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Strasbourg, 6 November 2017

**AD HOC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ROMA AND TRAVELLER ISSUES<sup>1</sup> (CAHROM)**

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**CAHROM THEMATIC VISIT  
ON THE SITUATION OF EASTERN ROMA GROUPS  
(ROMA, LOM/BOSHA, DOM/GARACHI, ABDAL)  
AND POLICY RESPONSES TO THEIR NEEDS**

**TBILISI, GEORGIA, 21-23 JUNE 2017**

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**THEMATIC REPORT**

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context of the thematic report

The idea to set up a thematic group came from the Secretariat for two reasons: on the one hand, there is little information at the level of the Council of Europe, apart from some references in European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) reports<sup>2</sup>, and of the CAHROM itself about the Roma and Roma-related communities (Dom, Lom, Abdal) living in Turkey and the Caucasus region; on the other hand, it was an opportunity for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation to participate for the first time in a CAHROM thematic visit.

There were nevertheless a few attempts in the past to bring the situation of eastern Roma communities to the attention of the CAHROM.

A first discussion on eastern Roma, Lom, Dom and Abdal took place within CAHROM in Istanbul on 22-25 November 2011 when the Turkish government hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> CAHROM meeting in Strasbourg on 14-16 May 2013, information on the situation of Roma in the Russian Federation was provided by Mr Sergey Tolkalin, CAHROM member on behalf of the Russian Federation.

At the 6<sup>th</sup> CAHROM meeting in Rome, Italy, on 28-31 October 2013, Mr Irakli Kokaia and Ms Feride Yazır made a presentation on the situation of Roma in Georgia and Turkey respectively.

At its 10<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting in Bucharest, Romania, in October 2015, the Committee heard a presentation from Mr Harutyun Marutyan the CAHROM member on behalf of Armenia on the situation of Bosha (Lom) in Armenia.

There has been no presentation on the situation of Roma in Azerbaijan.

Initially Turkey had proposed to host this thematic visit in 2016 but due to the fact that it had also proposed to organise another CAHROM thematic visit on Roma access to employment (later postponed to 2018), Georgia was approached to be the hosting country and kindly accepted to do so.

### 1.2 Official invitation letter received from the Georgian authorities

An official invitation letter inviting the CAHROM thematic group to visit Georgia was addressed to the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Roma Issues by Mr Sozar Subari, Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia on 19 April 2017. See below the invitation letter in Georgian and its translation into English.



official letter-geo.pdf



official letter-eng.pdf

<sup>2</sup> See the ECRI reports at [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/countrybycountry\\_en.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/countrybycountry_en.asp). There are no references to Roma in ECRI reports on Armenia.

### 1.3 Composition of the thematic group

#### Experts from GEORGIA, requesting/hosting country

<b>Mr Irakli KOKAIA and Ms Rusudan ASATIANI</b>	CAHROM member and substitute member, Department of Migration, Repatriation and Refugee Issues, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia
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#### Experts from ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, TURKEY - partner countries

<b>Mr Harutyun MARUTYAN (ARMENIA)</b>	CAHROM member, Head Research Fellow D.Sc. (History), Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences
<b>Ms Tunzala AYDAMIROVA (AZERBAIJAN)</b>	First Secretary, Division of Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>Mr Alexey GOLOVANOV (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)</b>	Second Secretary, Division for liaison of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Department for liaison with the Constituent Entities of the Federation, the Parliament and Public Associations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>Mr Ömer Turan MAZGAL (TURKEY)<sup>3</sup></b>	CAHROM substitute member, Family and Social Policy Assistance Expert, General Directorate of Family and Community Services, Ministry of Family and Social Policies

#### International organisations' experts

<b>Ms Tatjana PERIĆ (OSCE/ODIHR)</b>	Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues / Deputy Chief of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CRPSI), Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
<b>Ms Zora POPOVA (ECMI)</b>	European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), Senior Researcher, Flensburg-based
<b>Ms Tamari BULIA (ECMI)</b>	European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), Communications and Outreach Officer, Flensburg-based
<b>Mr Michaël GUET (COUNCIL OF EUROPE)</b>	Secretary of the CAHROM, Head of the I-CARE Unit (Intergovernmental Co-operation, Anti-Gypsyism and Roma Equality), Support Team to the Special Representative of the Secretary General RSG for Roma Issues
<b>Ms Sandra VELOY MATEU (COUNCIL OF EUROPE)</b>	Member of the Support Team to the Special Representative of the Secretary General RSG for Roma Issues

<sup>3</sup> Excused for the thematic visit.

## 1.4 Programme of the thematic visit

Wednesday, 21 June 2017

Venue: Information Center on NATO and EU (2/1 Shalva Dadiani Street, Tbilisi, Georgia)

09:30-10:00	<p>Welcoming remarks by</p> <p><i>Mr Shota REKHVIASHVILI, Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia</i></p> <p><i>Mr Michaël GUET, CAHROM Secretary, Head of Unit, Support Team of the SRSB for Roma Issues, Council of Europe</i></p> <p><i>Ms Ketevan KHUTSISHVILI, EU Delegation in Georgia</i></p>
10:00-10:30	<p>Brief introduction on the background and the purpose of the CAHROM thematic visit</p> <p><i>Mr Michaël GUET, CAHROM Secretary, Head of Unit, Support Team of the SRSB for Roma Issues, Council of Europe</i></p> <p>followed by a <i>tour de table</i> on the expectations from all participants</p>
10:30-10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:45-12:45	<p>General situation and challenges faced by Roma, Dom Lom and Abdal (including information on self-identification, census results, estimates, research results) and state policy towards members of these communities in Georgia and in partner countries</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <p><i>Ms Rusudan ASATIANI, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia</i></p> <p><i>Ms Eliso LOMIDZE, Office of State Minister of Georgia on Reconciliation and Civic Equality</i></p> <p><i>Mr Temur KORIDZE, Office of the Public Defender of Georgia</i></p> <p>Discussion, questions to and answers</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <p><i>Ms Zora POPOVA, European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)</i></p> <p><i>Ms Tatjana PERIC, OSCE-ODIHR, CPRSI- "The Situation of Roma and Related Groups in South Caucasus: The OSCE/ODIHR Perspective"?</i></p> <p>Discussion, questions to and answers</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <p><i>Russian Federation, Mr Alexey GOLOVANOV</i></p> <p><i>Azerbaijan, Ms Tunzala AYDAMIROVA</i></p> <p><i>Armenia, Mr Harutyun MARUTYAN</i></p> <p>Discussion, questions to and answers</p>
12:45-14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:00-15:00	<p>Situation, challenges and achievements concerning the legal status, the reduction and prevention of statelessness and the provision of identity documents</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <p><i>Mr Levan MGEBRISHVILI, LEPL Public Service Development Agency of Ministry of Justice of Georgia</i></p> <p><i>Ms Nato GAGNIDZE, Innovations and Reforms Centre (IRC): Project review: "Reduction and Prevention of Statelessness in Georgia"</i></p> <p>Interventions by <i>partner countries' experts and international observers</i> on this topic</p> <p>Discussion, questions to and answers</p>
15:00-15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>

15:30-17:30	<p>Situation, challenges and achievements concerning access to education and the protection of children and youth at risk, including preventive measures against human trafficking, prostitution and street children</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> <i>Ms Eka DGEBUADZE, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia</i>  <i>Ms Lela TSKITISHVILI, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia</i>  <i>Ms Mariam BAZADZE, Mr. Suraj ALIMOV, Volunteers of "Sub-program for promoting social inclusion" of Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia</i>  <i>Ms Nargiz JINTCHARADZE, Kobuleti N5 School Director</i>  <i>Ms Ketevan SARAJISHVILI, Ministry of Justice</i>  <i>Ms Nino ODISHARIA, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs</i>  <i>Mr Irakli TCHKONIA, State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking</i>  <i>World Vision</i></p> <p>Interventions by <i>partner countries' experts and international observers</i> on this topic  Discussion, questions to and answers</p>
17:30-18:00	Closing session of the first day meeting: main conclusions
18:00-19:30	Visit to Africa district of Tbilisi and meeting with Roma communities

Thursday, 22 June 2017

Venue: Information Center on NATO and EU (2/1 Shalva Dadiani Street, Tbilisi, Georgia)

09:15-10:15	<p>Situation, challenges and achievements concerning access to health care and social security</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> <i>Ms Ketevan GOGINASHVILI, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs of Georgia</i></p> <p>Interventions by <i>partner countries' experts and international observers</i> on this topic  Discussion, questions to and answers</p>
10:15-11:15	<p>Place and value of the Romani culture in the cultural space</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> <i>Ms Lela TSKITISHVILI, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia</i>  <i>Mr Davit BIBILEISHVILI, Volunteer of "Sub-program for promoting social inclusion" of Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia</i>  <i>Ms Lena PROSHIKIAN, ECMI</i></p> <p>Interventions by <i>partner countries' experts and international observers</i> on this topic  Discussion, questions to and answers</p>
11:15-11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30-12:30	<p>Participation of Roma, Dom, Lom and Abdal in elections and decision-making bodies at local and national levels</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> <i>Ms Irina PUTKARADZE, NGO „Public Advocacy“</i>  <i>Ms Venera MARTKOPISHVILI, ROMA NGO</i>  <i>Ms Lena PROSHIKIAN, ECMI</i></p> <p>Interventions by <i>partner countries' experts and international observers</i> on this topic  Discussion, questions to and answers</p>
12:30-12:45	Closing session of the second day meeting: main conclusions
12:45-14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:00	Departure by bus to a Roma settlement in Kakheti region
19:00	Return in Tbilisi

Friday, 23 June 2017

Venue: Information Center on NATO and EU (2/1 Shalva Dadiani Street, Tbilisi, Georgia)

09:30-09:45	Coffee/Tea
09:45-13:00	Debriefing meeting between experts from the requesting and partner countries, the Council of Europe Secretariat, OSCE/ODIHR and ECMI
13:00	Close of the thematic visit and departure

### 1.5 Background material for the preparation of the thematic visit

Background information circulated prior to this thematic visit took into consideration some of the presentations made in CAHROM mentioned under 1.1 above, as well as ECRI monitoring reports (see Appendix 4) and some of the most recent existing research in the Caucasus, such as:

Elena Marushiakova & Vesselin Popov - **The Gypsies (Dom – Lom – Rom) in Georgia**<sup>4</sup> (2014)



The\_Gypsies\_Dom\_Lom\_Rom\_in\_Georgia.

Urszula Markowska-Manista - **Unwanted, rejected, unaccepted: around the problem of “invisible” Romani and Dom children in Georgia (2015)**



Unwanted rejected unaccepted around the

Hamlet Petrosian - **Name and Prestige: Self-Designation, Outsider-Designation, and the Search for a Neutral Designation (On the System of Ethnonyms of the Armenian Gypsies) (2003)**



Hamlet Petrosian-On the System of Ethnon

Harutyun Marutyan - **The contemporary expression of the identity of the Boshas (2011)**



HMarutyan- The Contemporary Expres

Elmari Mamishov from the Center for Democracy and Civic Integration (Georgia) - **South Caucasus Roma Network Project Final Report on Azerbaijan (December 2013)**



South Caucasus Roma Network Projec

Sandra Veloy Mateu for Georgia’s Reforms Associates (GRASS) - **Roma youth in Georgia: what are the challenges? (2017)**



Roma youth in Georgia what are the

<sup>4</sup> In: *Proceedings of Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society and Conference on Romani Studies, Bratislava, September 11-13, 2014* <https://sites.google.com/site/glsproceedings/presentations>.

Despite of the above mentioned research and data, the situation of Roma and Roma-related group remains still not properly recognised, not only in terms of numbers, but mostly in terms of their general situation, needs and problems they face. The situation is even more complicated, taking into account different groups of Roma present in the region and in the hosting country, Georgia, which has been confronted with different waves of Roma migrations (see next chapter).

## 1.6 Terminology

**ROMA (self-appellation: *Roma* or *Romlar*; language: *Romani* but other languages spoken, including Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Turkish, etc.):** This thematic report is referring to Roma in its general sense or as the eastern Roma living in Turkey and the Caucasian region and who would not identify themselves as Lom, Dom or Abdal. The use of the term *Tsyganye* (Gypsies) is not necessarily pejorative in this region<sup>5</sup> and is often used by the Roma community itself.

**LOM (self-appellation *Lomavtik*; language: *Lomavren* as a secret language; speak usually Armenian):** in Transcaucasia are called *Bosha* by surrounding populations. They live mainly in territories inhabited by ethnic Armenians, not only in present-day Armenia, but also in neighbouring Georgia and in North-eastern Turkey, where they are known as *Posha*.

**DOM (self-appellation *Dom* or *Domlar*; language: *Domari*; speak usually Turkish, Azeri or Kurdish):** They are called *Qaraçiler* in Azerbaijan, usually spelled also as *Garachi* or *Karachi* or *Karaçi*. They live in Azerbaijan for centuries. Historical evidences about them, however, are extremely scarce and fragmented and the same is true about their current situation. The Dom communities are scattered in different countries, including Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.

**ABDAL (self-appellation *Abdal*; Abdal speak a language which borrowed from Persian and other Iranian sources, some Kurdish and Romani with an essentially Turkish grammar):** The Abdal are a socio-cultural group found mainly in central and western Anatolia, Turkey, who follow an itinerant lifestyle. This lifestyle is closely connected with the activity of music making at weddings. Other occupations associated with the Abdal include tinning, basket making and sieve manufacture. The three most remarkable characteristics of the group are its close relationship with the Alevi sect, its use of a secret language or argot and its wide distribution. It seems that the name Abdal was associated with Alevi dervishes of Central Anatolia, whose existence is first recorded in the 16th Century. These *Abdalan-ı Rum* were extreme Alevis practicing celibacy and withdrawal from the world. Their unorthodox behaviour led to their suppression by the Ottoman authorities. At least some of the present day Abdals are descended from these groups. A possible connection with the Roma people is seen by the facts two of their subdivisions are the Gurbet and Kara Domen, signifying possible links with the Gurbati of Iran and the Dom of the Arab Middle East. According to the Abdal themselves, they came from originally from Khorasan in Iran, and are a tribe of Turkmen.<sup>6</sup>

In south-western Turkey, the Abdal play a particular role as musicians, minstrels, jewelers and magicians to the nomadic Barak Turkmen, as a dependent group. Abdal encampments are found at the edges of the Turkmen camps. A similar relationship also exists with certain Kurdish tribes. In the area north of Ankara, many Abdal are sedentary, but associated with certain activities as circumcision (a sacred Muslim tradition) and barbering.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The OSCE-ODIHR representative, however, argued about this affirmation during the thematic visit, underlining that multiple aspects of the context also need to be taken into account when discussing the use of this term in the region.

<sup>6</sup> Abdal by Peter Alford Andrews pages 435 to 438 in Ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey / compiled and edited by Peter Alford Andrews, with the assistance of Rüdiger Benninghaus (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Marginal Groups and Itinerants by Ingvar Savanberg pages 602 to 612 in Ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey / compiled and edited by Peter Alford Andrews, with the assistance of Rüdiger Benninghaus (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1989) .



## II. SIZE, COMPOSITION, LANGUAGE, LIFESTYLE AND SITUATION OF ROMA, DOM, LOM AND ABDAL COMMUNITIES

### 2.1. Georgia

#### Historical presence

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire, small groups of Romani traders began to move into the vast territory of the Russian Empire trading small wares, goods, and horses, whilst Romani women were often acting as fortune-tellers. Most likely, Roma at this time were largely nomadic in nature. Another wave of migration consisted of migrants from WWI period from the Ottoman Empire.

In the 1930s due to the so-called Great Famine from 1932-1933 in large parts of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, a large influx of Roma began to enter Georgia. Roma from these regions moved in massive groups to the south, either on foot or by train, and began dispersing across Georgia from the Black Sea coast inward. The exact number of Roma from this migration wave is unknown, but early Soviet census data recorded a significant increase from 70 self-declared « Tsyganye » (Roma) in 1926 to 727 in 1939. The advance of the German army into the southern regions of the Soviet Union during World War II also forced many Roma to flee the invasion and seek refuge in Georgia. Their number rose to 1,024 in the 1959 population census.

Frozen conflicts still present in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union provoked other migration waves and have rendered many Roma unprotected. At present, there is a temporary migration in Georgia from Azerbaijan, Turkey and other neighbouring countries which is essentially socio-economic but raises risks of human trafficking linked to beggars, street children and prostitution.

#### Size and geographical distribution of the Roma, Dom and Lom population

Georgia is the only country in the region, together with Turkey, to have Roma, Dom and Lom communities living on its territory.

According to the results of the 2014 General Population Census presented by the Georgian expert of the thematic group during the thematic visit, the population of self-identified Roma living in Georgia equalled 604 persons (male constitute 293 and women 311). The identified distribution of Roma by regions was as follows: Adjara (138), Imereti (135), Kvemo Kartli (92), Kakheti (85), Tbilisi (57), Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (53), Shida Kartli (24) and Guria (16). The share of persons aged 5-9 and 10-14 was higher compared to other age groups.

According to the results of this Census, 588 Roma had in 2014 Georgian citizenship; the number of Roma having citizenship of another country was less than 10; and, for 14 Roma, citizenship was not identified.

From the 2014 Census, information was obtained about the achieved level of education of the Roma population. According to the Census, 81 Roma have full general education; the basic and primary levels of general education achieved were indicated by 24 and 66 respectively; 115 out of 254 are literate but without general education; 139 are illiterate.

Based on the Census results, 54 of a total of 604 Roma are fluent in Georgian language and use Georgian as their mother tongue, whilst 38 Roma use Russian as mother tongue and 20 Roma indicated Romanian as their mother tongue; 167 respondents indicated that they cannot speak Georgian. 511 of a total Roma population indicated their mother tongue to be other than Georgian, Azerbaijani and Russian, of those Roma who are fluent in Georgian 274 persons' mother tongue is other than above-mentioned languages, and in the group of Roma who can't speak Georgian mother tongue also appears to be other language. Other language is Romani and the number of Roma who identified their native language so is 491.

Regarding the religion of Roma group representatives, the results of the 2014 Census showed that 476 Roma were Orthodox, 11 were Protestants, 61 did not indicate their religion, 36 Roma belong to none of the religions and less than 10 were Muslim.

The census showed interesting results about the distribution of Roma by their economic activities. According to the result out of total of 373 Roma, 147 were economically active, 115 were employed, 15 were hired worker, 70 were self-employed, 32 were unemployed, 171 were economically inactive and, in the case of 55 Roma, information about economic activities was not indicated. Based on the results, the main source of existence for 136 Roma was social assistance; 79 Roma had an income from their individual activities; 24 Roma were dependent on pension and 283 were dependent on other people.

Prior to the thematic visit, the Council of Europe estimated the number of Roma (in its general sense, comprising Roma, Lom and Dom communities) to be between 1,500 and 2,500 persons, i.e. approximately 0.04% of the total population. Following the thematic visit and taking into account Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research and other estimates, **the total Roma population (Dom and Lom included) is estimated at 4,500, or 0.12% of the total population.**

Except if other sources are specified, the information below about Roma, Dom and Lom in Georgia are extracts from Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research published in 2014 '**The Gypsies (Dom – Lom – Rom) in Georgia**'<sup>8</sup>.

### **Lom (Bosha)**

At the population census Lom (Bosha) declare themselves as 'Armenians', so there is no official data on their numbers. According to Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research **the estimated number of Lom (Bosha) in Georgia is around 2,000.** Bosha in Georgia are descendants of refugees from the region of Erzurum (today in Turkey) after the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29, when about 50,000 Armenians re-settled within the Russian Empire, in the region Javakhk. Part of these re-settlers were obviously Bosha, who in conditions of the Ottoman Empire lived together with local Armenians and shared their fate. As descendants of refugees from Eastern Anatolia, Bosha in Georgia speak the Western dialect of the Armenian language. It is different from literary Armenian language, which is based on Eastern Armenian dialects. It is difficult to determine whether they speak their own language or it is only one dialect of the Armenian language, with large number of 'own' words.

The identity of Bosha in Georgia is complicated and multidimensional. They not only always publicly declare but really perceive themselves as part of Armenian national minority, by analogy with neighbouring Armenia, where they are considered 'subethnos' or 'ethnographic group' in the composition of the Armenian nation. On the other hand, both in Armenia and in Georgia, they always set themselves a little apart from other Armenians. In fact, their identity exists on two levels, national (Armenian) and community (Lomavtic), and which of them will be leading depends on the specific situational context. The unique aspect in this is that the Armenians accept them as part of their nation. This can be explained through long shared historical experience and contemporary socio-political circumstances. They have been living side by side with Armenians perhaps more than a millennium; in the Ottoman Empire, where religion and ethnicity mix and overlap, they were part of the Armenian *millet*. Escalating ethnic tensions throughout Transcaucasia, have forged a strong sense of national unity, leading to efforts to mitigate internal ethnic and religious conflicts, including among the Bosha in Armenia and in Georgia.

In Georgia *Bosha* live mainly in the cities of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltskha, as well as in the cities of Tsalka, Shulaveri and Marneuli, in some villages in Ninotsminda municipality, and individual families resettled in cities of Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Gori. The community is most numerous in Akhalkalaki, which is centre of the historical region Samtskhe-Javakheti, where about 100 families live in the so-called "Bosha Mayla" (Bosha neighbourhood), located near the market.

Bosha in the past were leather sieves makers. Currently their main occupation is petty and itinerant trade. They travel across their region and within Georgia, buy agricultural production from peasants and goods from major markets, and re-sell them locally. Few of them maintain their own workshops on the markets for the production of tin products (including modernized version of the traditional sieves), leather hats, shoes, etc. Recently, after the introduction of visa-free regime

<sup>8</sup> See also their 2016 book published by Palgrave "Gypsies in Central Asia and the Caucasus".

with Turkey, some travel to Turkish markets too, where they are buying goods for mass consumption, which they re-sell in Georgia and also in Armenian town of Gyumri, and in the capital Yerevan.

The living conditions of Boshia are not different from their surrounding population (ethnic Armenians and Georgians). Their overall standard of living is even relatively good for Georgia.

### Roma

In October 2013, the CAHROM member on behalf of Georgia had indicated that an estimated 750 to 1,120 Roma were living in seven settlements across Georgia (Abkhazia included, see below) following a research conducted in 2010<sup>9</sup>. Romani settlements are scattered across Georgia. In Tbilisi, where the largest community can be found, approximately 250-300 people live in rented apartments and homes. In Georgia's eastern region of Kakheti, the Roma community consists of around 100-120 people living in typical rural homes that they own themselves. These people mostly carry Ukrainian family names and claim to have Ukrainian roots and ties with other Romani communities with Ukrainian last names in eastern Georgia. Next, a group of some 100 Roma claiming Russian ancestry lives in the Black Sea coastal town in Autonomous Republic of Ajara. These Roma claim that their relatives migrated to Kobuleti from Krasnodar krai during World War II. In Kutaisi, a group of roughly 100 Roma lives compactly in Soviet-style apartments in the Avangard district. Finally, in Sukhumi, the capital of the *de facto* separatist Republic of Abkhazia, roughly 500 Roma live in private apartments and houses in a district to the north of the centre of the city.

Georgia turns out to be one of the few countries in Europe which do not actually host 'own' Roma. Probably the first Roma entered Georgia back in the nineteenth century in the times of the Russian Empire, but the first real migration began in the 20s of the twentieth century, followed by new waves during and after World War II. The number of Roma in Georgia is fluctuating due to socio-economic cross-border migration. However, according to Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research **the maximum estimated number of Roma in Georgia is 2,000**.

The population census of Georgia in 2002 reported 472 people self-declared as 'Roma'. There is a clear decline in their numbers compared to the 1989 census, which counted 1,774 *Tsygane* ('Gypsies'). The tendency of a reduction of the number of Roma after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of Georgia as an independent state in 1991 is doubtless. The main reason for this is the situation in Georgia after the declaration of independence – civil war in the first half of the 90s, and armed conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In the wake of the country's nationalist mobilization, militias swept through most of the small Roma settlements in the early 1990s, razing houses to the ground and seizing property of Roma who had been so far peacefully living with their Georgian neighbours. In these conditions, combined with a severe economic crisis and plummeting standard of living, the majority of Roma from Georgia managed to emigrate to the Russian Federation and only some families returned back after normalization of the situation in Georgia, but were unable to return to their previous settlements. They, along with Roma who in spite of turbulences and harassments remained in Georgia, settled in different places, sometimes in houses that remain empty after repatriation of Russians. In Abkhazia almost all Roma living there left the area after the war from 1992-93 and declaration of independence in 1994. Most of them emigrated to Russia too and now live mainly in Tbilisi (Samgori district) and recently some of them return to Sukhumi.

Internal division of the *Roma* community in Georgia includes two main groups living also in the Russian Federation and Ukraine - *Vlaxi* and *Krimurya* (called also *Krymi*). Territorial demarcation between them is clearly expressed. *Krimurya* live in West Georgia, in Kutaisi, Batumi and Sukhumi. *Vlaxi* are living in Eastern Georgia, in Gachiani (together with some families of *Plashchuny*), Leninovka (Choeti) and in Telavi. The contact area between the two main groups now is the capital Tbilisi, where (mainly in Samgori district) live in rented homes as well as *Krimurja* from Kutaisi as *Vlaxi* from Leninovka. In past, at the time of the USSR in Georgia lived also representatives of other Roma groups – *Ruska Roma*, *Servi*, *Kishinyovtsi*,

<sup>9</sup> Source: presentation delivered by Mr Irakli Kokaia, CAHROM member on behalf of Georgia, at the 6<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting in Rome, Italy, on 28-31 October 2013.

and at least temporarily *Kelderari*. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, all of them have emigrated in the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Mixed marriages between members of different Roma groups are relatively few, more among Vlaxi with Plashchuni. The reasons are partly the group endogamy, also the territorial separation and different religions (Vlaxi are Orthodox Christians and Krimurya are Muslims). In both groups the “Gypsy court” (called *syndo* among Vlaxi and *davija* among Krimurya) ceased to function since at least two decades, because, according to our informants, the lack of adult respectable men (due high mortality of men, e.g. among Vlaxi is only one man in whole community, who is 50 years old, all others are much younger) and impossibility to invite respectable men from the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The transborder in-group marriages are currently non-existent, and now Roma in Georgia exist as small communities.

Formally, all Roma living in Georgia have the right (and should) get Georgian citizenship and the personal documents (including passport for travels abroad), but in practice the number of undocumented Roma still exist. This leads to number of other problems, such as impossibility to obtain pensions, child and social welfare, access to medical care and education, etc. Lack of international passport do not allow majority of Roma to seek alternative livelihoods through temporary or permanent migration. In recent years, however, some members of the *Vlaxi* community succeeded to obtain documents and are making short term travels for trade to Azerbaijan, which radically improve their household economies and prospects for future.

During the thematic visit, it was stated by Georgian interlocutors that the mobility groups were actively working in the process of documenting Roma. Moreover, free aid procedures are guaranteed to Roma in case of such need. Under the project of Reduction and Prevention of Statelessness in Georgia, free legal assistance was provided for target group, door to door campaigns were conducted, and a project consultant was working specifically on Roma issues. However, a lack of interest from the side of some Roma to regularize their situation should also be taken into account.

In general, in today's independent Georgia the financial and economic situation is heavy, but more severe it is for Roma. In Soviet times most of them, as well as throughout the entire USSR, worked, albeit irregularly, but instead developed a very successful small trading, according to the rules then classified as “speculation”, that allowed them to maintain relatively good standard of living. After the changes, the situation has radically changed and Roma not only lost their regular jobs, but more importantly, in a free market economy they were driven out by the surrounding population from their main economic niches. Some of them still live off the retail trade, in spite of huge competition and their traditional occupations (mostly mobile blacksmithing) is no longer suitable to the modern era. The majority of women (especially from Krimurya) keep trying to feed their families with fortune-telling on the streets of major cities. There are nowadays in Georgia few beggars from the Roma community (see however *Dom* below). For many Roma families, the main sources of income are petty trade and seasonal migratory agricultural work. As noticed by the group of experts during the field visit to Roma communities in the Kakheti region Roma are integrated into the local community and their living conditions are equal to Georgians.

Under these conditions it is obvious, that the educational level of the Roma in Georgia is at a very low level. During the decades after the changes has grown up a new generation that is with low literacy or completely illiterate, and the older generation, educated in socialist times display quite a low functional literacy (most of them Roma were taught in past in Russian schools and have no literacy skills in Georgian). So Georgia turns out to become a country where there is no *de facto* educated Roma elite, something absolutely not typical for countries of former socialist camp.

In 2014 in Georgia there were two official registered Roma organisations - Kakhetian Gypsy organisation “Roma” and Adjarian Gypsy organisation “Roma”, both led by non-Roma women, married with Roma. Both organisations however have no regular income and activities. With the help of evangelical mission Light for the People from Sweden was established a Roma church in Kobuleti, with a Roma pastor, but its overall activity is limited.

### **Dom (Garachi)**

Historical evidences about them are extremely scarce and fragmented and the same is true about their current situation. According to Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov’s research, **Dom in Georgia could be estimated at around 500.**

Their presence and attempts to settle permanently in Georgia began as soon as after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and over the past ten years, they are more intense. Dom, who live in Kutaisi, coming from Azerbaijan settled initially in Batumi, but were driven out by local authorities and moved to Kutaisi, where at the beginning more than three years they lived in shacks without water and electricity. In 2014 circa 100 Dom in Kutaisi were living in abandoned half-ruined houses in the neighbourhood Avanguard, and several families in the nearby city of Samtredia. Dom, who live now in Tbilisi are about 30-40 families in total about 200 people, but this number is not constant, as some families live here seasonally or in certain intervals. Some of them had lived (and some continue to live until now) in abandoned wagons of the urban railway station and gradually many of them are moving to rented flats. Dom, who live in Georgia (as said mainly in the capital Tbilisi and in Kutaisi, the second largest city in the country) are citizens of Azerbaijan, majority of them have permanent domicile there in cities Gazakh and Aghstafa, and surrounding villages.

Dom are migrating from Azerbaijan to Georgia, where the standard of living is much lower, but it is due to the geographical proximity and convenient transport links, whereas the larger cities in Azerbaijan are much further away. The main, and virtually sole, Dom's occupation in Georgia is begging, especially for women, often with infants in arms, together with small girls and boys. Rarely beg also elderly women and men (usually men are with signs of disability). Usually they have certain "own" places for begging, in city centre and major junctions (then they beg from passing cars), and urban markets. They have no serious problems with the police. This gives reasons to the local population, including the media, to talk about "mafia of beggars", that corrupts local authorities. Widespread are many public stereotypes typical also of Roma beggars in Europe: about intentionally breaking arms and legs of children, and their exploitation by rich "bosses". Local population in Georgia (including Roma in Tbilisi and Kutaisi) are convinced that they all are Kurds. The Dom in Georgia usually also say in the public that they are Kurds; and their main language is Kurdish, with many preserved old 'own' words and phrases. Within their community their identity is of 'Dom', and they are distancing themselves from the Kurds, including in language and their self-identity is *Kurdi domlar* (Kurdish Dom). Since in the Transcaucasia generally everybody believes that the Kurds are Yazidis, and both designation are overlapping, so in the cases when the Dom want to distinguish themselves from the Kurds they underline, that they are real Muslims and not Yazidis. They are unable to distinguish between Shia and Sunni branch of Islam, and in order to prove that they are real Muslim, they stress that they go regularly into the mosque, observe Ramadan, celebrate Kurban Bayram (Eid) and other holidays, which they consider important for Muslims, such as Navruz and Hidirlez.

The Dom living in Tbilisi and Kutaisi have relatives not only in Azerbaijan but also in the Russian Federation, even individual families in Central Asia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of borders parts of them went repeatedly to beg in Turkey, where they succeed to establish links with local *Domlar* (e.g. in Diyarbakir). They see Turkish *Domlar* as a separate part of their community which is divided from national borders, and consider marriages between Dom people living in Azerbaijan and Turkey not only eligible but even welcomed (as opposed to marriage with representatives of other communities).

Migrations of Dom to Georgia that could be defined as a specific form of cross-border labour mobility are only part of their movement in the whole post-Soviet space. Some of them were in the Russian Federation – Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar, Grozny (the capital of Chechnya) and other major cities (primarily in southern Russia). Some even go to beg in Eastern Turkey, as said, but encounter there strong competition from local *Domlar*. We cannot speak about an overall life strategy of Dom aimed at resettlement to Georgia, which is accompanied by many legal problems, but there are already visible signs that at least part of them intent to settle permanently in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, even already some of the weddings in the community are conducted in their new residences.

### Challenges

The Romani community is the most marginalized ethnic community in Georgia.

The fate of the 'Dom' and 'Roma' in Georgia reflect the post-soviet realities in the region and is situated between two extremes – emigration and labour mobility on one side, and on the other isolation, gradually crowding in the social

periphery and marginalization, which can reach unexpected dimensions. Against this backdrop stands the unique case of the 'Lom', who in result of historical fate and contemporary development of the region intensified feelings of national unity and integration with Armenian minority. The relations between the three divisions 'Dom – Lom – Rom', whom the surrounding society in Georgia designated collectively as 'Gypsies' (using Russian designation *Tsygane*) are virtually non-existent. In practice, representatives of different communities are not able to communicate directly, because they live in different places, and in fact the only contact zones are the capital Tbilisi and Kutaisi (and only between 'Rom' and 'Dom'). Even in these conditions they avoid each other and they sharply set themselves apart from each other. Interestingly the surrounding population has a dual attitude towards them, they do not consider 'Dom' and 'Lom' to be 'Gypsies', but interconnect them. 'Dom' and 'Lom' from their side, often without being asked, are hurry to refuse to identify themselves as 'Gypsies' at all. As reasons for the distinction they indicate different mother tongues, different religions ('Lom' belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, 'Rom' are Orthodox Christians and Muslims, 'Dom' are Muslims), and some cultural characteristics. Even proposals for inclusion in projects targeting Roma coming from the NGOs which offer respective financial support has so far been firmly rejected by the representatives of the 'Lom' and 'Dom' (BTW similarly the 'Dom' refused also the attempts of Kurdish NGO's to be included in their projects). So, at least at this stage, the construction of any kind of unity or achievement of at least some form of co-operation between the three communities seems impossible.<sup>10</sup>

The above mentioned migration flows, both internal and external, are some of the reasons explaining the lack of identity documents among Roma and Dom in Georgia which is a serious obstacle to access any public services, including education. This starts the typical vicious circle: the lack of education results in no employment, bad health and precarious housing situation and grooving impoverishment among the Roma community. The result is the presence of many children in street situation: a 2009 study revealed the number of 1,049 children living/working in the streets of Tbilisi and other cities in 2007. The Georgian Government is aware that many children are living and working in the street. Due to their vulnerable situation, there is high risk for them to become victims of organised crime. Authorities are trying to strengthen the co-operation between the children's shelter mobile groups and the supervising mobile groups for timely detection and investigation of the alleged crimes<sup>11</sup>. To the end of 2015 there were 634 children in street situation and a majority of them had no identity papers. Moreover, the problem of domestic violence is unreported (and denied by community members) even though it influences not only the situation of women but also of children. The abusers are not only husbands but also other family members, including parents.

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women<sup>12</sup>, its causes and consequences in Georgia puts Roma women in Georgia, alongside women from other minorities (Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian, Kist, and Yazidi) among the groups at risk: they are not only discriminated against because of their gender; their minority status also increases their vulnerability to specific forms of violence. Gender stereotypes and gender-specific roles within the family and in society are still prevalent in those communities. Child marriage and, consequently, early pregnancy, high dropout rate from school and domestic violence tend to be more prevalent in minority groups, particularly in rural areas<sup>13</sup>.

The phenomenon of child marriages among Roma communities is common, despite the fact that according to the Georgian law, it is prohibited<sup>14</sup>. The age of marriages between 13 and 15-years-old is widely accepted in the Roma communities. It results in low level of Roma girls' attendance to schools and high drop-outs rate. Another, not less important, reason for illiteracy among young Roma in Georgia is that education is still not highly valued in those communities, as children are expected to contribute to the household economy.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research published in 2014 **'The Gypsies (Dom – Lom – Rom) in Georgia'**.

<sup>11</sup> Public Defender Office, 'Situation of children in the streets', 2015: <http://www.eoi.at/d/EOI%20-%20Jahresberichte/Georgien/Situation%20of%20Children's%20Rights%20in%20Georgia.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> On the situation of women, see also the chapter "Roma Women" in the UN Women report from 2014 [http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2014/study%20on%20ethnic%20minority%20women\\_eng.pdf?la=en&vs=238](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2014/study%20on%20ethnic%20minority%20women_eng.pdf?la=en&vs=238).

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to Georgia - A/HRC/32/42/Add.3, 22 July 2016, : <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/164/40/PDF/G1616440.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>14</sup> Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, the parental consent for allowing marriages between 16 and 18 has been revoked (except in case of pregnancy which then requires a court decision).

In 2012, the Georgian government, with support of ECMI and local NGOs, started the registration process of Roma people. Still, the number of text devoted to those groups and available to wider international public is low.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the presence of related groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal) is not fully recognised in the reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) so far.

In 2016, a conference was organised by the Caucasus branch of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), in cooperation with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to identify the needs of the Roma community of Georgia and to present possible solutions, following a six-month project “Towards Roma Inclusion in Georgia”.

### **Policies and projects implemented to improve the situation of Roma, Dom and Lom communities**

The project of Reduction and Prevention of Statelessness in Georgia aimed at the improvement of the legal status and living conditions of stateless persons. In this regard, the following activities were conducted:

- Identification of beneficiaries and provision of free legal support;
- Preparation of recommendations/proposals on the improvement of the existing legislative base and practice;
- Implementation of informative and educational campaign.

The identification of Roma beneficiaries was one of the most important directions of the project. The Project Consultant was working specifically on Roma issues with community leaders. A door-to-door information campaign was conducted. A referral mechanism worked for individual cases/beneficiaries (UNHCR, PSDA, SSA, etc.). The co-operation was ensured with the civil society organisations and local governments. Concretely, 72 cases were prepared and administered by the project; 47 beneficiaries were assisted, as follows: Resident Permit / Card – 14; Establishment of Georgian Citizenship / ID Card – 14; Establishment / registration of birth and obtain birth certificate – 21; other type of assistance – 23. It should be underlined however that one of the main reasons for the lack of identity documents is the internal migration. The lack of interest from the side of some Roma and Dom to regularize their situation should also be taken into account.

## **2.2 Armenia**

Prior to the thematic visit, the Council of Europe estimated the number of Roma (in its general sense), essentially of the Lom community, at 2,000 persons, consisting 0.06% of the total Armenian population. The following information was provided by the Armenian expert during the thematic visit:

### **Historical background**

Entering the Armenian highland during the end of 11th and the beginning of the 12th century, a large group of Roma people, in consequence of a their long term contacts with the Armenians, gradually settled down, became Armenian speakers, and adopted Christianity. Possibly since 17th or 18th centuries, their ethnic culture and appearance became very different from those of the other Roma ethnic groups. However, owing to a vagrant/nomadic way of life and specific occupations, the local Armenians used to call them “boshā” or “Armenian-boshā”. The term “boshā” first appeared in the Armenian historiography during the eighteenth century.

During the 19th and 20th centuries the important economic activities of the Boshā people were sieve and basket-weaving, as well as making of musical instruments (drums, tambourine), crafts, which were closely related to leather tanning. Many

<sup>15</sup> Some information is available in: ECMI,; The Gypsies (Dom – Lom – Rom) in Georgia, by E. Marushiakova and V. Popov [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266387938\\_The\\_Gypsies\\_Dom\\_-\\_Lom\\_-\\_Rom\\_in\\_Georgia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266387938_The_Gypsies_Dom_-_Lom_-_Rom_in_Georgia); Unwanted, rejected, unaccepted: around the problem of “invisible” Romani and Dom children in Georgia, by U. Markowska-Manista, 2015 <http://www.pwe.ug.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Markowska-Manista-nr31.pdf>; The contemporary expression of the identity of the Boshas, by H. Marutyan, 2011, <http://akademai.com/doi/abs/10.1556/AEthn.55.2011.2.3>; Roma Youth in Georgia: what are the challenges? by S. Veloy-Mateu, 2017

of them were also engaged in small retail trade. Since the end of the 19th century, the Boshas gradually lost a large part of their ethnic and specific tradition and from the middle of the 20th century they became totally settled, integrated in the society and became engaged almost in all spheres of the social and economic life of Armenia. Nevertheless, in them one could still find tendencies towards handicraft and retailing, which was complemented by other types of business and crafts. Many Boshas had the reputation of being good drummers, zurna-players, accordionists, tambourine players and performers of traditional songs.

### **Size of the Lom (Bosha) population**

According to the census of 2011, Armenians constitute 98.1% of population of Republic of Armenia. As a national minority, Boshas last time were named in the census of 1926 (only a few persons). In the censuses of 1939, 1959, 1979, 1989, and 2011, Boshas were not mentioned as a separate ethnic group or national minority.

According to the data of ethnographic field research, at the end of the 20th century their approximate number was 5,000-7,000. Considering that the Lom population alone in Georgia is estimated at approximately 2,000, **the Armenian Lom (Bosha) population can therefore be estimated at around 5,000, or approximately 0.17 % of the total population.**

### **Geographical distribution**

In modern Armenia the Boshas live mainly in the capital Yerevan, as well as the cities of Gyumri, Vanadzor, and Artashat, in the village of Gyulagarak, in Kotayk region (particularly in the village of Jraber, formerly "Bosha village"). In Georgia they live in the cities of Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha in Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia (bordered with Armenia in the north-west, with a majority Armenian population), the village of Ghzlkilisa (Tsalka region), and Tbilisi. The vast majority of compact Boshas settlements, both in the cities and in villages, are certain neighbourhoods which have names identifying places like *Sari Tagh* (Mountain District, in Yerevan), *Veri plan* (Upper Plan, in Akhaltskha). However Armenians (especially the middle aged and the elderly) mostly call those places *Bosha(nnu) mayla* (the neighbourhood/quarter of Boshas, in Armenian and Turkish), stressing their sub-ethnic/group context.

### **Language**

The native tongue of the Boshas is the Armenian language, and their children attend Armenian schools. The vocabulary of the Boshas language (Lomavren) is very limited and is mainly intended for brief communications. They define their own language as "*a secret language*" and even use forms specific to the Armenian inflexion. It is not a language for family or ethnic communication, rather it has the nature of argot and only a few examples of its folklore have been preserved. The modern Boshas could not be identified as bilinguals. They have undergone complete lingual assimilation.

### **Issue of (self-)identity**

Today the Boshas do not distinguish themselves from local Armenians, even in their self-naming. They do not openly use their endoethnic name *Lom*, which is a version of the Gypsy endoethnic name of *Rom* with the accepted reasoning that "*Lom means Boshas*". Their endoethnic name corresponds to the exoethnic name *Boshas* used by the Armenians in a pejorative sense. It is not a proper name but an adjective synonymous to the words "beggar, slacker", and is therefore pejorative.

Mixed marriages are very common among the Boshas. Marrying Armenian female villagers was especially common. Naturally, marriages inside the ethnic sub-group of Boshas represent the greater number of these unions.

Since 1970-80s, the young and middle-aged Boshas have abandoned sieve-making in order not to be identified as Boshas due to their profession or environment/neighbourhood. Thus, the Boshas strive to get rid of the trade particular to their sub-ethnic/group identity, in order to assimilate.



Another unintentional factor preserving the identity of Bosha is the physical anthropological peculiarities, which are normally preserved in a group, the most important feature being their dark skin, which currently has lost its prominence owing to the mixed marriages.

The Armenians currently do not call them “*Bosha*” openly. However, in their absence the term is used; not with the intention of *offending*, but for *distinguishing* them. In some cases they intentionally use the word *bosha*, conscious of all the negative implications of the word, to emphasize some features of the Bosha when talking to their Armenian friends or relatives. Nowadays, the Armenians sometimes complain that “*Bosha became pasha and the Armenians became Bosha*”, meaning that a great number of Armenians have become retail dealers and peddlers, while the Bosha have become respected citizens.

All the above-mentioned reasons make the researchers to consider the sub-ethnic mass of Bosha as an ethnographic group of Armenians with a different origin, which naturally and voluntarily are trying to assimilate with the Armenians.

As a conclusion, it can be stated that the Bosha define themselves as Armenians, they are equal citizens of the Republic of Armenia. Many Armenian people, especially young man, who sometimes use in their lexicon the term “*bosha*”, perceive it as an adjective and hardly are aware of their sub-ethnic background.

### **Social issues**

The social issues, which the CAHROM thematic visit is trying to address, are not characteristic to the Bosha people, living in Armenia. That is:

- Bosha schoolchildren are attending the same schools, as the other pupils, and there is no discrimination in this regard. Armenia adopted 12-year mandatory school education system. Of course, especially in villages, there are children, who are not attending school from some upper grades, but this is conditioned by social/economic factors only.
- Housing issues are general for all the citizens of Armenia. It should be mentioned, that as far back as the mid-1990s, privatization of apartments took place in Armenia, thanks to which people living in the state owned houses became the outright owners of their living space with a very small payment.
- There are no informal settlements of Bosha people, therefore there is no need for their legalisation.
- The mother tongue of the Bosha people is Armenian, and they receive the education offered in all Armenian schools.
- In the Armenian history textbooks, Bosha people (nearly 300 warriors) are mentioned fighting together with the Armenians during the self-defense battles in Yerevan in 1724, against the Turks.
- Cases of early marriage in the Armenian society are not so many, and in the statistical reports do not have ethnic tendencies.
- Cases of human trafficking in the Armenian society do not have ethnic/sub-ethnic background.
- It is unclear, whether among the beggars in the streets representatives of Bosha people are present. It should be mentioned, that once a year, especially in the Summer, in the streets of the central district of Yerevan one can see colourfully dressed Russian speaking Roma women, who are engaged in fortune-telling for a payment.
- The cases of exploitation of children have socio-economic reasons, and do not have any ethnic/sub-ethnic tendency.
- In the Armenian media, the theme of Bosha as an ethnic/sub-ethnic group is not mentioned. Only very rarely (may be once per year or every two-years in Facebook or electronic media) one can find articles on ethnographic and historic background of the Bosha, providing information about these sub-groups.

The Armenian expert concluded that in Armenia there is no policy of distinction (differentiation, discrimination) towards the Bosh people. Bosh people of the Republic of Armenia feel themselves as part of the Armenian nation, and their separation in any way from the Armenian people is not in their own interests.

### 2.3 Azerbaijan

Prior to the thematic visit, the Council of Europe estimated the number of Roma (in its general sense), essentially of the Dom (Garachi) community, at 2,000 persons, consisting 0.02% of the total Azerbaijani population. The following information was provided by the Azerbaijani expert during the thematic visit:

#### **Geographical distribution**

Roma people reside in compact settlements mostly in Yevlakh, Agdash, Aghsu and Barda regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

#### **Size of the Dom (Garachi) population**

According to the 2009 population census, 49 persons considered themselves Roma; the rest of the population of Roma origin do not officially identify themselves as Roma. However, if we add the estimates of Roma people living in Yevlakh (3,140 persons), Agdash (2,800 persons), Aghsu town (48 families), Barda (53 families) and if we consider that an average family shall be composed of five persons (which is probably a low estimate) the Roma population can be estimated at **6,500 or approximately 0.06% of the total population.**

#### **Legal status, provision of identity documents; registration and documentation**

Roma people are residing in compact settlements in the areas listed above are citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As citizens, they are issued national identity documents which ensure their access to social, healthcare and education services on equal basis with the rest of the population.

Roma people are registered on the basis of their place of residence and are issued national IDs accordingly (2,812 out of 3,140 Roma settled in Yevlakh region have obtained IDs). 216 persons of Roma origin have moved from Azerbaijan to the Russian Federation and Georgia.

#### **Political and public participation, electoral rights**

According to Article 56 of the Law on Elections "citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have the right to elect and to be elected to the state bodies, as well as to take part in referendum".

Electoral rights of citizens are regulated by the Laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On election of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan" of 9 June 1998, "On elections to Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan" of 5 July 2000 and "On rules of elections to municipalities" of 2 June 1999.

Electoral legislation of Azerbaijan recognises equal right of all citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan irrespective of their national, race, religious and language identity to elect and to be elected to the higher legislative and executive bodies, as well as to municipalities of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The State Committee on Family, Women and Children Problem of the Republic of Azerbaijan held Forums of Azerbaijani Children with participation of children representing all regions of Azerbaijan. Forums aimed at protecting children's rights, promoting children's participation in decision-making and giving them an opportunity to come up with new ideas and initiatives were held in all regions of Azerbaijan in 2009, 2011 and 2014.

The Fourth Forum of Azerbaijani children is planned to be held in November 2017 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Special attention will be attached to involving children belonging to ethnic minorities and representatives of other nationalities, including Roma children.

### **Healthcare system**

As citizens of Azerbaijan and holders of national IDs, people of Roma origin have equal access to healthcare services; Access to healthcare and relevant public policies are regulated by the Law "On healthcare of population" of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

### **Education**

National minorities living in Azerbaijan enjoy equal rights and freedoms, including the right to education without any discrimination based on their ethnic origin.

In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education" all citizens have equal right and access to all pillars of education. Thus, favourable conditions were created for ensuring access to education of Roma children along with other schoolchildren. Roma children were fully provided with textbooks, and school staff has kept regular contact with their parents and families.

Despite this, school attendance among Roma children is still not satisfactory. The dropout rate increases among senior pupils enrolled in secondary education. Thus, primary school attendance among Roma children is 50-60%, while in senior high school the attendance rate is only 20-30% out of total number of schoolchildren. School dropout among Roma children is 15-20%. No one from Yevlakh and Agdash school graduates of Roma origin continue their education in universities or vocational schools.

The total number of Roma children studying in 4 schools of Agdash city is 191 persons. 182 children out of 191 attend school, 7 students dropped out of school. In Yevlakh, the total number of school students of Roma origin is 192.

### **State policy towards minorities**

The 1995 Constitution guarantees respect for human rights and freedoms regardless of ethnic origin, race, religion, languages or other distinctions. The Constitutional Act on state sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan envisages that all citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have equal rights before the law. Restriction of rights and freedoms of citizens based on racial, religious, ethnic discrimination or of ethnic, political and social origin is strongly prohibited. In accordance with Article 44 of the Constitution "everyone has the right to maintain his or her national identity. No one can be forced to change his or her national identity".

Presidential Decree of 16 September 1992 on "State support for the development of language and culture, as well as protection of rights and freedoms of national minorities, smaller peoples and ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan", Laws "On Culture" and "On Education" and many other legislative acts provide solid legal framework for prevention of cases of national, racial and religious discrimination. Along with national legislation, provisions of relevant international documents are also being applied in Azerbaijan. Since 2000 Azerbaijan has been party to the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and in 2001 has signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages.

### **Protection of women, children and youth at risk**

Roma children were not identified among children victims of human trafficking in the period between 2005 and the first five months of 2017. Women make up 85-90% of all Roma engaged in begging. In some cases parents divert their children from school in order to engage them in begging. The lack of or refusal to present identity documents and constant relocation of Roma engaged in begging create difficulties in obtaining statistical data in this area.

According to national legislation, employment of a person under 15 years old, engaging children to labour that may cause damage to their health and morality, regular begging and engagement of children to begging by an adult are prosecuted by the Administrative Offences Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

#### 2.4. Russian Federation

Prior to the thematic visit, the Council of Europe estimated the number of Roma (in its general sense) between 450,000 and 1,200,000, using an average figure of 825,000, i.e. 0.58% of the total population of the Russian Federation. The following information was provided by the Russian expert during the thematic visit:

##### **Size of the Roma population**

The Russian Federation is the largest State in the world with poly-ethnic population. According to the latest All-Russian Census held in 2010, more than 193 peoples reside in the Russian Federation. Their cultural and linguistic diversity is protected by the State.

According to the All-Russian Census held in 2010, around 205,000 Roma reside permanently in the Russian Federation. Compared with a relevant figure of the previous All-Russian Census of 2002, the number of the Roma has increased by 12 percent (in 2002, 183,000 citizens of the Russian Federation identified themselves as Roma).

However, some experts claim that a real number of the Roma residing in the Russian Federation exceeds the figure reflected in the abovementioned statistical data and may amount to **500,000** people. This may be explained by the facts that not all Roma residents indicated their Roma identity during All-Russian Census and there is no statistical data on the number of the Roma who did not register their place of residence. They are mainly living in rural areas of the Russian Federation and the ones who have come to the Russian Federation from the CIS countries illegally.

##### **Language**

277 languages and dialects are used in the Russian Federation, 89 languages are applied in the education system with 30 of them as the language of education and 59 of them as one of the curricula subjects, including Romani language.

##### **Human rights and minority policies**

The Russian Federation pursues consistent policy in the field of protection and promotion of human rights of all citizens irrespective of their racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic identity. Discrimination on various grounds is subject to criminal and administrative proceedings. The provisions of our national legislation are entirely applied to Russian Roma who enjoy all the rights and freedoms resulting from their Russian citizenship.

##### **Roma civil society**

At present, there are 74 Roma public associations that represent interests of the Roma in the spheres of culture, education and human rights. In 1999, main Roma public associations from different regions of the Russian Federation established the All-Russian "umbrella" Roma organisation, namely the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Russian Roma. Its President, Ms. Nadezhda Demeter, is a member of the Council for Interethnic Relations under the President of the Russian Federation, established in 2012. She is also a member of the Expert Consultative Council of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Inter-ethnic Relations Issues under the Government of the Russian Federation. Such memberships enable her to actively participate in the activities of the abovementioned bodies.

##### **Roma policy**

The Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs - the State body in charge of elaboration and implementation of the State policies in the field of inter-ethnic relations in our country that replaced in that role the Ministry for Regional Development and the

Ministry of Culture - conducts activities aimed at promoting the integration of Russian Roma in the society, including their ethno-cultural development. Yet, in line with the recommendations of the Council of Europe on the integration of the Roma and the improvement of their situation in the Council of Europe Member States, the Government of the Russian Federation took a decision to strengthen the coordinated activities of various federal, regional and local authorities in this field in line with numerous recommendations and resolutions of the Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe adopted since 2011 and its initiative - the European Alliance of cities and regions for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers.

In this regard the pilot project – Action Plan of socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Roma in the Russian Federation for the period of 2013-2014 (hereafter the “Action Plan”) was approved in 2013 and had proved to be particularly successful. It was elaborated in close cooperation with the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Russian Roma and included a number of activities in the field of Roma ethno-cultural development and education, social care, information etc., aimed at promoting the social inclusion of Roma. These activities focused on such important issues as raising their educational level and employment, launching a systemic work of local authorities with leaders and activists of Roma public associations and removing negative public stereotypes and prejudice towards Roma.

It should be emphasized that the actors involved in the implementation of the national Action Plan were State bodies concerned, including the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs, ministries of culture, education, health, labour, internal affairs, etc., regional and local authorities, as well as Roma NGOs.

The Action Plan also launched monitoring system at regional and local levels that gathered information on Roma demography, level of social and economic development, a number of Roma pupils and students, areas with high concentration of Roma population, their migration capability, availability of nationality and identity documents, knowledge of Russian, Romani and regional languages, a level of social, transport, housing and communal services at Roma municipalities, etc.

According to the position of the Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe the local and regional authorities have a responsibility to implement policies that will ensure access for Roma to social rights in the fields of housing, education, employment and healthcare, as well as empowerment and political participation through numerous activities that can be implemented on the local and regional level.

In this regard the previous Action Plan resulted in 2013 in the adoption by the Ministry of Regional Development of methodological recommendations for regional and local authorities that promoted an increase of regional programmes aimed at assisting Roma communities with allocation of the necessary funding from regional budgets. These regional and local programmes included measures aimed at improving living standards and ethno-cultural development of Roma communities, insuring an average Russian level of housing and communal, social and transport services in areas with large Roma population, promoting traditional Roma crafts (blacksmiths, production of metal dishes, horse breeding, etc.), as well as financial support for initiatives and projects of Roma NGOs in this field.

Regional programmes also promoted study and development of Romani language, provided access for Roma NGOs to infrastructure of regional and local Houses of friendship, Houses of nationalities, National-Ethnic communication centres etc., involved Roma children and youth in local festivals and cultural events.

The secondary education remains the principal way of social integration for Roma children and youth. For example, in Kaliningrad oblast about 170 Roma pupils are trained in general education schools in the current school year and in the Republic of Bashkortostan more than 140 Roma children aged from 7 to 16 are studying in schools. In the Kalinin municipality (Tambov oblast), taking into consideration Roma nomadic traditions and parents' wishes, a distance

secondary education was organized for 58 Roma children that follow school programmes from 5 to 9 grades and for them 8 teachers are engaged 3 times a week in the afternoon.

The creation in some rural schools of the so-called "Roma classes" is also based on the decision of the parents, taking into account Roma national traditions and their nomadic way of their life. For example, such "Roma class" was created in one of schools in Bryansk for 18 Roma children who followed the educational programmes of the first and second grades. After some time the education was interrupted because of the move of the Roma camp to a new place of residence but after their return to Bryansk a "Roma class" was reopened. Also extra-curricular activities in different form aimed at health, cultural development and deeper social integration of Roma children are organized in schools usually in regions with a high concentration of Roma population.

Mainly due to difficulties with obtaining secondary and higher education, the Roma confront with obstacles in finding employment, especially regarding the formal one. Additional challenges for Roma integration into the society pose scientific and technological progress, development of large retail chains as well as increasing competition from other national minorities in the Russian Federation that deprive Roma from their traditional sources of income: blacksmith's craft, fortune telling, private trade and even begging.

The sphere of employment of the Roma is determined generally by the most developed sectors of economy in the region where they decided to settle. In the South of Russia this is mainly the agriculture, in Tatarstan, partly due to its active pace of regional development, this is the construction and in Perm Krai - breeding horses, organizing leisure activities on holidays, harvesting livestock products, picking mushrooms and berries.

Regarding a consultative support, regional plans included an invitation of Roma representatives to consultative bodies on inter-nationality relations to regional governors and local communities as well as providing advisory support for initiative groups of Roma and the development of cooperation with local and regional leaders of Roma NGOs.

The dialogue with Roma camps and areas of their compact residence is usually established through the head of community and in that way local authorities usually settle emerging confrontations between the Roma and local population. This practice proved to be successful, for example, in the municipality Kanevsky district (Krasnodar Krai) where local authorities managed to significantly reduce the level of criminal offences through direct dialogue with Roma leaders.

In 2017 the Russian Government, taking into consideration a positive outcome of previous coordinated efforts of national, regional and local authorities in this field, took a decision to begin drafting a new Action Plan of socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Russian Roma for the period of 2017 – 2019 at the inter-ministerial level with Roma NGOs participation. The Russian expert hopes that the Action Plan may have been adopted by November 2017, and then its measures profoundly studied could be presented.

## 2.5. Turkey

Although Turkey's population consists of a lot of ethnic majorities and minorities, there is no official record of the number of any ethnic group since the Republic of Turkey citizenship is not based on ethnicity. Turkish authorities estimate the total number of Roma in Turkey to be between 500,000 and 2.5 million<sup>16</sup>. Several NGOs, including Istanbul-based Zero Discrimination association and the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), indicate 3 to 5 million<sup>17</sup>. Researchers

<sup>16</sup> Estimated figure provided by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policy at the 6<sup>th</sup> CAHROM meeting (Rome, Italy, 28-31 October 2013).

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 5 of CAHROM (2011)25 Meeting report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> CAHROM meeting, Istanbul, Turkey, 22-25 November 2011, available at <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom>, as well as ERTF factsheet on Turkey available at [https://www.ertf.org/images/Reports/The\\_situation\\_of\\_Roma\\_in\\_Turkey\\_17062015.pdf](https://www.ertf.org/images/Reports/The_situation_of_Roma_in_Turkey_17062015.pdf).

working in the ERRC/HYD/EDROM Research covering cities in seven regions of Turkey, mention 4.5 to 5 million<sup>18</sup>. The council of Europe average estimate of 3 million is generally accepted by all parties, i.e. 3.78% of the total population. In Turkey, there are four main Roma groups: Roma, Lom, Dom and Abdal. Roma live mostly in Aegean Region, Lom live in the Black Sea Region, Dom live in Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolia, while Abdal are still largely itinerant and live in Central and South-Eastern Anatolia. Most of these groups have similar living standards.

### **The National Roma Integration Strategy**

The Turkish “National Strategy Document for Social Integration of Roma Citizens 2015-2020”<sup>19</sup> is implemented by two-year action plans in the periods 2017-2018 and 2019-2020. The document consists of 14 titles as follows:

- Introduction
- Policy Rationale
- Current Situation in Main Policy Fields
- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Housing
- Social Assistances and Social Support Services
- Sub-Policy Axes
- Cross-cutting Policy Fields
- Basic Implication Principles
- Implication Process and Methodology
- Annex I: Basic Indicators
- Annex II: Annual Action Plan Format

“The Introduction” part gives a brief explanation on the situation of Roma people in Turkey. “Policy Rationale” part describes the social exclusion and “Current Situation in Main Policy Fields” describes the brief situation and main problems observed in the fields of education, employment, health, housing, social assistances and social support services. Under the following five titles, there are strategic goals (a strategic goal for each title) and strategic targets associated with these goals. Sub-Policy Axes provide brief explanations, strategic goals and strategic targets associated with the following fields:

- Increasing the effectiveness of social inclusion policies (Supporting evidence-based policies, revision of relevant legislation)
- Increasing access to general public services
- Combatting with discrimination and preventing hate crimes

“Cross-cutting Policy Fields” are the fields which require parallel policy responsibilities and implications. It includes responsibilities under following titles:

- Combatting with discrimination and Access to Equal Rights
- Protecting gender equality
- Improving social participation and strengthening civil society
- Establishing inter-cultural dialogue and Roma mediation
- Protecting child rights and supporting families with children
- Protecting the rights of disabled and strengthening disabled people
- Providing special policies and measures for youth

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.hyd.org.tr/staticfiles/files/biz\\_buraday%C4%B1z\\_turkiye'de\\_romanlar-1.pdf](http://www.hyd.org.tr/staticfiles/files/biz_buraday%C4%B1z_turkiye'de_romanlar-1.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> “Roman Vatandaşların Sosyal Bütünleşmesi için Ulusal Strateji Belgesi 2015-2020” in Turkish.

“Implication Process and Methodology” include general principles for Turkey to ensure successful Roma integration policies developed in this strategy. The principles are as follows:

- Evidence-based design and implementation of policies
- Targeted but not exclusive regional policy approach
- Targeting mainstream public services and social life
- Coordination among institutions and integrated policy approach
- Design of policies according to regional needs
- Effective monitoring and re-design
- Coordination with national policies and mainstreaming
- Considering EU policies and European experiences
- Ensuring transparency, accountability and participation
- Supporting fundamental rights, respect to differences and social dialogue

“Implication Process and Methodology” include a brief explanation on the implication process and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms. First annex include basic structural, process and result indicators for all the strategic targets developed in this document. Finally, second annex provide a sample action plan format for the implication of the strategy which should be filled in before the end of 2015 for the first time by the responsible institutions.

### **Impact of measures**

Below the summary of results of a Study on the social situation of the Roma community in Turkey<sup>20</sup>. This study had for objective to collect nationwide information concerning the social and economic situation of the Roma community in Turkey. The sampling was made of 14 provinces (22 districts); pilot provinces of the SIROMA project, as well as Gaziantep and Artvin; within the 22 districts, Roma populated mahalles selected; in the selected mahalles, households selected to the study in a random manner. Sample size: 773 Roma respondents + 335 non-Roma respondents (reference group). The questionnaire and data collection methodology were compatible with the 2011 Regional Roma Survey conducted by the EU and UNDP.

### **Education**

- Low levels of education among Roma respondents. 71 % of all the Roma respondents had completed only primary school or had no education at all (reference group: 46 %).
- Only 34 % of the Roma had obtained some professional education after leaving school (non-Roma reference group: 42 %).
- Education levels are rising quickly among young generations. Among Roma who were 30 years or younger, 57 % had completed at least lower secondary-level school. (Corresponding figure among Roma older than 30 years: 22 %).
- Differences in education levels are marked between Roma men and women. 53 % of Roma women had not completed even primary school (Roma men: 31 %). However, the difference between men and women disappears among the youngest generations.
- For Roma women, the family had traditionally made in the most cases (among all Roma women, 52 %) the decision to stop going to school. Roma boys had traditionally more freedom to decide themselves about stopping school attendance (58 %).
- However, the traditional role of the family, as well as the gender roles, are rapidly changing. In the age groups 18-24 years, only 14 % of Roma girls and 19 % of Roma boys said that parents of the family had made the decision to stop going to school.

<sup>20</sup> Presentation delivered by Timo Piirainen and Sosyal Politika ve İstihdam Uzmanı at the Project Steering Committee Meeting on 12 September 2017 - Romanların Yoğun Olarak Yaşadığı Alanlarda Sosyal İçermenin Desteklenmesi için Teknik Destek (SIROMA).



- For Roma children and youth, the most frequent reasons for stopping school attendance were the need to work and have an income (34 %) and high costs related to education (34 %).
- 7 % of Roma women indicated marriage or childbirth as a reason for stopping school attendance.
- 9 % of Roma in the youngest age group (16-24 years) had never been at school at all. In the age group 31-40: 22%.

### **Employment and social security**

- Low employment rate among Roma. Only 31 % of the Roma respondents were considered to be in employment. (Among non-Roma 55 %, i.e. a figure corresponding the official overall employment rate in Turkey).
- Roma were more often unemployed (25 % of all Roma respondents), at home as full-time home makers (48 % of Roma women), or doing marginal work (e.g. waste collection, begging, napkin selling; 17 % of all Roma respondents).
- Only 11 % of the Roma respondents were in full-time paid work (non-Roma reference group: 26 %).
- 74 % of the Roma respondents indicated that they were not covered by old-age pension insurance (reference group: 44 %).
- Non-Roma (21 %) were more often self-employed and had small businesses than Roma (6 %).
- When unemployed, Roma (18 %) had more often been registered as job-seekers at Employment Services than non-Roma (13 %).

### **Health**

- Prejudice among health care staff against Roma was not mentioned by anybody as a reason for not receiving the needed medical care.
- All Roma women who had given birth to a child during past five years had done this in a public hospital or maternity clinic. Overall satisfaction concerning treatment was high: 91 % of Roma women told that they had been treated very well or fairly well.
- Overall conclusion: public health care is accessible to Roma, and satisfaction concerning the treatment by health care staff and the quality of services is high.
- Prejudice among health care staff against Roma was not mentioned by anybody as a reason for not receiving the needed medical care.
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- Overall conclusion: public health care is accessible to Roma, and satisfaction concerning the treatment by health care staff and the quality of services is high.

## **III. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED, GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED, AND ENVISAGED FOLLOW-UP**

### **3.1 Conclusions of the thematic group of experts**

#### **3.1.1 Conclusions concerning the organisation of the thematic visit**

Partner countries' experts and international organisations present welcomed the initiative of Georgian authorities to host this thematic visit and thanked them for their great hospitality. The organisation of the thematic visit followed the CAHROM recommendations; there has been a chance to discuss the agenda prior to the thematic visit. The experts of the thematic group welcomed the variety of speakers and the fact that the thematic visit was opened by Mr Shota Rekhviashvili, Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia. The Georgian authorities provided simultaneous interpretation which was highly appreciated.

Presentations were not always focused with too general and sometimes one-sided information. There was sufficient time devoted for questions and answers and an exchange between partner countries' experts and Georgian participants; however, more time for discussion would have sometimes been needed. Due the heavy agenda, the field visit to the Africa district of Tbilisi scheduled at the end of the first day had to be cancelled. However, the experts appreciated the possibility to visit a village outside Tbilisi.

The expert from Azerbaijan highlighted the very informative field visit to Roma communities organised outside Tbilisi, namely in Tchoeti village, Dedoplistskharo municipality, Kakheti region which is inhabited by 13 Roma families. She took note that children were provided transportation from the settlement to school, that most children were enrolled in the schools, and that Roma families engaged in agricultural activities as they had a chance to have some land to cultivate. Generally-speaking, she found presentations in Tbilisi very informative.

The Russian expert highlighted the very positive fact that organisers invited both governmental representatives and civil society. He regretted the lack of sufficient information on the Roma, Dom and Lom population in Georgia; more ethnic based data would be needed, as well as in the languages (and variants) they speak. He also highlighted the importance of focusing on the group of Roma who are crossing borders from neighbouring countries and that might be involved in some "illegal" activities (human trafficking, begging, etc.).

The Armenian expert also highlighted the need for more research so as to collect more data and evaluate more precisely the needs and the situation. As an anthropologist and ethnographer, he considers that this research should be made by conducting interviews with the Roma, Dom and Lom families. He was however not expecting too many such details considering that this was the first thematic visit organised. Like the expert from Azerbaijan, he found some of the presentations too general and fuelled with some external and sometimes paternalistic perceptions which reflect a lack of regular contacts with the communities from the part of certain (not all) administrations. He indicated that the thematic visit was not conclusive on whether the Roma, Dom and Lom populations should be tackled from a poverty and socio-economic angle or from a minority approach. He noticed that in the village visited, there were no different attitudes towards Roma from the part of local authorities. He also stressed the need to come up with different approaches because the contexts are different: Georgia for instance is a multi-confessional and multinational state compared to Armenia.

The OSCE/ODIHR representative brought self-criticism in the discussion indicating that there has been no consultation on which interlocutors would be invited to the consultation in Tbilisi, and that her organisation could have contacted the new young Roma activists they had trained in Georgia and cover their costs to participate in the discussion in Tbilisi.

The ECMI representatives regretted that sometimes the discussions were too long and should have been limited to ten minutes maximum by the moderators. They also proposed that in the future the Council of Europe together with the hosting authorities prepare a list of questions and circulate it in advance to the speakers to help focus the discussion. Whilst there was a great variety of interlocutors, Tbilisi local authorities were missing in the discussion (they were present however present during the visit to Tchoeti village, Dedoplistskharo municipality, Kakheti region).

The Georgian hosts acknowledged a lack of focus on Roma from some of the presenters and lack of attention in general from policy-makers essentially due to two factors: on the one hand, the small number of Roma, Dom and Lom living in Georgia; on the other hand, the fact that there is no specific agency working for Roma, Dom and Lom because these communities are covered under ethnic minorities policy at large. They indicated that they would take due account of the proposed recommendations of the thematic report. They were pleased that the meetings led to open discussions, and sometimes even criticisms in front of international organisations.

### 3.1.2 Lessons learnt regarding the situation of Roma, Dom and Lom in Georgia

Both the hosting experts and the partner countries' experts had the impression that the health and education policy, and legislative frameworks in Georgia function well. They considered, for example, that the tools developed in the health system are even quite advanced compared to many other countries. However, there is a lack of focus on the approach when it comes to Roma, Dom and Lom because these communities are considered alongside with other beneficiaries of the health system and health programmes.

The group of experts agreed that there was a lack of pro-activeness approach from the side of Georgian authorities: the general impression was that this was not due necessarily to a discriminatory attitude, as it might be the case in some other countries in Europe, but due sometimes to a passive attitude from the side of some institutions or public officials who expect Roma to come to knock at the door rather than going and meet Roma, Dom and Lom where they live. This remark should however be balanced with the fact that some of the positive projects presented during the thematic visit are clearly implying grassroots co-operation between public servants and civil society and communities, namely the **"New Initiative for children living and/or working in streets"** project; the **"Reduction and prevention of statelessness in Georgia"** project; the **"Social Inclusion Support sub-Programme"** and the mobility groups.

The Ministry of Education and Science is a step forward compared to other ministries as they go and visit the communities but this approach is essentially linked to the personal involvement and commitment of Ms Lela Tskitishvili who works for the ministry. By having a grassroots approach and by being in close contact with families, she has obtained great achievements in maintaining Roma children and teenagers in schools, including girls, and single parent families. Moreover, she has also found alternative and innovative ways to ensure their enrolment in vocational educational and try to give them a professional future, whilst at the same time boosting their self-esteem and motivation. This was clear for the thematic group of experts when discussing with these young people both in Tbilisi and in the village. These positive models should therefore be replicated by the Ministry of Education and Science, and additional should be allocated to support these types of initiatives.

The Georgian organisers underlined that the discussions during the thematic visit served as an eye opener for most of the Georgian participants. The fact that both the OSCE and the Council of Europe have a specific mandate on Roma issues has been an argument for their leadership to organise this specific visit on Roma and for them to attract other stakeholders. They also highlighted the general difficulty for them to draw the attention to the problems face by the Roma, both from decision-makers and donors, since they constitute a relatively small minority in Georgia. In Tbilisi alone, there are 125 different minorities.

The group of experts highlighted some priorities that would need more immediate action from the Georgian authorities:

- **Lifting barriers for all children to access education.** The lack of an ID should not be an obstacle to access schools. In that respect, it was noted that Roma can benefit, like any other beneficiaries, of the health system programmes regardless the fact that if they have Georgian citizenship or have the status of stateless persons. The same approach should therefore be followed by the Ministry of Education and Science for access to schools;
- **Ensuring sustainability as long as needed of mobile teams which exist through current projects to solve the lack of IDs, and extend their role to land and property registration or health insurance, involving competent authorities;**
- **Putting more emphasis on issues related to Roma, Dom and Lom communities in Georgia within the existing inter-ministerial commission on ethnic minorities Roma led by the Office of State Minister of Georgia on Reconciliation and Civic Equality,** ensuring when these communities are on the agenda of the inter-ministerial commission the presence of relevant ministries, as well as representatives of Roma, Lom and Dom communities (including young and women activists);
- **Further awareness-raising among the general public on Romani culture and traditions, including variants between Roma, Lom and Dom communities, as well as promoting role models among these communities;**
- **Providing training for activists, youth leaders, and public officials;**

- **Starting registration of Roma women** who cannot be afraid of going to the military service - which then could facilitate the registration of their children – **as well as registration of men over 27 years old** – leaving temporarily aside the group of young men below 27 years old;
- **Further supporting Roma young people and developing a targeted policy action to deal with issues affecting the Roma community**, with particular attention to Roma youth<sup>21</sup>.

### 3.1.3 Lessons learnt concerning Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Turkey

#### ARMENIA

- To conduct research on Lom (Bosha) living in Armenia and across the border and on other Roma groups.

#### AZERBAIJAN

- To pay more attention to the situation of Roma and Dom/Garachi communities, in particular the most vulnerable and having a precarious living who are for instance moving to Georgia to become street children, beggars and might be victims of human trafficking.
- To ensure that preventive measures and legislation concerning begging does not disproportionately affect Roma and Dom/Garachi communities, as appropriate.

#### RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- To do more research on Roma at the regional level, including North Caucasus.
- To invite the regions to develop local/regional Roma integration action plans in line with the Action Plan of socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Roma in the Russian Federation for the period 2017-2019.

#### TURKEY

- To pay more attention to the situation of Roma, Lom/Posha and Dom/Garachi communities, in particular the most vulnerable and having a precarious living who are for instance moving to Georgia to become street children, beggars and might be victims of human trafficking or prostitution.
- To consider inclusion of the Roma people in working life and employment as the key challenge.
- To continue the positive developments, bearing in mind that the current universal service provision needs to be complemented with targeted provision of services and assistance to support social inclusion, in particular integration to the labour market.

### 3.2 General conclusions of the thematic group of experts

Census figures do not reflect the reality. State policies should consider estimates, not census figures, to draw their policies. Many Roma in the region identify themselves as other groups: Lom (Bosha) as Armenians; Dom (Garachi) as Kurds, Turks or Azerbaijani); Roma as Russians, Ukrainians, Moldovans, etc.

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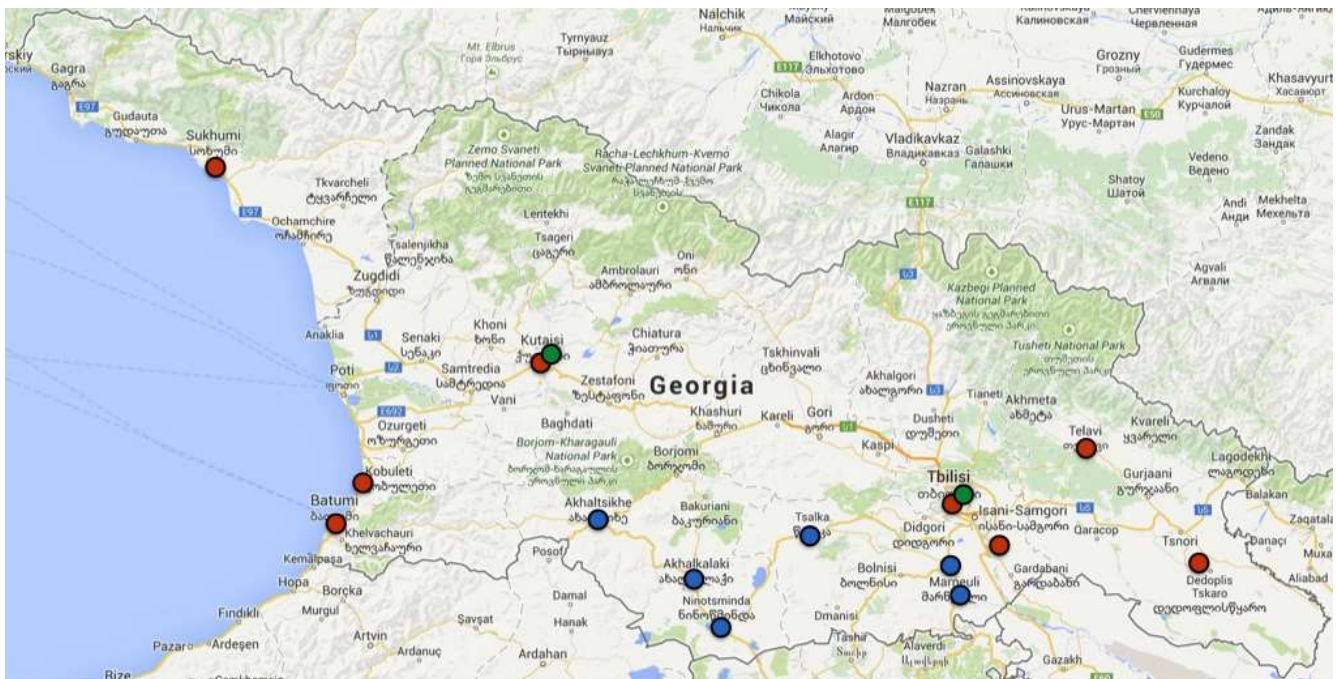
<sup>21</sup> See other Roma youth-related policy recommendations from the 2017 report "Roma youth in Georgia: what are the challenges by Sandra Veloy Mateu for Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS).



The 2012 estimated numbers of Roma, Dom and Lom provided in the Council of Europe EXCEL table on estimated number of Roma (generic sense) per member State that prove to be two to three times lower than the current estimates in Armenia (probably closer to 5,000), Azerbaijan (6 to 7,000) and Georgia (4 to 5,000). The estimated number of Roma in the Russian Federation is still vague and unbalanced: there seems to be more accurate estimated figures of Roma living around major cities like Moscow or Saint-Petersburg due to a more active civil society and less information on the number of Roma living in Caucasian Republics of the Russian Federation. The number of Roma, Lom, Dom and Abdal living in Turkey is still subject to a wide range of estimates (from 500,000 to 5 million) with 3 million considered as an acceptable estimate by the authorities making Turkey the Council of Europe member State with the largest Roma population before Romania.

More research and ethnic-based data collection is therefore needed, whilst respecting self-identification and necessary safeguards for the collection and use of such data. Such research on the situation of Roma should require defined and clear indicators. For example: the distance between a settlement and a school or a hospital, etc. compared with the majority population.

The group of experts would strongly recommend developing a mapping of Roma, Lom, Dom and Abdal living in these five countries. The mapping of Roma, Dom and Lom communities in Georgia conducted by Marushiakova/Popov (which was part of an initial project financially supported by the OSCE) is a very good starting point in Georgia but needs to be further researched and updated matching also relevant and more recent resources. In this regard, the OSCE-ODIHR representative mentioned that OSF Georgia is currently supporting a one-year project on the creation of an **interactive electronic map with information about ethnic minorities** and their existing resources, which will include Roma. The thematic group of experts also noted that the “**Social Inclusion Support Sub-Programme**”, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia with the assistance of volunteers, contains a **Roma database**.



Source: Marushiakova/Popov. In red Roma, in green Dom and in blue Lom living in Georgia.



Source: Roma database of the **Social Inclusion Support Sub-Programme**, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

Any research should pay particular attention to the terminology and various possibilities of self-identification. In Georgia for example, the terms *Bosha* and *Tsyganye* are used and generally accepted by the communities and are not necessarily pejorative as it can be in other countries in Europe<sup>22</sup>. However, it has been noted that within each community, including the Lom community who traditionally self-identify as Armenians, a distinction is made between these communities and the rest of the population (using “kachut”, “gadge”, etc. to designate the others). It reveals that even if there is a strong tendency among certain groups to self-assimilate (which might be partly due to external factors) members of these groups, when they are among themselves, still make a distinction with “others”.

<sup>22</sup> See OSCE-ODIHR reservation regarding this affirmation in footnote no. 5.

Among the findings from the thematic visit was also the fact that Roma activists in Georgia, and the wider public in general, are not always aware about the politically correct vocabulary and that by using some ‘traditional concepts’ they are reinforcing existing negative stereotypes. This was mentioned in particular after the presentations made by volunteers of the Social Inclusion Promotion Sub-Programme.

There is little information about to which extent the Romani language is being used. Many Roma families present in Georgia may speak Romani but also Russian Ukrainian, Romanian in addition to Georgian. Lomavren, the language spoken by the Lom community (Bosha) is a secret language with restricted use within the community; it seems therefore in danger to disappear with younger generations tending more and more to speak exclusively the national language.

Whilst Turkey and the Russian Federation have developed respectively a National Roma Integration strategy / an Action Plan of socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Roma in the Russian Federation for the period of 2013-2014, there has been so far no targeted Roma policy in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Georgia, however, since it cover Roma among other ethnic minorities under the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and define Roma-related activities under its Action Plan is probably more inclined to step in the process of developing a more targeted policy approach in the future. A comprehensive national Roma integration policy, similar to those adopted by EU and CoE member States, might be envisaged in the mid-term future, provided that other ministries get involved, feel concerned and provide funding for more targeted measures. As regards Azerbaijan and Armenia, the fact that Bosha (Lom) and Garachi (Dom) strongly identify themselves respectively as Armenians and as Kurds or Azerbaijani, make it almost impossible to develop such a comprehensive and targeted policy approach, at least under present circumstances. Some specific actions might however be needed.

Participating countries of the thematic group, if they have not yet done so, are invited to ratify relevant Council of Europe conventions such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation and Turkey), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Turkey), the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Russian Federation) or the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, so-called “Istanbul convention” (Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation) so as to ensure, where needed, better protection for Roma, especially for the most vulnerable Roma, such as those victims of human trafficking or gender-based violence.

A stronger promotion and valorisation of Roma mediators and Roma volunteers, especially among Roma youth and women, is also recommended to bridge the gap in communication and possible mistrust between communities and institutions. Role models should definitely be promoted. In Georgia, and this might be the case in neighbouring countries, there are too few “Roma activists” (often women such as Lena Proshikian or Venera Martkopishvili) which means that most of the programmes and actions in Georgia rely on the same persons.

Solving the lack of identity papers among Roma communities should be the first priority for all countries in the region, including by lifting administrative and legal barriers and by training relevant professionals. In Georgia, the lack of identity documents prevents access to education, which is definitely not the case in a large number of Council of Europe member States. This could explain a lower participation of Roma children in school, especially among the Roma and Dom communities who are migrating to Georgia. The good practice introduced in Georgia to provide an ID for street children should be extended to all Roma (and others) having no identity documents.

Due to the fact that in Azerbaijan it is forbidden to beg on the street, many poor Dom/Garachi families come to the main towns in Georgia, including children.

The group of experts also identified a need for Roma civil society to receive training (empowerment, capacity-building, advocacy, funding, youth, gender, participation, linguistic skills/English, etc.). Peace Corps, a US organisation providing

free English language classes, even in remote cities, could be approached. They also identified a lack of cooperation between Roma communities and the rest of civil society: they all seem to work separately.

Public servants working in administration and potentially in contact with Roma would also need training.

Another conclusion is the general need to increase trans-border co-operation on Roma-related issues and exchange both at state and civil society level with the rest of Europe to stop isolation which is a point valid for both the policy-makers and the Roma communities themselves. By doing so they could also learn from the experience of countries and NGOs that have already a longer experience and could benefit from lessons learnt, negative or positive, and therefore save time when designing actions or programmes.

### 3.3 Good practices identified

#### 3.3.1 In Georgia

- The **“New Initiative for children living and/or working in streets”** EU funded project implemented since 2012 by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia via the LEPL Social Service Agency and UNICEF;
- The **“Sub-programme for the Provision of Shelters to Homeless Children”** - within the framework of the Governmental Decree №291 of 14 April 2014 - which finances services for children living and working in streets;
- The **“Social Inclusion Support Sub-Programme”** implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia with the assistance of volunteers which aims at rising motivation towards education in pupils and students with(of) special educational needs by means of social inclusion and at supporting the creation of convenient educational environment in public schools and professional educational institutions;
- The **“Reduction and prevention of statelessness in Georgia”** project implemented since 2011 by the Innovations and Reforms Center (IRC), a National Civil Society Partner of UNHCR in Georgia. This project provides an ID/registration for street children. As a good practice, such initiative should be extended to all Roma (and others) having no identity documents, including those who are not street children;
- The educational approach and support developed by Lela Tskitishvili from the Ministry of Education and Science;
- Roma volunteers of the **“Sub-programme for promoting social inclusion”** of the Ministry of Education and Science;
- The existence of free legal aid;
- A developed and modern health insurance system, which should however be tailored to the specific needs of Roma, Lom and Dom communities;
- The fact that Roma benefit, like any other beneficiaries, of the health system programmes regardless the fact that if they have Georgian citizenship or have the status of stateless persons;
- Tradition of collaboration and partnership between state agencies and non-governmental organisations and representatives of civil society reflected for example in the partnership between the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and Roma NGO.

#### 3.3.2 In Armenia

- Existing anthropological research on Roma/Dom/Bosha living in Armenia.

#### 3.3.3 In Azerbaijan

- Multinational and multi-confessional country reflected in the legislation.
- Provision of identity documents to Roma (Dom/Garachi).



### 3.3.4 In the Russian Federation

- Adoption of an Action Plan of socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Roma in the Russian Federation for the period of 2013-2014 and a new one for 2017-2019;
- Establishment in 1999 of the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Russian Roma acting as an All-Russian umbrella of main Roma public associations from different regions of the Russian Federation;
- A Roma woman is a member of the Council for Interethnic Relations under the President of the Russian Federation established in 2012 and a member of the Expert Consultative Council of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Inter-ethnic Relations Issues under the Government of the Russian Federation.

### 3.3.5 In Turkey

- Adoption of a comprehensive National Roma Integration Strategy.
- Impressive positive developments have taken place during the past 20 years in Turkey concerning the inclusion of Roma in education and the number of Roma enrolled in education increased.
- Key public services (health care, basic education) are accessible to Roma and there is no systematic discrimination in service provision with regard to social or ethnic background.

## 3.4 Envisaged follow-up

### 3.4.1 Immediate follow-up

#### For the Council of Europe:

- To provide for future CAHROM thematic visits methodological guidance to hosting authorities and to partner countries' experts so as to ensure that all invited speakers to CAHROM thematic visits prepare focused presentations, addressing not the situation of Roma in general but the issues related to the theme of the thematic visit;
- To collect, circulate and share all presentations and available research papers, studies, etc. to participants of the CAHROM thematic group (see also the Addendum of this thematic report);
- To send to Georgian experts the toolkit and leaflet from the Dosta! campaign against prejudice and stereotypes towards Roma. This was done after the visit and the Department of Migration, Repatriation and Refugee Issues under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia decided to translate these documents into Georgian;
- To provide information about the funding possibilities for Roma youth and involve young Roma activists from Georgia into existing youth programmes and training activities; this is to be followed-up by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe;
- To invite Roma, Dom and Lom women from Georgia to Roma women-related activities of the Roma and Travellers Team of the Council of Europe<sup>23</sup>;
- To explore with the Strategic Partnerships Unit of the Roma and Travellers Team the possibility to organise training for Roma mediators (with a gender and youth focus) in Georgia using ROMED methodology;
- To provide the Russian Federation with the questionnaire on Roma participation in advisory and decision-making bodies and in political life;
- To encourage monitoring bodies (ECRI, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, European charter for Regional or Minority Languages), as well as the Office of the Commissioner for Human

<sup>23</sup> Following the thematic visit, Ms Lena Proshikian and Ms Venera Martkopishvili were invited by the Council of Europe to attend the 6<sup>th</sup> International Roma Women's Conference on Political participation in Strasbourg on 6-7 November 2017.

Rights to meet with representatives of Roma, Lom, Dom and Abdal communities during their country visits and reflect on their situation in their (monitoring) reports;

- To explore the possibility to introduce some Roma-related actions under the Anti-Discrimination Chapter of the council of Europe country action plan with Georgia;
- To invite the Public Defender of Georgia to future meetings of OPRE, the Operational Platform on Roma Equality, set up by the Council of Europe, FRA, ENNHRI and Equinet<sup>24</sup>.

#### For the OSCE/ODIHR:

- To continue its work in the region in the follow-up to its international consultation meeting “The Situation of Roma and Related Groups in the South Caucasus and Central Asia Regions: Experiences and Way Forward”, held in Tbilisi in May 2016;
- To send to Georgian experts information about Romani culture, Roma political figures and role models;
- To further assist, together with the Georgian authorities and the Council of Europe Youth Department, with the setting up of a network of young Roma activists;
- To explore the possibility to further promote Roma in Georgia, in particular the youth movement<sup>25</sup>;
- To help and share other countries’ experience with a possible study visit about registration.

#### For ECMI:

- To reinforce its work in Georgia;
- To assist with Roma research on Roma living in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Caucasian Republics of the Russian Federation;
- To approach DVV International (the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association) to see if they could engage in providing after/evening classes for illiterate Roma in Georgia.
- To further publish on Roma in Georgia.<sup>26</sup>

#### For the European Delegation in Georgia and the Public Defenders in Georgia:

- To complete their compilation of factsheets on various cultural minorities living in Georgia and their contribution to Georgian history and culture with a similar factsheet on Roma (Dom and Lom communities included)

#### For Georgia:

- To request to be a partner country in the planned CAHROM thematic visit on Roma integration and coordination practices in countries with a small Roma population to be held in Latvia in 2018 with already Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Norway and Switzerland as partner countries; Georgia has provisionally been added to the list of partner countries and needs to confirm its interest at the 14<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 24-27 October 2017<sup>27</sup>.

#### For Armenia

- To conduct further research on Lom (Bosha) living in Armenia and across the border and on other Roma groups living in Armenia if any.

<sup>24</sup> The next meeting of the OPRE platform will take place in Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, in late March or early April 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Following the thematic visit, the OSCE-ODIHR invited a group of five young Roma activists from Georgia and two more activists working on Roma issues in Georgia to attend the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in September 2017; the activists also attended the preparatory training before the event.

<sup>26</sup> See following ECMI publications:

No way out: An assessment of the Romani Community in Georgia, by D. Szakony: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/48377/working\\_paper\\_39.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/48377/working_paper_39.pdf) ;

A Way Out? Initial Steps Towards Addressing Romani Issues in Georgia, by Sordia: [http://www.ecmcaucasus.org/upload/publications/brief\\_21\\_eng.pdf](http://www.ecmcaucasus.org/upload/publications/brief_21_eng.pdf) ;

Needs Assessment of Ethnic Minority Women in Georgia’ commissioned study for UN Women/EU Project (Innovative Action for Gender Equality): [http://ecmcaucasus.org/upload/Ethnic%20Minority%20Women\\_Eng.pdf](http://ecmcaucasus.org/upload/Ethnic%20Minority%20Women_Eng.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Georgia confirmed its interest to be partner country in this thematic visit during the 14<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting.

**For Azerbaijan**

- To further verify information mentioned in this thematic report concerning the migration of Dom/Garachi families, including children, from Azerbaijan to Georgia.

**For the Russian Federation:**

- To present at the 14<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 24-27 October 2017 its Action Plan of socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Roma in the Russian Federation for the period 2017-2019;
- To confirm hosting in June 2019 a CAHROM thematic visit on the impact of traditions and culture in Roma policy developments and implementation (interest expressed by Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” to be partner countries).

**For Turkey:**

- To present at the 14<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 24-27 October 2017 its National Integration Strategy for Roma;
- To confirm hosting in 2018 a CAHROM thematic visit on Roma access to employment (with a focus on Roma women and youth) with the following partner countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”<sup>28</sup>.

**3.4.2 Mid-term follow-up****For the Public Defenders in Georgia:**

- To publish a report focusing on Roma, Dom and Lom communities in Georgia

**For Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation:**

- To conduct researches and surveys – including through interviews - on Roma, Lom, Dom and Abdal communities living on their territories to find out more about their situation and needs and with a view to obtaining more realistic estimated data and a geographical mapping of these communities (see good practices of mapping in Hungary, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Spain, etc.), with possible assistance from ECMI.

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<sup>28</sup> Turkey prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting announced that it would not be in a position to host this thematic visit.

**APPENDIX 1****Roma-related extracts of ECRI monitoring reports on Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation and Turkey**

Extracts of ECRI  
monitoring reports for

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See also in the **ADDENDUM to this thematic report** the following presentations of Georgian interlocutors met during the CAHROM thematic visit and available in English:

- *Roma community in Georgia – census statistical information*, delivered by Ms Rusudan Asatiani from the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia;
- *Georgian Health System Overview*, delivered by Ms Ketevan Goginashvili from the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
- *Reaching vulnerable children in Georgia, Children living or working on the street*, which contains information about the “New Initiative for children living and/or working in streets” and the “Sub-programme for the Provision of Shelters to Homeless Children”, delivered by Ms Nino Odisharia from the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
- *Registration of a stateless persons/persons seeking stateless status in Georgia, issuance of residence permit and travel passport*, delivered by Mr Levan Mghebrishvili, LEPL Public Service Development Agency of Ministry of Justice of Georgia;
- *State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking*, delivered by Mr Irakli Chkonia, AtipFund Georgia;
- *Reduction and Prevention of Statelessness in Georgia*, delivered by Ms Nato Gagnidze from the Innovations and Reforms Center (IRC);
- *Street Connected Children*, delivered by World Vision in Georgia;
- *Social Education - Overview and Challenges*, delivered by Ms Ekaterine Dgebuadze from the Department of National Curriculum, Inclusive Education Development Division, Ministry of education and Science of Georgia;
- *Social Inclusion Support Sub-Programme*, delivered by Ms Lela Tskitishvili from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
- *Gypsy Culture*, delivered by Mr David Bibileishvili, Social Inclusion Promotion Sub-Programme Volunteer;
- *The Roma people and Georgia*, delivered by another Social Inclusion Promotion Sub-Programme Volunteer.