member State in the NFP reports largely corroborate this estimate, although in some Member States, the ‘stateless’ position of the Roma – which arises because of their lack of a birth certificate, ID card, or other form of official identification – compounds the absence of accurate official data. However, it is generally accepted that the Roma and Travellers now constitute the single largest minority ethnic community in the European Union.

The available demographic and particularly educational data must be treated with caution: the paucity of reliable ethnically differentiated official statistics in education make “[...] seemingly straightforward questions, such as how many Roma live in a particular country, prove extremely challenging”¹³ and an analysis of the situation has to rely more on survey based studies and descriptive reports rather than robust and comparable statistical evidence.

The lack of data is compounded by the difficulty in identifying Roma and Travellers, who constitute a true “mosaic” with numerous groups and subgroups based on clan membership or occupational category. Roma may also be Christians (of various denominations) or Muslims (e.g. in Greece and Cyprus). Another issue regards the focus of the data and information on the “visibly” socially excluded and marginalised Roma and Travellers: even though social exclusion and marginalisation are key characteristics of these groups, this does not necessarily apply to all Roma and Travellers in Europe, as improvements in key areas of social life have affected positively some parts of Roma

¹² DG Employment and Social Affairs (Unit D3), European Commission (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*, p.5

¹³ Dena Ringold (2005) *Measuring Roma Ethnicity and Poverty in Central and Eastern Europe*, Paper prepared for the IAOS Satellite Meeting on Measuring Small and Indigenous Populations, Wellington, available at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/BC78CAFB-CDD8-4B4F-BAAC-8690231FA914/0/PAPER201.pdf> (21-01-2006)

and Traveller populations. Nevertheless, research tends to focus on the “visible” Roma and Travellers, who actually correspond to the stereotype of the marginalised and impoverished pariah possibly introducing a somewhat distorted view for the entire population. A final difficulty lies in the rapid demographic growth of the Roma population, which means that data should be frequently updated. Evidence suggests that around half this population is under sixteen years of age making the issue of education appear all the more pertinent.¹⁴

¹⁴ Jean-Pierre Liégeois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 35

A brief history

The Roma are considered to be descendents of people who left the Indian sub-continent at the end of the first millennium. Evidence suggests that they arrived in Europe around the 14th – 15th century eventually meeting and sometimes merging with indigenous European nomadic groups in a “cultural and social exchange, leading to stratification, and vast linguistic and cultural diversification, both within a given region and from one region to another”¹⁵. Although the specific history of the various Roma and Traveller groups differs, marginalisation, discrimination and persecution have always been defining characteristics.

The conditions of life of Roma and Traveller communities were influenced by different state policies towards them. Policies of exclusion and open persecution were practised mostly in Western Europe in contrast with policies of assimilation followed in Central and Eastern Europe by the Austrian monarchy and the Ottoman Empire aimed at eradicating nomadic lifestyles.

During the Nazi period the Roma were specifically targeted and systematically persecuted resulting in mass extermination in concentration camps. After the war socialist governments in Central and Eastern Europe engaged in a concerted and culturally repressive effort to assimilate and settle the Roma populations. Although socialist policies improved conditions by increasing access to education and employment, they failed to provide equality of opportunity providing jobs that were mostly unskilled, low-paying and physically demanding and education that was in most cases in low quality segregated schools or classes. The process of transition from communism further doomed the Roma to a second-class status by marginalising them in the labour market, further weakening their access to decent housing, health and education and subjecting them to open racism and discrimination.¹⁶

In more recent years Roma and Travellers have continued to experience serious abuses in EU Member States, as documented in the 2005 EUMC comparative report “Racist Violence in EU Member States”. The arrival of Romani migrants and asylum seekers from the

¹⁵ Jean-Pierre Liegeois and Nicolae Gheorghe (1995) *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*, Minority Rights Group International, p. 7

¹⁶ Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erika Wilkens (2005) *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*, World Bank, Washington, p. 15, available at [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/\\$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf) (12-10-2005) and Gheorghe, N. and A. Mirga (1997), *The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy Paper*, Project on Ethnic Relations, available at http://www.per-usa.org/21st_c.htm (13-11-2005)

former Yugoslavia, along with the arrival of Roma from Central and Eastern Europe, was often met with a hostile response from the press, the public and politicians. In the 1990s age-old “anti-Gypsyism” sentiments surfaced in Member States of the European Union that were facing the prospect of increased numbers of Roma asylum seekers. At the same time, Central and Eastern European countries failed to tackle the reasons behind large numbers of Roma seeking to leave. Their long history of discriminatory treatment, at the hands of the State and civil society, has placed Europe’s Roma and Travellers in the unenviable position of being among the most marginalised and discriminated against populations in Europe.

2. Public education: Inequalities and discrimination

The situation of Roma and Travellers in the public education systems of all EU Member States is characterised by severe inequalities in the access to and benefits from education traced in overall poor enrolment, attendance and performance figures. These inequalities arise from the operation of a variety of discriminatory mechanisms of exclusion and segregation as a result of a wide array of interrelated factors and despite efforts by national governments and the Community to improve the situation. In the following sections we present in two separate sections the available data and information on enrolment, attendance and attainment, and on segregation.

2.1. Enrolment, attendance, attainment

Regular official statistical data on enrolment, drop-out rates, school attainment and transition to secondary, vocational and higher education is rarely informative regarding Roma and Travellers due to the lack of ethnically differentiated data. In addition, educational statistics are not comparable between countries due to the different methodologies and categories used in the data collection and given the different educational systems. Available statistical figures derived from survey results and qualitative studies concerning enrolment, attainment and, in some cases, attendance are not directly comparable given the different methods of data collection. Detailed data on the academic attainment and progress of Roma and Traveller pupils is generally not available. Roma and Travellers may also be under-recorded especially since their group affiliation is usually established through ethnic or linguistic self-identification, which many Roma and Travellers prefer to avoid.

Nevertheless, the country-by-country overview below based on data and information from NFP reports and other background material, gives a good indication of the situation in each Member State. In addition, it seems that research providing valuable information is carried out at national or transnational level covering some Member States, but such research would be desirable in the other Member States also.

In **Belgium** there are no official statistics on the Manouche (estimated at around 1,500) and Rom (estimated at around 750) groups. In addition the Vlaams Minderhedencentrum¹⁷ (VMC) estimates approximately 26,000 immigrant Roma living in the Flemish and Brussels region, while the Centre de Médiation des Gens du Voyage de la Région Wallonne (CMGVW) estimates 5,000 to 10,000 to live in the Walloon region. According to the NFP report there are no official educational statistics concerning these groups, but research indicates that there are striking differences in the level of school participation between the different groups with Rom and Roma pupils' enrolment rates at very low levels. According to a 1994 VMC survey in the Flemish region, 94.6 per cent of *Voyager*¹⁸ children enrolled in primary school, but only 80.3 per cent attended regularly and absenteeism of older pupils increased. 81 per cent of Manouche children enrolled in schools, but only 67.8 per cent attended secondary schools. Only 18.8 per cent of Rom children attended school and around half of the Roma between the ages of six and eighteen attend school. 2001 data collected by the VMC show that school attendance has gradually improved.

In the **Czech Republic** the Roma are recognised as a national minority¹⁹. In 1989, 145,738 Roma were recorded by local authorities, but in the 1991 Census only 32,903 declared themselves as Roma and the number dropped in 2001 to 11,746. However, the official "Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2004", published by the Council of National Minorities in 2005 notes that "their number, according to qualified estimates, is put at approximately 200,000" (the number could be even higher according to Roma sources).

According to the NFP report, the current critical educational situation of Roma in the Czech Republic is a result of long-lasting exclusion from society and legislative measures during the communist era aiming largely at their assimilation. Data from 1987²⁰ show very high dropout rates in the transition from primary to secondary education and very low attainment rates in vocational apprentice centres. According to

¹⁷ The Vlaams Minderhedencentrum (VMC) established in 1999 and partly funded by the Flemish community

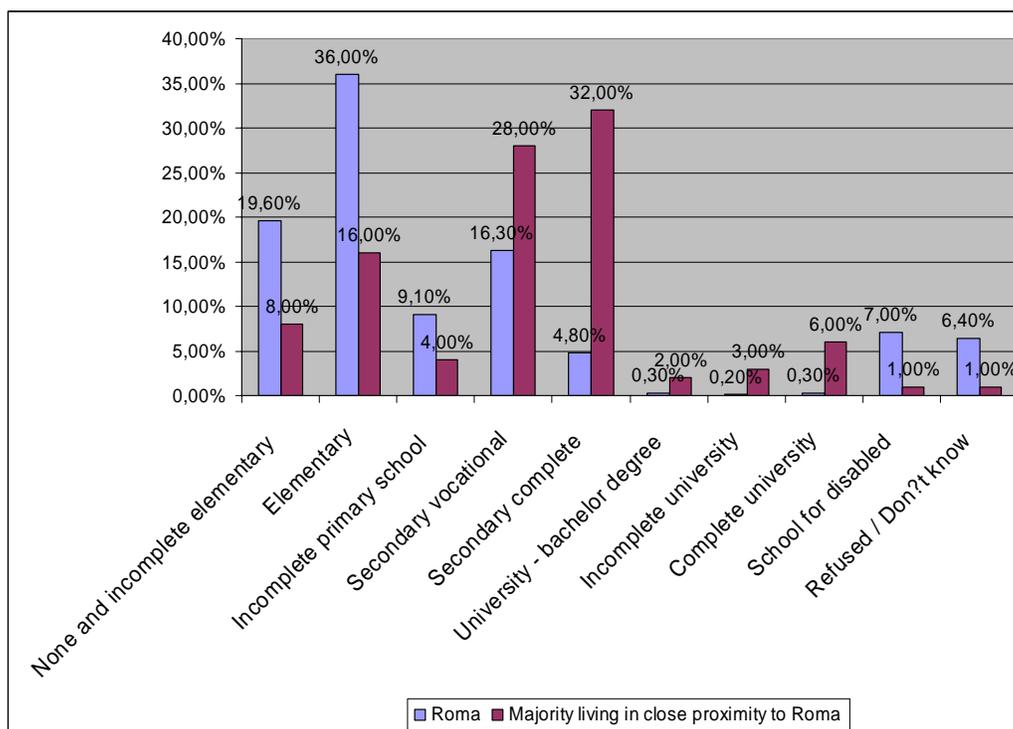
¹⁸ *Voyagers* are descendants of former Belgian occupational travellers. Ethnically they cannot be considered as Roma or Sinti, but they share the same culture. After becoming sedentary, they lived in caravans or houses. Their first language is Dutch and French depending on their region of residence, added with words of their own language, called 'Bargoens'. Their religion is mainly Catholic.

¹⁹ Law No. 273/2001 Coll. (amended by law No 320/2002 Coll.)

²⁰ Víšek, P. (1999) "Program integrace – Řešení problematiky romských obyvatel v období 1970-1989", in: Socioklub (1999) *Romové v České republice (1945 – 1998)*, p. 256

a March 1996 report²¹, only about 1 per cent of Romani men and 0.9 per cent of Romani women had received some middle or secondary school education by 1991. The report also indicates that 2.5 per cent of Romani children enter secondary school; this figure reportedly includes vocational technical schools and regular secondary schools. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released in February 2005 its latest survey data covering among others the Czech Republic. Accordingly, 25 per cent of Roma aged 12 and above have completed primary education compared to 73 per cent of the majority population.

Figure 1: Highest education level attained in the Czech Republic (Roma and majority population)



Source: UNDP (2005) Survey data (Education): Highest attained education level
 Available at <http://vulnerability.undp.sk> (12-10-2005)

In order to combat the high absenteeism rates the distribution of social benefits was linked to pupils' attendance rate by the Law on Social Needs No. 422/2003 Coll. The implementation of the law, since January 2004, shows some effect. However, the latest government report claims that "the efforts of many schools to provide quality education to Roma

²¹ Conway, Laura (1996) *Report on the Status of Romani Education in the Czech Republic*, Citizen's Solidarity and Tolerance Movement – HOST, Prague

pupils are thwarted by lax attendance and frequent absence, especially among pupils in the upper level of primary schools, even though there are no legislative obstacles in the education system leading to the discrimination of Roma in education. This situation can only be handled at local level. However, it affects educational success significantly.”²²

In **Denmark**, according to an official report there are 1,750²³ Roma, but representatives of Roma communities²⁴ estimate a number closer to 10,000 - 20.000. Danish authorities divide Roma into two main groups, namely those having arrived at the end of the 1960s and recent refugees from former Yugoslavia having arrived in the 1990s. The authorities maintain that those Roma who took up residence prior to the 1960s have been completely integrated and do not emerge as an identifiable group.²⁵ There are thus, according to the NFP report, no education statistics available on Roma and only some information is provided for the municipality of Ellsinore, where the attendance rate in the segregated classes for Roma is reportedly around 66 per cent.²⁶

In **Germany**, there are no ethnically differentiated statistical data relating either to the demographic characteristics or the educational situation of Roma and Sinti. The Central Council of Sinti and Roma (*Zentralrat der Sinti und Roma*) estimates their number at around 70,000²⁷, a figure corroborated by the Federal Foreign Office²⁸. However, this figure includes only those who hold German citizenship, and therefore belong to the officially recognised national minority of Sinti and Roma. In addition, about 100,000 Roma with foreign citizenship are currently living in Germany, mostly refugees from East and Southeast Europe should be added to this group²⁹.

²² Council of National Minorities (2005) *Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2004*, Prague, p. 46

²³ Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights (2002) *Legal Situation of Roma in Europe*. The report is based on a survey of all Danish municipalities.

²⁴ Lautrop, J. (2002) “Sigøjnere I Brønshøj” (Gypsies in Brønshøj), in *Jyllandsposten*

²⁵ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (2005) *Second Opinion on Denmark adopted on 9 December 2004*, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2004)005, Par. 51

²⁶ Laursen, J. (2004) *Sigøjnernes desintegration I velfærdsstaten (Gypsies disintegration in the welfare state)*, p. 19

²⁷ Bundesministerium des Innern (2004b) *Nationale Minderheiten in Deutschland*, Berlin p.14

²⁸ Information available at <http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/805.0.html> (12-10-2005)

²⁹ Open Society Institute (2002) *Monitoring des Minderheitenschutzes in der Europäischen Union: Die Lage der Sinti und Roma in Deutschland*, p. 82

The available sources indicate that the educational situation of Sinti and Roma in Germany is poor with school achievement below average, high absenteeism and drop-out rates leading one study to conclude that the educational provisions for Roma and Sinti in comparison to those offered for other ethnic groups must still be seen as “catastrophic negligence”³⁰. The same study, however, also notes that during the 1990s a positive trend could be observed in Roma and Sinti participation in education. Nevertheless, in 2002, a government report noted that, within the framework of a project on educational support for Sinti children in the state of Schleswig-Holstein, “striking periods of absences were established”, although Sinti assisted the teachers³¹.

In **Estonia**, according to the 2000 Census³², there are 542 Roma, of which 426 declared Romani as their mother tongue, although unofficial estimates³³ suggest that there are approximately 1,000 - 1,500. According to the Ministry of Education and Research³⁴ during the 2003/2004 academic year there were 56 pupils in all schools of Estonia who spoke Romani at home. There are no detailed education statistics on the Roma. However, according to the NFP report, a representative of the Education Ministry argued that Roma children usually stopped school after five years³⁵.

In **Greece**, the last Census containing linguistic data in 1951 recorded 7,500 individuals speaking Romani. However, studies³⁶ indicate that the number of Roma was always far higher than that. Survey data indicate a number between 150,000³⁷ and 300,000³⁸. According to the

³⁰ Thomas, Christina (2000) *Integration durch Achtung und Anerkennung der Differenz: Erfahrungen aus der Praxis im deutschen Bildungssystem*. In: Hornberg, Sabine (ed.): *Die Schulsituation von Sinti und Roma in Europa*, Frankfurt/M

³¹ Bundesministerium des Innern (2002) *Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung zu der Stellungnahme des Beratenden Ausschusses zu dem Bericht über die Umsetzung des Rahmenübereinkommens*, Berlin, p. 16

³² Estonia/Statistical Office of Estonia, public database at <http://www.stat.ee>

³³ Petrova, D. (2004), “The Roma: Between a Myth and the Future”, in: *Roma Rights*, No. 1, p.9 available at <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1844> (12-10-2005)

³⁴ Ministry of Education and Research; Written communication no. 3.1-3/4172 of 3 August 2004

³⁵ *Proceedings of the International Drom-Edu Project (COMENIUS) Meeting, 15-18.05.2003*, Tallinn, Estonia

³⁶ Vaxevanoglou, A. (2001) *Greek Gypsies: Marginalised and family men*, Athens: Editions Alexandria, p. 17

³⁷ Komis, K. (1998): *Gypsies: History, Demography, Culture*, Athens: Editions Ellinika Grammata

³⁸ EETAA (2001): *Integrated Action Plan for the Greek Roma*, Athens: EETAA, p.45

Treaty of Lausanne³⁹ Muslim Roma resident in Thrace enjoy a special status, not shared by Christian Roma or Muslim Roma living outside the area defined by the Treaty.

Despite several literacy projects for adult Roma organised by the Ministry of Education since 1984, Roma literacy rates were found by a 1997 study⁴⁰ to be extremely poor with approximately 60 - 80 per cent of nomadic Roma illiterate and the remaining 20 - 40 per cent functionally illiterate; practically no Roma children had received pre-school education, while a significant number of Roma children could not enrol at all due to the lack of necessary documentation and lack of proof of vaccination. A 1999 report⁴¹ by the Greek section of 'Doctors of the World' showed similarly that the percentage of literate tent-dwelling Roma in Athens was extremely low at around 6 per cent. According to the NFP report, existing data concerning Roma enrolment in Greece in the past years have not been reliable: Roma pupils are not recorded systematically in school registers, while some schools have reported that Roma enrol simply in order to collect an annual education benefit, but do not actually attend classes. A 1998 - 1999 survey⁴² showed that 69.7 per cent of the sample aged 18 - 47 had never attended school, while only 10 per cent completed primary education, 2.1 per cent compulsory education and 0.9 per cent higher secondary education; 42.6 per cent of parents stated that their children attend school, but none in secondary education. Among the reasons given for not attending school 29.7 per cent suggested the racist behaviour of teachers, pupils and their parents. Nevertheless, 85 per cent believe that a better education would lead to better employment.

The Education Ministry⁴³ claims that the implementation of the "Gypsy Children Education" project (*Ekpedefsi Tsiganopedon*) in 1997, followed up by the project "Integration of Gypsy Children in Schools" (*Éntaxi Tsiganopédon sto Scholio*)⁴⁴ in 2004, reduced dropout rates from

³⁹ Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Appendix A, Article 2), Lausanne January 30, 1923 between the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Greek Government

⁴⁰ Tsiokos G., Vergidis D., Nikolakopoulos I., (1998) *National study on illiteracy* (in Greek), Athens: National Book Centre – Book Observatory.

⁴¹ Médecins du Monde (1999) *Joint Action of Organisations for the rights of tent-dwelling Roma in Greece*

⁴² G. Papakonstantinou, M. Vasileiadou, M. Pavli-Korre (2004) *The economic, social and cultural situation of Gypsies in Greece: 1998-1999 research*, University of Ioannina, Ioannina

⁴³ More information at http://www.ypepth.gr/el_ec_page2094.htm (12-10-2005)

⁴⁴ There is scarcely any information about this project publicly available. Its website that contains no information regarding impact was eventually discovered at <http://195.130.114.39/ROMA/intro.htm> (10-10-2005)

75 per cent to 24 per cent⁴⁵. However, this is not corroborated by any publicly available official enrolment statistics and a 2003 NGO report⁴⁶ argued that still many Romani children are not even enrolled in school or drop out at a very early stage. In order to improve enrolment rates hampered in many cases by bureaucratic requirements for formal documentation and proof of vaccination, the Education Ministry established in 2000 the “Roma Student Card” enabling Roma pupils to enrol without further formalities. In 2004 a set of data published by the project coordinators showed increased Roma enrolment at primary school level from 25 per cent to 75 per cent and a reduction in the dropout rate. Yet, critics have produced evidence showing that the actual participation of Roma children in the Greek educational system remains very low⁴⁷. Meanwhile, reports by the NGO Greek Helsinki Monitor⁴⁸, as well as cases presented to the Ombudsman⁴⁹, highlight serious problems regarding enrolment and attendance.

In Spain the socially and culturally diverse *Gitano* population is estimated at 650,000 to 800,000 people⁵⁰ of whom almost half live in Andalucia. Large numbers of immigrant Roma from Eastern Europe⁵¹, Romania, Bulgaria and ex-Yugoslavia were added, particularly after 2002. According to the NFP report the largest immigrant group are Romanian Roma, mostly of the *Ursàri* subgroup. Educational attainment of the *Gitano* in primary education is lower than the national average, but data indicate that the situation has improved in the last 20 years. 74 per cent of *Gitano* children attended pre-school in 2001-2002⁵² compared to the national average of 93 per cent⁵³. Estimates by the Consultative Commission of the “Gitano Development Plan” show that around 50 per

⁴⁵ Stamelos G. (ed) (2002) *To elliniko ekpaideutiko systima* (The Greek educational system), Centre for Educational Research, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, Athens

⁴⁶ ERRRC, Greek Helsinki Monitor (2003) *Cleaning Operations: Excluding Roma in Greece*, Country Report, No. 12, p. 64, available at

http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/bhr/english/organizations/ghm/greeceE_2003.rtf (10-09-2005)

⁴⁷ Greek Helsinki Monitor (2005) *Roma denied education or sent to segregated schools in Greece: A case study and general information*, pp. 14-15 available at

http://cm.greekhelsinki.gr/uploads/2005_files/ghm-mrge_on_roma_education_november_2005.doc (10-02-2006)

⁴⁸ More information available at <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr>

⁴⁹ The Greek Ombudsman (2004) *Annual Report 2003*, p.186 available at www.synigoros.gr

⁵⁰ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs data available at <http://www.mtas.es>

⁵¹ Peeters Grietens, K. (2004) *Entre Tinieblas. Roma inmigrantes del Este de Europa en Barcelona*, Fundació Jaume Bofill

⁵² Fundación Secretariado General Gitano (2002) *Evaluación de la Normalización Educativa del Alumnado Gitano*, Madrid

⁵³ Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (2001) *Datos Básicos de la Educación en España para el año 2001/2002*, Madrid

cent of *Gitano* pupils attend primary school regularly, 35 per cent are absent sporadically and 10 per cent attend rarely.

In terms of school performance 30 per cent achieve average results, but 60 to 70 per cent fail. Consequently drop-out rates before the age of 14 are high at 30 per cent, while around 5 per cent do not attend school at all⁵⁴. Statistical survey data⁵⁵ collected by the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* (FSGG) in 1993 - 1994 and 2000 - 2001 show a general trend of improvement in primary education raising the level of enrolment to 94 per cent and achieving normal school attendance for 46 per cent of *Gitano* pupils. Nevertheless, 31 per cent may still be absent even for months at times. School performance is also shown to have improved with 69 per cent enrolled in the grade appropriate to their age group. However, whereas one third achieves equal or superior marks compared to non-*Gitano*, 67 per cent attain on average inferior marks. There is little information regarding *Gitanos* in secondary education, but a study⁵⁶ on teachers' perceptions indicates that absenteeism and drop-out rates remain a problem. A 2003 study for the regions of Levante and Sur showed that 56 per cent of *Gitano* pupils did not continue to secondary education⁵⁷, while 2004 research shows that in different regions only one per cent of *Gitanos* manage to complete compulsory education⁵⁸.

In **France**, the name “Travellers” -*gens du voyage*- encompasses a variety of different groups, such as Rom, Kale, Manouche, Sinti Catalan and Andalusian Gitans, as well as Yenish, commonly referred to as ‘*gitans*’ – Gypsies⁵⁹. Ethnic minorities are not recognised in France. A significant number are non-sedentary with sources estimating around 35,000 caravans⁶⁰. The 1990 “Traveller’s -*Gens de Voyage*- Situation Report”⁶¹ estimated around 100,000 sedentary, 70,000 non-sedentary and

⁵⁴ Data provided by the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano*, <http://www.fsgg.org>

⁵⁵ FSGG (2002) *Evaluación de la Normalización Educativa del Alumnado Gitano*, Madrid

⁵⁶ Asociación Enseñantes con Gitanos (1998) *La Transición de Primaria a Secundaria*. *Boletín del Centro de Documentación 14/15*, Madrid: AEG; Asociación Enseñantes con Gitanos, (2004) *El éxito escolar de los españoles gitanos*. *Boletín del Centro de Documentación 25/26*, Madrid

⁵⁷ Giménez, A. (2003) *The Education of Gipsy Childhood in Europe*, available at <http://www.opre.roma.uji.es> (12-10-2005)

⁵⁸ Abajo, J. & Carrasco, S. (2004) “Síntesis del libro ‘Gitanos en la encrucijada: experiencias de éxito y continuidad educativa para repensar el cambio social y cultural’”, in: Asociación Enseñantes con Gitanos, (ed.) *El éxito escolar de los españoles gitanos*. *Boletín del Centro de Documentación 25/26*, pp. 51-83, Madrid

⁵⁹ The term has no derogatory meaning and is commonly used for self-designation.

⁶⁰ National Consultative Committee on Travellers (2002) *Report submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Work and Solidarity*

⁶¹ Delamon, Arsène (1990) *La situation des ‘Gens du Voyage’ et les mesures proposees pour l’ameliorer*, Rapport de Mission de Préfet Monsieur Arsène Delamon à Monsieur le Premier Ministre

65,000 semi-sedentary “Travellers”. The report estimates that 50 per cent of non-sedentary children were enrolled in education, compared to 85 per cent of sedentary children, while less than 10 per cent of both groups attend lower secondary schools (*collèges*). The 2000 official report “Schooling of Traveller Children”⁶² indicated that there was a slight improvement in school enrolment and the number of pupils following training courses at vocational or technical high schools. The 2004 report “Synthesis of the investigations into the Schooling of Traveller Children”⁶³ found that enrolment rates in 2002/2003 approached 85 per cent of sedentary and 60 per cent of non-sedentary children. On the other hand, a European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) report published recently suggested that participation levels of Gypsy children are “dramatically low, with many children not attending school at all and others dropping out at an early age... and only a very small minority complete secondary education.”⁶⁴ ECRI, in its 2005 report expressed its concern over allegations of continued refusal by authorities, in certain cases, to enrol children whose parents are in an illegal situation or to enrol children who are Travellers, although compelled by law.⁶⁵

Ireland is unique in Europe, in that migrations of Roma did not substantially reach the country. Until the 1990s the indigenous Irish Travellers were the only ethnic group in the Roma/*Gypsy*/Traveller ethnic cluster⁶⁶. However, Irish Travellers are of Irish ancestry and therefore do not ethnically or linguistically belong to any of the Romani speaking groups. Since the mid 1990s an estimated 1,700 Roma migrant workers and asylum seekers mainly from Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria⁶⁷ have migrated to Ireland. The 2002 Census recorded about 23,681 Travellers, but Traveller organisations have argued that the enumerating procedures were gravely flawed and that at least 25 per cent of Travellers were not registered.

⁶² Ministry of Education, Department of Schools (2000) *La scolarisation des enfants des Gens de Voyage*, p. 55

⁶³ Ministry of Education, Department of Schools (2004) *Synthèse de l'enquête sur la scolarisation des enfants du voyage, année scolaire 2002-2003*

⁶⁴ ERRC (2005) *Always somewhere else, Anti-Gypsyism in France*, Country Report, No. 15, Budapest, p. 230

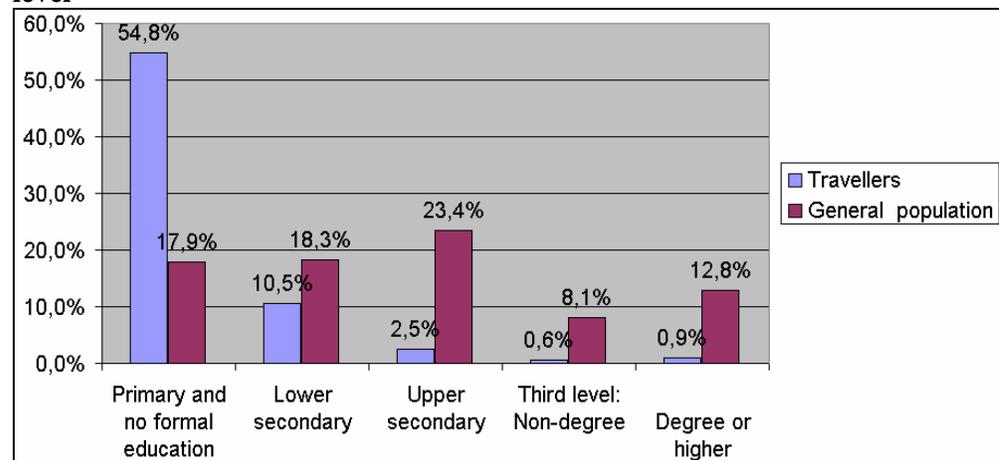
⁶⁵ ECRI (2004) *Third Report on France*, Council of Europe, 25 June 2004 CRI (2005) 3

⁶⁶ Kenny, M. (1997) *The Routes of Resistance: Travellers and Second-level schooling*, Aldershot: Ashgate

⁶⁷ Main sources: Roma Support Group and Pavee Point (2002) *Roma in Ireland – an initial needs analysis*, Dublin: Pavee Point Publications; National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (2004) *Traveller and Roma Community*, available at <http://www.nccri.com/cdsu-travellers.html> (30-11-2004)

Despite a lack of disaggregated data, educational statistics show that the education of Travellers (migrant Roma are not included) lags far behind that of the general population especially regarding their participation in higher secondary and tertiary education, although their participation in primary education can be considered satisfactory. Data show that enrolment in legally compulsory junior secondary cycle lag behind, while attendance levels are far more problematic, and deteriorate with seniority even in the junior cycle. Whilst Traveller enrolment at primary level is estimated at around 80 per cent, (roughly on a par with attendance levels in schools in disadvantaged areas); attendance and attainment require improvement.

Figure 2: Population aged 15 years and over in Ireland in 2002, Traveller and national population: educational attainment at each level



Source: Central Statistics Office (2004) 2002 Census, Volume 7: Education and Qualifications, and Volume 8: The Irish Traveller Community, Dublin

In **Italy** unofficial estimates put the number of Roma and Sinti at around 110,000 – 130,000 including immigrants mainly from Eastern Europe, especially former Yugoslavia. Educational statistics do not exist, but a 2000 survey carried out by the Education Ministry⁶⁸ recording 8,982 Roma and Sinti pupils in both primary and secondary education; 75 per cent were in nursery level (19.07 per cent) or elementary schools (56.78 per cent), 19.68 per cent at lower secondary schools and less than 5 per cent in upper secondary schools. Most of the registered Roma/Sinti

⁶⁸ Ministry of Education (M.I.U.R.) (2000): *Indagine sugli alunni appartenenti a comunità nomadi. Sintesi conoscitiva dei principali dati (Survey of pupils belonging to Roma/Sinti communities. Informative summary of main findings)*, Roma

pupils were concentrated in the first few years at each school level and drop-out rates and disaffection increased in later school years.

According to the NFP report, Roma/Sinti pupils' attendance rates are quite irregular in primary education, despite the importance attached by pupils and their families to basic writing and reading skills. Another survey carried out by the NGO 'Opera Nomadi' suggested that the drop-out rate among Roma and Sinti children was very high reaching 73 per cent in primary and 84 per cent in lower secondary education increasing with age. The situation differs somehow across provinces, with that of Naples recording the lowest incidence of Roma/Sinti pupils on overall school population leading the Education Ministry to conclude that there is a "failure in that province to fulfil the duty of compulsory education by Roma/Sinti children"⁶⁹. According to the NFP report, the rigid curricular structures, lack of teacher flexibility and frequent refusal to register pupils in schools close to their camps, prejudice and racism in schools, contribute to Roma/Sinti disaffection from education.

Figure 3: Roma/Sinti pupils in state schools by grade in Italy, 1999/2000

<i>Type of school</i>	<i>Class or grade</i>	<i>Percentage distribution of Roma/Sinti pupils</i>	<i>Percentage distribution of all pupils</i>
Elementary	First	25,20	19,21
	Second	20,96	20,18
	Third	19,00	20,18
	Fourth	17,84	20,32
	Fifth	17,00	20,11
Lower secondary	First	54,58	34,82
	Second	26,36	32,87
	Third	19,06	32,32

Source: MIUR⁷⁰

In **Cyprus**, the Kurbet (Muslim) and Mantides (Christian) indigenous groups are not officially recognised as minorities and consequently no official demographic or education statistical data are

⁶⁹ Ministry of Education (M.I.U.R.) (2000): *Indagine sugli alunni appartenenti a comunità nomadi. Sintesi conoscitiva dei principali dati*, Roma p. 7

⁷⁰ Ministry of Education (M.I.U.R.) (2000): *Indagine sugli alunni appartenenti a comunità nomadi. Sintesi conoscitiva dei principali dati*, Roma p. 7

available, but some unofficial estimates⁷¹ suggest around 1,200, while others⁷² around 2,000 – 3,000⁷³. There is little information regarding their participation in education. A study⁷⁴ examining the elementary school of Ayios Antonios in Limassol showed that during the school-year 2003 - 2004, out of 40 Roma enrolling half attended regularly. Interviews with teachers conducted by the NFP indicate an alarming dropout rate especially in the transition between primary and secondary education. The NFP report notes that despite the findings of a 2004 study indicating that most of the children are predestined for failure in school⁷⁵, the situation regarding primary school attendance is slowly improving. In June 2005 the Ombudsman Office released a report on the living conditions in the Roma settlement of Makounta village noting that Roma had problems accessing education services. In July 2005, another Ombudsman report noted problems of access to education faced by Roma children in Limassol.

In **Latvia** the 2000 Census⁷⁶ recorded 8,204 Roma, but other sources estimate their number at 13,000 - 15,000⁷⁷. The 2001 Census data show low educational levels, but also in 2003 - 2004 a worrying drop by 6 per cent in enrolment rates⁷⁸ in comparison to the previous year, despite the relatively high Roma birth rates⁷⁹.

⁷¹ More information available at <http://www.domresearchcenter.com/reports/index.html> (12-10-2005)

⁷² Adrian Marsh and Elin Strand (2003) "...spies, deserters and undesirable persons...", the Gypsies of Cyprus, 1322-2003, available at <http://www.domresearchcenter.com/journal/18/cyprus8.html> (12-10-2005)

⁷³ An unidentified number of Anatolian Romanlar from Turkey resides in the occupied territories.

⁷⁴ Galatia Agathocleous (2004) *Interpretation of school reality as experienced by Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot (Gypsy) pupils in Limassol*, available at http://www.casca.org.cy/Galatia_Presentation.pdf (12-10-2005)

⁷⁵ Spyrou, S. (2004) *Educational Needs of Turkish-speaking Children in Limassol*, UNOPS

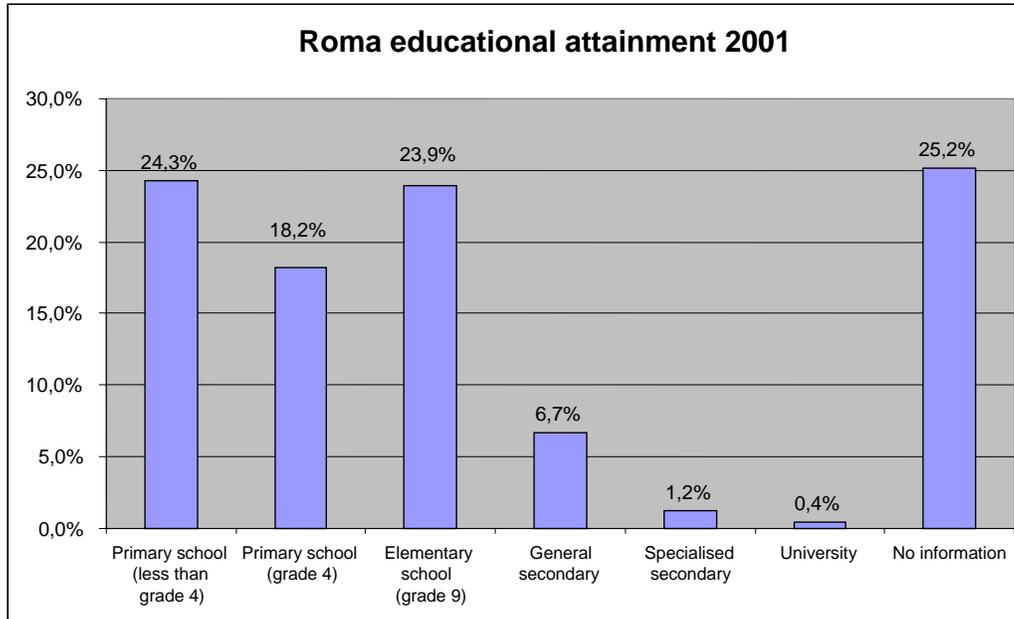
⁷⁶ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2001), *The Results of the 2000 National Census in Latvia: Collection of Statistical Data*, p. 13

⁷⁷ Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (2003), *The Situation of Roma in Latvia*, p.7

⁷⁸ Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia, *The distribution of children attending general education schools in the Republic of Latvia by nationality*, available at <http://www.izm.lv>

⁷⁹ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, *Demographic Year Book of Latvia 2003*, p. 60

Figure 4: Roma educational attainment in Latvia

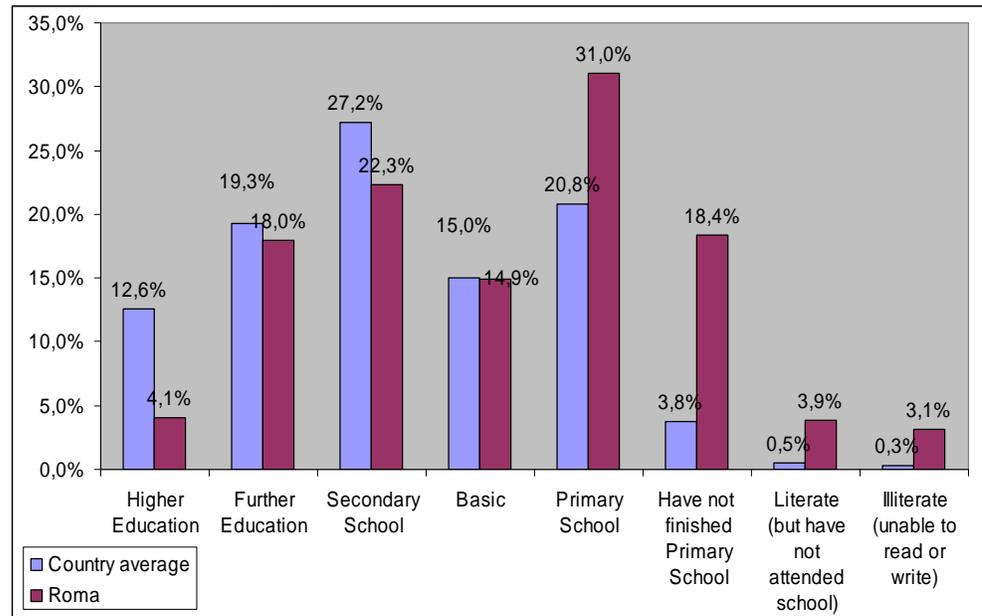


Source: The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2001), The Results of the 2000 National Census in Latvia: Collection of Statistical Data, p.202

In **Lithuania** the 2001 census recorded 2,571 Roma, but informal estimates suggest that the number could be higher (for example the ‘Minority Rights Group’ estimates 3,000 - 4,000). Educational statistics from the Education Ministry and the NGO Foundation for Educational Change show that the educational level of the Roma population continues to remain low, but the situation could improve, since by 2004 enrolment levels had risen, while drop out rates, although still a problem, were reduced, especially in primary education. Illiteracy remains a major problem as 2001 Census data show much higher illiteracy rates for Roma than the national average. A 2001 survey⁸⁰ of Roma settlements in Vilnius revealed that around 18 per cent of Roma men and 35 per cent of Roma women were illiterate.

⁸⁰ Darbo ir socialinių tyrimų institutas (2001) *Romų, gyvenančių Vilniaus miesto taboruose, sociologinis tyrimas*

Figure 5: Roma educational attainment in comparison to country average in Lithuania, 2001



Source: Statistics Lithuania (2002), Population by Education, Mother Tongue and Command of Other Languages. Population Census 2001⁸¹

In **Luxemburg** the indigenous Roma (*Gypsy*) population is estimated at 250 to 500 persons. The NFP reports notes that according to the NGO Caritas they seem to be well integrated, but there are no official data or research evidence regarding their educational situation. In addition there is also an unidentified number of refugees and asylum seekers from ex-Yugoslavia, whose educational situation is markedly lower than the national average.

In **Hungary** the Roma composed of three linguistic groups, Romungro, Vlax and Boyash are recognised as an ethnic minority. The 2001 Census recorded 190,000 Roma, but a 2003 survey suggested a number closer to 600,000⁸² and the Foreign Ministry⁷⁵ estimates 400,000 – 600,000. A 1993 survey indicated differences between Roma groups regarding educational achievement with 23 per cent of Romungro (native

⁸¹ Higher Education is post-18 university-level; Further Education is post-16; non-University level education includes adult education.

⁸² Kemény, I – Béla Janky (2002) “Data on Roma ethnicity in Hungary”, in: Kállai, E –Törzsök, E (eds) *Cigánynak lenni Magyarországon. Jelentés 2002*, Budapest: EÖKIK, pp. 32-39

language Hungarian) completing less than basic education, compared to 42 per cent of Boyash (native language Romanian) and 48 per cent Vlax (native language Romani)⁸³.

The 2004 Fact-sheet⁸⁴ provided by the Hungarian Foreign Ministry suggests that 90 per cent of young Roma complete primary school education, and of those 85 per cent study in a secondary institution, but only 0.3 per cent move on to higher education. The National Institute of Public Education estimated that around 77 per cent of Roma completed primary education⁸⁵, while another survey⁸⁶ showed that in 2000 88 per cent of 5 year old Roma enrolled in pre-school education, but around 15 per cent did not continue in secondary education in contrast to a non-Roma average of 3.2 per cent. After the transition to parliamentary democracy the number of Roma pupils in secondary schools increased⁸⁷ largely due to the reformed financial support system for schools, now based on per capita normative subsidies, which resulted in intensified efforts by schools to attract pupils.

The incorporation of Roma education into the general ethnic minorities' education programmes since 2001/2002 led to an increase in the number of Roma pupils in secondary education by approximately 30 per cent. The majority of Roma pupils continue in secondary vocational schools, as can be seen in Figure 5 below. This can lead to sought after occupations, but around half drop out at the 9th or 10th grade, which means that only about a third or less will be able to attain qualifications leading to good employment opportunities. A recent study⁸⁸ found that long-term poverty of the Roma that increased considerably with the massive layoffs of unskilled workers since the mid-1980's is strongly associated with their high drop-out rate in secondary education.

⁸³ Puporka and Zádori (1999) in Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erika Wilkens (2005), *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*, World Bank, Washington p. 43, available at [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/\\$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf) (12-10-2005)

⁸⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2004) *Gypsies/Roma in Hungary*, available at http://www.mfa.gov.hu/NR/rdonlyres/05DF7A51-99A5-4BFE-B8A5-210344C02B1A/0/Roma_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

⁸⁵ National Institute of Public Education (2003) *Hungarian Roma Education Policy Note*, Budapest

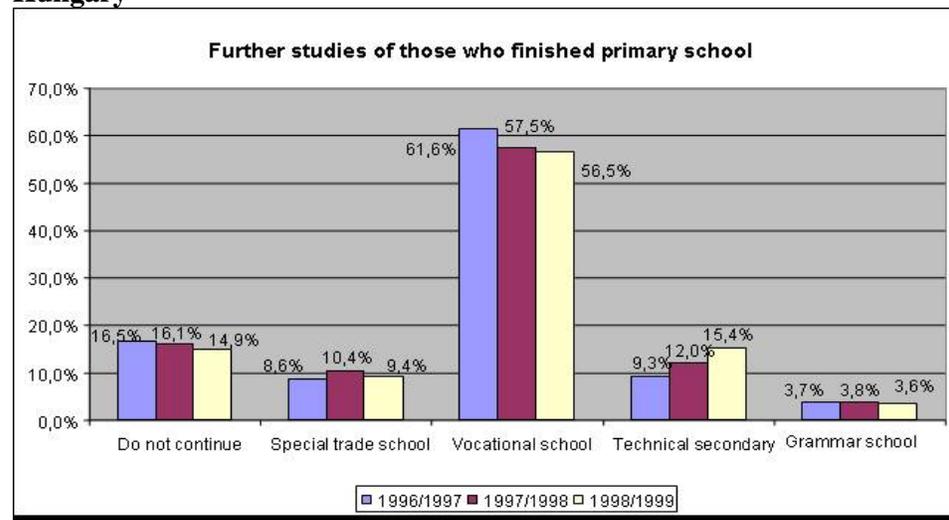
⁸⁶ Gábor Havas – István Kemény – Ilona Liskó (2002) *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában (Romani children in primary schools)* Oktatáskutató Intézet, Új Mandátum Kiadó, p.18

⁸⁷ Havas, G - Kemény, I - Liskó, I. (2002) *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Budapest: OKI-Új Mandátum

⁸⁸ Gábor Kertesi and Gábor Kézdi (2005), Roma children in the transformational recession: Widening ethnic schooling gap and Roma poverty in post-communist Hungary, Central European University, Budapest available at http://www.personal.ceu.hu/departs/personal/Gabor_Kezdi/WorkingPapers/Kertesi-Kezdi-2005-RomaChildren.pdf (11-11-2005)

According to the NFP report efforts by the Ministry of Education, as part of the integration programme launched in 2003, appear to be producing some encouraging results.

Figure 6: Roma educational attainment after primary school in Hungary



Source: Havas, G - Kemény, I - Liskó, I. (2002) *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Budapest: OKI-Új Mandátum

In the **Netherlands** it is difficult to estimate the current number of Roma and Sinti, since they are no longer recorded by the Central Statistical Agency⁸⁹. The National Sinti Organisation (LSO) estimates the number of Roma and Sinti at 5,000, while the *2003 Minorities Yearbook* quotes an estimated 4,000 persons⁹⁰. Other sources estimate their number between 6,000 and 10,000.⁹¹ According to the NFP report the educational attainment of Roma and Sinti is generally lower than the national average, although lately there are signs of improvement with practically all Roma and Sinti pupils completing primary school and continuing to secondary level. Participation in pre-school and early school programmes and schooling (up to age 5) has also sharply increased in recent years, but there are still problems with poor school

⁸⁹ CBS (2003) *Allochtonen in Nederland 2003 (Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands, 2003)*, Voorburg/Heerlen

⁹⁰ H.M.A.G. Smeets et al., *Jaarboek Minderheden 2003*, Houten/Mechelen: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum; The Hague: SDU/Koninklijke Vermande 2003, p. 80.

⁹¹ K. Sikkema (2004) *Sinti en Roma in Nederland, Een onderzoek naar de algemene levensomstandigheden, gezondheidssituatie en toegang tot de gezondheidszorg van de Sinti en Roma in Nederland*, Amsterdam: Dokters van de Wereld, p. 4.

performance, above-average truancy and higher than average drop out rates in primary education as a recent study indicates⁹².

Little is known about their participation and performance in secondary education. A survey by CEBEON⁹³ reveals that in 2000 - 2001, 62 per cent of Roma and Sinti children attended preparatory vocational education rather than general secondary education in contrast to the national average of 19 per cent. In the same year, 8 per cent attended VMBO/HAVO/VWO schools (junior general secondary education, senior general secondary education, university preparatory education) in contrast to the national average of 95 per cent, while 9 per cent attended no school and 21 per cent attended a special secondary school in contrast to the 5 per cent national average.

In **Austria** ethnic data is not collected, although an optional declaration⁹⁴ is possible. Some information may be drawn from language data, although it must be interpreted with caution. The 2001 Census⁹⁵ recorded 4,348 Romani speakers with Austrian nationality and 1,925 Romani speakers with other nationalities. Estimates⁹⁶ put the number of Roma at 10,000 - 20,000. In December 1993 Austrian Roma and Sinti were recognised as an ethnic minority⁹⁷, but there is an undefined number of immigrant Roma mostly from ex-Yugoslavia. Education statistics distinguish only on the basis of nationality and the pupils' first language.

Research⁹⁸ indicates that 50 per cent of the Roma pupils in Oberwart, where Austria's Roma born between 1975 and 1985 are concentrated, faced severe problems with school education during their first year in primary school. However, around 40 per cent of younger

⁹² Y. van der Ree, A. van der Hurk & R. Timmermans (2001) *Als niet kan wat moet, moet wat kan. Handreiking ter bestrijding van het schoolverzuim onder woonwagen- en zigeunerkinderen*, 's Hertogenbosch: KPC Groep

⁹³ Centrum Beleidsadviserend Onderzoek (2002) *Monitor maatschappelijke en economische positie woonwagenbewoners*, Amsterdam, p.19.

⁹⁴ Sec 1 para 3 Minorities Act, Austria / BGBl 396/1976

⁹⁵ Statistik Austria (2002a), Volkszählung 2001. Hauptergebnisse I – Österreich, Table 14: *Bevölkerung nach Umgangssprache, Staatsangehörigkeit und Geburtsland* (Population by language spoken in every day life, nationality and country of birth), p.76

⁹⁶ Österreichisches Volksgruppenzentrum (2000) *Volksgruppenreport 2001: Zur Lage der ethnischen Minderheiten in der Republik Österreich*, NGO-Report; *Minderheiten in Österreich* (Report on the autochthonous ethnic groups 2001: On the situation of minorities in the Republic of Austria, NGO-Report; Minorities in Austria), Wien

⁹⁷ Ordinance of the Federal Government governing the Advisory Councils for National Minorities (Verordnung der Bundesregierung über die Volksgruppenbeiräte), Austria / BGBl 38/1977 as last amended by BGBl 895/1993, (23.12.1993). The Roma Advisory Council was not actually set up until after the bomb blast in Oberwart in 1995.

⁹⁸ Samer, H. (2001) *Die Roma von Oberwart*, Oberwart: edition lex liszt , pp. 95-108

children (born after 1985) were doing well pursuing upper secondary and one (born in 1980) even higher education. These findings are corroborated by a 2004 survey conducted in the context of the EQUAL project *Mri Buti*⁹⁹. The attained education levels have improved among the younger members of the community, but are still far lower than in the general population. Almost 60 per cent of the under 26 age group only completed lower secondary education.

Most adult Roma suffer from serious education deficits. There is very little information regarding immigrant Roma; the Vienna based association Romano Centro¹⁰⁰ reports that absenteeism is a serious problem among immigrant Roma pupils¹⁰¹. Nevertheless, ECRI noted in its last report that the disadvantaged position of Roma, for the most part non-autochthonous Roma, in education at all levels plays a central role in excluding them from most other areas of public life¹⁰².

In **Poland**, the Roma population, recognised as an ethnic minority, is composed of different groups, such as the Polska Roma, the Lovara, the Kelderara, the Bergitka Roma and the Sinti. The General Census of 2002 recorded 12,731 Roma, but local authorities estimate their number at 20,750¹⁰³ and the “Joint Inclusion Memorandum”¹⁰⁴ to 20,000 – 30,000. According to the latter among ethnic and national minorities, the Roma are most affected by social problems; 30 per cent did not participate in compulsory education and the attendance rate of Roma pupils is described as “too low”. The Ministry of Interior and Administration⁸⁶ also describes the educational levels of the majority of the Polish Roma as very low with illiteracy a common phenomenon especially among the older generation. The NFP study noted that the only data available come from the Małopolskie Voivodship¹⁰⁵ for the school years 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 indicating that about 80 per cent of Roma children attend primary school.

⁹⁹ Leoni, T. (2004) *The Labour Market Development of Oberwart and the Socio-Economic Situation of the Roma*, WIFO Working Papers 226/2004

¹⁰⁰ More information available at <http://www.romano-centro.org/> (15-09-2005)

¹⁰¹ Romano Centro (1999) “Unsere Lernhilfe”, in: *Romano Centro 25*, available at: <http://romani.uni-graz.at/romani/rc/1999/rc1999-25-10.de.shtml>, p. 10 (15-09-2005)

¹⁰² ECRI (2005) *Third report on Austria*, Council of Europe, 25 June 2004 CRI (2005) 1

¹⁰³ Ministry of Interior and Administration (2003) *Program na rzecz społeczności romskiej w Polsce*, available at <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/index.php?dzial=185&id=2982> (15-09-2005)

¹⁰⁴ Poland (2003) *Joint Inclusion Memorandum*, Brussels SEC(2003) available at <http://www.mps.gov.pl/integracja/pliki/JIM%20eng.pdf> (15-09-2005)

¹⁰⁵ Data were collected in the context of the “Pilot Government Programme for the Roma Community in Małopolskie Voivodship 2001-2003”.

In **Portugal**, there are no official demographic data regarding the *ciganos* groups (descendants of Rom, Sinti, Calé and Manouche groups). Different sources estimate their number at 40,000 – 60,000¹⁰⁶ or 30,000 – 92,000¹⁰⁷. Although in general there are no comprehensive educational statistics on *ciganos*, official data available until 1998¹⁰⁸ indicate very low levels of participation in pre-school education, high levels of school failure and early drop-out rates: during 1998, although 91,6 per cent of *cigano* pupils attended the four years of the first cycle of primary education, only 55,4 per cent managed to complete it compared to a national average of 87,7 per cent. The statistical trends show that relatively satisfactory attendance in the first years of compulsory education is followed in later years by increasing drop out rates. There are no data regarding tertiary education, but a 2000 study¹⁰⁹ points to only two *cigano* graduates.

In **Slovenia**, the Roma are recognised as an ethnic group. The 2002 Census recorded 3,246 ethnic Roma and 3,824 Romani speakers, but recent estimates indicate a number of 7,000 to 10,000¹¹⁰. A Sinti group numbering around 200 persons lives in the Gorenjska region. Despite an impressive rise in primary school enrolment figures from 897 in 1986/87 to 1,469 in 2004/05¹¹¹, it is estimated that only around 100 continue to secondary education¹¹². A 2003 survey by the Employment Service noted that 98.2 per cent of the 1,650 registered unemployed Roma in Dolenjska had not completed primary education in contrast to the national 4 per cent average, while only 1.5 per cent of the unemployed Roma had vocational school qualifications¹¹³.

The NFP report notes that there are differences in the educational performance of Roma pupils in different regions reflecting differences in educational provisions. For example, although it is difficult to generalise, in one school in Prekmurje, from 1988 until 2000, 68 per cent of Roma pupils completed the 8th grade (national average 94 per cent) in contrast to another school in Dolenjska where the majority of Roma pupils did not

¹⁰⁶ *Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Minorias Étnicas (ACIME)* [High Commissariat on Immigration and Ethnic Minorities]

¹⁰⁷ Mendes, M. M. (1998), “Etnicidade Cigana, exclusão social e racismo”, in *Sociologia*, nº 8, pp. 207-246

¹⁰⁸ Entreculturas DataBase, Gabinete de Educação e Formação do ACIME / Secretariado Entreculturas, Portugal

¹⁰⁹ Bastos, J. G. P., Bastos, S. P. (2000) *Ciganos em Portugal, hoje*, Centro de Estudos de Migrações e Minorias Étnicas, FCSH, Lisboa

¹¹⁰ Office for Nationalities (2004) *Poročilo o položaju Romov v Republiki Sloveniji*, p. 4

¹¹¹ Data by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

¹¹² Office for Nationalities (2004) *Poročilo o položaju Romov v Republiki Sloveniji*, p. 26, Zagreb

¹¹³ Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (2004) *Rapid reports No. 328*, p. 23

advance beyond the 5th or 6th grade of elementary school¹¹⁴. Research¹¹⁵ indicates also that most Roma children do not attend pre-school education. Similar differences were detected in attendance levels: In Prekmurje, 70 per cent of Roma pupils attended regularly, in contrast to 39 per cent in Dolenjska. Another issue concerns the support classes for Roma, which according to some sources is at a lower level than that offered in ordinary classes, and therefore potentially penalises pupils.¹¹⁶

In the **Slovak Republic**, the 2001 Census recorded 89,920 Roma, recognised as a national minority, but as it is based on ethnic self-identification this figure was considered low. In 2005, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities estimated their number at 320,000 based on the results of a sociographic mapping of Roma communities through a project funded by the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency.

According to the NFP report the available evidence indicates that in recent years the education of Roma has deteriorated. Educational reforms, such as the introduction of fees to a now optional pre-school education, which until 1989 was free and obligatory, resulted in a dramatic fall in the participation of Roma who constituted in 2003 less than one per cent of the total pre-school population¹¹⁷. In primary education drop-out rates for Roma pupils have also risen significantly over the last 10 - 15 years, while few Roma pupils continue in secondary education¹¹⁸. During the 2002/2003 school year, a survey conducted by the State School Inspection revealed that less than 20 per cent of Roma pupils continued their education after primary school in vocational schools, while none proceeded to secondary grammar schools¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁴ Zupančič, M. (2001) *Izobraževanje učencev Romov na OŠ Sv. Jurij*, in: *Romano Them (Romski svet)*, No. 11, pp. 6-8

¹¹⁵ Škof, V. (1990) *Vzgoja in izobraževanje romskih otrok v osnovni šoli*, in: Levičnik, I. (ed.) *Vzgoja in izobraževanje romskih otrok v predšolskem in osnovnošolskem obdobju*, Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo, pp.10-18

¹¹⁶ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (2005) *Second Opinion on Slovenia adopted on 26 May 2005*, ACFC/INF/OP/III(2005)005, Note 153

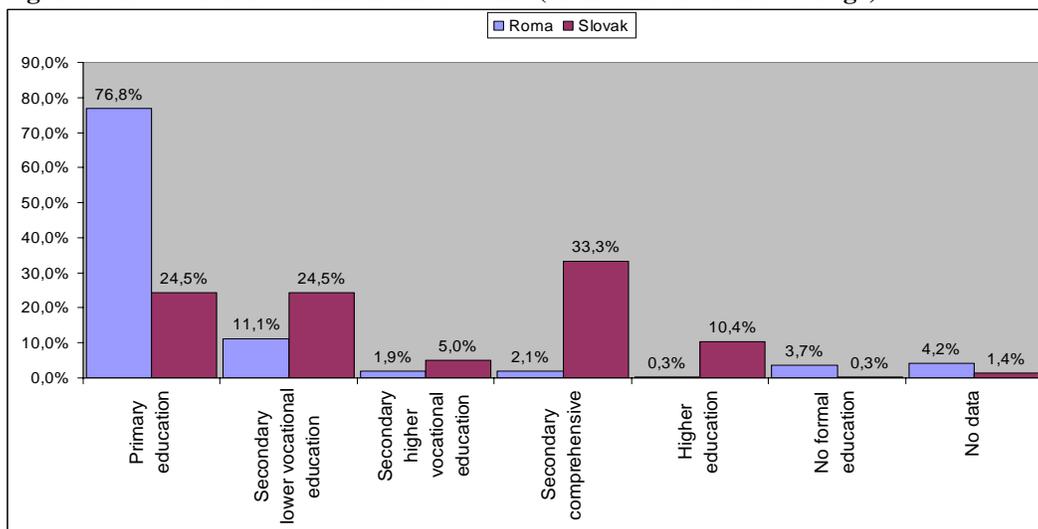
¹¹⁷ Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (2003) *Štatistická ročenka školstva* [Statistical Yearbook of the Education System], available at: <http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html> (12-10-2005)

¹¹⁸ Andrej Salner (ed), (2005) *Roma Children in the Slovak education system*, Slovak Governance Institute, available at <http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Documents/SGIRomaChildrenintheSlovakRepublic.pdf> p. 7-8 (12-10-2005)

¹¹⁹ State school Inspection (2003) *Správa o stave výchovy a vzdelávania žiakov zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia v základných školách a špeciálnych základných školách v SR v šk. r. 2002/2003*, p.2

A 2005 public opinion survey¹²⁰ on Roma political attitudes found that 20.2 per cent of the representative sample (based on the socio-graphic mapping mentioned above) had not completed elementary education, 50.5 had completed elementary school, 22.9 had attended, but not completed secondary and only 3.5 per cent had gained secondary school qualifications resulting in a reported staggering 63.6 per cent unemployment in the sample. In its second (2005) report¹²¹ to the FCNM the government describes the situation regarding the school attendance of Roma pupils as “unfavourable”, because Roma pupils are absent for an average of one month per school year. However, the report does not provide any information regarding the possible causes of this behaviour.

Figure 7: Educational attainment in Slovakia (Roma and national average)



Source: 2001 Population Census; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2001

In **Finland**, the Roma belong to the Kaale group and are recognised as a national minority numbering around 10,000, although official figures are not available. A 2004 study¹²² by the Finnish National Board of Education recorded 859 Roma pupils in 380 schools characterised by high levels of absenteeism (affecting almost 30 per cent of the pupils) and relatively poor performance, while only 2 per cent had

¹²⁰ Available at http://www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1901_sk_romapresent_090105.pdf

¹²¹ Second Report (2005), Slovak Republic, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ACFC/SR/II(2005)001, p 63

¹²² National Board of Education (2004) *Romanilasten perusopetuksen tila. Selvitys lukuvuodelta 2001-2002 (A Survey on the Status of Roma Children's Basic Education; School year 2001-2002)*, Helsinki, pp. 20-39

previously participated in pre-school education. The survey also found that between 5 and 18 per cent of Roma pupils dropped out, compared to the national average which is close to zero. Around 50 per cent of Roma pupils received remedial teaching in comparison to the national average of around 20 per cent.¹²³

In **Sweden**, the Kalee, Sinti, Lovare, Kelderari, and Arli groups are recognised as a national minority since 1999 and Romani Chib is an official minority language. Although ethnicity is not recorded in the Swedish Census there are an estimated 20,000 – 25,000 Roma in Sweden, excluding “travellers”. Since education authorities record neither the ethnicity nor the nationality of pupils there are no relevant ethnically differentiated statistical data. The 1999 report "Roma and the Swedish school"¹²⁴ based on teachers' assessment of Roma scholastic achievement in two schools found that only 20 per cent of Roma girls and 12 per cent of boys could manage to complete compulsory education, while their absenteeism rate exceeded 50 per cent. A survey¹²⁵ carried out by the National Agency for Education in 2000 in a selected number of cities showed that problems regarding attendance, poor performance and relatively high drop-out rates were common in all cities examined, while most Roma pupils, although entitled to education in Romani Chib, did not choose it.

In the **United Kingdom**, *Gypsy* and Travellers¹²⁶ are not included in the ethnic monitoring categories of the Census covering Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), and formal statistics mainly derive from a mix of caravan, household and pitch counts. However, they are part of the ethnic categories used for Northern Ireland¹²⁷. The latest data of July 2004 covering England only have recorded a total of 15,009¹²⁸. Other sources¹²⁹ estimate the overall number of *Gypsies* and Travellers living in

¹²³ Finland, National Board of Education (2004) *Romanilasten perusopetuksen tila. Selvitys lukuvuodelta 2001-2002 [A Survey on the Status of Roma Children's Basic Education. School year 2001-2002]*, p. 33. Helsinki

¹²⁴ The National Agency for Education -Skolverket (1999) *Romer och den svenska skolan*, Lund

¹²⁵ Sweden, National Agency for Education (2001) *Undervisning i och på de nationella minoritetsspråken – kartläggning av situationen 2001*, Stockholm

¹²⁶ Including Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage, North Welsh Kale, English Romanichals, fairground families, New Age Travellers, circus families, barges and other families living on boats; The DfES does not exclude Gypsy/Travellers who are housed or live in static accommodation, unless stated as such in a specific context

¹²⁷ Excluding *Romani* and *Romanichal* populations mostly living in sedentary accommodation.

¹²⁸ ODP, (2004) *Count of Gypsy Caravan – July 2004* (England), London: ODP

¹²⁹ Donald Kenrick and Colin Clark (1999) *Moving On: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain*, Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press

Britain to be around 120,000, whilst the *Gypsy Council* puts the figure at closer to 300,000 in 2004¹³⁰. The 2001 Northern Ireland Census recorded 1,710 Irish Travellers.

Already in 1985 the Swann report¹³¹ noted Travellers' children were strongly affected by "racism and discrimination, myths, stereotyping and misinformation, the inappropriateness and inflexibility of the education system." In its 1999 report *Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils* (HMI 170), the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) highlighted the fact that *Gypsy* and Traveller pupils, mostly those of either *Gypsy/Roma* or Irish Traveller heritage, were at the greatest risk of underachievement.

In 2003, OFSTED estimated that there were at least 70,000 - 80,000 school age *Gypsy* and Traveller children in England and Wales with relatively low participation rates of 84 per cent for Key Stage 2 (10 to 11-year-olds) and 47 per cent for Key Stage 4 (14 to 16-year-olds)¹³². The report stressing that "the vast majority of Traveller Pupils linger on the periphery of the education system... and the alarm bells rung in earlier reports have yet to be heeded", indicates that nevertheless some progress has been made in improving attendance and achievement among *Gypsy* and Traveller pupils in secondary education, although it estimates that around 12,000 secondary age children are not registered at any school in England.

In Scotland, the Save the Children Fund estimated¹³³ that only 20 per cent of *Gypsy* and Traveller children of secondary school age attended regularly. In Northern Ireland, recent research¹³⁴ found that the majority of Traveller children do not continue to attend school after primary education. The Scottish Traveller Education Programme has identified bullying as an endemic problem in schools in Scotland¹³⁵, and attributes the high drop-out rates among *Gypsy* and Traveller children to the failure of schools to tackle this problem¹³⁶. A 2004 study by the Scottish Traveller Education programme Research concluded that despite the limitations of statistical evidence, the patterns of enrolment,

¹³⁰ Please see <http://www.travellerslaw.org.uk> and <http://www.thegypsycouncil.org>

¹³¹ Department of Education and Science, *Education for All: the report of the committee of enquiry into the education of children from ethnic minority groups (The Swann Report)*, HMSO, London, 1985

¹³² OFSTED (2003) *Provision and support for Traveller pupils* (HMI 455) London: HMSO

¹³³ Save the Children Fund (Scotland) (1996) *The Right to Roam*, Edinburgh: SCF, p17.

¹³⁴ Connolly, P. and Keenan, M. (2000) *Racial Attitudes and Prejudice in Northern Ireland, and Opportunities for All: Minority ethnic people's experiences of education, training and employment in Northern Ireland* NISRA, Belfast

¹³⁵ See also <http://www.scottishtravellered.net> (15-10-2005)

¹³⁶ Commission for Racial Equality (2004) *Gypsies and Travellers: A strategy for the CRE, 2004 - 2007*, p.11 available at http://www.cre.gov.uk/gt_strategy_final.doc (10-02-2006)

attendance and attainment of Gypsy/Travellers in schools and in out-of-school settings, suggest that “the aim of the National Priorities to deliver the best possible life chance for every child in Scotland is a long way from being realised for many Gypsy/Traveller pupils”¹³⁷. Evidence of the range of initial stays at and return visits to specific schools indicate that the majority of the Gypsy/Traveller pupils experience ‘interrupted learning’. Many Gypsy/Travellers do not attend school out of fear of racist attacks and because of what they see as a continuing lack of relevance of the secondary curriculum, particularly for boys, who continued attending primary school precisely to catch up on basic literacy and numeracy skills. Traveller teachers’ evidence demonstrated that flexible arrangements in schools and out-of-school settings cannot deliver sufficient educational input comparable with their mainstream peers reflecting a picture of impoverished and missed educational opportunity.

¹³⁷ Pauline Padfield and Elizabeth Jordan (2004) Issues in school enrolment, attendance, attainment and support for learning for Gypsy/Travellers and school-aged children and young people based in Scottish local authority sites, Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP), The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh p. 90-92

Key findings

- Enrolment and attendance rates of Roma and Traveller pupils are poor especially in comparison with those of the general population. Roma and Traveller pupils tend to leave education early without the qualifications that would enable them to compete successfully in the labour market.
- Analysis is hampered by a paucity of relevant official data disaggregated by ethnicity. In addition, the different data collection methodologies employed makes data comparability practically impossible.
- Aggregate data on the educational performance and attainment of Roma and Traveller pupils and survey results indicate lower academic achievement compared to that of the majority population in all EU Member States. These pupils have consistently higher dropout rates and consequently tend to attain lower educational credentials. In most countries transition to secondary education is reportedly particularly low, and even in countries where more Roma and Traveller pupils seem to continue their studies in secondary education to some extent (such as in Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary, England and Wales), they regularly choose vocational rather than general secondary education, while drop-out rates are very high. Participation in higher education is practically non-existent in all countries.
- In some countries, notably Belgium and France, enrolment and attendance varies between different groups, while regional variations are noted in Hungary and Slovenia.
- Absenteeism, which at an early age is also related to parental control, remains a persistent, common and serious problem that needs to be addressed effectively by understanding the underlying causes.
- Positive developments are reported for some countries regarding enrolment, as a result of specific educational policies targeting these groups and successful initiatives, but there is little reliable data regarding the impact of such policies that evidently needs to be monitored more effectively.

2. 2. Segregation: the hidden curriculum

In 2005, the European Parliament called on Member States “...*in which Roma children are segregated into schools for the mentally disabled or placed in separate classrooms from their peers to move forward with desegregation programmes within a predetermined period of time, thus ensuring free access to quality education for Roma children and preventing the rise of anti-Romani sentiment amongst schoolchildren,*”¹³⁸

Formal and informal practices of segregating Roma pupils persist, despite a number of strategies and policies that have been developed to combat them. Although systematic segregation as educational policy no longer exists, segregation continues to be practised by schools in a number of different ways: Roma pupils can be segregated within a classroom by sitting them in a different part of the room away from the others. Arrangements can also be made to instruct children in separate classrooms, but within the same school (following the same curriculum or a “lighter version”). Schools and educational authorities may segregate pupils on the basis of their “perception of different needs” and/or as a response to behavioural issues and learning difficulties. It is not specialised classes per se which is the issue, as they can facilitate transition to ordinary classes, however, but rather the role which they are given and which too often is segregation and isolation¹³⁹.

The latter could also lead to the placement of Roma and Traveller pupils in special schools on the basis of psychological cognitive tests, such the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC – III) that arguably ignore linguistic and cultural differences revealing less about the abilities of Roma children and more about the ethnocentric assumptions of the testers¹⁴⁰. Placement in special education could also be preferred by parents to avoid racial abuse or due to lack of information regarding its far reaching negative consequences¹⁴¹. As the practice has been used for several years Roma parents may also consent to such placement for their children, because they were themselves

¹³⁸ European Parliament (28 April 2005) *Resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union*, RC-B6-0272/2005

¹³⁹ Jean-Pierre Liégois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 268

¹⁴⁰ Jean-Pierre Liégois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 268

¹⁴¹ ERRC (2004) *Stigmata, segregated schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest, pp. 42-49

educated in that way. Wrongful assignment to special education is the most odious form of indirect segregation, because it attaches a particular stigma with far reaching negative consequences for such pupils' life chances. The "Step by Step" project¹⁴² initiated pilot classes in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, testing the hypothesis that, given the appropriate conditions for learning, Roma children in special schools are in fact capable of academic achievement to the level of mainstream curriculum standards. The project found that the majority of Roma children, although labelled as 'mentally handicapped,' could, if provided with good pedagogy and high expectations for academic success, succeed in education.

A different and worrying development are negative responses to schools with a growing number of Roma pupils either as a result of efforts to increase the enrolment of Roma pupils or because Roma have moved to a particular area or a combination of both. There are reports of strong negative reactions to such developments by non-Roma parents, as well as by school and local authorities, as for example in Greece, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Spain attempting either to transfer their own children to other schools ("white flight") or to prevent the enrolment of Roma pupils fearing that educational standards will suffer.

In an effort to attract Roma and Travellers and other socially disadvantaged pupils to education and support their school performance it is at times regarded as necessary to set up support classes. However, even such "benevolent" segregation is not preferable to the provision of additional support to the school in the form of specially trained teachers, appropriate teaching material and intercultural mediators. Support measures should be functionally linked to normal school activities facilitating the full integration of pupils into the normal educational process.

In the **Czech Republic** Roma segregation in primary education remains a serious concern. Roma pupils are often assigned to special schools "... designed for children and pupils aged 3 - 19 who are mentally and/or physically handicapped, with impaired hearing, vision and/or speech, with developmental disorders"¹⁴³. In 1989, official data showed

¹⁴² Proactive Information Services (2003) *Step by Step Roma Special Schools Initiative: Final Evaluation Report Year 3*, available at http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Documents/Final_Evaluation_Report_Adobe_February_2003.pdf (01-03-2008)

¹⁴³ Czech Statistical Office (2005) *Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2004*, available at <http://www.czso.cz/eng/redakce.nsf/i/home> (12-10-2005)

that 46.4 per cent of Roma children attended special schools in contrast to a national average of 3.2 per cent. In response the Ministry of Education promoted a number of measures including specific measures¹⁴⁴ for re-assigning pupils to mainstream schools and providing adequate educational support by establishing special classes to prepare the pupils transition from special to mainstream education¹⁴⁵. Other support measures include the establishment of preparatory classes for Roma children before primary school and the support for alternative educational programmes. In the academic year 2000/01, 110 preparatory classes with 214 pedagogical assistants were opened for 1,364 pupils. This measure ostensibly has decreased the number of Roma pupils in special schools by 25 per cent, but there are neither impact assessment reports regarding the measures taken nor any up-to-date official data regarding the number of Roma pupils in special schools.

Recent research indicates that in certain areas Roma pupils are still assigned to a great extent to special schools¹⁴⁶. 1999 research by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) suggested that Roma pupils are assigned to special schools at least 15 times more often than non Roma¹⁴⁷. Three years later ERRC research revealed unchanged patterns of segregation. In October 2005 the FCNM Advisory Committee¹⁴⁸ “noted with concern that, according to non governmental sources, a considerable number of Roma children are still being placed, at a very early age, in “special” schools, and that revision of the psychological tests used in this context has not had a marked impact. According to non-official estimates, Roma account for up to 70 per cent of pupils in these schools, and this raises doubts concerning the tests’ validity and the relevant methodology followed in practice”.

In May 2005 the European Court of Human Rights, reserving final judgment, declared admissible the case of “D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic” complaining of racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to education (Article 14 of the Convention combined with

¹⁴⁴ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *Methodical instructions for the transfer of successful pupils from special to primary schools*, (Guideline No. 28 498/99-24)

¹⁴⁵ Czech Republic, The Government of CR (2004) *Koncepce romské integrace*

¹⁴⁶ Tošner, M. (2004) *Vysoké Mýto*, Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Humanity Studies, West-Bohemian University in Pilsen – not published, a final report on the long-term stationary research of socially excluded localities, for the purposes of The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (contract No. HS 108/03)

¹⁴⁷ European Roma Rights Centre (1999) *A Special Remedy Roma and Schools for the Mentally Handicapped in the Czech Republic*, available at <http://www.errc.org/db/00/23/m00000023.rtf> (12-10-2005) p. 6

¹⁴⁸ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (2005) *Second Opinion on the Czech Republic adopted on 24 February 2005*, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2005)002, Par. 146

Article 2 of Protocol No. 1) regarding the placement of Roma in special schools. Eighteen Roma represented by the European Roma Rights Centre¹⁴⁹ claimed that their assignment to special schools for mentally disabled contravened human rights law and was racially motivated, because the placement and testing procedures were culturally biased. Another worrying trend with segregation effects is the transfer of non-Roma pupils from schools with a rising Roma pupil population, which despite additional educational support have much higher drop-out rates and lower transition rates to secondary education than schools with a low Roma population¹⁵⁰. However, in February 2006 the European Court of Human Rights¹⁵¹ held, by six votes to one, that there had been no violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights, taken in conjunction with Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (right to education).

In **Denmark**, Roma are as a rule not segregated. However, the municipality of Ellsinore has since 1982 taught groups of Roma students in primary and lower secondary school in separate classes, which were established due to an alleged high level of absenteeism, despite recommendations to discontinue this practice by the Education Ministry, which were confirmed by the Local Government Office of the County of Copenhagen (Statsamt) Legal Control of Municipalities and County Authorities on 13 September 2004. In response the Municipality closed two of the three classes, but applied for an exemption from the Ministry of Education to continue the class until all pupils have completed their compulsory education.

The EU's Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the issue in his "Report on the visit to Denmark, 13-16 April 2004" strongly encouraging alternative solutions. In August 2005 the municipality of Ellsinore established a new temporary class consisting only of Roma children at the local youth school (continuation school). Following an investigation the Complaints Committee for Ethnic Equal Treatment informed the municipality of Ellsinore that the temporary class for Roma children constitutes a case of indirect discrimination and is therefore illegal. In 2005 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe also

¹⁴⁹ See http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=102719 (12-10-2005)

¹⁵⁰ Bořkovicová, M. (ed) (2004) *Smíchov*, Plzeň: Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Humanity Studies, West-Bohemian University in Pilsen – not published, a final report on the long-term stationary research of socially excluded localities, for the purposes of The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (contract No. HS 108/03)

¹⁵¹ More information available at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=964007&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE> (12-10-2005)

expressed concerns regarding the equality of education for Roma children taught separately in a class for Roma children with high rates of absenteeism¹⁵².

In **Germany** Roma and Sinti often live in relatively isolated communities and this often leads to a high concentration of Roma and Sinti children in individual schools. Due to the fact that ethnicity is not recorded, there is little evidence regarding Roma and Sinti assignment to special schools. A study¹⁵³ of Sinti pupils in Schleswig-Holstein, however, indicated that Sinti pupils were "... frequently referred by their primary school teachers to schools offering special instruction (mostly) within two years of schooling". Relating to the findings of projects in Hamm and Cologne the study pointed out that this is not a problem exclusive to Schleswig-Holstein. The study also found¹⁵⁴ that almost 90 per cent of special school teachers had at some point taught Roma and Sinti pupils in contrast to 30 per cent of primary school and 25 per cent of secondary school teachers.

In **Greece**, there are no official data regarding segregation of Roma pupils, but reports by the Greek Helsinki Monitor¹⁵⁵ reveal strong parental reactions to the enrolment of Roma pupils leading to their de facto segregation in separate schools or classes, occasionally in different buildings, because such reactions allegedly tend to be adopted rather than critically addressed by local authorities, as well as schools. In a 2003 report¹⁵⁶ it is argued that in a number of localities educational arrangements are racially segregated and in fact schools intended exclusively for Romani children have been established with tacit or even explicit government approval. Incidents of "white flight" are also identified in the report. Often such tensions are present in poorly resourced schools that are expected to deal with increasing numbers of pupils with particular learning needs in communities suffering from social exclusion.

¹⁵² Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Resolution ResCMN(2005)9 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Denmark

¹⁵³ Träbing-Butzmann, Sylvia-Wurr, Rüdiger (1998) *Schattenkämpfe. Widerstände und Perspektiven der schulischen Emanzipation deutscher Sinti*, Kiel, p.13

¹⁵⁴ Träbing-Butzmann, Sylvia-Wurr, Rüdiger (1998) *Schattenkämpfe. Widerstände und Perspektiven der schulischen Emanzipation deutscher Sinti*, Kiel, p.13

¹⁵⁵ See http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/bhr/greek/special_issues/roma.html (12-10-2005)

¹⁵⁶ European Roma Rights Center, Greek Helsinki Monitor (2003) *Cleaning Operations: Excluding Roma in Greece*, Country Report Series, No. 12, p. 68, available at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/bhr/english/organizations/ghm/greeceE_2003.rtf (12-10-2005)

A 2001 survey¹⁵⁷ by Kappa Research commissioned by UNICEF in Greece, showed that, although 68.2 per cent of Roma respondents stated that education is good for children, as it can reduce poverty, they also argued that it is difficult for their children to attend school: 36.7 per cent considered that the greatest difficulty lies in the racist discrimination and social isolation experienced by their children at school. The 2002 report¹⁵⁸ of the National Commission for Human Rights also suggests that segregation and racist discrimination remain very serious problems.

The official website of the Education Ministry¹⁵⁹ notes the continued operation of two schools in Zefyri, Attica exclusively for Roma (3rd Zefyri primary school and 4th nursery school) without reference to plans for desegregation. There is no information regarding the presence of Roma in special education. Muslim Roma in the Thrace region along with ethnic Turks and Pomaks are entitled to minority education provided on the basis of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty¹⁶⁰. Education is provided in both Turkish and Greek and curricula are developed on the basis of bilateral agreements between Turkey and Greece¹⁶¹.

In **Spain**, according to the NFP report, “white flight”¹⁶² affects many public schools situated in or near “Gitano” areas. In areas with 50 per cent “Gitano” population, schools are attended by 80 - 90 per cent “Gitano” pupils¹⁶³. The separation of schools in public, private and “colegios concertados”, a form of private partly state funded schools, has intensified further the segregation of “Gitanos”, as they are over-represented in public schools, as access to the “colegios concertados” is limited by discriminatory mechanisms, despite efforts of some Autonomous Communities, notably in Madrid, to reverse this tendency. The School Monitoring Programme launched in 1999 in three districts of

¹⁵⁷ More information available at <http://www.unicef.gr/reports/exploit.php> (09-10-2005)

¹⁵⁸ National Commission for Human Rights (2002), *The situation of Gypsies in Greece*, Athens, available at http://www.nchr.gr/category.php?category_id=61#_ftn1 (12-10-2005)

¹⁵⁹ See http://isocrates.gr/content_by_cat.asp?contentid=461&catid=165&how=&keywords= (12-10-2005)

¹⁶⁰ Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Appendix A, Article 2), Lausanne January 30, 1923 between the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Greek Government

¹⁶¹ ANTIGONE - RAXEN NFP (2004) *Analytical study on education*, Athens, available at <http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/RAXEN/4/edu/R4-EDU-EL.pdf> (12-10-2005)

¹⁶² “White flight” is a colloquial term describing a trend to move away from areas with increasing populations of “non-whites”. The phenomenon is observed in countries like Spain, Hungary, Slovakia, etc., when non-Roma parents move or send their children to schools in other areas to avoid being schooled together with Roma.

¹⁶³ EU Accession Monitoring Program (2002) *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection*, section on Spain, p. 305, available from <http://www.eumap.org> (12-10-2005)

the Municipality of Madrid by the Madrid City Council and the Asociación Secretariado General Gitano aiming to facilitate the integration of Roma children into the regular school system had reportedly limited results. The “remedial education” provided to disadvantaged pupils allows them to receive school books, meals, hygiene programmes and vaccinations. However, the system has been criticised as perpetuating the segregation of Roma children from their non-Roma peers, as well as limiting their ability to pursue further education.¹⁶⁴

In **France**, according to the NFP report, “white flight” and problems associated with the housing situation, particularly of non-sedentary groups, lead effectively to segregation. There are around 15 campsite schools run by the Education Ministry and some 40 mobile school units (Antennes Scolaires) mostly operated by ASET¹⁶⁵. These provisions according to the Education Ministry constitute “only stepping-stones towards mainstream education”¹⁶⁶ and should be seen as a means of providing education for children aged between 3 and 16 who cannot receive education in other schools due to their parents’ non-sedentary lifestyle. However, teachers and parents often perceive them as “ghetto” schools or classes, since they inevitably reinforce residential segregation, while the quality of education provided is reportedly low. Growing demand for quality education and the gradual abandonment of non-sedentary lifestyles¹⁶⁷ means that a growing number of *Gypsy* children enrol in mainstream local schools attending special “initiation classes” in primary education and “reception classes” in secondary education developed to address the needs of immigrant pupils. Although the official policy of the Ministry of National Education aims at schooling *Gypsy* and “Traveller” children in mainstream schools, various forms of segregated schooling remain a reality¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁴ Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erika Wilkens (2005) *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*, World Bank, Washington, p. 15, available at [http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/\\$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf](http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf) (12-11-2005) p. 123

¹⁶⁵ ASET (“Association d’aide à la scolarisation des enfants tsiganes” – Aid association for the education of *Gypsy* children) is a non-profit organisation under the law of 1901, founded in 1969 and operating some thirty mobile school units.

¹⁶⁶ Ministry of Education, Circular no.101, 25 April 2002, *La scolarisation des enfants du voyage et de familles non sédentaires*, Bulletin Officiel no. 10

¹⁶⁷ Clarisse Decroix and Hervé Giraudeau (1998) *Scolariser des enfants gitans: une interrogation pour le système*, Ville École Intégration n° 115 - MENRT, CNDP

¹⁶⁸ ERRC (2005) *Always somewhere else, Anti-Gypsyism in France*, Country Report, No. 15, Budapest, p. 230

Ireland has had a history of segregation of Travellers in education, although, according to the NFP report, this is being phased out. In the 1980s a number of alternative post-primary education units for Travellers were opened. These units were intended to encourage Travellers to stay in formal education when the majority of Traveller parents were totally opposed to transferring their children to mainstream secondary schools. For a period they did provide an alternative to complete non-attendance, but their location – often not near the local secondary school – meant that linkages were weak. The possibility of fusing the targeted and mainstream provision was limited in the case of the junior education centres. Three of these centres still operate, catering for about 100 students; but they are being phased out¹⁶⁹. The NFP reports that pre-school provision for Travellers is segregated and provision levels are inadequate, but there is very little State funded provision outside targeted sectors. Segregated further education and training provision for adults is also in a process of transition to integration.

In **Cyprus**, whilst the official policy is clearly to desegregate by allocating minority pupils to several schools, the NFP report provides evidence that it is not always implemented by schools regarding Roma: In a Limassol school, on two occasions classes were segregated: in 2003/2004 the first grade and in 2005 the sixth grade, following permission from the Ministry, were divided into separate classes for Roma and non-Roma arguably on the basis that a large number of Roma pupils in class posed obstacles in the successful education of the pupils.

In **Latvia**, about 10 per cent of Roma pupils are assigned to special classes or schools intended for students with mental and physical disabilities and special needs¹⁷⁰. Another significant share of Roma pupils are enrolled in Roma segregated classes¹⁷¹. There are eight such classes, six of which implement “pedagogic correction programmes” and two reportedly a “lighter curriculum” of general education programme. In 2002/2003, 15 per cent and in 2003/2004 18 per cent of all Roma pupils attended segregated Roma classes aiming to facilitate the

¹⁶⁹ Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2001) *First Progress Report of the Committee to Monitor and Co-ordinate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*, Dublin: Stationery Office, p. 186

¹⁷⁰ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Reviews of National Policies for Education*. Latvia, (<http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/1401071E.PDF>), p. 129 (12-10-2005)

¹⁷¹ “Čigānu klases”

transition of Roma pupils into regular classes. A 2003 report¹⁷² expressed concerns regarding the quality of education offered in these segregated classes, which provide no education on Roma culture or history. In 2002/2003, 10 per cent of Roma pupils attended special schools in contrast to 3.25 per cent of non-Roma pupils. In some areas, for instance in Jekabpils and Valmiera, this ratio is far higher with the proportion of Roma pupils attending special schools reaching 40 per cent¹⁷³. The NFP report noted that Roma parents are provided with a strong incentive in the form of free food, lodging, clothes, and books for enrolling their children to special schools.

In **Lithuania**, according to the NFP report during the 2004/2005 school year 12 per cent of Roma pupils attended special schools in the areas of Ukmergė, Joniškis and Klaipėda after a diagnosis of “mild mental retardation” by municipal Pedagogical Psychological Offices. Given that Roma pupils have to perform in a bilingual or even a trilingual school and family environment, such diagnoses based on their academic performance could be flawed. Several other instances of segregation are reported by Roma activists¹⁷⁴.

In **Hungary**, research data suggest that nearly 35 per cent of Roma pupils study in primary schools with a high Roma concentration¹⁷⁵. During the 1990s, as a result of structural social transformations accompanying the transition to a market economy, significant numbers of Roma moved to small settlements in the poorer regions of the country and in deteriorating areas of large cities. This resulted in an increase in the number of Roma pupils in these areas, which was accompanied by the transfer of non Roma pupils to other schools leading to de facto segregation. As the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities¹⁷⁶ pointed out, “local authorities and schools often give in to pressure from local non-Romany population and play an active role in creating such situations”. The Commissioner also noted in the same report that “...in several cases local authorities – in cooperation with schools – organize

¹⁷² Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (2003), *The Situation of Roma in Latvia*, p.28

¹⁷³ Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (2003), *The Situation of Roma in Latvia*, p.28

¹⁷⁴ Note by Egle Kristina Kučinskaite, available at <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1655#9> (12-10-2005)

¹⁷⁵ Gábor Havas – István Kemény – Ilona Liskó (2002) *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában (Romani children in primary schools)* Oktatókutató Intézet, Új Mandátum Kiadó

¹⁷⁶ Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Jogok Országgyűlési Biztosának (2001) *Beszámoló a nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségi jogok országgyűlési biztosának tevékenységéről, 2000. január 1. – 2000. december 31.* Budapest, 2001, p. 42 and 50

Roma minority education only in order to obtain the supplementary normative financial support and exploit this form of education to segregate the Romany pupils in a – seemingly – lawful manner”. The per capita support system of education leads to a “school competition” for pupils. In order to prevent non-Roma pupils from leaving schools, where the proportion of Roma increases, schools apply a variety of intra-school segregation measures. This, according to the Institute of Public Education is achieved through “...the introduction of ‘remedial classes’ with a disproportionate number of Roma pupils and usually with a lower educational requirement level, ‘special faculty classes’ offering extracurricular education (e.g. language teaching, advanced mathematics, etc) usually reserved for non Roma and classes set up by misusing the institution of ‘Roma minority education’¹⁷⁷ .

Survey research in 2000 showed that while the proportion of Roma pupils in normal classes was 45.2 per cent it dropped to around 16 - 17 per cent in “special faculty classes” and rose sharply to 81.8 per cent in “remedial classes”. Roma pupils are over-represented in remedial and support programmes, such as “auxiliary classes”¹⁷⁸. By 2000 every fifth Roma child was sent to an "auxiliary" programme on the basis of culturally biased testing¹⁷⁹. The percentage of Roma pupils in these programmes was above 80 per cent¹⁸⁰. The National Institute for Public Education claims that Roma constitute around 30 – 50 per cent of enrolments in special schools and official data¹⁸¹ show that the ratio of Roma pupils in special schools increased from about 25 per cent in 1974 to 42 per cent in 1992, while a later survey¹⁸² of special schools estimated the percentage of Roma pupils to over 40 per cent. Other research¹⁸³ indicates that by 2001 around 25 per cent of Roma children were still diagnosed¹⁸⁴ as mentally disabled.

¹⁷⁷ National Institute of Public Education (2003) *Hungarian Roma Education Policy Note*, Budapest

¹⁷⁸ Loss, S. (2000) “Út a kiségitő iskolába”, in: Horváth, Á; Landau, E; Szalai, J. (Eds.) *Cigánynak születni*, Budapest: Új Mandátum, pp.365-401

¹⁷⁹ Kaltenbach, J. (2000) *Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights from Jan 1 1999 to 31 Dec 1999*, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners

¹⁸⁰ Havas, G; Kemény, I; Liskó, I. (2002) *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Budapest: OKI-Uj - Mandátum

¹⁸¹ National Institute of Public Education (2003) *Hungarian Roma Education Policy Note*, Budapest

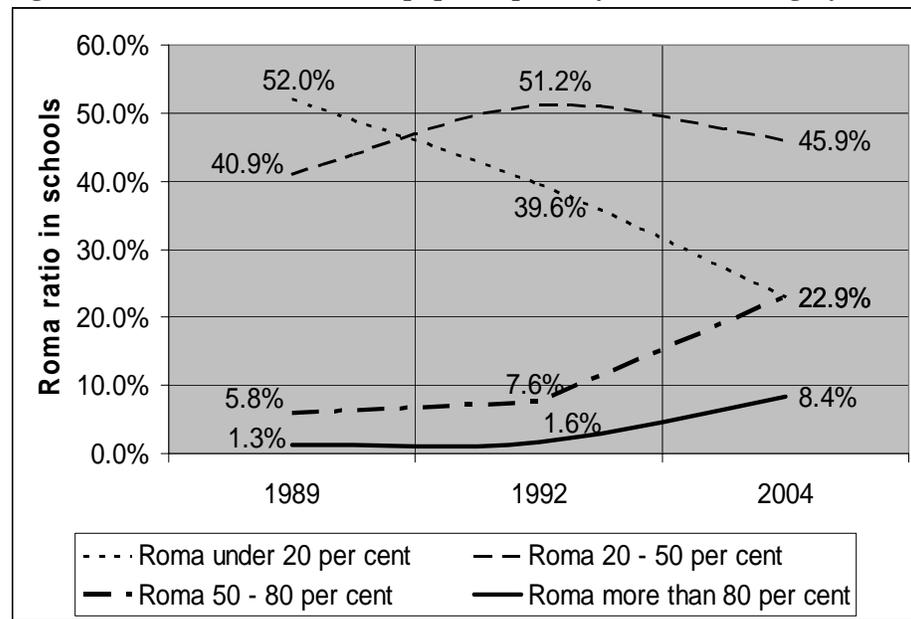
¹⁸² Péter Radó (1997) *Jelentés a magyarországi cigány tanulók oktatási helyzetéről (Report on the education of Roma students in Hungary)*, Office of National and Ethnic Minorities

¹⁸³ Gábor Havas – István Kemény – Ilona Liskó (2002) *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában (Romani children in primary schools)* Oktatókutató Intézet, Új Mandátum Kiadó, p.95

¹⁸⁴ The diagnosis is reviewed after 12 months and every second year until the age of 12 and thereafter every three years.

In Hungary, inter-school segregation by the organisation of private schools, foundation schools etc., is a new way of segregating Roma pupils. The rise in inter-school segregation can be seen in Figure 7; there is a sharp increase in the ratio of schools with more than 50 per cent Roma or even more than 80 per cent Roma from 1989 to 2004 and a corresponding sharp decrease in the number of schools with a Roma ratio of under 20 per cent.

Figure 8: Concentration of Roma pupils in primary schools in Hungary



Source: Liskó, I (2004) *Gyorsjelentés a Szegregáció a roma tanulók általános iskolai oktatásban c. kutatásról* (in manuscript, data provided by the NFP)

In **the Netherlands** there have been some attempts to tackle the educational problems of Roma and Sinti by establishing separate educational facilities¹⁸⁵ or referring them to special education programmes. A 2003 study¹⁸⁶ showed that 15 per cent of Roma and Sinti were enrolled in primary special education, in contrast to the national average of 5 per cent, and the “cultural minorities” average of 6 per cent. Another study¹⁸⁷ showed that nationally 21 per cent of the Roma, Sinti

¹⁸⁵ P.R. Rodrigues & M. Matelski (2004) *Monitor Racisme en Extreem Rechts: Roma en Sinti*, Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting

¹⁸⁶ R. Timmermans & M. Kalee *Schoolloopbaangegevens WWZ-leerlingen, totaalrapport 2002-2003*, 's Hertogenbosch: KPC Groep 2003.

¹⁸⁷ *Monitor maatschappelijke en economische positie woonwagengebewoners*, Cebeon, February 2002.

and caravan-dwelling students were enrolled in special education. Researchers¹⁸⁸ attribute the high number of referrals to special education largely to failure to understand the cultural norms and behaviour of the group and argue that referrals to special education would be fewer, if schools were better informed about the cultural norms and characteristics of this group. The trend, however, is now to offer educational support in regular schools and avoid placement in special education.

In **Poland** there are no national statistics regarding the number of Roma attending special schools, according to the NFP report. The only available data¹⁸⁹ for the Małopolska Voivodship suggests that 20 per cent of the special school pupils in 2001/2002 were Roma. According to the NFP report Roma leaders and NGOs have raised the issue of Roma overrepresentation in special schools arguing that Roma children with alleged learning difficulties were diagnosed on the basis of language tests. In response the Ministry of National Education and Sport requested a review of earlier diagnoses. In the 1990s there were some efforts to develop “remedial classes”¹⁹⁰ for Roma pupils. According to the Ministry of Interior and Administration, there are still 10 to 20 such “Roma classes” supporting language acquisition with around 200 pupils¹⁹¹.

In **Slovenia**, although segregated Roma classes have been discontinued¹⁹², the disproportionate number of Roma placed in special schools still constitutes a problem. In 2002/2003 there were eight segregated classes in primary schools, in 2003/2004 six classes, and during 2004/2005 only one school had segregated classes for Roma pupils¹⁹³. The latest legislation on the elementary school programme¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Y. van der Ree, A. van der Hurk & R. Timmermans, *Als niet kan wat moet, moet wat kan. Handreiking ter bestrijding van het schoolverzuim onder woonwagen- en zigeunerkinderen*, 's Hertogenbosch: KPC Groep 2001 p.8.

¹⁸⁹ Małopolski Education Superintendent (2003) *Analysis and evaluation of tasks realized in the realm of education as part of the Pilot government program for the Roma community in the Małopolska Voivodship for the years 2001-2003 in school year 2002/2003, 2003* (unpublished)

¹⁹⁰ Mirga A. (2001) *Addressing the Challenges of Romani Children's Education in Poland – Past and Current Trends and Possible Solutions*, report commissioned to the Roma Cultural Centre in Tarnów by OSCE/ODHIR, available at:

http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2003/01/1505_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

¹⁹¹ Poland, Ministry of Interior and Administration (2003) *Program na rzecz społeczności romskiej w Polsce (Programme for the Roma community in Poland)*, available at http://www.mswia.gov.pl/index_eng_wai.php?dzial=10&id=55 (12-10-2005)

¹⁹² In cases, like the Brsljin school in the southern town of Novo Mesto, attempts to reintroduce segregation measures following protest by non Roma parents have been strongly protested by the Roma community.

¹⁹³ Information provided to the National Focal Point by the Ministry of Education upon request.

¹⁹⁴ Slovenia / SOP: 2004-01-3561, (23.07.2004)

no longer retains such classes as an option. The placement of pupils into special schools (elementary schools with special curriculum) is regulated mainly by the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act¹⁹⁵ and the Statute on the Procedure of Placement of Children with Special Needs¹⁹⁶. After an assessment of the testing for placement in special schools revealed cultural bias¹⁹⁷, the government modified the testing procedures¹⁹⁸ and organised training for members of placement committees. An increase in complaints filed against past evaluations¹⁹⁹ also points to the increased awareness of Roma parents on the need to assume an active role in the pursuit of access to quality education.

Research has shown²⁰⁰ that in 1986/1987 18.4 per cent of Roma children were placed in special schools, although there are considerable regional variations with areas such as Lendava and Maribor reaching 46 per cent. However, according to the NFP report, in 1998/1999 less than 14 per cent of all Roma children were placed in special schools²⁰¹, the figure dropping to 9.2 per cent in 2002/2003²⁰² and to 8.8 per cent in 2004/2005²⁰³. While this is a clear improvement, the enrolment of Roma children in special schools is still high and in striking contrast to a relatively constant national average of around 1.2 per cent²⁰⁴.

In **Slovakia**, according to the NFP report segregation remains a serious problem, especially regarding the placement of Roma pupils in special schools for mentally handicapped children located in the vicinity of Roma settlements²⁰⁵. According to 1990 official data 21.4 per cent of all Roma pupils attended special schools, constituting 65.2 per cent of their pupil population²⁰⁶. A study²⁰⁷ showed that the percentage of Roma

¹⁹⁵ Slovenia / SOP: 2000-01-2496, (16.06.2000)

¹⁹⁶ Slovenia / SOP: 2003-01-2704, (06.06.2003)

¹⁹⁷ Information provided to the National Focal Point by the Education Development Unit upon request.

¹⁹⁸ Slovenia / SOP: 2003-01-2703, (06.06.2003)

¹⁹⁹ Information provided to the National Focal Point by the National Education Institute upon request.

²⁰⁰ Škof, V. (1990) "Vzgoja in izobraževanje romskih otrok v osnovni šoli", in: Levičnik, I. (ed.) *Vzgoja in izobraževanje romskih otrok v predšolskem in osnovnošolskem obdobju*, Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo, p. 10

²⁰¹ Perič, T., Zaviršek, D. (2001) "Minority Protection in Slovenia", in: Open Society Institute, *Minority Protection: Country Reports*, p. 502

²⁰² Slovenia, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (2004) *Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v republiki Sloveniji*, p.10

²⁰³ Information for the years 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport upon request of the National Focal Point.

²⁰⁴ Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (2004), *Rapid reports No. 274*

²⁰⁵ Tomatová, J. (2004) *Na vedl'ajšej kol'aji. Je proces zarad'ovania rómskych detí do špeciálnych základných škôl znevýhodňujúcim činiteľom?*, Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute

²⁰⁶ European Roma Rights Centre (2004) *Stigmata: Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, a survey of patterns of segregated education of Roma in Bulgaria, the Czech*

in special schools is at least 75 per cent and controlled pilot studies in western and eastern Slovakia found that Roma children were between 22 and 26 times more likely to be placed in a special school. A 2005 study²⁰⁸ quoting data from the Institute of Information and Forecasting of Education claimed that while the share of Roma children in primary schools was 0.53 per cent in the 2003/2004 school year, this figure was 7.62 per cent for special needs schools, almost 15 times higher. The government developed new diagnostic tests in 2004²⁰⁹. Residential concentration of Roma also leads to a proportionally higher number of Roma pupils in schools resulting often in non-Roma parents transferring their children to private schools.

In **Finland**, pupils may receive remedial teaching in separate classes for specific subjects, while being otherwise fully integrated into mainstream education. In 2001-2002, 50 per cent of Roma pupils received remedial teaching in comparison to the national average of around 20 per cent²¹⁰. Around 18 per cent of Roma pupils in primary education attended “observation classes” for pupils with severe learning difficulties and attention deficit disorders during 2001-2002 rising to 29 per cent in lower secondary (compulsory) education²¹¹.

Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia, available at <http://www.errc.org/db/00/04/m00000004.pdf>, p. 28 (12-10-2005)

²⁰⁷ Save the Children (2001) *Denied a future*, London, Vol. 2, p.188

²⁰⁸ Andrej Salner (ed), (2005) *Roma Children in the Slovak education system*, Slovak Governance Institute, available at

<http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Documents/SGIRomaChildrenintheSlovakRepublic.pdf> (12-10-2005)

²⁰⁹ European Consultants Organisation (2004) *Reintegrácia sociálne znevýhodnených detí zo špeciálnych škôl do štandardných základných škôl*, Bratislava

²¹⁰ Finland, National Board of Education (2004) *Romanilasten perusopetuksen tila. Selvitys lukuvuodelta 2001-2002*, Helsinki, p. 33

²¹¹ Finland, National Board of Education (2004) *Romanilasten perusopetuksen tila. Selvitys lukuvuodelta 2001-2002*, Helsinki, pp. 35-37

Key findings

- No Member State of the European Union has an explicit segregation policy. However, evidence suggests that segregation does occur to a lesser or greater degree either as a result of non-implementation of national anti-segregation policies by local authorities and schools, or as indirect effect of educational policies and practices limiting equal access to education to Roma and Traveller pupils.
- Over-representation of Roma pupils in special education for mentally handicapped appears to be a common phenomenon in some Member States. Particularly in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic over-representation remains high, despite recent efforts to reduce it.
- Wrongful assignment to special education is an issue of particular concern not only because it directly violates the principle of equal treatment in education, but also because attendance of such schools has far reaching negative consequences for future employment opportunities, while reinforcing negative stereotypes and contributing to social exclusion.
- Roma and Traveller parents, but also teachers, are often not adequately informed and aware of the negative far reaching effects of the wrongful assignment to special education.
- Assessment procedures for placing pupils in special schools need to be urgently reviewed in terms of their cultural bias and take into account language issues and different socio-cultural norms and behavioural models. The procedures for the placement of Roma and Traveller pupils in such schools need to be monitored systematically with the direct involvement of parents.
- Member states have not yet made adequate use of the positive action provision in the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC, "...With a view to ensuring full equality in practice the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantage linked to racial or ethnic origin."

3. Factors influencing the education of Roma and Travellers

The preceding sections highlighted severe inequalities in access to education traced in overall poor enrolment, attendance and performance, as well as in segregation practices. The data and information provided by NFP reports, as well as other studies²¹² point to a variety of interrelated factors influencing the education of Roma and Travellers. Some of the explanations provided are based on an overall assessment of the situation and others rely on theoretical insights or research referenced in the country reports. It is apparent, though, that up to date robust statistical evidence regarding enrolment, attendance, performance and attainment, as well as in depth ethnographic research with a focus on perceptions about the relevance of educational attainment is necessary. Furthermore, research should be given more attention in developing national strategies and policies.

Access to education and the educational attainment of Roma and Travellers is affected by direct and systemic discrimination and exclusion in education and influenced by their overall conditions of life, which are invariably characterised by high unemployment, substandard housing and poor access to health services creating a vicious circle of poverty, exclusion and marginalisation that affects their ability to participate in and benefit from education.

Other factors are also critically important for educational attainment. The importance attached by the family and the community to education has also a profound impact on the children's willingness to attend school regularly and learn effectively. Evidence suggests that

²¹² For example: UNDP (ed.) (2002) *Avoiding the Dependency Trap. The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*; DG Employment and Social Affairs (Unit D3), European Commission (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*; Save the Children (2001) *Denied a future*, London; Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erika Wilkens (2005) *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*, World Bank, Washington; EUMC (2004) *Migrants, minorities and education: Documenting legal measures and remedies against Discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, Vienna, EUMC; EUMC (2005) *National Strategies for Minority Schooling: A comparative analysis*, Vienna, EUMC; Jean-Pierre Liegeois and Nicolae Gheorghe (1995) *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*, Minority Rights Group International; Dena Ringold (2000) *Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and Challenges*, World Bank; ERRC (2004) *Stigmata, segregated schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest; Edwin Rekosh and Maxine Sleeper (2004) *Separate and Unequal: Combating discrimination against Roma in education*, Public Interest Law Initiative, Budapest

Roma and Travellers are aware of the benefits of formal education, but its actual capacity to improve their future life chances depends also upon prevailing prejudice and discrimination in the labour market.

The school itself also influences how Roma and Traveller pupils experience education by the way it interacts with them, their families and their community. Positive experiences will be produced by school administrations which are flexible in the application of rules that could exclude Roma and Traveller pupils, but take all necessary steps to ensure regular attendance working closely with the parents; by schools that value the Roma and Travellers' cultural heritage, their skills and informal knowledge and use it in their teaching practice; by schools that actively reach out and engage families and the community actively in school life providing incentives for more interaction between teachers, parents and all the members of the local community; by teachers who respect their pupils cultural differences that may be expressed in a different behaviour and engage them in learning by applying appropriate and differentiated teaching methods.

The family plays a key educational role among Roma and Travellers, but little attention has been paid to its values and dynamics²¹³. In the context of the Roma and Traveller community work skills acquired by interacting with other family and community members can be more important than formal education provided by the school. The acquisition of work skills is vital, particularly for those who move frequently, due to the important contribution children make to their family's economic activities²¹⁴. These skills are not only technical, but more importantly social, based on cooperation, horizontality and networks, including teamwork and co-operative organisation, flexibility to adapt to change and intercultural competencies. However, since access to the labour market in the knowledge society largely depends on academic qualifications, low levels of schooling are a serious barrier²¹⁵. The school should acknowledge and respect the value of the education provided by

²¹³ Jean-Pierre Liégeois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 64

²¹⁴ Tracy Smith (1997) "Recognising Difference: The Romani "Gypsy" Child Socialisation and Education Process", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, June 1997, Vol. 18 Issue 2, p243, p. 14 in: Csaba Fényes, Christina McDonald, Anita Mészáros (eds) (1999) *The Roma Education Resource Book*, Open Society Institute – Institute for Educational Policy, Budapest, available at http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles_publications/publications/roma_19990101/romaed1_1999.pdf p. 9 (03-11-2005)

²¹⁵ Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities, University of Barcelona (2004) *Workaló: The creation of new occupational patterns for cultural minorities: The Gypsy case*, Final Report (HPSE-ct2001-00101), European Commission, Research Framework Programme 5

the family and involve parents in its work by building upon their values, structures, languages and cultures.²¹⁶

3. 1. Factors related to pupils, parents and the community

- **Language and cultural differences:** Comprehension of the official national (majority) language affects the educational attainment of Roma and Traveller pupils. The same is true for culturally based differences in values, experiences with formal education, religion etc. Roma and Travellers that grow up within extended family structures could have limited contact to the national language. The importance of pre-school education therefore cannot be overestimated for early language acquisition and the early introduction of pupils into the social norms and behavioural patterns expected by schools. However, cultural identity as an essential component of personality and necessary for the development of social relationships should be recognised and respected by the school.
- **Participation in pre-school programmes:** Roma and Traveller children rarely participate in pre-school programmes. Partly this is related to traditional family values and the fear that early socialisation outside the kinship group could alienate the child from its cultural traditions.²¹⁷ However, pre-school education is crucial for later academic achievement, since it prepares children to function in a school environment and fosters the learning of the country's dominant language.
- **Socialisation, learning patterns and fear of assimilation:** In Roma and Traveller communities socialisation and learning are based on the freedom to explore and learn rather than to follow rules in a confined environment; the needs of the community are considered more important than the needs of individuals; decisions are reached by consensus rather than by obedience to an established hierarchy; verbal skills are more highly valued than writing and reading skills; applied knowledge is considered more important than abstract knowledge²¹⁸. In some cases Roma and Traveller parents could fear

²¹⁶ Edwin Rekosh and Maxine Sleeper (2004) *Separate and Unequal: Combating discrimination against Roma in education*, Public Interest Law Initiative, Budapest p. 311

²¹⁷ Jean-Pierre Liégeois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 16

²¹⁸ Tracy Smith (1997) "Recognising Difference: The Romani "Gypsy" Child Socialisation and Education Process", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, June 1997, Vol. 18 Issue 2, p243, p. 14 in Csaba Fényes, Christina McDonald, Anita Mészáros (eds) (1999) *The Roma Education*

that participation in education and indeed educational success could alienate their children from their culture²¹⁹. Their kinship ties are particularly strong, forged as a means of defence to discrimination and persecution throughout centuries. This could affect participation in pre-school education and should be addressed by educators who recognise, respect and learn from Roma and Traveller norms and values.

- **Parental background and aspirations:** The educational level of the parents affects their capacity to support their children in their homework²²⁰. Furthermore, research suggests that pupils' low educational attainment can also be attributed to the overall low socio-economic position of their parents²²¹. It has also been argued that Roma and Traveller parents do not always link scholastic success to economic and social success and thus could place a lower value to scholastic achievement²²².
- **Nomadic community life:** Groups with a nomadic lifestyle, which could be part of their cultural identity or a necessity imposed by their conditions of life, often face problems with local authorities and schools, often in contrast to official national education policies. The de facto segregation of non-sedentary children through the provision of mobile school units (e.g. in France), while providing a form of education, also reinforces social isolation. Such a lifestyle, however, does not affect scholastic achievement per se, since children leading such a life do at least as well as others,²²³ and experimental projects

Resource Book, Open Society Institute – Institute for Educational Policy, Budapest, available at http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles_publications/publications/roma_19990101/romaed1_1999.pdf p. 8 (03-11-2005)

²¹⁹ Gheorghe, N. and A Mirga (1997) *The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy Paper*, *Project on Ethnic Relations*, available at http://www.per-usa.org/21st_c.htm (13-11-2005)

²²⁰ Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erika Wilkens (2005) *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*, World Bank, Washington, p. 15, available at [http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/\\$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf](http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/eca/ecshd.nsf/ECADocByUnid/EDF5EC59184222F8C1256D4F0053DA41/$FILE/Full%20Report%20in%20English.pdf) (12-11-2005) p. 63; and R. Timmermans & M. Kalee (2003), *Schoolloopbaangegevens WWZ-leerlingen, totaalrapport 2002-2003*, 's Hertogenbosch: KPC Groep 2003, p.10

²²¹ Gábor Kertesi and Gábor Kézdi (2005) *Roma children in the transformational recession: Widening ethnic schooling gap and Roma poverty in post-communist Hungary*, Central European University, Budapest available at http://www.personal.ceu.hu/departs/personal/Gabor_Kezdi/WorkingPapers/Kertesi-Kezdi-2005-RomaChildren.pdf

²²² Jean-Pierre Liégois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 177

²²³ Jean-Pierre Liégois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 177

with distance education using state of the art technology show encouraging results.²²⁴

3. 2. Factors related to teachers and the peer group

- **Teacher training:** Teachers in ethnically mixed schools are often not adequately trained to understand and address appropriately normative and behavioural differences. Thus they may not be able to grasp the underlying causes of a pupil's behaviour or performance in order to address it appropriately.
- **Teacher support:** Teachers dealing with an ethnically diverse student population are constantly challenged and work under more than average pressure. They tend therefore to “burn out” quicker and become demoralised if the necessary support structures in the form of adequate financial and career incentives, intercultural mediators, expert advice from educational authorities, etc are not in place²²⁵.
- **Teacher expectations:** Pupils expect to be challenged by teachers and to receive satisfaction from responding successfully to these challenges and achieving their objectives. Low teacher expectations that indirectly devalue pupils have adverse effects on their school performance and attendance rates²²⁶.
- **Harassment by peers and teachers:** Harassment, racial slurs, bullying and scapegoating are clear manifestations of racism and result in social exclusion and isolation. Such phenomena, highlighted in numerous studies and reports²²⁷, are very serious and could have far reaching effects on social cohesion and integration efforts, especially if they are tolerated by teachers.
- **Roma and Traveller teachers:** There are several initiatives in Member States employing Roma and Traveller teaching assistants or mediators that can play a valuable role. However, the NFP studies

²²⁴ For example <http://www.scottishtravellered.net/research/laptops.pdf> (12-10-2005)

²²⁵ Jean-Pierre Liégeois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 270

²²⁶ Jean-Pierre Liégeois (1998) *School Provision for Ethnic Minorities*, University of Hertfordshire Press, p. 270

²²⁷ Csaba Fényes, Christina McDonald, Anita Mészáros (eds) (1999) *The Roma Education Resource Book*, Open Society Institute – Institute for Educational Policy, Budapest, available at http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles_publications/publications/roma_19990101/romaed1_1999.pdf (03-11-2005); EU Accession Monitoring Program (2002), *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection*, sections on Germany and Spain, available from <http://www.eumap.org> (07-10-2005); ECRI Country Reports available at http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/4-Publications/#P26_307 (22-12-2005); ERRC (2004) *Stigmata, segregated schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest

have specified the presence of Roma accredited teachers only in Hungary, Finland and Hamburg in Germany.

3. 3. Factors related to institutional discrimination

- **Enrolment and attendance:** Difficulties in enrolment resulting from bureaucratic regulations requiring proof of residence status, or other documentation not readily available, and open refusal of school authorities to enrol Roma and Traveller children could discourage parents from enrolling their children to school. Attendance that is not systematically monitored by school authorities undermines the importance of schooling in the eyes of both pupils and parents.
- **Segregation in different schools:** Segregating Roma and Travellers in different schools due to the distance of Roma and Traveller settlements from other schools or resistance by non-Roma and non-Traveller parents to their enrolment directly results in social exclusion and has far reaching negative consequences.
- **Segregation in different school classes:** Any form of prolonged segregation, even with the objective to improve educational attainment, has negative social and educational consequences. Performance problems that are wrongly attributed to assumed “ethnic” or “cultural” attributes reinforce negative stereotypes and “label” pupils collectively rather than on the basis of an objective assessment of their individual performance. In those cases where such segregation involves placing such classes in different school buildings, it may have even more pronounced negative effects.
- **Assignment to special education for reasons other than disability:** Wrongful assignment to special education seriously limits pupils’ advancement in education and employment. The placement of pupils in special schools without adequately weighted testing taking into account their cultural background will have serious detrimental effects upon their education. Although Member States have tried revising the conditions for placement (e.g. in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia) and efforts are made to avoid it, there may still be indirect incentives for unaware parents to actually prefer special education, in order to avoid the effort and discipline required by mainstream schools.
- **Placement in lower than age-appropriate grades:** Roma and Traveller pupils are occasionally placed in classes lower than their age group, largely as a result of erratic attendance, academic failure or temporary abandonment of school. This affects socialisation and

social inclusion adversely by preventing peer group integration, has a demoralising effect and can result in higher dropout rates.

- **Lack of intercultural school curricula and resources:** The absence of Roma and Traveller related information in the school curriculum (particularly in history and social science) has the effect of devaluing their identity, culture and traditions. This together with the lack of educational resources relating to the Roma and Traveller pupils' life experiences could alienate them and reinforce negative stereotypes.

3. 4. Other Factors

- **Residential segregation:** Roma and Travellers often live in poor and ethnically segregated rural and urban areas, where schools are often stigmatised with negative effects on educational outcomes. "Ghetto schools" with an increasing concentration of Roma pupils due also to the "white flight" phenomenon run a high risk of developing a "bad" reputation. Attending such a school could limit the option to be admitted to more challenging schools in the future or to be considered for better jobs. In schools with high concentration of Roma or Traveller pupils the development of integrated classes becomes even more difficult.
- **Employment opportunities:** Compared to the majority population Roma and Traveller pupils tend to experience greater difficulty in finding employment corresponding to their attained educational level due to widespread prejudice, and especially in finding their first job. This could be particularly demoralising and seriously jeopardise the incentives for continuing education.
- **Monitoring:** In all Member States there is a marked absence of systematic monitoring of key indicators, such as enrolment, attendance, attainment and performance of Roma and Traveller pupils, as well as phenomena of institutional structural discrimination and racist incidents. The resulting lack of objective and reliable statistical data makes impact assessment of policies and measures very difficult. This prevents timely and focused action and weakens efforts to improve equality in education.

4. National education policies, measures and initiatives

The multiethnic European landscape requires the development of national education strategies that combat discrimination and prejudice, while encouraging cultural exchange and enrichment in order to strengthen social cohesion, improve equality of opportunities and develop social capital. This is not only necessary for improving the productive capacity of human capital and achieving greater economic prosperity, but primarily because equality of opportunity and access to services is a fundamental right and key value of the European Union.

Member States have gradually developed educational strategies with intercultural elements that aim to develop individual skills and abilities to achieve an “intercultural communicative competence”²²⁸, developing bridges between communities and individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In many cases these strategies were developed in response to the growing number of second generation immigrants in education, but particularly in the 1990s they are increasingly addressing Roma and Travellers, especially in the “new” Member States of the European Union. In most countries, however, such strategies currently consist largely of a series of support measures targeting Roma and Travellers as “disadvantaged learners”, rather than being a key dimension of national education policy and part of its core pedagogical objectives. In other countries intercultural elements are present only in specific projects which do not affect the structure and operation of the general education system. As such they are unlikely to have the capacity to bring about the necessary systemic changes and thus their added value as well as their sustainability remains questionable.

*“General education implies, among other things, the creation of a common code, which at least rudimentarily guarantees communication among the members of a society, a minimum of social consensus and, of course, social cohesion.”*¹⁸⁵ The specific contents of this common code, the resulting curricula and the modes and practices of school interaction should promote intercultural exchange and dialogue to achieve cultural enrichment. This requires new teaching methods, schoolbooks that incorporate different cultural perspectives in an unbiased manner, special

²²⁸ Michael Damanakis (2005) *European and Intercultural Dimension in Greek Education*, European Educational Research Journal, Volume 4, Number 1, 2005

teacher training, a more diverse teacher body and more flexibility in the organisation and operation of schools. This not to say that support measures for “disadvantaged learners” are not valuable and essential, but these need to be complemented by educational strategies that address the entire school population. Such strategies are designed to recognise the value of cultural diversity, to develop respect and positive attitudes towards others, cooperative skills, and a better understanding of social relations in order to foster the development of social capital²²⁹. As research indicates, the positive effect of such a development will not be merely economic growth, but the reduction of inequality and the social distance between individuals, leading to an increase in overall social cohesion.²³⁰

In **Belgium**, educational policy in the Communities contains intercultural elements, but does not target particularly Roma and Traveller groups with specific support measures or affirmative action relying primarily on measures prohibiting discrimination, with the exception of the Flemish Community, where the 2002 ‘GOK I’ decree stipulates that schools can receive extra funding for enrolling Roma and Traveller pupils. However, according to the NFP report few schools have taken advantage of this opportunity, particularly those that were supported to do so by active NGO advocacy organisations. There are some other examples of affirmative action policies, such as the Flemish decree²³¹ allowing travelling families to be absent from school on the basis of a specific arrangement for monitoring academic progress, but no concrete evidence of their effectiveness could be found.

In the **Czech Republic**, Roma have been addressed not in terms of intercultural education, but in the context of support measures. According to the NFP report over the past ten years resources on Roma and national minorities and training guides for teachers working with Roma pupils have been published with financial support by the PHARE project “CZ 2000-02-03 Support for Roma Integration”. In 2004 the government announced plans to introduce elements of intercultural education through the proposed Framework Educational Programmes

²²⁹ Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions.

²³⁰ Ángel de la Fuente and Antonio Ciccone (2003) *Human capital in a global and knowledge-based economy*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 23

²³¹ Circular BaO/2002/11

(FEP) for primary education²³². Accordingly, Roma history, culture and language are planned to be included in general education and representatives of local Roma communities are expected to be actively involved. The new Education Act (Act N° 561/2004 Coll.), which entered into force in January 2005 contains a number of further reforms, such as waiving fees for the last year of pre-school education, relaxing the rules on minimum class sizes, more individualised education, appointing Roma educational assistants, teacher training aiming to achieve a compulsory minimum knowledge of Roma language, culture and mediation skills²³³.

Another planned reform initiative is the pedagogical training of Roma assistants in schools and educational institutions within the framework of the Support to Roma Integration programme²³⁴. An affirmative action concerns support to Roma pupils for improving access to secondary schools through the 'Programme of Support to Roma Secondary School Students'²³⁵ providing financial support for school fees at private schools, travel costs, food, textbooks etc. The Ministry plans to expand later the programme to primary and tertiary education. These measures were confirmed in the 2005 'Roma Integration Policy Concept'²³⁶ that outlines key policy measures and actions aiming at improving the social situation of the Roma and combating racial discrimination. The document, however, also makes reference to the Roma "cultural disadvantage", which raises questions regarding its understanding of the intrinsic value of Roma culture. Furthermore, it defines teacher-parent cooperation more as guidance regarding school requirements rather than as a two-way relationship taking on board parental concerns or wishes. The 'Decree on Education of Children, Pupils and Students with Special Educational Needs and Exceptionally Gifted Children, Pupils and Students (No.73/2005 Coll.)' provides for "special basic schools to educate children from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment", despite a stated commitment to desegregation.

²³² The Government of CR (2004), *Informace o plnění usnesení vlády týkajících se integrace romských komunit a aktivního postupu státní správy při uskutečňování opatření přijatých těmito usneseními ke dni 31. prosince 2003*

²³³ The Government of CR, (2004) *Druhá periodická zpráva o plnění zásad stanovených Rámcovou úmluvou o ochraně národnostních menšin podle článku 25 odstavce 2 této Úmluvy*

²³⁴ The Government of CR (2004) *Informace o plnění usnesení vlády týkajících se integrace romských komunit a aktivního postupu státní správy při uskutečňování opatření přijatých těmito usneseními ke dni 31. prosince 2003*

²³⁵ The Government of CR, (2004) *Druhá periodická zpráva o plnění zásad stanovených Rámcovou úmluvou o ochraně národnostních menšin podle článku 25 odstavce 2 této Úmluvy*

²³⁶ The Government of CR (2005) *Roma Integration Policy Concept*, available at <http://wtd.vlada.cz/files/rvk/rzrk/dokumenty/conception.pdf> (12-10-2005)

Furthermore, there is no mention of any provisions for reassessing Roma pupils currently assigned to special education and their integration into mainstream education. In October 2005 the FCNM Advisory Committee²³⁷ noted its concern that these measures have produced few improvements, while local authorities do not systematically implement the government's school support scheme, and do not always have the determination needed to act effectively in this field. A very important development in January 2006 is the government decision to introduce a new monitoring system for the collection of anonymous data on the Roma community. This new monitoring system that is expected to produce the first statistical results in 2008 will collect systematically data on employment, income, housing conditions, debts and education.

In **Denmark**, according to the NFP report there is no specific intercultural educational strategy at national level and local authorities are primarily responsible for support projects. Roma students are generally treated as "bilingual students", but not in the Municipality of Ellsinore. This situation has attracted criticism and the OECD Pilot Review of the Quality of Schooling Outcomes in Denmark, EDU/EC (2004) stresses the need for improvement of the Danish public school system with regard to the education of ethnic minority students. During 2005, there were some initiatives by local authorities to develop a more multicultural curriculum, e.g. a project aiming at including minority languages into the curriculum, and another project including minority religion teaching into the curriculum. However, according to the NFP, both projects were terminated by the Ministry of Education. Currently, the national education strategy focuses on "the internationalisation of Danish education and training" with no reference to the development of intercultural competences²³⁸.

In **Germany** education is the responsibility of the federal states and it is thus difficult to generalise on educational strategies. Generally speaking, state measures especially for Sinti and Roma, particularly regarding the teaching of the Romanes language in public schools, are assessed negatively by the Central Council of German Sinti and the

²³⁷ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (2005) *Second Opinion on the Czech Republic adopted on 24 February 2005*, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2005)002, Par. 145

²³⁸ Ministry of Education (2004) *Enhanced Internationalisation of Danish Education and Training*, Policy Paper to Parliament available at <http://pub.uvm.dk/2004/internationalisation/index.html> (12-10-2005)

Roma and the Sinti Alliance. Roma and Sinti children benefit from general support measures offered to migrant children and young people in almost all federal states: Special support classes are established for beginners in primary schools and for “newcomers entering education at a later stage” in primary schools and secondary modern schools in order to improve their language skills usually for up to one year. Special instruction in the form of intensive support courses additionally to the regular instructions may also be offered. All such measures aim at integrating pupils to normal classes as soon as possible.

In addition to these general support measures there is also a number of small scale, but successful projects in a number of German states for Roma and Sinti relying on the involvement of Roma and Sinti in the educational process and developing educational material for the teaching of Roma and Sinti history and culture. In some German states, e.g. in Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen and Hamburg, Roma and Sinti are successfully employed as mediators to improve communication between the children, parents and teachers. In Hamburg the employment of nine Roma and Sinti teachers and social workers has improved enrolment and attendance rates, while reducing learning problems. Other federal states, like Bremen, aim to employ Sinti and Roma mediators. Other states, like Brandenburg and North-Rhine Westphalia, have developed informational and awareness raising material for teachers of Roma and Sinti pupils. In Hamburg on the basis of parental demands the Office for School, Youth and Vocational Training (Behörde für Schule, Jugend und Berufsbildung) has integrated the teaching of Romanes into the curriculum and has developed bilingual teaching material on the Roma history and literature. Vocational training is also provided in Romanes at adult education classes (Volkshochschule).

In **Estonia**, although according to the NFP report intercultural principles are not mainstreamed, the State Integration Programme, while primarily focusing on language proficiency, also introduces multicultural elements into the school curriculum and supports financially minority cultural organisations providing educational services. In 2002, the Ministry of Education established a special commission on Roma education, and in 2003 the right of smaller minority groups for native language and culture education in public schools was recognised. Integration related initiatives are funded by the Integration Foundation, established in 1998²³⁹ with the aim to support projects submitted by local government and other actors.

²³⁹ Estonia/RT I 1998, 33, 471 (08.04.1998)

In **Greece**, intercultural education policies and measures target immigrants and repatriated Greeks from abroad, but not Roma. Partly this can be explained by the official conception of Roma as a “disadvantaged social group” rather than as an ethnic group²⁴⁰. The first major educational initiative targeting Roma was the government sponsored project “Education of Gypsy children”²⁴¹ partly financed by EU structural funds and followed up by the successor project “Integration of Gypsy Children in Schools”. The aim of the project is the integration of Roma children into mainstream education through the improvement of enrolment and attendance rates and the development of curricular resources with elements of Roma culture for use by Roma pupils. Also, the cultural awareness of teachers working with them is to be improved. The project is not integrated into regular schooling, but is run as an add-on element and has attracted criticism regarding its scope and objectives as well as its impact, according to the NFP report. Roma were not involved in the design or the planning, but some were reportedly employed by the project contributing to educational and research activities.

During 1998 – 2001 the project was implemented in 30 areas, training about 3,000 teachers, producing new training and educational material, creating reception and supplementary teaching classes and organising events addressed mainly to non-Roma parents in order to create awareness of the issues. Since 2002 Roma families can also benefit from a financial support measure for families with an income of less than €3,000 annually providing an annual school benefit²⁴² of €300 for every child enrolled in primary education. Critics have pointed out that although this will increase enrolment rates, the improvement of Roma pupils’ actual school attendance, performance and attainment will require a serious reconsideration of systemic elements in the education system and a comprehensive national strategy.

In **Spain**, intercultural education is currently confined to providing support to minorities through compensatory education programmes²⁴³. According to information provided by the government to ECRI the draft law introducing reforms to the 2002 Law on the Quality

²⁴⁰ Georgiou G., Terzopoulou M. (1996) *Gypsies in Greece: History – Culture*, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs – General Secretariat of Popular Education, Athens

²⁴¹ See previous sections 2.1. and 3. for details

²⁴² Greece, Ministerial Decision 2/37645/0020/8-7-02.

²⁴³ Gitano children are reported to be the beneficiaries of approximately half of all compensatory education measures taken, see ECRI (2006), *Third Report on Spain*, Council of Europe, 24 June 2005 CRI(2006) 4

of Education includes measures directed at providing a better distribution of children with special educational needs, including *Gitanos*, in public schools and in publicly-funded private schools, as well as measures aimed at the promotion of better attention to cultural diversity, including teacher training, and of better relations between the school and its environment. Access to education of *Gitano* children became a priority issue for the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Departments of Education of the Autonomous Communities during the 1980s. A number of measures were taken to avoid segregation and to introduce affirmative action as well as in some cases positive discrimination policies. In the 1980s, for example, Andalusia had around 100 *Gitano* monitors/mediators liaising between schools and families in an effort to reduce absenteeism²⁴⁴.

The “Gitano Development Programme” also implemented a variety of educational programmes. In 2001, the Education Commission of the “Gitano Development Programme”, belonging to the Ministry of Education and Culture, drafted a major policy document “The Gitano people and education” with recommendations to include elements of *Gitano* culture to the primary education curricula, to distribute relevant educational materials and to develop intercultural mediator training programmes. The Departments of Education of the Autonomous Communities also funded training programmes and programmes of employment promotion to support students older than sixteen who did not achieve the main objectives of compulsory secondary education in the context of the so-called *Social Guarantee Projects*. Explicit reference to the *Gitano* population or culture is also made in the legislation regulating education of the Autonomous Communities of Canaries and Valencia.

In **France**, national education policy is governed by anti-discrimination rather than intercultural principles. Accordingly the main aim of the education policies regarding “children of parents of no fixed abode” is integration into mainstream classes corresponding to the age of the child. This constitutes “the principal means of participation in schooling”²⁴⁵. Non-sedentary pupils are therefore required to “attend the school in the locality where their parents are encamped, irrespective of the length of stay and irrespective of the numbers of pupils enrolled in

²⁴⁴ Calin Rus (2004) *The training of Roma/Gypsy school mediators and assistants*, Council of Europe, available at http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/education/Roma-Gypsy_children/publication16_24EN.pdf p. 8 (12-10-2005)

²⁴⁵ Circular letter no. 101 of 25 April 2002, *op. cit.*

the class corresponding to their ability level.”²⁴⁶ However, there are also other provisions regarding non-sedentary children: The “mobile school units” (Antennes Scolaires Mobiles units) are schools for pupils on the move and are primarily intended to familiarise children with school education, particularly at the pre-school stage. The “campsite schools” are located on camping sites.

However, according to the Ministry of Education, such “...specific provisions may, if necessary, be envisaged on a temporary basis, but only as stepping-stones towards mainstream education.”²⁴⁷ Teachers of such units are mainly volunteers and have reportedly improved communication and understanding between local communities and non-sedentary groups. A “travel report book” widely recommended by numerous researchers²⁴⁸ is used successfully in this context enabling teachers to utilise the appropriate teaching methods that improve attainments while ensuring the pupil plays an active role in the learning process. Although educational follow-up is a necessity for non-sedentary pupils, its successful implementation requires systematic national coordination that is currently not in place.

There are also special educational provisions within mainstream schools, like extra staff for teaching support and improved communication between the school and family. Further support is provided in initiation classes in primary education and reception classes in secondary education, which are part of mainstream education and are known as “nomad classes” or “Traveller children classes”. In secondary education, pupils with learning difficulties may also attend special general and vocational teaching sections within mainstream secondary schools.

A number of important innovative initiatives have also been implemented – many in the context of transnational EU funded projects, like the 1991 distant education “Year 6 consolidation courses for *Gypsy* and Traveller children” for primary schools targeting exclusively non-sedentary children and introducing elements of *Gypsy* history and

²⁴⁶ Circular letter no. 66-104 of 08 August 1966 “relative à la scolarisation des enfants de familles sans domicile fixe” and to the application of article 15 of decree no. 66-104 of 18 February 1966, and the Order of 08 August 1966, French Ministry of Education and Social Affairs, *Journal Officiel*, 19 August 1966

²⁴⁷ Circular letter no.101 of 25 April 2002, *La scolarisation des enfants du voyage et de familles non sédentaires*, Bulletin Officiel no. 10, 25 April 2002

²⁴⁸ Two background documents in this field: “*Le suivi des enfants du voyage*”, Revue du Centre de Recherche en Education (C.R.E.), Université Jean Monnet de Saint Etienne, no. 18, Saint Etienne: CDDP Loire, November 2000, and *Orientations pour le suivi pédagogique des enfants itinérants*, Confluence(s), No. 11, Revue trimestrielle de l'Institut Universitaire de la formation des maîtres de l'académie de Lyon, November 2000, 66 pp.

culture. The success of the project was such that from 46 pupils enrolled in 1995/1996, the number rose to 3,110 in 1999/2000. Some shortcomings, however, were also highlighted particularly relating to the lack of a clear legal status, difficulties in maintaining communication due to the frequent change of postal addresses, problems in assessing progress made and the cost of books.

Another important initiative concerns the organisation of a teachers' network in the context of the "Travel-School Liaison and Information Centre (Centre de Liaison et d'Information Voyage-Ecole) initially created in February 1985. It is meant to share experience and know-how, to develop networking among teachers, to contribute to a better understanding of the current situation and to develop measures to bring the school system (primary and secondary) more into balance with the realities of a nomadic lifestyle. Teacher training remains an issue as there are no relevant modules in teacher training colleges ("Institut universitaire de formation des Maîtres"). Recently the tasks of the District Centres for Schooling of New Arrivals and Travellers ("*Centres académiques pour la Scolarisation des Nouveaux Arrivants et enfants du Voyage*")²⁴⁹ regarding "Traveller" children have been reinforced, particularly in terms of developing teaching materials, collecting and analysing data on training requirements and coordinating the follow-up of age cohorts in the regions of France.

A grave and as yet unresolved issue hampering seriously the education of non-sedentary children concerns their ability to camp legally. The "Besson law"²⁵⁰, as amended in July 2000²⁵¹, requires local authorities to provide for the encampment of "Travellers". However, as noted in the recent ECRI report²⁵² local authorities are reluctant to provide encampment sites, while some of the existing ones display major inadequacies, being situated in locations that are far away from towns and/or that are unsuitable and present health risks. ECRI recommended strongly that French authorities respect the "Travellers'" dignity and choice of an "itinerant" lifestyle implementing fully the Besson laws without delay and ensuring that the sites created are sufficiently numerous, suitably located and properly equipped. However, according to the NFP report, the encampment issue was addressed by the March 2003 law on internal security²⁵³ criminalising unauthorised encampment

²⁴⁹ Only since circular letter No. 102 of 25 April 2002 has the notion of "Traveller children" appeared explicitly in teacher training literature. The former CEFISEM centres then became CASNAV centres.

²⁵⁰ Law no. 90-449 of 31 May 1990, *Journal Officiel*, 2 June 1990

²⁵¹ Law no. 2000-614 of 05 July 2000, *Journal Officiel*, 06 July 2000

²⁵² ECRI (2004) *Third Report on France*, Council of Europe, 25 June 2004 CRI (2005) 3

²⁵³ Law no. 2003-239 of 18 Mars 2003 on internal security, *Journal Officiel* no. 66 of 19 March 2003

under heavy penalties. Furthermore, in August 2003 the new law on town planning, programming and urban renewal exempted smaller local authorities containing “sensitive urban zones” from the obligations of the “Besson law” making it very difficult for “Travellers” to camp legally, while heavily penalising them for camping illegally.

In **Ireland** the White Paper on Education published in 1997 recognised the need to educate all children for a global society. Its treatment of diversity in schools is related to Travellers’ needs²⁵⁴. The 1995 Task Force Report²⁵⁵ had already recognised Travellers as a culturally distinct or ethnic group and identified key principles for education provisions: equality of opportunity, anti-discrimination, respect for diversity, recognition of children’s legal right to enrolment and integrated school placement regardless of social background, and parental involvement in decision making. It called for strategies to enable delivery of effective education to nomadic people, including record transfer systems and standardised texts and programmes. This report contributed substantially to the current policy of mainstreaming all forms of provision for Travellers²⁵⁶.

Traveller education is now located under the aegis of the Social Inclusion Unit of the Department of Education and Science, which is committed to full integration of Traveller children in primary and secondary schools. In its Report on Preschool Education for Travellers, and in the White Paper on Adult Education²⁵⁷ a move towards integration of Travellers and mainstream provision is envisaged. The parliamentary Joint Committee on Education and Science foresees the appointment of a National Co-ordinator to oversee issues of interculturalism across the complex of Department of Education and Science structures and services²⁵⁸. It warrants consideration that structures targeting education

²⁵⁴ Department of Education and Science (1997) *Charting our Education Future: White Paper on Education*, Dublin: Stationery Office, pp. 9, 26, 57

²⁵⁵ Task Force on the Travelling Community, Department of the Environment (1995) *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*, Dublin: Stationery Office, Section B: Culture, C: Discrimination, and F: Education

²⁵⁶ Monitoring Committee on Travellers, Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2001) *First Progress Report of the Committee to Monitor and Co-ordinate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*, Dublin: Stationery Office, pp. 149-208

²⁵⁷ Department of Education and Science (2000) *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education*, Dublin: Stationery Office, p. 172; (2003) *Pre-Schools for Travellers: National Evaluation Report*, Dublin: Stationery Office, pp. 73-74

²⁵⁸ Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Science (2004) *Second Report. The Provision of Educational Services in a Multi-Ethnic/Multi-Cultural Society. April 2004*, p. 6

for Travellers should, like possible provisions for other minority ethnic groups, be within that broader diversity framework.

The Department of Education and Science instituted an intercultural education committee within the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and guidelines on intercultural education for primary and post-primary schools have been developed²⁵⁹. The Department also promotes interculturalism in its guidelines on Traveller education, and has funded research into ethnicity and racism in schools. In its Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-Level Schools²⁶⁰ the Department of Education and Science notes that interculturalism is not an add-on or another subject, but a commitment to teaching all subjects informed by knowledge of diversity. In its report on pre-schools for Travellers²⁶¹ the Department also advocates training and programmes that reflect Traveller culture. The Guidelines for Primary Schools include an extensive list of materials for use in classrooms²⁶², but relatively few items have specifically a reference regarding Travellers.

In teacher education there is a focus on specific curriculum areas, such as the language of instruction, social studies and religion and the delivery of specific interculturalism modules²⁶³. Travellers are not present as teachers, but have found roles in schools mainly as special needs assistants. At ongoing teacher education level, a teachers' handbook²⁶⁴ on Travellers, their culture and appropriate pedagogic responses, was produced. According to the NFP report a Joint Working Group drawn from the Educational Disadvantage Committee and the Advisory Committee on Traveller Education will present a report with recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy. One of the core issues it is addressing relates to how existing targeted educational supports for Traveller children might best be integrated, on a phased basis, into an enhanced mainstream provision.

In **Italy**, according to the NFP report some intercultural elements addressing primarily immigrants have been gradually introduced since the early 1990s. The National Council of Public Education has shown the

²⁵⁹ More information available at www.ncca.ie (10/03/06)

²⁶⁰ Department of Education and Science (2003) *Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-Level Schools*, Dublin: Stationery Office, pp. 7, 40

²⁶¹ Department of Education and Science (2003) *Pre-Schools for Travellers: National Evaluation Report*, Dublin: Stationery Office, pp. 45-49

²⁶² Department of Education and Science (2003) *Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools*, Dublin: Stationery Office, Appendix 1

²⁶³ Eurydice (2004) *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe*, Brussels, pp. 63-65

²⁶⁴ O'Reilly, M. (1993) *With Travellers: A Handbook for Teachers*, Dublin: Blackrock Education Centre.

intention of moving towards an intercultural pedagogy, as the relevant policy documents issued in 1992²⁶⁵ and 1993²⁶⁶ show. An inter-departmental working group for intercultural education and integration of foreign students was also created within the General Directorate for Primary Education of the Ministry for Public Education, but there have been no specific national policy measures addressing the education of the Roma effectively due possibly also to an absence of a comprehensive strategy of Roma integration at national level²⁶⁷. In 1986 schooling was made compulsory for all Roma children by Ministry of Education Circular 207 of 1986 introducing the concept of “mutual responsibility” in compulsory education. This means that while pupils have a duty to attend school, public educational institutions have a corresponding duty to respect the cultural identity of the pupils. In later years, legislation recognised also the need to protect the right to nomadism as a cultural trait. However, the NFP report suggests that these legislative measures were never properly implemented.

Over the past few years, local authorities have trained Roma/Sinti cultural mediators in various cities to work in schools, and provided Roma pupils with public transportation to schools. A pilot project was carried out in Milan with 11 mediators and was later extended to other cities (Rome, Turin, Mantua).

In **Cyprus**, according to the NFP report, immigration over recent years has resulted in elements of intercultural education being introduced in primary education, and some in-service training for teachers and school principals includes intercultural education. There are no measures targeting explicitly Roma pupils. In 2001, a set of measures was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Culture to address the general issue of cultural diversity of the various ethnic minorities, to assist non-Greek speaking students in learning Greek as a second language and to facilitate their social integration, but the actual impact of these measures on Roma pupils has not been assessed.

Policies of intercultural education focus exclusively on language issues: Roma pupils are categorised as non-native Greek speakers and, since February 2004, were offered lessons in their mother-tongue (i.e. Turkish) in afternoon sessions along with their parents. However, the

²⁶⁵ Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione (23.4.1992) *Pronuncia del CNPI di propria iniziativa sull'educazione interculturale nella scuola*

²⁶⁶ Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione (24.3.1993) *Pronuncia in merito a "razzismo e antisemitismo oggi: ruolo della Scuola"*

²⁶⁷ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (2005) *Second Opinion on Italy adopted on 24 February 2005*, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2005)003, Par. 114

measure has been discontinued due to lack of interest by Roma pupils or parents. There are no provisions or any official reference to the local Roma language, *Kurbetcha*. Since the Cyprus Constitution recognises only a Turkish-Cypriot “communal” identity, Roma identity and culture is subsumed within this category. A positive measure recently implemented in the 18th Primary School in Limassol, attended by a large number of Roma pupils, is the appointment of a Turkish speaking mediator to facilitate communication between teachers and Turkish-speaking pupils and their parents. The Second ECRI Report on Cyprus 2001²⁶⁸ recommended that the Cypriot authorities should ensure that “all teachers are properly trained to teach in a multicultural environment”. However, the training provided is still minimal and there have been complaints by teachers that they receive little support in their efforts to teach ethnically mixed classes. In 2003 the three-year programme ‘Zone of Educational Priority’ developed on a teacher initiative was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Culture aiming to support underprivileged students.

In **Latvia**, there are no specific national strategies or policies targeting the Roma population in education apart from general references in the National Action Plan for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (2004 - 2006). A recent project by the “Education Initiative Centre” for Roma pupils reportedly resulted in the integration of around 100 Roma children in educational establishments with the support of Roma teacher assistants and trained teachers.

In **Lithuania**, the 2003 - 2010 national strategy for education suggests that additional attention should be paid to the educational needs of minorities without specifying Roma. The Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000 - 2004²⁶⁹ acknowledging the low enrolment and attendance and the high dropout rates among Roma pupils established in 2002 a Roma Community Centre and supported in particular educational activities and the establishment of social worker services that has improved school attendance and performance. The Education Ministry was tasked with the development of appropriate teaching material, curricula and teacher training. In 2003, the first Romani language textbook²⁷⁰ was published.

268 ECRI (2001) *Second Report on Cyprus*, Council of Europe, 3 July 2001 CRI (2001) 35

²⁶⁹ Lithuania / No.759, (01.07.2000)

²⁷⁰ Bagdonavičienė, T., Prosnjakova, H. (2003) *Romane Bukvi. Romu Abėcėlė*, Vilnius: Kronta.

The publication was prepared with the financial support of the Education Ministry and Foundation for Educational Change.

In **Hungary**, a series of policies and measures have been taken in recent years to improve Roma access to education. The Bureau of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged and Roma Children was set up in 2002 under the Ministry of Education, which took a variety of measures in support of Roma in education. According to the NFP report, during 2003, 8,776 Roma pupils participated in preparatory programmes for integration nationwide. An additional 24,117 Roma pupils in primary and vocational schools took part in ability development programmes supplanting remedial courses of the previous period. In the same year the Ministry of Education provided material pertaining to the culture, past and present of the Roma population for the school subjects history and Hungarian language and literature.²⁷¹

The 2003 amendment of the Act on Public Education introduced new legislative measures²⁷² aiming at improving attainment and preventing drop-out and prohibiting segregation (as a form of direct discrimination). Other measures aim at avoiding grade repetition in early school years, facilitating oral assessment, extending pre-school education, modernising vocational schools, reducing the number of “private pupils”²⁷³, etc. However, as the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe²⁷⁴ highlighted, affirmative action measures have met with resistance at local level and governmental control on local authorities in this field is not efficient enough to discourage such practices.

After a number of significant PHARE programmes during the pre-accession stage, new programmes have been launched within the framework of the National Development Programme empowering minority organisations to organise special programmes for Roma education, like the Ministry of Education initiative “From the last form” aiming to re-assess pupils’ academic ability and to provide support in order to re-introduce them to normal classes. About 10 per cent of 2,000

²⁷¹ Hungary /Decree 14/2003 of Ministry of Education

²⁷² Report of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Hungary to the 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the EU Work Programme on Education and Training (2005) available at <http://www.om.hu/download.php?ctag=download&docID=407> p. 7 (25-11-2005)

²⁷³ Pupils can be classified as “private pupils” mainly for medical reasons and are not obliged to attend classes, although they participate in examinations. According to the NFP report Roma are often advised to designate their children as “private pupils”, thus excluding them in practice from education. See also ERRC (2004) *Stigmata, segregated schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest, pp. 80-84

²⁷⁴ Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Resolution ResCMN(2005)10 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Hungary

re-assessed pupils were returned to normal classes. As of 2005, an additional 20 per cent of the total number of students enrolling on a higher education course will be reserved for 'underprivileged students'²⁷⁵ scoring at least 80 per cent of the pass grade in the entrance examinations.

In the **Netherlands**, intercultural education was introduced into elementary education in 1984. Considering the extensive scope of the Equal Treatment Act (*Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling*), there is no supplementary legislation for education, but there are various policy frameworks within the educational system that address certain target groups. The Dutch policy on educational disadvantage aims at offering every student an equal range of classes without specially adapted teaching programmes for certain student groups.

At the end of 2001, the policy framework was laid down for the Municipal Policy for Educational Disadvantage (*Gemeentelijk Onderwijsachterstandenbeleid*, or GOA policy) for the period 2002 - 2006. The GOA policy was launched in 1998 and has been extended once since then. It defines five points of activities that mainly focus on reaching target group children for pre-school and supplementary education, supporting the scholastic career, tackling the problem of school dropouts, mastering the Dutch language and working with the policy on educational opportunities.²⁷⁶ Children of Roma and Sinti, caravan dwellers and ex-caravan dwellers are given a weight of 1.7 in the Municipal Education Disadvantage Policy. The higher the weight, the more money becomes available for the school which the child is attending. By way of comparison, a child with native parents who have had little schooling has a weight of 1.25, and a child with ethnic minority parents who have had little schooling has a weight of 1.9.

In **Austria**, the principle of intercultural education applies to the entire curriculum aiming at improving mutual understanding between all pupils (*Unterrichtsprinzip Interkulturelles Lernen*)²⁷⁷. In 1993, the

²⁷⁵ Those who received state welfare benefits during secondary education or whose parents or guardians left school before or immediately after completing the eighth grade.

²⁷⁶ Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2001, 445. (2001) Decision of 18 September 2001, permanent declaration of the municipal policy on disadvantaged people (*Besluit Landelijk beleidskader gemeentelijk onderwijsachterstandenbeleid 2002-2006* [Decree on National policy framework concerning policy on educational disadvantage 2002-2006]). Volume 2001.

²⁷⁷ Austria / Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (2003) *Gesetzliche Grundlagen schulischer Maßnahmen für SchülerInnen mit einer anderen Erstsprache als*

“Romani Project”²⁷⁸ a co-operative effort of the Roma community and the Linguistics Department of Graz University developed writing conventions and teaching material for Roman (the Burgenland variety of the Roma language). An amendment of the Burgenland Minority School Act laid the legal basis for the language to be taught in schools in the federal state of Burgenland²⁷⁹. Since 1999, Roman is offered as a voluntary subject for groups of at least five pupils. Classes are held jointly by a non-Roma school teacher and a language competent Romni²⁸⁰. In the school year 2004/2005, classes were held in two primary schools and one main general secondary school. In some Vienna schools with a high concentration of immigrant Roma pupils, Roma teaching assistants were assigned to support teachers, pupils, and parents and facilitate interaction between Roma and non-Roma since 2000²⁸¹. Roma teaching assistants work in the schools, but also meet parents at home. Since 2001, the Vienna Board of Education employs such a Roma teaching assistant as language teacher for Romani, Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, and Macedonian.

In **Poland**, intercultural education is still seldom addressed as an issue²⁸² and remains, as a concept and practice, confined to the provision of appropriate education to the country’s national minorities²⁸³. The ‘Programme for the Roma community in Poland’ is based on the experience of the programme for the Roma community in the Małopolskie Voivodship during 2001 - 2003, which reportedly increased enrolment in primary education, but did not address the issue of separate “Romani classes” or wider issues of racial discrimination. The new programme prioritises increasing Roma graduation rate, enhancing attendance and learning achievements, facilitating continuation of learning in schools above the elementary level and in universities for Roma youth.

Its long-term goal is the gradual elimination of segregated Roma classes by introducing Roma pupils in normal classes. In order to achieve

Deutsch, Gesetze und Verordnungen, Informationsblätter des Referats für interkulturelles Lernen Nr. 1/2003

²⁷⁸ See: http://romani.uni-graz.at/romani/index_en.shtml (12-10-2005)

²⁷⁹ Austria / BGBl I Nr. 136/1998, (18.08.1998)

²⁸⁰ More information available at <http://www.roma-service.at/unterricht/sprachunterricht.html> (12-10-2005)

²⁸¹ More information available at http://www.romano-centro.org/projekte_en.html (12-10-2005)

²⁸² Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs (2004) *Education to Tolerance: Poland* conference paper available at <http://folk.uio.no/leirvik/OsloCoalition/Poland0904.htm>

²⁸³ Ministry of National Education and Sport (2005), *Measures by the Ministry of National Education and Sport for the integration of migrants*, 13th Economic Forum, Prague, 23 – 27 May 2005, available at <http://www.osce.org/item/14561.html> (12-09-2005)

this objective the programme introduces innovative elements, such as: art education for Roma pupils and support for talented Roma youth, a scholarship system for Roma students in tertiary education, development of textbooks and teaching curricula for the Romani language and development of Roma history and culture textbooks. The poorest non-Roma members of local communities will also be included in the programme. Based on experiences gained during the pilot phase, particular attention will be given to reinforcing Roma education at the pre-school level. The programme was officially launched on April 8, 2004 (World Roma Day) and is implemented in the 16 voivodships of Poland. The programme employs Roma assistants as an intermediary between school and pupils' families, facilitating relations between the school and Roma pupils, as well as stimulating and monitoring educational progress. In addition, so-called support teachers are also working with Roma pupils²⁸⁴.

In **Portugal**, the Ministry of Education created the Secretariat for the Coordination of Intercultural Education (*Entreculturas*)²⁸⁵, in order to address the cultural diversity in Portuguese schools. The Secretariat monitors the situation of cultural minorities in education including the *ciganos*. However, the development of ethnic monitoring was criticised by NGOs, such as SOS Racismo and Roma associations. There are few government initiatives specifically for *cigano* communities in education, but a host of legislative measures on education target disadvantaged social groups including the *ciganos*. Between 1993 and 1997 the Coordinating Secretariat for Multicultural Education Programmes (SCPEM) implemented the Intercultural Education Project in 52 selected Lisbon schools introducing intercultural education modules into the curriculum and developing intercultural educational material including publications on *cigano* culture²⁸⁶.

In 1996, the Priority Educational Areas were developed in order to combat school failure in “areas with a significant number of students

²⁸⁴ Poland (2003) *Joint Inclusion Memorandum*, Brussels SEC(2003), p.28 available at <http://www.mps.gov.pl/integracja/pliki/JIM%20eng.pdf> (12-10-2005)

²⁸⁵ The *Secretariado Entreculturas* is an inter-ministerial organism created in February 1st, 2001, by the Portuguese Cabinet Presidency - and by the Portuguese [*Ministério da Educação*] Ministry of Education. The *Entreculturas* secretariat was recently integrated in the structure of the *Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Minorias Étnicas* [High Commissariat for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities]

²⁸⁶ Donald Kenrick (1998) *Ciganos: da Índia ao Mediterrâneo, a migração dos Ciganos*; Donald Kenrick e Grattan Puxon(1998) *Os Ciganos sob o domínio da suástica*; Antonio Gómez Alfaro, Elisa Lopes da Costa e Sharon Sillers Floate (1999) *Ciganos e Degredos – Os casos de Espanha, Portugal e Inglaterra, sécs XVI – XIX*; Jean-Pierre Liégeois (2001) *Minoria e esolarização: o rumo cigano*; Maria Helena Torres (coord.) (2001) *Que sorte, ciganos na nossa escola!*

belonging to different ethnic groups, immigrants' children or children of 'itinerant' populations". In 1996 in the context of the Social Integration Income, geared towards fighting poverty and social exclusion, a financial supplement was provided to deprived families upon the condition that their children attend school regularly. One of the initiatives developed specifically for the *ciganos* is cultural mediation in schools, even though it later widened its scope encompassing other communities as well. The initiative is aimed towards establishing cultural mediators in order to improve trust in the school system and training teachers to understand the *cigano* culture. In 2001, the introduction of socio-cultural mediators was established by Law n. 105/2001, and according to a survey by ACIME (High Commissariat on Immigration and Ethnic Minorities) more than a hundred schools filed requests for mediators. The impact of the initiative is considerable, but there are problems regarding the mediators' career prospects, difficulties in placement procedures and a precarious work situation, as well as the lack of recognition for their contribution.

In **Slovenia**, there is no intercultural strategy per se according to the NFP report, but a variety of policies and measures in support of Roma pupils were developed in the 1990s. The first comprehensive study on Roma education was published in 1987. In 1993 the "Instructions for the adaptation of the Elementary School Programme for Romani Pupils"²⁸⁷ defined the contextual, organisational and normative conditions for the inclusion of Roma in the education system acknowledging the right of Roma to their mother tongue, cultural identity and the development of their potential accordingly²⁸⁸. However, it also referred to the "different psycho-physical needs of Roma pupils" that should be treated as "children with special needs".

In 1995 the "Programme of Measures for the Assistance to Roma"²⁸⁹ was the first attempt to address the social situation of Roma in general, including education. In 1996 legislation established on the basis of the 1995 White Paper on Education²⁹⁰ dealt with minority education, but not comprehensively. Roma education was later regulated through the "Organisation and Financing of Education Act"²⁹¹ and the

²⁸⁷ Slovenia, Ministry of Education and Sport (1993), *Navodila za prilagajanje programa OŠ za romske učence*

²⁸⁸ Referring to music, art, sports and housekeeping lessons.

²⁸⁹ Government of the Republic of Slovenia (1995), *Program ukrepov za pomoč Romom v Republiki Sloveniji*

²⁹⁰ Krek, J. (ed.) (1995) *Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji*, Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport (English version: Krek, J. (ed.) (1996) *White paper on education in the Republic of Slovenia*, Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport)

²⁹¹ Slovenia / SOP: 2003-01-5027, (24.11.2003)

“Kindergarten Act”²⁹² regarding programmes of supplementary education for Roma pupils including textbooks and teaching aids and special norms and standards.

In 2000, the “Instructions for the Adaptation of the Elementary School Programme for Romani Pupils” for the nine-year elementary school²⁹³, and in 2002 the “Supplement to the Curriculum for Kindergartens for work with Romani children”²⁹⁴ revised the legal framework in line with the educational reform. In an effort to attract Roma to the teaching profession the Education Ministry provided scholarships to Roma students for pedagogical studies, although by 2004 only one such scholarship had reportedly been awarded²⁹⁵. A special study group for teachers who work with Roma pupils was also established at the National Education Institute, and workbooks on language and mathematics were developed for Roma pupils. Measures were also taken to improve attendance rates, such as summons or reports to competent authorities on the failure of Roma parents to comply with the obligation for compulsory education. In 2004, in an effort to improve school participation rates, the government introduced a measure²⁹⁶ linking social assistance to regular school attendance, which has had reportedly good results.

Since December 2002, the Ministry of Education tasked a special working group, headed since May 2005 by the Chairman of the Union of Roma, with developing a strategy for improving Roma access to education. The strategy²⁹⁷, published in 2004, sharply criticised previous measures “as guidelines on the assimilation of Roma into the predominant school culture”²⁹⁸. The strategy introduces intercultural elements in schools operating in the “ethnically mixed areas” and focuses on the provision of pre-school education. Other provisions include optional Romani language classes, as well as Roma culture and history lessons and teacher training. The strategy aims at abolishing all forms of segregation and developing forms of additional school support that do not segregate Roma pupils. It also acknowledges the need for systematic

²⁹² Slovenia / SOP: 1996-01-0569, (29.02.1996)

²⁹³ Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (2000) *Navodila za prilaganje programa OŠ za učence Rome, za 9-letno osnovno šolo*

²⁹⁴ Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (2002) *Dodatek h kurikulu za vrtce za delo z otroki Romov*

²⁹⁵ Office for Nationalities (2004) *Poročilo o položaju Romov v Republiki Sloveniji (2004)*, p. 27

²⁹⁶ Slovenia / SOP: 2004-01-1571

²⁹⁷ Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (2004) *Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v republiki Sloveniji*

²⁹⁸ Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (2004) *Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v republiki Sloveniji*, pp.15-16

monitoring and a national action plan is expected to be developed on this basis in the future.

In **Slovakia**, according to the NFP report intercultural education was vaguely envisaged in the policy document prepared in 1999 ‘Millennium – the National Programme of Education and Training for the Next 15-20 Years’ outlining general educational issues. The policy on Roma education was more clearly reflected in the 2001 ‘Concept for Schooling of Roma Children and Students’, but critics pointed out that it lacked any quantification of outputs and expected results to enable evaluation²⁹⁹. In 2003, the “Basic Principles of the Slovak Government’s Policy to Integrate Romany Communities”³⁰⁰ addressed the need to develop Romani based education on a long term basis. Proposals were made regarding funding and capacity building for Roma assistant teachers operating in pre-school and primary education and regarding scholarships for Roma pupils³⁰¹. In 2004, the “Strategy of Integrated Education of Romany Children and Youth, Including Development of Secondary and University Education”³⁰² published by the Ministry of Education identified two key objectives, to ensure that education fulfils adequately pupils’ needs and to influence positively societal attitudes towards minorities³⁰³. The strategy, closely linked to the objectives of the “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015”, also defined some concrete measures, such as new diagnostic tests for assessing children’s mental capacity, but critics³⁰⁴ pointed out that it will be difficult to assess adequately the fulfilment of its objectives. In an effort to improve school

²⁹⁹ Andrej Salner (ed) (2005) *Roma Children in the Slovak education system*, Slovak Governance Institute, available at

<http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Documents/SGIRomaChildrenintheSlovakRepublic.pdf> p. 12 (12-10-2005)

³⁰⁰ Úrad vlády SR (2003) *Základné tézy koncepcie politiky vlády SR v integrácii rómskych komúnit*; available at: http://www.vlada.gov.sk/orgovanova/dokumenty/4zakladne_tezy.rtf (25.11.2004)

³⁰¹ Úrad vlády SR (2004) *Vyhodnotenie Základných téz koncepcie politiky vlády v integrácii rómskych komúnit za rok 2003 a Priority vlády SR v integrácii rómskych komúnit na rok 2004*, available at:

[http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/EB53B6A8FC8B67DCC1256E890041057A/\\$FILE/Zdroj.html](http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/EB53B6A8FC8B67DCC1256E890041057A/$FILE/Zdroj.html) (25.11.2004)

³⁰² Ministerstvo školstva (2004) *Koncepcia integrovaného vzdelávania rómskych detí a mládeže, vrátane rozvoja stredoškolského a vysokoškolského vzdelávania*, Bratislava

³⁰³ Ministerstvo školstva (2004) *Koncepcia integrovaného vzdelávania rómskych detí a mládeže, vrátane rozvoja stredoškolského a vysokoškolského vzdelávania*, p. 4

³⁰⁴ Andrej Salner (ed) (2005) *Roma Children in the Slovak education system*, Slovak Governance Institute, available at

<http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Documents/SGIRomaChildrenintheSlovakRepublic.pdf> p. 13 (12-10-2005)

attendance rates a punitive measure was introduced in 2003 linking the allocation of child allowances to school attendance.³⁰⁵

Since 2004/2005, an affirmative action, “merit scholarships”, was introduced rewarding good school performance and attendance rates for primary school pupils whose parents are eligible for social assistance benefits³⁰⁶. Schools may also receive state subsidies for boarding and other costs related to pupils living in material poverty³⁰⁷. Early assessment of these measures indicates that they are effective. The employment of Roma teaching assistants on a national scale since 2002 has reportedly³⁰⁸ shown encouraging results.

According to the government³⁰⁹, study plans and curricula have been prepared for schools teaching the Roma language. A primary school and secondary School of Art with Roma language as a teaching language have been established in Košice, and in Nitra the Department of the Roma Culture at the Faculty of Education has been established.

The so called ‘Zero grade classes’ introduced as a pilot project and reformed in 2002³¹⁰ in districts with a significant Roma population aimed at improving school entry standards. These classes are according to the Ministry of Education “[...] a form of alternative education of children from socially and educationally non-stimulating environment, for children with insufficient or no command of the language of instruction and children less adaptable to school, in the framework of which the pupils should master the knowledge of the first class of a primary school and obtain skills for successful promotion to higher levels.”³¹¹

³⁰⁵ Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (2002) *Metodický návod Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR a Ministerstva školstva SR pre krajské úrady, okresné úrady, školy a obce na zabezpečenie aplikácie ustanovenia § 18 ods. 2 zákona č. 281/2002 Zb. o prídavku na dieťa a o príspevku k prídavku na dieťa v znení zákona č. 658/2002 Zb.*

³⁰⁶ Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR (2004) *Výnos zo 7. septembra 2004 č. 3950/2004-II/1, ktorým sa dopĺňa výnos Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR z 25. februára 2004 č. 37/2004 – II/1 o poskytovaní dotácií v pôsobnosti Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR, § 4c*

³⁰⁷ Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR (2004) *Výnos zo 7. septembra 2004 č. 3950/2004-II/1, ktorým sa dopĺňa výnos Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR z 25. februára 2004 č. 37/2004 – II/1 o poskytovaní dotácií v pôsobnosti Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR, § 4b*

³⁰⁸ Rigová, S. et al. (2003) *The Roma in the Education System and Alternative Education Projects*, in: Vašečka, M. (ed) *Čačipen pal o Roma: A Global Report on Roma in Slovakia*, Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, pp. 415-443

³⁰⁹ Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (2005) *Educational system in Slovak Republic*, available at http://www.uips.sk/download/rs/Educational_system_in_Slovak_Republic.pdf p.28 (12-10-2005)

³¹⁰ Ministry of Education (2002) *Methodological Instruction* No. 600/2002-43

³¹¹ Ministry of Education (2005) *Report on Education Policy in Slovakia: National report on fulfilment of goals of European Commission work programme “Education and Training 2010”*,

In **Finland**, intercultural education is mainstreamed, and ethnic and multicultural issues are part of the curriculum and teaching material at all levels of education. The Ministry of Education monitors educational material to ensure that the history and special characteristics of Finland's indigenous and immigrant ethnic minorities are incorporated. The 2004 - 2005 policy directive of the National Board of Education³¹² emphasises respect for and realisation of the rights of minorities to receive education in their native language as well as to learn about their own culture. In addition, it provides for remedial teaching to be given to those pupils whose educational performance is below the average standards. Finally, the policy calls for the provision of support personnel, as well as training and material for teachers, in order to realise these aims.

In 1994, the National Board of Education established the 'Education Unit for the Roma Population' assigning Roma representatives on its management board in order to develop and implement nation-wide training and education for Roma and to promote Roma language and culture. Roma are entitled to learn Romani at the basic, secondary, vocational and adult education levels. Local authorities, however, are under no obligation to provide teaching in Romani as it does not have the status of primary mother tongue and in practice, most Roma speak Finnish as first language even though they may also use Romani. Accordingly, Romani was taught only as a second language in 20 schools for 73 Roma (8.5. per cent of Roma pupils) in 2001 - 2002³¹³, but teaching Roma language and culture has been extended to vocational schools since 2003. In 1997 the Act on Vocational Qualifications approved the 'Further Qualification and Specialist Qualification of Culture Instructor for Roma' in an effort to provide local authorities with certified language teachers.

The Advisory Board for Roma Affairs has also educated day care providers about the Roma children and culture as part of the VASU-Project (*Early Childhood Education and Care*) coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.³¹⁴ The VASU-Project served as a basis for municipal curricula and for the curricula implemented in the day-care centres and in family day care. The National Guidelines on

Bratislava, p.7 available at

http://www.minedu.sk/EI/LSAV/ND/200504_National_report_Slovakia_En.pdf (8-2-2006)

³¹² National Board of Education (2004) *Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004*

³¹³ National Board of Education (2004) *Romanilasten perusopetuksen tila. Selvitys lukuvuodelta 2001-2002*, p. 23

³¹⁴ Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2003) *Suomen viides määräraikaisraportti kaikkinaisten naisten syrjinnän poistamista koskevan kansainvälisen yleissopimuksen täytäntöönpanosta*, available at http://formin.finland.fi/doc/fin/ihmisoik/raportointi/raportit/naiset_5_fin.pdf (18.4.2004)

Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland were published in September 2003. It contains a separate section on the Roma children and their needs – composed with help of the Advisory Board for Roma Affairs³¹⁵.

In **Sweden**, there are no specific strategies targeting Roma education, which is covered under minority education. In 1999, the government adopted a new minority policy that defined education as an area of major concern and promoted equal opportunities for national minorities to establish and run their own educational institutions. The new policy led to curricular reforms providing all pupils with education on the culture and history of national minorities³¹⁶, as well as developing skills in the mother tongue, which is seen as crucial in the development of identity. The lack of Romani teachers, however, may prove to be a problem. In Stockholm, for example, apart from the education in the single special Roma class, there was only one Romani teacher (not a qualified teacher). The National Agency for Education supported the development of education for Roma pupils in close collaboration with Roma representatives. Its work consists of initiatives supporting the development of Romani dialects represented in Sweden, educational materials in different Romani dialects and training for Roma working in education. Since there is a great shortage of Roma qualified to work in education, the Agency tries in the meantime to provide immediate assistance to pre-school and school teachers and to authors of educational textbooks; in the long run, it develops a plan to increase the number of qualified Roma teachers.

In the **United Kingdom**, an enforceable, statutory general duty to promote race equality has applied since 2002 to public authorities in England, Wales and Scotland requiring from them to take steps to tackle unlawful racial discrimination, and promote equal opportunities and good race relations. The duty applies to schools and will help authorities to tackle inequalities in education, build public confidence in public services, and improve relations between local communities³¹⁷. The education systems of Scotland, England and Wales, and Northern Ireland differ in their approach to “Gypsy and Traveller education”.

³¹⁵ More information available at <http://www.stakes.fi/varttua/english/curriculum.htm> (18.10.2004)

³¹⁶ Sweden, Ministry of Justice (2003) Fact sheet Ju 03.10, June 2003

³¹⁷ Commission for Racial Equality (2004) *Gypsies and Travellers: A strategy for the CRE, 2004 – 2007*, p.15 available at http://www.cre.gov.uk/gt_strategy_final.doc (10-02-2006)

In England and Wales, Local Education Authorities (LEA), supported by central government, began setting up Traveller Education Services (TES) already in the 1970s. TES have a direct input into the teaching of *Gypsy* and Traveller students, but they also allocate school places and they give advance notice to each other of likely *Gypsy* and Traveller arrivals. They may also supervise the use of distance learning materials and provide general back-up support. TES provide a continuity of education by liaising with other TES in areas where the children have been previously. As of 2004, TES are placed within the School Improvement Team of Local Education Authorities and funded centrally through the Vulnerable Children's Grant (VCG) introduced in April 2003 to ensure that school aged *Gypsy* and Traveller children receive their full entitlement to education³¹⁸. This gives the opportunity to LEAs to allocate funding more efficiently providing support across different groups of vulnerable children.

The policy emphasis in England and Wales from separate provision to *Gypsies* and Travellers to supporting their access to mainstream education shifted in 1996 with Section 488 of the Education Act (1996). In April 2000, funding provided through Section 488 was merged with funding for the "Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant" (EMAG) forming the "Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant" (EMTAG), falling within the Education Ministry's Standards Fund. In 1999/2000 the grant supported a total expenditure of £13.7 million for England and Wales³¹⁹. EMTAG was targeted specifically at raising the achievement of ethnic minority and *Gypsy*/Traveller pupils, but, following strong criticism regarding the loss of focus on Travellers, EMTAG was separated back into two separate grants creating a new "Traveller Achievement Grant" (TAG) in April 2001. The collection and analysis of data of ethnic minority pupil performance was recognised as a key management tool by an increasing number of schools and by 1999 the OFSTED Report noted that all primary schools surveyed with *Gypsy*/Traveller pupils had supplied their LEA with National Curriculum attainment information³²⁰.

A recent government initiative in the area of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and multimedia resources for pupils

³¹⁸ The Vulnerable Children Grant is used to: secure improved access to education; provide high-quality education for those unable to attend school or whose circumstances make it difficult for them to do so; to support attendance, integration and reintegration into school and to provide additional educational support to enable vulnerable children to achieve their full potential. Clearly *Gypsy* and Traveller children fall into many of these concerns.

³¹⁹ After 2001 in Wales the National Assembly became responsible for future policy developments.

³²⁰ OFSTED (1999) *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils*, London: OFSTED, p. 14

is also worth noting for its impact on *Gypsy* and Traveller education. Furthermore, the 'Sure Start' programmes introduced initially in England, Wales and Scotland and then later Northern Ireland, aim at improving the health and education status of 0 - 3 year olds by activities targeted at children and families. Sure Start has implications for *Gypsy* and Traveller education in that it does not exclude them *per se*, indeed there are a few local programmes in all three countries that have at least *Gypsy* and Traveller elements to them. In September 2001, the government introduced a £420m youth support service called 'Connexions'. This service was first outlined in the *Learning to Succeed* White Paper in 1999. The aim of this service is to offer 'the best start in life for every young person' and to 'offer a range of guidance and support for 13 - 19 year olds, to help make the transition to adult life a smooth one' and during 2003/2004 pilots were held in thirteen locations in twelve different parts of England.

In October 2003 'Aiming High', an Education Ministry strategy to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils, offers another opportunity to make sure that concerns about educational attainment among *Gypsy* and Traveller pupils form a distinct strand within the strategy, and are not pursued simply as questions of educational mobility. In this context the Ministry of Education published a specific guide for schools³²¹.

In Scotland, there is no special grant for *Gypsy* and Traveller education as in England and Wales and funding is allocated within the overall framework of funding for local authorities. The 2001 'Inquiry into *Gypsy* Travellers and Public Sector Policies' demonstrated the need for positive change at local authority and individual school level and the Scottish Executive introduced in 2003 guidance³²² for all education authorities and schools.

³²¹ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils - A Guide to Good Practice July 2003*, available at http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/links_and_publications/763027/Gypsy_Traveller_Guide.doc (10-11-2005)

³²² Scottish Executive - Scottish Traveller Education Programme (2003), *Inclusive Educational Approaches for Gypsies and Travellers within the context of interrupted learning: Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools, Learning and Teaching Scotland*

Key findings

- Despite educational reforms and the development of new strategies and policies addressing Roma and Traveller education, segregation remains a fundamental problem requiring strong political leadership and more efforts for integration at the local level.
- Policies and measures aimed at improving Roma and Traveller education are still often pursued through actions within a segregated school environment. Desegregation and integration are rarely the overarching goal of policies and measures aiming to improve Roma and Traveller education.
- Few Member States have integrated effectively intercultural education into the national education programmes and curricula, although there are many specific projects targeting Roma and Travellers.
- Most Member States have no specific educational policies or measures targeting Roma and Travellers, but address their needs in a wider anti-discrimination and/or intercultural education policy framework.
- Member States with specific policies and measures targeting the Roma and Traveller groups provide little, if any, information regarding their monitoring, evaluation and measurable impact.
- Roma and Travellers are rarely directly involved in designing and planning policies, measures, or major initiatives and projects, although they may be involved in implementation.
- Although Romani language courses are provided in some countries, education in Romani language is not and the likely consequences of this fact on integration and employment opportunities remain a contested issue. Mother tongue lessons are provided usually in the form of optional courses rather than being mainstreamed into the curriculum, even in areas with a high concentration of Roma.
- Elements of Roma culture and history are integrated into the curriculum in some countries, but the focus seems to be more on providing this instruction to Roma pupils only, thus reducing its potential positive impact on all pupils.
- A variety of innovative projects are implemented in several Member States with the support of EU education programmes, such as Comenius or Leonardo. The PHARE programme was extensively used during the accession phase of the ten “new” Member States, but

there is little information regarding the impact and sustainability of many of these projects.

- Member States with a sizeable Roma and Traveller minority have taken steps to reform their educational provisions, as well as their overall strategy towards the Roma and Travellers. However, there is evidence of slow and difficult progress mainly due to local government and parental resistance requiring more awareness raising and consensus building efforts.

5. Roma and Travellers in education: a challenge for social inclusion and anti-discrimination policies

Entire groups of Romani children, today, are sitting in separated classes meant for mentally disabled children; entire communities of Roma are confined to ghettos where they are living in substandard conditions ... The question is not simply that any individual Roma applying for a job, or seeking to have his or her child attend a school, is denied employment or the possibility to register; it is that a whole community should be integrated when it has for so many years been subjected to systematic exclusion and segregation.

De Schutter, O. and Verstichel, A. (2005) *The Role of the Union in Integrating the Roma: Present and Possible Future*, EURAC Research, p.37

Reports from a variety of sources, and over a period of many years, have highlighted the deprivation and discrimination experienced by Roma and Travellers, who, as a diverse community, have been and continue to be subject to systematic exclusion and segregation in all areas of social life including education.

The European Parliament, the Commission and the Council have repeatedly highlighted in recent years the need for urgent measures combating racial discrimination against Roma and Travellers and improving their conditions of life at national and local level. The school is an important arena for developing policies and practices promoting social cohesion. If pupils from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds develop with the support of trained and sensitised teachers mutual understanding and respect for each other, they can convey this key message also to their parents. Such an approach calls for concrete policy measures at European, national and local level addressing effectively the deeply rooted negative stereotypes and promoting actively respect for and appreciation of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity of Roma and Travellers. The impact of such policies will increase with the active participation of Roma and Traveller representatives and the engagement of civil society organisations that have been lobbying for the rights of Roma and Travellers.

5.1 Legal and policy responses in the EU

Evidence of responses regarding the education of Roma and Travellers³²³ can be traced back to March 1984, when the European Parliament³²⁴ urged the Commission to take appropriate action “in cooperation with the Member States and in consultation with the organisations representing the parents in education, regardless of the Community country they happen to be in, so that they may meet compulsory education requirements”. In a second resolution in May 1984³²⁵ “On the situation of Gypsies in the Community” the European Parliament recommended that the governments of the Member States coordinate their approach and called on the Commission to draw up programmes to be subsidised from Community funds aimed at improving the situation of Roma and Travellers without destroying their separate identity.

In 1986 the Commission presented a report on “School Provisions for Gypsy and Traveller Children; A Synthesis Report”³²⁶, which notes that only about 30 – 40 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller children attend school with a degree of regularity, while half of them never attend school at all and only a very small percentage gets as far as, or enters into, secondary level. The report also noted that adult illiteracy is generally above 50 per cent, and in some places is as high as 80 per cent or even 100 per cent, concluding that the schooling of Gypsy children has been a failure for all concerned, and that in this situation it is not a “...question of ‘reforming’ school, but of establishing it in the first place.”³²⁷

³²³ For a critical analysis of EU discourses on Roma and Travellers see Simhandl, K. (2004) *Western Gypsies and Travellers – ‘Eastern Roma’: The Creation of Political Objects by the Institutions of the European Union*, Paper presented at the Fifth Pan-European Conference, The Hague, September 9 - 11, 2004 available at <http://www.sgir.org/conference2004/papers/Simhandl%20-%20Gypsies%20Travellers%20Roma-Creation%20of%20political%20objects.pdf> (12-10-2005)

³²⁴ EP Resolution, *Education for children whose parents have on fixed abode*, European Parliament, Working Documents 1-1522/83, PE 87.789/fin., 12 March 1984: Annex II. (OJ No C 104/144 of 16 April 1984)

³²⁵ EP Resolution, *The situation or Gypsies in the Community*, 24th May 1984, (OJ No C 172/153 of 2 July 1984)

³²⁶ School Provisions for Gypsy and Traveller Children: A Synthesis Report. Jean-Piere Liégeois, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, “Documents” series. Luxembourg, 1987

³²⁷ Liégeois, J-P (1998) *School Provisions for Ethnic Minorities: The Gypsy Paradigm*, Hertfordshire, p. 255

In response the Council and the Ministers of Education Meeting within the Council presented a landmark resolution on 22 May 1989³²⁸. Considering that “the present situation is disturbing in general”, this resolution proposed specific measures at **Member State level** aimed at promoting support for educational establishments and teachers, pupils and parents; support for experiments with teaching methods adapted to nomadic life and measures to facilitate transition between schooling and continuing educational training; for consideration of the Roma and Traveller history, culture and language; for adequate training of teachers working with Roma and Traveller pupils, and especially of teachers of Roma and Traveller origin; for increased provision of documentation and information to schools, teachers and parents; for the encouragement of research on Roma and Traveller culture, history and language; for the encouragement of liaison groups bringing together parents, teachers, school administrations and the authorities involved in the schooling of Roma and Traveller children. At **Community level** the Council proposed the encouragement of national initiatives concerning the exchange of experience and the promotion of innovatory pilot schemes, as well as the support of meetings of Roma and Traveller representatives and teachers at Community level.

Reporting on the implementation of the Council recommendations, the European Commission noted that in terms of Community actions, “various measures have enjoyed the active involvement of the various partners and a favourable assessment of their provisions and the way they were carried out, and there is a firm intention to develop activities further. These measures are far from sufficient and the education situation among the gypsy communities remains a difficult problem”²² largely because the social and financial position of many families prevents them from educating their children properly. At the same time, Roma and Traveller language, history and culture are not taken into account sufficiently, and stereotypes and prejudices colour the attitudes of politicians and administrators, teachers, parents of other pupils, the other pupils themselves. This rejection is a major factor in hindering access to schools by Roma and Traveller children.

In 1995 the Commission presented a Communication on racism, xenophobia and antisemitism defining EU priorities in the fight against

³²⁸ Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 22 May 1989 *On school provision for gypsy and traveller children*, Official Journal C 153, 21/06/1989 p. 0003 - 0004

racism. In 1998, after the momentum³²⁹ created by the European Year against Racism in 1997, “mainstreaming” the fight against racism into all Community actions and policies, the Commission adopted an Action Plan against Racism consisting of four main strands:

- Paving the way for legislative initiatives by continuing the non-discriminatory application of Community legislation in order to present legislation combating racial discrimination;
- Mainstreaming the fight against racism by involving sectors such as the employment strategy, the Structural Funds, **education, training and youth**, etc.
- Developing and exchanging new models, by funding projects and initiatives;
- Strengthening information and communication work.

Since then a number of significant legal and policy initiatives that target the needs and rights of minorities, including, both directly and indirectly, those of the Roma and Travellers in education were developed and implemented in the European Union.

On June 1, 2005 the Commission noted in its Communication following the adoption on 28 May 2004 of the Green Paper on *Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged EU*: “One issue of particular concern is the situation of the Roma. The Commission has repeatedly highlighted the difficult conditions faced by Roma communities in Member States, candidate countries and acceding countries. Substantial amounts of financial assistance have been provided from the EU budget, including over €100 million through the PHARE programme for projects specifically targeting Roma. However, the Roma continue to experience particularly severe forms of exclusion and discrimination in **education**, employment, housing, healthcare and other areas.”³³⁰

Internal co-ordination within the European Commission

The Commission enhanced internal coordination on the Romani issues by establishing the Inter-service working group on Roma

³²⁹ The European Year against Racism (1997) led to a broad range of initiatives at all levels, the establishment of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), the development of a European network of anti-racism NGOs (ENAR) and launched a number of major information and communication campaigns.

³³⁰ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all - A framework strategy [SEC(2005) 689] of 1st June 2005, p. 11, available at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/ey07/com07_en.pdf

(hereafter group) in October 2004. The group is coordinated by the Directorate-General (DG) Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities and brings together 14 DGs that deal with relevant policy areas. The group meets on a quarterly basis and besides the discussion on targeting versus mainstreaming policy on Roma, it touches on issues such as coordination and communication about policies and funding interventions of the Commission's services, exchange of good practice from various fields regarding the improvement of the situation of Roma and issues of ethnic data collection.

Similarly, coordination of activities of international organisations on Roma is strengthened by the existence of the Informal Contact Group of international organisations and institutions on Roma. The Group brings together the European Commission and EU bodies, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, European institutions, UN agencies and some international NGOs to discuss regularly appropriate policy responses and improve coordination.

5.1.1 Legal initiatives

The two most important legal developments affecting the Roma and Travellers are Article 13 of the EC Treaty and Directive 2000/43/EC – the Racial Equality Directive.

Article 13, which was included in the EC Treaty following the entry into force of the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, introduced measures to combat discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin – alongside discrimination with respect to someone's sex, religion or belief, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Article 13 introduced a coherent and integrated approach to the fight against discrimination, with the introduction of common legal and policy responses to the problem. But, as pointed out in an article by the coordinator of the EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights, Article 13 does not prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin, nor does it create rights with respect to race and ethnic origin³³¹. Rather, it serves to provide a legal reference point from which to proactively address discrimination.

Directive 2000/43/EC, adopted on the basis of Article 13, focuses on the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of

³³¹ De Schutter, O. and Verstichel, A. (2005) *The Role of the Union in Integrating the Roma: Present and Possible Future*, EURAC Research, pp.7-8

their racial or ethnic origin. The Directive serves to ban direct and indirect discrimination, alongside harassment, on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, and covers the areas of employment, training, **education**, social security, healthcare, housing and access to goods and services. After the transposition of this Directive into national legislation, which has still to be undertaken in some Member States, a strong legal framework will exist to combat discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin.

However, combating discrimination retroactively, as the EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights has pointed out, may not be enough to tackle social exclusion: “Racial discrimination receives the highest protection through the broad scope of application of the Racial Equality Directive and racial and ethnic belonging stands at the peak of the ‘hierarchy of equalities’. However, although the Directive is qualified as a ‘quantum leap’ forward in the protection against racial discrimination, there remains scope for improvement in order to tackle effectively the current exclusion of Roma from mainstream society.”³³² The report proposes two additional dimensions that are necessary for a more comprehensive approach to the social inclusion of Roma and Travellers: A “proactive, ex ante, approach affirmatively ensuring the integration of the Roma” and special measures to ensure that the process of social inclusion does not oblige them to sacrifice any dimension of their ethnic identity. Both dimensions have been addressed in projects implemented in the context of the Community policy initiatives discussed below.

5.1.2 Policy initiatives

The European Union addresses the situation of Roma and Travellers in education through a variety of instruments aimed at improving equality of opportunity and combating discrimination in education.

In December 1999, at the Tampere summit the European Union (COCEN group) adopted the **‘Recommendation on the Situation of Roma in the candidate countries: Guiding Principles for improving the situation of the Roma based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe’s Specialist Group of Roma/Gypsy and on the recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National**

³³² De Schutter, O. and Verstichel, A. (2005) *The Role of the Union in Integrating the Roma: Present and Possible Future*, EURAC Research, p. 25

Minorities'. The Recommendation addressing the Member States stated: "Education [...] should be considered as a priority by States designing policies to improve the situation of the Roma; the disadvantaged position of the Roma in society and, in particular, their often very difficult socio-economic situation, should be borne in mind when designing such policies."³³³

The Commission's **Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination** directly addresses discrimination with respect to race and ethnic origin. The action programme has been given a budget of 98.4 million Euros, for the period 2001 - 2006³³⁴, and is managed by the Commission's Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs. The Community action programme is in recognition that laws need to be complemented by practical initiatives that set out to:

1. Improve the understanding of discrimination (analysis and evaluation);
2. Develop capacity to prevent and address discrimination (capacity building);
3. Promote the dissemination of values and practices underlying the fight against discrimination (awareness-raising).

In 2004, the work programme of the Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination identified eight priority areas, one of which was targeted at Roma and Traveller integration in education and employment.

At a broad practical level the **European Social Fund (ESF)** provides funding for among others the promotion and improvement of adult vocational training, education and counselling in the context of a lifelong learning policy. The ESF has funded Roma related activities, e.g. the National Programme for the Spanish Roma Community (ACCEDER), which supported 3,600 Roma through employment related training programmes. The ESF helps to implement the **EQUAL** Community initiative to combat all forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market. EQUAL's mission is to promote a more inclusive work life through fighting discrimination and exclusion. Within EQUAL innovative approaches to vocational education and training have therefore been offered in several cases to Roma and Travellers. There is little information currently available regarding the actual impact of

³³³ Available at http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/documentation/recommendations/MiscCOCENguideline_en.asp

³³⁴ Council Decision 2000/750/EC, 27 November 2000 establishing a Community Action Programme to combat discrimination OJ L303, 2 December 2000

projects funded by EQUAL. The mid-term evaluation of the EQUAL Community initiative points out in regard to the national monitoring of implementation that "... the reliability of the quantitative monitoring systems highlights the main problem of these systems, namely the fact that they are entirely dependent on data provided by the Development Partnerships and that there are generally no checks."³³⁵

Complementing the above, and under the direction of Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security the **Hague Programme**, which was launched in May 2005, sets out ten key priority areas for action in the area of freedom, security and justice. Under the priority area 'fundamental rights and citizenship', the Commission refers to the desired goal to combat discrimination in all its forms, including effective implementation and enforcement of EU anti-discrimination legislation.

The main Roma-centred practical initiative to date, which is focused on the pre-accession and candidate countries of the EU, is the **PHARE Programme**. In the process of meeting the accession criteria for entry to the EU, many accession and candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe were criticised with respect to the situation of Roma within their territories. The Commission's pre-accession reports on these countries highlighted a number of points of concern. In response, the PHARE Programme established by the Commission devoted 32.2 million Euro of the PHARE Assistance to Roma for initiatives in education between 1999 and 2002³³⁶. These projects were instrumental in stimulating discussion on the situation of the Roma minorities by highlighting the magnitude, severity and complexity of the problems, but showed also a generally weak commitment to systemic change and mainstreaming by governments.³³⁷

Therefore, DG Enlargement recommended in its interim evaluation of the PHARE assistance to Roma minorities that governments "must lead in ensuring that social inclusion policies for Roma are translated into practice. Social inclusion must be underpinned

³³⁵ Bernard Brunhes International in co-operation with Economix and ICAS Institute (2004) *EU-wide evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL 2000–2006, Mid Term Report*, European Commission DG Employment and Social Affairs, p. 41

³³⁶ European Commission DG Enlargement; Directorate E – Evaluation Unit (2004) *Review of the European Union PHARE Assistance to Roma Minorities, Interim Evaluation of the PHARE Support allocated in 1999-2002 and implemented until November 2003*, Brussels (Report ZZ/MIN/03082), available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/phare_evaluation_pdf/revised_minorities_thematic_raw_161204.pdf

³³⁷ European Commission DG Enlargement; Directorate E – Evaluation Unit (2004) *Review of the European Union PHARE Assistance to Roma Minorities, Interim Evaluation of the PHARE Support allocated in 1999-2002 and implemented until November 2003*, Brussels (Report ZZ/MIN/03082), p. III

by serious commitment to bring about systemic change, particularly in the education sector... Achieving social inclusion of Roma will be a long term process of sustainable development that requires significant resource allocations and the input of development professionals to ensure that the policies and interventions are designed and oriented to overcome the many complex and interconnected barriers that exclude Roma from mainstream society.”³³⁸

A significant number of PHARE supported projects were also identified as “good practices” that could act as guides for systemic changes: a common theme of these educational projects was the training of Roma teaching assistants, to provide additional support for Roma children in the classroom. This approach was cited as an example of good practice in both the World Bank (2003) and UNDP (2002) reports.

Implementing the Lisbon Agenda: Education and training

In an effort to strengthen Europe’s employment strategy, the **2000 Lisbon Agenda** addresses the educational and training needs of Europe’s diverse population and within this promotes the need for social inclusion of marginalised social groups – such as the Roma and Travellers. The Council³³⁹ has called for targeted intervention in this area and the Commission’s relevant communication mentions specifically the situation regarding education and vocational training in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia³⁴⁰.

The objectives set by the Lisbon Summit to improve active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion has a special relevance for the access of Roma and Travellers to general and vocational education and training systems, especially since young people constitute a majority in Roma and Traveller communities³⁴¹.

³³⁸ European Commission DG Enlargement; Directorate E – Evaluation Unit (2004), Review of the European Union PHARE Assistance to Roma Minorities. Interim Evaluation of the PHARE Support allocated in 1999-2002 and implemented until November 2003, Brussels (Report ZZ/MIN/03082), see:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/phare_evaluation_pdf/revised_minorities_thematic_raw_161204.pdf, p. VII (12-10-2005)

³³⁹ Council Recommendation of 14 October 2004 on the implementation of Member States’ employment policies (2004/741/EC)

³⁴⁰ Brussels 7/4/2004 - COM (2004) 239 final, 2004/0082 (CNS) Communication from the Commission ‘*Strengthening the implementation of the European Employment Strategy*’, Proposal for a Council Decision on ‘guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, and Recommendation for a Council Decision on ‘the implementation of Member States’ employment policies’.

³⁴¹ Save the Children (2001) *Denied a future*, London, Vol. 2, p18

The ‘Education, Youth and Culture’ Council of 5 May 2003³⁴² taking over the European benchmarks in education and training as set out in the Commission Communication of 20 November 2002, fixed corresponding objectives to be met by 2010, in the context of the Copenhagen declaration, some of which are particularly relevant to improving Roma and Traveller education and skills:

- “Reduce to no more than 10 per cent the average proportion of early school leavers (source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey);
- Ensure that at least 85 per cent of 22 year olds have completed upper secondary education (source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey);
- Decrease by at least 20 per cent compared to the year 2000 the percentage of low-achieving 15 years old in reading literacy (source: PISA, OECD).”

However, as the Commission’s 2004 report on “The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union”³⁴³ noted, the wide ranging and ambitious educational goals outlined in the Lisbon Agenda might inadvertently result in the marginalisation of the most vulnerable groups, such as the Roma and Travellers. In other words, as Member States strive to fulfil these educational goals they may “... fail to register disparate impacts on Roma and other ethnic groups.” What this critique suggests is that targeted intervention with the Roma and Traveller community is essential, if the Lisbon goals in the area of education of marginalised groups are to be achieved. The report also notes that besides the educational needs of Roma and Traveller children, the Commission’s priorities for lifelong learning should also consider the educational and vocational training needs of adult Roma and Travellers. Moreover, the report criticises Member States for what it refers to as their ‘failure’ to identify the Roma and Travellers as a policy group in the field of lifelong learning³⁴⁴.

To date, only seven Member States have agreed to include monitoring of the progress in social inclusion of Roma and Travellers in the National Action Plan (NAP) reports that provide an update on the progress of implementation of the Lisbon Agenda. This could be due to different constitutional traditions of Member States, where there are some difficulties to reach an agreement on monitoring the situation of

³⁴² Council Conclusions of 5 May 2003 on reference levels of European average performance in education and training (Benchmarks) [Official Journal C 134, of 07.06.2003].

³⁴³ DG Employment and Social Affairs (Unit D3), European Commission (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*, p.17 available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/publications/2005/ke6204389_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

³⁴⁴ DG Employment and Social Affairs (Unit D3), European Commission (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*, p.17 available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/publications/2005/ke6204389_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

ethnic minorities. However, for future policy decisions it is essential to monitor progress, particularly regarding the benchmark objectives of the May 2003 Council identified above, on the basis of specific indicators. The 29 indicators developed for monitoring performance and progress of education and training systems in Europe³⁴⁵ could be further elaborated to allow the identification of indirect and institutional discriminatory practices.

Community Action Programmes available to Roma and Travellers

Pursuing the objectives set out by the Lisbon Agenda the Commission developed a series of major instruments addressing education, vocational training and lifelong learning: the Community Action programme Leonardo da Vinci working in co-operation with the Socrates programme, the Youth for Europe programme (mobility and non-formal education programme targeting young people aged between 15 and 25 years), and the European Social Fund. However, as stated in the Commission's report "The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union", these initiatives have been demand driven and therefore not systemic³⁴⁶, therefore their results have only partly fed into the development of national policy. This could be improved by cost-benefit analyses establishing whether full scale implementation would be sustainable under prevailing national and local constraints³⁴⁷.

In 1995 the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) developed the **Socrates Action Programme**³⁴⁸, now in its second phase (2000 - 2006). Socrates stresses the multicultural character of Europe supporting the education of the least advantaged groups of people and addressing phenomena of social exclusion and underachievement at school. The interim evaluation report³⁴⁹ notes that all actors involved have a very positive opinion of the programme and stresses the relevance and usefulness of its actions, but suggests that its visibility and the dissemination of results can be improved.

³⁴⁵ See http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/impact/docs/SEC_2004_0971_1_EN.pdf (12-10-2005)

³⁴⁶ DG Employment and Social Affairs (Unit D3), European Commission (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*, p. 2 available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/publications/2005/ke6204389_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

³⁴⁷ Edwin Rekosh and Maxine Sleeper (2004) *Separate and Unequal: Combating discrimination against Roma in education*, Public Interest Law Initiative, Budapest p. 67

³⁴⁸ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (2002), *Socrates: Gateway to education* available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/socrates/depl_en.pdf (17-11-2005)

³⁴⁹ European Commission (2004) *Interim evaluation report on the results achieved and on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education 'Socrates'*, Brussels, 8.3.2004 COM(2004) 153 final, available at http://www.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/evaluation/intsocrates_en.pdf (17-11-2005)

The **Comenius Action**³⁵⁰ of the Socrates Programme contributes to enhancing the quality and reinforcing the European dimension of school education by, inter alia, developing and disseminating methods for combating educational exclusion and school failure, promoting the integration of pupils with special educational needs, and promoting equal opportunities in all sectors of education. Furthermore, Comenius contributes to fostering intercultural awareness in school education in Europe by transnational activities designed to promote enhanced awareness of different cultures; develop intercultural education initiatives for the school education sector; improve the skills of teachers in the area of intercultural education; support the fight against racism and xenophobia; improve the education of children of migrant workers, occupational travellers, Roma and Travellers by promoting participation, integration and equality of opportunity for these children in all school activities; improve school attendance levels and the quality of education received; as well as meet the children's particular needs. Despite the overall success of the action, the ex-post evaluation³⁵¹ of Comenius 2 concluded that intercultural education did not take enough into account the specific needs of schoolchildren in certain educational establishments in geographical areas commonly referred to as “disadvantaged areas”.

The **Grundtvig Action**³⁵² – adult education – of the Socrates Programme focuses on adult education supporting projects designed to address the educational needs of “hard-to-reach” social groups including Roma and Travellers – in order to improve their employability and enhance their capacity to enter or re-enter formal education. Projects specifically dealing with Roma and Travellers have been financed under the “Learning Partnerships” strand, a framework for small-scale co-operation activities between organisations working in the field of adult learning. Compared to the transnational co-operation projects, which are product-oriented, the learning partnerships focus more on process, and aim to broaden the participation of smaller organisations that want to include European co-operation in their education activities.

The **Leonardo Vocational Training Action Programme**, introduced in by the European Commission in 1994 by and now entering its second phase, 2000 – 2006 seeks to consolidate a European co-operation area for education and training. The programme actively

³⁵⁰ Projects addressing Roma and Travellers can be accessed at <http://www.isoc.siu.no/isocii.nsf>

³⁵¹ European Commission DG EAC (2004) *Ex-post evaluation of the Comenius 2 Action under the Socrates I Programme*, available at http://www.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/comenius/evaluation/soc1com2sum_en.pdf (17-11-2005)

³⁵² See http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/grundtvig/home_en.html (17-11-2005)

supports lifelong training policies by the Member States and focuses on innovative transnational initiatives³⁵³ for promoting the knowledge, aptitudes and skills necessary for successful integration into working life and the full exercise of citizenship. It affords scope for links with other Community initiatives – particularly the Socrates and Youth programmes – by supporting joint actions. Commission evaluation reports³⁵⁴ on the implementation of Leonardo da Vinci concluded that for the pre-accession countries a clear impact at system level was visible and that the programme was invaluable in the promotion of transnational initiatives. However, it also noted that the programme’s design and intervention logic lacked a user-focus³⁵⁵.

The **YOUTH Community Action Programme**³⁵⁶ offers opportunities for mobility and active participation contributing to the achievement of a “Europe of knowledge” and facilitating cooperation in the development of youth policy, based on non-formal education. It encourages lifelong learning and the development of skills and competencies promoting active citizenship. Key objectives are to facilitate the integration of young people into society, to support the fight against racism, to promote a better understanding of the diversity of European culture and its common basic values, to help eliminate discrimination and promote equality. As it is a key priority to give young people from a less-privileged background access to its activities, a strategy for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities into YOUTH was established. In 2005, the priority of the YOUTH programme was cultural diversity, e.g. facilitating dialogue and joint activities of young people from multicultural, multiethnic and multifaith backgrounds, fighting racism and xenophobia, while also promoting the social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. The project has been evaluated positively. Its strongest impact reported concerns the municipal level, since involving municipalities and also local politicians has proved to be fruitful and helps to overcome prejudice and racism at local level.³⁵⁷

³⁵³ Projects for Roma and Travellers at http://leonardo.cec.eu.int/pdb/recherche_en2000.cfm (12-10-2005)

³⁵⁴ European Commission, Final Report on the Implementation of the First Phase of the Community Action Programme Leonardo da Vinci (1995-1999), Brussels, 22.12.2000, COM(2000) 863 final

³⁵⁵ European Commission, *Interim report on the implementation of the second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (2000-2006)*, Brussels, 8.3.2004 COM(2004) 152 final

³⁵⁶ For more information, http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/program/index_en.html (12-10-2005)

³⁵⁷ European Commission, Interim evaluation of the Youth Programme 2000-2006 (covering the period 2000-2003) Brussels, 08.03.2004 COM(2004) 158 final, available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/program/eval/report_interim_evaluation_youth_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

5.2 Perspectives and activities of other institutions

5.2.1 The Council of Europe

Since the 1960s the Council of Europe has played a key role in policy development regarding Roma and Traveller education in member states and has developed specific actions in the field of teacher training since 1983.³⁵⁸ In 1969 the Parliamentary Assembly issued **Recommendation 563 “On the Situation of Gypsies and other Travellers in Europe”** recommending the provision of special classes to facilitate the integration of these children into normal schools. In 1975 the Committee of Ministers passed resolution (75) 13 on “Recommendations on the Social Situation of Nomads in Europe” underlining that, “the schooling of the children of nomads should be promoted by the most suitable methods, working towards integrating them into the normal educational system”³⁵⁹. In 2001 the Committee of Ministers passed **Recommendation (2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe** that acknowledged a link between educational achievement and employment opportunities; and in 2005 the Committee of Ministers acknowledged the link between influence of living conditions on educational achievement in the **Recommendation (2005)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe**.

The Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly issued **Recommendation 1557 (2002) on the legal situation of Roma in Europe** and **Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe** that both touched significantly on the need of addressing discrimination of Roma and Travellers in education. Next to the issue of discrimination, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) called specifically to “vigorously combat all forms of school segregation towards Roma/Gypsy children” in its **General Policy Recommendation No. 3 Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies ECRI (98) 29**.

In September 1995 the CoE Committee of Ministers decided to set up a **Specialist Group on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-**

³⁵⁸ Vuolasranta, Miranda, *Council of Europe Activities on Roma and Travellers and the European Roma and Travellers Forum*, in: EQUAL Voices Issue 16 (June 2005), EUMC available at <http://www.eumc.eu.int>

³⁵⁹ Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (1975) Resolution (75) 13: Containing Recommendations on the Social Situation of Nomads in Europe. Strasbourg, Appendix, point B.1

ROM³⁶⁰) responsible for reviewing all aspects of the situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe on a regular basis. The work of the group led in 2000 to the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of a specific recommendation on the education of Roma and Traveller children in Europe (2000 - 2004)³⁶¹ regarding the development of appropriate curricula and teaching material and the recruitment and training of teachers.

The Recommendation sets out the “guiding principles of an education policy for Roma children” and lists the priorities in terms of structures, curriculum and teaching material, recruitment and training of teachers, information, research and assessment, consultation and co-ordination.

The Recommendation also became a basis for the project “Education of Roma children in Europe” developed by the Division for the European Dimension of Education, Directorate-General IV – Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport. The objective of the project is to stimulate national initiatives, help to design and implement new working methods and encourage innovative actions, while bearing in mind measures required to integrate Roma and Traveller children into the general education system. Since the launching of the project in 2001, the team has been focusing on developing a guidebook for Roma and Traveller school mediators, introduction of the teaching of Roma and Traveller history and culture in curricula, teachers' training, and the harmonisation of teaching materials in Romani language. European workshops for teachers and school mediators on specific themes have been organised. Teaching modules and material on Roma and Traveller history and culture have been prepared.³⁶²

The MG-S-ROM developed also other important recommendations that were eventually adopted by the Committee of Ministers, such as on “**Improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe**” (2001-17), on the “**Movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe**” (2004-14) and on “**Improving Housing Conditions for Roma and Travellers in Europe**” (2005-4). Two additional draft recommendations are being discussed at MG-S-ROM: a draft recommendation on appropriate access of Roma and Travellers to public health care and a draft recommendation

³⁶⁰ MG-S-ROM changed name on 19 April 2006 officialy (approved by the CDMG) to Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers.

³⁶¹ Council of Europe, Recommendation No R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe (Adopted 3 February 2000)

³⁶² For more information see http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Roma-Gypsy_children/ (12-10-2005)

on policies for Roma and Travellers that should include a chapter on monitoring the implementation of national strategies/programmes for Roma and/or Travellers.

In its 2004 report³⁶³ the MG-S-ROM refers extensively to significant initiatives undertaken by the CoE regarding Roma and Travellers, such as the “Project on Roma/Gypsies in Central and Eastern Europe” that started in 1996 and was renamed in 2002 to the “Project for policies toward Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in Europe”. The project is intended to help and provide support to governments in the development and implementation of policies vis-à-vis Roma and Travellers. Bilateral and multilateral activities are carried out under this programme, often in co-operation with other organisations. It also provides financial support for Roma and Traveller representatives to attend international events. In 2004 the Programme was financed by voluntary contributions from Finland of 304,500 Euros. Four main priorities have been set up within this project in 2004: assistance activities to develop and implement national programmes for Roma and Travellers, meetings to set up the European Roma and Travellers Forum, trainings of Roma and Traveller NGOs, Roma and Traveller education and health related activities, as well as coordination with other international institutions and initiatives. The programme has been prolonged for another three-year period under the name “Programme for Roma and Travellers in Europe” with a new contribution of 60,000 Euros from Finland for 2005.

In January 2001, the President of Finland, Ms Tarja Halonen, proposed in her address to the Parliamentary Assembly to create a Roma and Traveller consultative assembly in order to give them a voice at international level. In July 2003 the idea of a non-governmental association with a special link to the Council of Europe was adopted after a joint French and Finnish proposal. After a comprehensive consultation process the **European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)** was registered in Strasbourg as a non-governmental organisation in September 2004. A Partnership Agreement was signed between the ERTF and the Council of Europe on 15 December 2004, which also provides funding. The 22 founding members representing 16 countries must also function as advisers and contact persons for their national election campaign, assisting and advising the national Roma and Travellers organisations on conducting fair elections. In early spring 2005 the Forum set up its offices in Strasbourg and recruited a Chief Executive Officer of Roma origin.

³⁶³ Council of Europe, Directorate General III - Social Cohesion, Migration and Roma Department, Roma and Travellers Division and the Co-ordinator for activities concerning Roma and Travellers (2005) *2004 Report on activities relating to Roma and Travellers*

In February 2006 the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights published his final report on the human rights situation of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Europe³⁶⁴ noting in regard to education that, “in certain countries, school non-attendance and school dropouts continue to be unacceptably high among Roma children and have even increased during the past ten years. While poverty and, in certain communities, traditions create additional impediments to access to education, discriminatory practices and prejudices are a profound cause of inequality in access to education.”

5.2.2 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The OSCE addresses Roma and Sinti issues and coordinates relevant activities through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) aiming to strengthen national and international efforts to promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

In July 1991 the CSCE/OSCE meeting of state representatives in Geneva adopted the report of the Meeting of Experts on National Minorities³⁶⁵ that referred to Roma in the context of racial and ethnic hatred and discrimination stating that effective measures will be taken effective to promote tolerance, understanding and equality of opportunity.

In 1994 the OSCE set up a **Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues** as part of its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)³⁶⁶, whose aim was to function as a mechanism for early warning in indicating increasing tensions and situations calling for crisis management in cases where tensions between Roma and the majority population have evolved into open conflict. The key overall objective of the ODIHR's work in this field would be the promotion of enduring security and stability in the OSCE region by assisting in the development of truly inclusive societies in which all citizens enjoy equal rights.

In March 2000 the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities published a report on the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area. The section on education remarks that “... across a wide range of countries Romani children are effectively excluded from the classroom experience. Beyond overt manifestations of bias, the educational experiences of Romani children reinforce broader patterns of

³⁶⁴ Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights (February 2006) *Final Report on the human rights situation of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Europe*, CommDH(2006)1, p.20

³⁶⁵ OSCE (1991) Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities, Geneva, Point VI

³⁶⁶ For more information, see <http://www.osce.org/odihr/13369.html> (12-10-2005)

exclusion... It is thus small wonder that many Romani children experience the classroom as an alien world – or, more aptly, a world in which they are the perennial outsiders. Although not the sole factor, these experiences contribute to astonishingly low levels of school attendance by Romani children and high levels of illiteracy among Roma.” The report proposes specific recommendations regarding the education of Roma.³⁶⁷

Following the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti in Vienna in April 2003³⁶⁸, the Permanent Council of the OSCE adopted in November 2003 the “**Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area**”³⁶⁹ in order to reinforce the efforts of the participating States and relevant OSCE institutions and structures aimed at ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating discrimination against them. Regarding education the Action Plan stresses that “education is a prerequisite to the participation of Roma and Sinti people in the political, social and economic life of their respective countries on a footing of equality with others. Strong immediate measures in this field, particularly those that foster school attendance and combat illiteracy, should be assigned the highest priority both by decision-makers and by Roma and Sinti communities. Educational policies should aim to integrate Roma and Sinti people into mainstream education by providing full and equal access at all levels, while remaining sensitive to cultural differences.” The Action Plan contains a set of specific recommendations to the OSCE Member States and accompanying procedures for review and implementation.

5.2.3 The United Nations and the World Bank

In 2000, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) recognising the importance of education for the Roma and Travellers called³⁷⁰ for the inclusion in the school system of all children of Roma and Traveller origin and action to reduce drop-out

³⁶⁷ OSCE (2000) High Commissioner on National Minorities, *Report on the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area*, The Hague, p. 63 available at http://www.osce.org/documents/hcnm/2000/03/241_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

³⁶⁸ Available at http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2003/09/681_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

³⁶⁹ OSCE Permanent Council (2003) *Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area*, 479th Plenary Meeting, PC Journal No. 479, Agenda item 4, DECISION No. 566 PC.DEC/566, available at http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2003/11/1562_en.pdf (12-10-2005)

³⁷⁰ CERD (2000) General Recommendation XXVII on Discrimination against the Roma, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, U.N. Doc A/55/18, annex V at 154 (2000)

rates, in particular among Roma and Traveller girls; for the prevention of the segregation of Roma and Traveller students; for raising the quality of education and the level of Roma and Traveller pupil achievement; for the recruitment of school personnel from among members of Roma and Traveller communities; and for the promotion of intercultural education.

In 2002 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an extensive survey among Roma in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. The survey report³⁷¹ concluded that Roma (as well as other vulnerable groups) should be integrated productively into their home societies, via employment, **education** and political participation to ensure successful participation in the EU. The survey data outlined the magnitude of segregation in education with, on average, 19 per cent of children in the households surveyed attending classes comprised mostly of Roma. The data suggested that discrimination in access to education is both a consequence of exclusion as well as its primary cause. The report also noted that Roma parents are open to a variety of options that can improve their children's educational opportunities, but instruction in Roma languages is not a priority for them. Thus, explicit strategies for ensuring proficiency in the majority languages should be a key policy goal, as well as the pre-school participation that supports best the integration of Roma children. Regarding education, the key recommendation of the report is on integrated education that should be seen as "...the only effective means of achieving equal education opportunities. All current short- and mid-term steps towards improving the educational status of Roma should be implemented in the context of integrated education as a long-term objective."

In July 2003, a high-level regional conference on Roma, "Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future", was held in Budapest with the participation of Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, FYROM, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovakia. It was co-financed by the World Bank, the Open Society Institute (OSI), the European Commission, UNDP, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the governments of Hungary, Finland and Sweden. The conference resolved to establish a Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015, during which countries would focus on reducing disparities in key economic and human development outcomes for Roma. Education is defined as a priority area with the primary objective to ensure access to compulsory education and increase the education status of Roma boys and girls. In support of this an international Roma

³⁷¹ UNDP (ed.) (2002) *Avoiding the Dependency Trap. The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*, pp. 3-5

Education Fund³⁷² was also established with 34 million Euros pledged for the period 2005 - 2015 by eight bilateral donors (Canada, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK), private foundations, the World Bank and the Central European Bank. The aim of the Fund is to contribute to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. This includes the desegregation of educational systems by making grants to public and private education sectors to help improve educational outcomes for Roma, serving as an information clearinghouse on Roma education and advocating improved educational outcomes for Roma.

³⁷² More information available at <http://www.romaeducationfund.org> (15-10-2005)

6. Conclusions

Roma and Traveller pupils continue to present a challenge to educational policies and institutions in all Member States, as widespread prejudice and negative stereotypes prevent the integration of Roma and Traveller pupils into mainstream schools. Practices of segregation, evidence for which has been found in several Member States, raise particular concern.

Some Member States have taken measures to improve the situation. However, without robust and reliable statistical, ethnically differentiated data regarding enrolment, attendance, attainment and performance in all levels of education it will not be possible to measure their impact and added value. Member States should consider cooperating with the Commission and Eurostat in order to develop common statistical indicators in education for monitoring Roma and Traveller pupils' educational attainment. Problems in defining these groups in ethnic, linguistic or cultural terms could be overcome with the adoption of broad definitions.

Strategies at national level have a greater impact when local organisations and communities are directly involved in designing measures and implementing them. In many countries this is already the case.

Pre-school education is a key to improving school attendance, attainment and performance. Some Member States have already focused on measures to strengthen it. At this educational level, parental involvement could be more effective in developing a pro-school attitude.

Teachers are key actors in education and can function as multipliers of key messages regarding integration and non-discrimination. In this sense it is important to educate and train Roma and Travellers as teachers as soon as possible, not only to facilitate the integration of Roma and Traveller pupils, but most importantly in order to provide alternative role models counteracting negative social stereotypes.

Social deprivation, segregated housing and poverty influence directly the educational perspectives and opportunities of Roma and Travellers. It is therefore crucial to provide adequate financial means that will enable these pupils to reach and participate in mainstream schools. This may

take the form of scholarships and social support, as well as means of transportation that will allow them easy access to schools.

Curricula and textbooks convey directly or indirectly key social values and contribute to the development of social attitudes. It is therefore essential to present Roma and Travellers and their contributions to society and culture in a positive light as well as to make their presence visible.

For a long time, the educational situation of Roma and Travellers has been ignored. In recent years, efforts have been made to better understand the factors which contribute to their low educational attainment. Knowledge gained during research should inform policies, which should be thoroughly implemented.

7. Opinions

General policies and measures	
Improving the overall conditions of life of Roma and Travellers	The deprivation, exclusion and marginalisation of Roma and Travellers in the European Union are well documented. Urgent action is required by the Community and its Member States. Member States should develop an action plan targeting Roma and Travellers, involving them, as well as local authorities, from the start and focusing on improving their situation in employment, housing, health and education. In this context the National Equality Bodies should be responsible for monitoring the situation systematically in order to improve ex post assessment and evaluation of policies, measures and initiatives.
Combating prejudice and promoting respect for Roma and Traveller culture and tradition	Discrimination against Roma and Travellers is often the result of deeply rooted prejudice and negative stereotypes resulting from ignorance of their history, culture, values and norms, which are an integral part of European and national heritage. Member States should develop policies and measures promoting respect and appreciation of Roma and Traveller history and culture particularly by involving journalists and the media.
Educational policies and measures	
Enrolment and attendance	Roma and Travellers should be actively encouraged to enrol by removing administrative requirements that could either prevent or discourage them from enrolling. Member states should also ensure that Roma and Traveller children are provided with the necessary documentation by registration at birth, acquisition of official name, residency and nationality, in accordance with the national laws and relevant international instruments.

	<p>Schools should monitor systematically non-attendance or truancy and involve actively the parents in ensuring that children attend school regularly, indicating clearly to them the importance of regular attendance for good performance and attainment. In this way the school will also come to understand the reasons for non-attendance that can be social or financial and develop the appropriate responses to address them effectively in cooperation with other state agencies.</p>
	<p>Education authorities should ensure that all Roma and Traveller pupils have free access to compulsory and post compulsory education, including higher education, meaning that costs (e.g. tuition fees, cost of books, other educational material, transportation, etc) should be covered by scholarship and tuition fee support schemes.</p>
<p>Parents’ expectations and aspirations</p>	<p>Schools should highlight successful educational attainment by Roma and Traveller pupils and the relevant national authorities should ensure that qualified individuals are effectively supported in their search for appropriate employment in order to make the link between educational attainment and improved life chances visible.</p>
	<p>Schools should make strong efforts to engage Roma and Traveller parents in school related activities in order to enhance mutual understanding. Schools must attract parents by respecting their values and culture and acknowledging their contribution to the education of their children.</p>
	<p>Schools should reach out proactively and make strong efforts to engage Roma and Traveller parents and the entire community in school related activities or other home/community programmes, where parents and teachers can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their children’s learning and behaviour in order to enhance mutual understanding, develop respect for each other and reduce conflict. Schools must attract parents by respecting their values and culture and acknowledging their contribution to the education of their children.</p>

	<p>Special measures should be urgently implemented to reduce adult illiteracy and improve employability by developing marketable skills targeting particularly women.</p>
<p>Nomadic community life</p>	<p>A nomadic lifestyle can be a deliberate choice and part of ethnic identity. Pupils of travelling communities should be supported by special pedagogical measures designed to admit and integrate them to the local schools of their temporary residence, to monitor and record their progress systematically across the schools they attend and to promote the use of distance education tools through the provision of access to new technologies and the Internet.</p>
	<p>Local authorities need to be sensitised to the needs of travelling communities and provide them with the necessary facilities that will improve their standard of living. Schools also need to develop special pedagogical measures in order to integrate them in the school population by openly acknowledging nomadism as a legitimate and respected choice and lifestyle.</p>
<p>Romani language</p>	<p>Romani language classes could be available as an optional course for all pupils in areas with a particularly high concentration of Roma. The Roma community should be consulted regarding the use of Romani in school, since opinions are sometimes divided.</p>
<p>Participation in pre-school programmes</p>	<p>Awareness raising campaigns promoting pre-school education should be designed involving Roma and Traveller representatives as well as local authorities, and should be implemented at local level. The campaigns should focus on concrete measures taken to involve Roma and Traveller parents in pre-school education so that fears of assimilation or harassment at school can be alleviated.</p>

	<p>The active involvement of Roma and Traveller families in pre-school education will also facilitate the integration of elements of their cultural practices in the schooling process at a crucial stage for socialisation. This will also allow non-Roma and non-Traveller children to come to both understand and appreciate Roma and Traveller values and norms.</p> <p>Specific practical incentives, such as additional social benefits, should be provided to Roma and Traveller families to promote enrolment to pre-school education, which indirectly also supports the development of women's employment opportunities.</p>
Addressing segregation	
Segregation in different schools or classes	<p>Member States must ensure that the necessary legal measures expressly prohibiting any form of direct or indirect segregation into different schools or classes with effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions are in place and implemented by the relevant authorities.</p>
	<p>Member States must ensure that schools with Roma and Traveller pupils receive the appropriate funding that allows them to provide education of equal quality as all other public schools. This could mean that additional funding may be necessary for additional support measures aiming at integration and the improvement of the attainment and performance rates of Roma and Traveller pupils.</p>
	<p>Where segregation of Roma and Traveller children exists, the authorities should deploy desegregation strategies. The Member States should ensure that desegregation measures are properly implemented at the local level.</p>
Assignment to special education for reasons other than disability	<p>Assessment procedures and psycho-pedagogical testing taking into account language issues and different socio-cultural norms and models of behaviour should be developed involving Roma and Traveller representatives in order to replace any current discriminatory practices that result in the placement of a disproportionately high number of Roma and Traveller pupils in special education.</p>

	<p>Assessment procedures and psycho-pedagogical testing needs to be carefully and systematically monitored with the direct involvement of parents.</p> <p>Special education disengagement programmes should be established aiming at transferring and integrating Roma and Traveller pupils to regular education.</p>
Placement in lower than age-appropriate grades	<p>The placement of pupils in classes lower than their age group should be actively discouraged by education authorities. Schools should take all necessary support measures to ensure that such pupils are transferred to their age group class as soon as possible.</p>
Educational curricula and teacher training and support	
Teacher training and support	<p>The keystone of all pedagogical innovation is the initial and in-service training of teachers that should be characterised by flexibility and adaptability. Particularly teachers working in a multicultural environment should be properly trained, adequately paid and supported by educational experts and intercultural mediators. Teachers should be supported in addressing prejudice and negative stereotypes through special training that increases their own awareness of direct and indirect discrimination and develops the necessary intercultural awareness to deal effectively with ethnically mixed classes. Teachers should also be made aware that they need to engage Roma and Traveller pupils in class and not de-motivate them by placing lower demands upon them.</p>
Roma and Traveller teachers	<p>Urgent affirmative action measures should be taken to ensure that Roma and Travellers are encouraged to train as teachers. In addition Roma and Travellers should be employed by education authorities and schools as intercultural mediators to improve communication between families, communities, local and education authorities.</p>
Intercultural school curricula and resources	<p>Roma and Traveller history and culture should be included in the mainstream textbooks avoiding “folklorisation” and with particular consideration given to the experience of Roma people during the Holocaust.</p>

	<p>The publication and distribution of books and other materials in languages spoken by Roma should also be encouraged and supported. Roma and Traveller authors should also be actively encouraged to develop work for educational purposes.</p>
	<p>Incentives should be provided to Universities and research centres to study and develop research programmes and courses on Roma and Travellers' history, culture and tradition.</p>
<p>Monitoring and data collection</p>	
	<p>Appropriate structures and methods should be developed in order to collect systematically ethnically differentiated statistical data on the educational situation of Roma and Travellers and measuring the impact of policies and measures</p>

Appendix I

Definitions and concepts

The EUMC undertakes its work on racism and racial discrimination on the basis of European and International standards to combat racism promote equality and guarantee human rights. These standards contain definitions and concepts on racism and racial discrimination. These definitions and concepts provide the framework for the EUMC's work and its support for European Union policy to combat racism, xenophobia and antisemitism.

In its work against racism, the EUMC cooperates closely with the Council of Europe, in particular through its European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in order to avoid duplication, to ensure consistency and coherence in line with European and International standards and to reinforce mutually each other's activities and actions. ECRI publishes general recommendations on a variety of issues related to combating racism and intolerance and the EUMC incorporates the general recommendations of ECRI into its work. The EUMC works also with the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) through its interagency cooperation on combating racism and promoting tolerance. The EUMC is therefore guided by the comments and observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

European Union policy to combat racism and promote equal treatment

The right of individuals not to be discriminated against on a range of grounds, including racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, has long been recognised by international organisations, like the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, the European Union and its Member States. International agreements such as the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) exemplify the

commitment of the international and European communities to guarantee respect for the right to non-discrimination.

Since the European and international standards have come into force, support at European Community level in combating discrimination has been expressed through a variety of joint declarations, charters, resolutions, and legislation related to the fight against racism and xenophobia and the promotion of equal treatment. Further to the broadening of its powers relating to discrimination in the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, the Community went one step further in 2000 and gave a specific legal base for action to promote equal treatment through the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive. These Directives afford a common minimum level of protection to EU citizens against all forms of discrimination. They also supplement and reinforce existing Member State legislative measures implementing the principle of equality that prior to the implementation of the Directives all States had enshrined through their constitutional and/or common laws.

Legislation sends clear signals about what society regards as acceptable or unacceptable, and the two Directives form an integral part of the Community's strategy in changing attitudes and behaviour. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient on its own. That is why the Community established in parallel with the Directives a Community Action Programme to combat discrimination (2001 - 2006) to enable people to build their own actions to tackle discrimination at a local level, where it is often most effective.

Definition of Racism

The EUMC applies the definition of *racism* from the work of the Council of Europe, namely the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) general policy recommendation N°7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, that is

'Racism'³⁷³ shall mean the belief that a ground such as race³⁷⁴, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons.

³⁷³ The term "racism" should be understood in a broad sense, including phenomena such as xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance.

³⁷⁴ Since all human beings belong to the same species, ECRI rejects theories based on the existence of different "races". However, in this Recommendation ECRI uses this term in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as belonging to "another race" are not excluded from the protection provided for by the legislation.

Concept of Racial Discrimination

The EUMC applies the concept of *racial discrimination* from the European Union's Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin:

“direct discrimination” shall be taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin;

“indirect discrimination” shall be taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared to other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary;

“harassment” shall be deemed to be discrimination within the meaning of the above, when an unwanted conduct related to racial or ethnic origin takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Appendix II

P6_TA(2005)0151

Roma in the European Union

PE 357.314

European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union

Submitters:

- Jaime Mayor Oreja, Ewa Klamt and Livia Járóka, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Hannes Swoboda, Martine Roure, Katalin Lévai, Claude Moraes and Jan Marinus Wiersma, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Viktória Mohácsi, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Elly de Groen-Kouwenhoven, Milan Horáček and Gérard Onesta, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Vittorio Emanuele Agnoletto, Giusto Catania, Bairbre de Brún, Ilda Figueiredo, Miguel Portas, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann and Erik Meijer, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

The resolution was adopted the 28 April 2005 by 497 votes for, 25 against and 30 abstentions.

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the celebration of International Roma Day on 8 April 2005³⁷⁵,
- having regard to the Constitutional Treaty signed by Heads of State and of Government on 29 October 2004 which includes the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union as its second part,
- having regard to Articles 3, 6, 7, 29 and 149 of the EC Treaty, which commit the Member States to ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens,
- having regard to Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which enables the European Community to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin,

³⁷⁵ International Roma Day was established in 1971 at the First Romani World Congress.

- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin³⁷⁶ which bans discrimination on ethnic grounds,
- having regard to Article 4 of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- having regard to Recommendation 1557 (2002) of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, particularly paragraphs 3 and 15 thereof, which underline the widespread discrimination against the Roma, and the need to strengthen the system for monitoring such discrimination and to resolve the legal status of the Roma,
- having regard to the document adopted by the COCEN Group in advance of the Helsinki European Council in 1999 entitled ‘Situation of Roma in the Candidate Countries’, which underlines the need to raise awareness about the racism and discrimination faced by Roma,
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation³⁷⁷,
- having regard to the Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society³⁷⁸,
- having regard to the establishment of a Group of Commissioners responsible for fundamental rights, anti-discrimination and equal

³⁷⁶ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22

³⁷⁷ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16

³⁷⁸ The ‘Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society’ is the proposal of the EU Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia to the political parties in the European Union. The text was adopted by that Commission on 5 December 1997.

opportunities³⁷⁹, and awaiting the presentation of the Group's agenda,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1035/97 of 2 June 1997 establishing a European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia³⁸⁰, to the Monitoring Centre's (EUMC) annual and thematic reports on racism in the EU and to the Commission Green Paper on equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged European Union (COM(2004)0379),
- having regard to the recent publication by the Commission of a report drawing attention to very disturbing levels of hostility and human rights abuses against Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in Europe³⁸¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 January 2005 on remembrance of the Holocaust, anti-semitism and racism⁵,
- having regard to international legal instruments such as General Recommendation XXVII ('Discrimination against Roma') of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and General Policy Recommendation No 3 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies,
- having regard to the comprehensive Action Plan, adopted by OSCE participating States, including EU Member States and candidate countries, focused on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, in which the States undertake inter alia to reinforce their efforts aimed at ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating discrimination against them,
- having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

³⁷⁹ Commission President José Manuel Barroso announced this initiative in his speech to the European Parliament on 26 October 2004, saying that the Group (which he will chair) will be handed the task of monitoring all Commission actions and major initiatives in these areas as well as acting as a political driving force.

³⁸⁰ OJ L 230, 21.8.1997, p. 19.

³⁸¹ 'The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged Europe', commissioned and published by DG Employment and Social Affairs, 2004.

⁵ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2005)0018.

- A. whereas 8 April has been designated International Roma Day and is considered to be the annual day of celebration for Roma, as well as an opportunity for raising awareness about Europe's largest ethnic minority and the extent of its social exclusion,
- B. whereas the 12-15 million Roma living in Europe, 7-9 million of whom live in the European Union, suffer racial discrimination and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, as well as multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation,
- C. underlining the importance of urgently eliminating continuing and violent trends of racism and racial discrimination against Roma, and conscious that any form of impunity for racist attacks, hate speech, physical attacks by extremist groups, unlawful evictions and police harassment motivated by Anti-Gypsyism and Romaphobia plays a role in weakening the rule of law and democracy, tends to encourage the recurrence of such crimes and requires resolute action for its eradication,
- D. recognising that the failure to combat racial discrimination and xenophobia against Roma, especially by public authorities, is a factor encouraging the persistence of the problems in society,
- E. whereas the Roma community is still not regarded as an ethnic or national minority group in every Member State and candidate country, and thus does not enjoy the rights pertaining to this status in all the countries concerned,
- F. whereas, while many Member States have quickly transposed into national law Directive 2000/43/EC, a number have failed to do so or have done so incompletely or incorrectly,
- G. whereas the Romani Holocaust deserves full recognition, commensurate with the gravity of Nazi crimes designed to physically eliminate the Roma of Europe, and calling in this connection on the Commission and the authorities to take all necessary steps to remove the pig farm from the site of the former concentration camp at Lety u Pisku and to create a suitable memorial,

- H. recalling that a large number of Roma were victims of war and of ethnic cleansing and continue to be victims of persecution in parts of regions of the former republic of Yugoslavia,
- I. deploring the fact that a significant number of Roma asylum seekers have been expelled, or threatened with expulsion, from the host Member States, in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement, as set out in the 1951 Geneva Convention and associated protocols,
- J. regretting that Roma continue to be underrepresented in governmental structures and public administration in Member States and candidate countries where they constitute a significant percentage of the population; whereas these governments have undertaken to increase the number of Roma working in decision-making structures but have yet to make significant progress,
- K. recognising the need to ensure effective Roma participation in political life, particularly as regards decisions which affect the lives and well-being of Roma communities,
- L. stressing that in no case should new citizenship laws be drafted and implemented in such a way as to discriminate against legitimate claimants to citizenship or to withhold citizenship from long-term Roma residents of the Member State or candidate country concerned,
- M. whereas in a number of countries there exist clear indications that police forces and other organs of the criminal justice system are affected by anti-Romani bias, leading to systemic racial discrimination in the exercise of criminal justice,
- N. whereas Roma are regularly discriminated against in the provision of health care and social security; noting with concern cases of segregation in maternity wards and the sterilisation of Roma women without their informed consent,
- O. whereas substandard and insanitary living conditions and evidence of ghettoisation exist on a wide scale, with Roma being regularly prevented from moving out of such neighbourhoods,
- P. having regard to the racially segregated schooling systems in place across several Member States, in which Roma children are taught

either in segregated classes with lower standards or in classes for the mentally handicapped; recognising that an improvement in access to education and opportunities for academic achievement for Roma is crucial to the advancement of Romani communities' wider prospects,

- Q. whereas on average Roma communities face unacceptably high levels of unemployment, so that specific measures are required to facilitate access to jobs,
- R. having regard to the difficulties faced by the Roma population in having their culture fully acknowledged, and deploring the fact that in most Member States and candidate countries the mainstream media continue to under-represent Roma in their programming while simultaneously reinforcing a negative stereotype of Roma citizens through news items and television and radio shows; noting that new communication technologies, including the internet, can also help to combat Romaphobia,
1. Condemns utterly all the forms of discrimination faced by the Roma people;
 2. Calls on the Council, the Commission, the Member States and the candidate countries to consider recognising the Roma as a European minority;
 3. Welcomes the recent declaration by Commission President Barroso regarding the importance of eliminating discrimination against Roma people and the role which the Lisbon Strategy could play in improving opportunities for Roma³⁸², and urges the Council, Commission, Member States and candidate countries publicly to take steps to combat Anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia in all forms, be it at local, national, regional or EU level;
 4. Urges the Commission to include the issue of combating Anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia across Europe among its priorities for the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, and calls on political parties and civil society at all levels to make it clear that racial hatred against Roma can never be tolerated in European society;

³⁸² Commenting at the launch of the 'Lisbon Scorecard V' on 17 March 2005.

5. Urges the Commission to further ensure, in the framework of the political requirements of the Copenhagen criteria, that candidate countries make real efforts to strengthen the rule of law and protect human and minority rights, particularly those of the Roma population;
6. Calls on the Commission to prepare a communication on how the EU, in cooperation with the Member States, can best coordinate and promote efforts to improve the situation of the Roma, and to adopt an action plan with clear recommendations to the Member States and candidate countries to bring about better economic, social and political integration of the Roma;
7. Commends Member States for quickly transposing into national law Directive 2000/43/EC and urges those which are currently subject to 'non-communication' infringement procedures to take steps to rectify their lack of progress; calls on the Council to agree under the Luxembourg Presidency the proposed EU Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia, which would make hate crimes punishable throughout the EU, and on which the European Parliament must be reconsulted;
8. Calls upon Member States and candidate countries to strengthen national legislation and administrative measures that expressly and specifically counter Anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia and prohibit racial discrimination and related intolerance, whether direct or indirect, in all spheres of public life;
9. Calls on the Member States and candidate countries to exchange best practice in order to encourage the promotion of Roma culture;
10. Calls upon Member States to take appropriate action to eliminate any racial hatred and incitement to discrimination and violence against Roma in the media and in any form of communication technology, and calls on the mainstream media to establish best practices for hiring staff who reflect the composition of the population;
11. Calls on Member States and candidate countries to develop a strategy to increase the participation of Roma in elections as voters and candidates at all levels;

12. Underlines the need to guarantee equal social and political rights to migrants of Romani origin;
13. Underlines that the lack of official documents is a serious obstacle to the exercise of basic rights by Roma throughout Europe, as well as to their access to services which are crucial to social inclusion;
14. Urges all Member States and candidate countries to take concrete measures to improve the access of Roma to labour markets with the aim of securing better long-term employment;
15. Calls on Member States in which Roma children are segregated into schools for the mentally disabled or placed in separate classrooms from their peers to move forward with desegregation programmes within a predetermined period of time, thus ensuring free access to quality education for Roma children and preventing the rise of anti-Romani sentiment amongst schoolchildren;
16. Recalls the resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 22 May 1989 on school provision for gypsy and traveller children¹ and considers that ensuring that all Roma children have access to mainstream education remains a priority;
17. Calls on Member States and candidate countries to take steps to ensure equal access to health care and social security services for all, to end all discriminatory practices, in particular the segregation of Roma in maternity wards, and to prevent the practice of non-consensual sterilisation of Romani women;
18. Welcomes the formation of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, and the work of groups within the Parliament focused on Roma and minority issues; recognizes the importance of cooperation with such bodies when creating Roma policies in Europe;
19. Considers that the current ghettoisation in Europe is unacceptable, and calls on Member States to take concrete steps to bring about deghettoisation, to combat discriminatory practices in providing housing and to assist individual Roma in finding alternative, sanitary housing;

¹ OJ C 153, 21.6.1989, p. 3

20. Urges governments in regions with Roma populations to take further steps to integrate Roma civil servants at all administrative and decision-making levels in line with previous commitments and to allocate the necessary resources for the effective operation of such positions;
21. Welcomes the Decade for Roma Inclusion Initiative to which five Member States and candidate countries are signatories and calls on the Commission to work in cohesion with those governments concerned to align relevant EU programme funding to realize this initiative;
22. Calls on the Commission to publicly encourage national governments to ensure that, when funding programmes are aimed at Roma, Roma actors are fully involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of such projects;
23. Supports the continuing moves within the EU institutions towards incorporating the Roma-to-Roma approach, as developed by the OSCE, in the future hiring of staff for Roma- as well as non-Roma-related vacancies;
24. Calls on political parties, at both national and European level, to review their party structures and procedures with the aim of removing all barriers that directly or indirectly militate against the participation of Roma and incorporate policies geared to full Roma integration into their mainstream political and social agenda;
25. Urges the EUMC and, upon its creation, the Fundamental Rights Agency to devote more attention to Anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia in Europe and to allocate the necessary resources to monitor racial abuse and human rights violations against Roma;
26. Urges all Member States to support initiatives to strengthen the Roma's ability to represent themselves and participate actively in public life and society as a whole and enable Roma civil organisations to make their voices heard;
27. Calls on the Commission to raise the Roma issue to a pan-European level, in particular with candidate countries, as the Roma live in every part of Europe;

28. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and candidate countries.

Appendix III

A number of international human rights instruments contain articles relevant to the right of Roma and Travellers for equal access to education. Examples are:

Article 21 of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** stipulates that “any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.” Article 22 further states that “the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity”.

Article 5 of the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** requires that “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of... (v) The right to education and training.” Article 7 also requires that “State Parties adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups.”

Article 3 of the **Convention against Discrimination in Education** stipulates among else that “in order to eliminate and prevent discrimination the States Parties undertake (a) To abrogate any statutory provisions and any administrative instructions and to discontinue any administrative practices which involve discrimination in education; (b) To ensure, by legislation where necessary, that there is no discrimination in the admission of pupils to educational institutions”.

Article 13 of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** states that “States Parties further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups”.

Article 2 of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** stipulates that “States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without

discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status". Article 28 recognises the right of the child to education and Article 29 stipulates that "... the education of the child shall be directed to (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own." Article 30 also states that "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language."

Article 6 of the **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**³⁸³ stipulates that "The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity." In Article 12 it also states that "The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority. In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities." Finally, in Article 14 it states that "The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have

³⁸³ Please note that the term "national minority" is not defined in the Treaty text. Country declarations available at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeDeclarations.asp?NT=157&CM=8&DF=08/02/05&CL=ENG&VL=1> (12-10-2005)

adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.”

Article 4 of the **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities** states that “States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory.”