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Annexes

**SECOND REPORT SUBMITTED BY ALBANIA
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 25, PARAGRAPH 2
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR
THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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MINORITIES IN ALBANIA¹

Introduction

Protection of national minorities and rights and freedoms of people belonging to these categories are part of the international protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms and are of a great importance with regards to stability, democratic security and peace in Europe, aiming at the creation of a climate characterised by tolerance and dialogue, as well as enrichment of every true democratic and pluralist society.

The issue of protection and respect of national minority rights is beyond question a very delicate and complex issue, whose notion developed considerable during the last years by international institutions. Although at the beginning every institution worked on its own, presently OSCE, CE and EU are working together to develop a coherent system to protect national minorities.

The governments are required these days not only to respect ethnic, cultural, language and religious identity of every person belonging to a national minority, but also create necessary conditions offering to these people an opportunity to express, preserve and develop this identity.

Adversaries on notions and nature of rights being recognised to minorities have hindered work to compile international standards, which can regulate their protection. The greatest obstacle is related to elaboration of the definition of “minority” as a notion. The greatest part of existing international texts does not provide a general definition of the term “minority”. Experience indicates that it is difficult to provide a definition, which covers all minority categories, because of complexity of minority groups and difficulty to classify them homogeneously. Only the Additional Protocol of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1993 attempted to provide a definition of the notion “minority”. This definition includes objective and subjective elements. Elements of objective nature tackle the existence (among the population of a country) of separate groups with other stable ethnic, religious or language characteristics, numeric importance of this group, their position to other groups of the population; elements of subjective nature consist in the will of minority group members to preserve the particularity of the group. Although the draft of Additional Protocol was not approved by the Council of Ministers of CE, the Parliamentary Assembly calls for legislation (on the part of member states and those who requested membership) in compliance with the articles of this protocol.

Difficulty to provide a general definition of the notion “minority” explains why international documents have avoided this issue and have dealt only with the identification of minorities through ethnic, language, religious and cultural heritage particularities. These criteria were generally used by international organisations to characterise minorities.

The work performed by different international institutions for the protection of minority rights begins with the “International Pact on civil and political rights”

¹ Quarterly Statistical Buletin, 2003, INSTAT

of the UN, article 27 of which includes only a concise wording of the obligation that states have to be tolerant and must not obstruct ethnic, language or religious minority rights. After that comes the “Declaration of rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and language minorities” of 14 December 1992, which defined a list of rights for minority people, the commitment of the state to protect the existence of and national, ethnic, religious and language identity of minorities and favour creation of adequate conditions to develop this identity. Although this declaration is not a directive, but only a political document, it constitutes one of the first contemporary documents trying to make a synthesis of international rights situation related to minority rights and as such it still enjoys a great moral authority.

Obviously, most important international documents as far as respect of minority rights is concerned remain “Declaration of Copenhagen” of June 1990 and “Fundamental Convention for the protection of minority rights” of CE, February 1995. Like all other documents of OSCE, the Declaration of Copenhagen binds no state to its implementation, however it is considered presently as “The European Charter of Minorities”, as it includes a number of definitions and protective principles of minorities, on which 35 signing states have reached a political consensus.

Fundamental Convention is relatively a new instrument in the field of international right. It declares a certain number “provision programs” as targets to be reached by the states and being that its provisions are not directly implemented, its execution is firstly achieved by measures taken within the national frame, and secondly through by-lateral agreements.

It underlines a certain number of principles related to promotion of identity of national minorities respecting the law, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Even though these principles might be considered with the minimal law standards, as they were thought to be proposed as models to the states. These on their turn should fill them with their minority characteristics and offer them the possibility to choose complimentary actions to be taken. However, this Convention represents the international instrument of highest level of commitments that states should engage themselves into, to protect and respect minority rights.

Recognition of minorities

Lacking a clear definition of the term “national minority”, it is up to the states to give the status of national minority to groups living in their territory, to assure thus a protective treatment to them. In this situation, Albania bases sets the process of minority rights recognition to the criteria predicted by international agreements and conventions.

According to historical tradition, in Albania are recognized as national minorities those minorities having a common motherland and characteristics like: national identity, the language, customs and tradition, religion etc. This right has been recognized to greek, macedonian and montenegrin minorities.

Roma and Armenian have been recognised and respected as ethnic-linguistic minorities.

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania considers the national minorities an integral part of the Albanian society. It guarantees them full equality before the law and in the exercise of their freedoms and rights, and acknowledges them the right “freely to express, without prohibition or compulsion, their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic belonging” and the right “to preserve and develop them, to study and be taught in their mother tongue, and to unite in organizations and associations for the protection of their interests and identity”.

It also predicts a particular status for international instruments, which Albania has signed. Article 121 and 122 foresee that each international agreement ratified by the Parliament is part of the domestic legislation. They are directly implemented, unless the cases when it is required to do so through ratification. International agreements are superior to domestic legislation not in compliance with them as well as standards approved by an international organisation. If an agreement request direct implementation, in case of conflict they are superior to domestic legislation.

Albania signed framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities in 29.06.1995. It was ratified by the Assembly of the Republic of Albania by the Law 8496, dated 3.06.1999 and after depositing the ratification documents in 28. 09.1999 it entered in force in 01.01 2000.

After the ractification, this Convention is part of the domestic legislation and constitutes a guarantee for the protection of minority rights in Albania.

Situation of national minorities in albania up to 2001

The above explanations assist us in understanding that during 1945-1990, demographic phenomena as well as economic and political developments in the country affected national minority demography. Numbering of national minorities was affected by several factors like: (i) marriages of a number of ethnic persons with Albanian nationality and vice versa (ii) isolated population for 45 years (iii) prohibition of practice of religious activities for 23 years (1967-1990), (iv) high demographic development of Albanian population compared to minority groups, (v) geographical spreading and settlement mainly near neighbouring countries of their ethnic origin. Obviously we must not forget to mention political pragmatism, i.e. wishful party membership, the only political party in the country, which leaded the Albanian society to ensure a better economic and social status, or compensate up to a certain degree social origin (biography) of “bourgeois, private or commercial” status of the families and support during communist regime in Albania after the Second World War. Presently it results difficult to measure these and other factors. Combination of these lasts to information of former regime, mainly opinions or surveys unpractised by any other public institution of the time, leave space to subjectivity in interpretation.

This new economic, political and social frame must be the basis for the interpretation of movement of different groups of population, being massive or not. Thus, with the termination of Albanian political system during 1991-1992, many persons (mainly of Albanian nationality) migrated especially towards Greece and Italy and later on to other countries like Germany, France, and USA. Greek government facilitated migration of persons belonging to Greek minority. Thus, the number of people belonging to Greek minority in Albania did not increase.

Albanian population, with regards to ethnic point of view, may be generally considered as very homogeneous, with only 2% (during the whole period following the 2nd WW in 1990), Greeks, Macedonians, Aromanians, Montenegrin, etc.

As far as ethnic-linguistic minorities are concerned, Roma and Aromanian, no accurate documents confirm their percentage. These two minorities have been recognised in Albania as ethnic-linguistic minorities with their language and culture. They enjoy all rights too preserve and develop their culture, learn their language and organise themselves in associations.

Roma

The statistical data with regards to the number of Roma living in Albania do not exist, because a census was not conducted for them.

The national Strategy "For the Improvement of Living Conditions of Roma Minority" approved by the Albanian Government in September 2003 is the only document that provides data regarding the Roma population living in Albania.

The arrival of Roma people to Albania is assumed to date back to nearly the 15th century with the Ottoman occupation. The Roma people have settled mostly in Central and Southern Albania, because of the mild climate of these regions. They consist of four main tribes: Kallbuxhinj (Tirana, Elbasani, Pogradeci, Korça, Bilishti, Gjirokastra, Saranda); Meçkare (Lushnja, Fieri, Vlora); Kurtofet - scattered; Cergaret - nomads. In general they have large families.

Until the 1960s, the Roma of Albania led a nomadic life. According to seasons, they moved from one region to another. This way of living created problems for the regime in power, because it could leave these people out of control. For these reasons, beginning from the 1960s, the authorities of that time started to concentrate the Roma in agricultural enterprises, forcing them to be employed, while in the cities they were worked mostly in parks maintaining enterprise or in public services.

Aromanians

Among the ethnic-linguistic minorities in Albania are also the Aromanians. The Albanian territories in set spaces and times have felt the growth of the population by Aromanian nomads. This peopling has been manifested in different forms, both in the aspect of time and in the mode of living. From the time aspect, the populating with Aromanians is considered as an ancient populating, perhaps around the 6th century, and a later populating, that perhaps of the start of the past century.

Over the two phases of the populating time process, the Aromanians emerged as a livestock nomadic population, which, later, through a gradual stabilization,

engaged in other economic activities, in agriculture, and in the cities, they went in for craftsmanship.

Ancient Aromanian population settled in the rural areas of Myzeqe of Fier and Vlora, in Frasher of Permet, in Moker of Pogradec, in Kolonja etc., as well as in some cities such as in Korça, Berat, Tirana, Elbasan and Durrës.

The Aromanian population settled in the city of Voskopoja, in village Shipcke, which lies in the mountainous zone of Voskopoja. With the ruin of the city of Voskopoja, the Aromanian people left and settled in Manastir, and partly in other cities of Albania.

The country's peopling with later Aromanians was inhabited by people coming from the high plateaus of Pindus in Greece. This group of people is known in Albania under the name "kucovlachs" or "sarakaçane". Until 1950, this population retained its nomad livestock character and its stabilization is linked with the so-called "completion of the socialist cooperation of agriculture" under the communist dictatorship in Albania.

After this period, the movement of Aromanian population in Albania and its entire demographic evolution was subjected to the demographic and social-economic laws, like all the population of the country, in which it was completely integrated.

The data for the number of the Aromanian minority in Albania appeared for the first time in the 1950 census. In this census, the Aromanian population counts for 2381 inhabitants. While in the 1955 census, the number of the Aromanian population was 4249. In the later censuses no data were produced regarding the number of the Aromanians in Albania, while in 1989 census the number is 782 inhabitants.

The information on characteristics of national minorities Albanian population were collected for the first time through the census of 1945; at a later period this question was asked even during the census of 1950, but the number of foreigners and national minorities was smaller than the one registered by the census of 1945. This situation had an historical explanation deriving from the return of many Italians, Yugoslav who came to Albania during the War. For this reason, the statistics under analysis to comprehend numeric situation of national minorities commence with the year 1950.

In the practice of censuses in Albania, when the surveyor confirmed obvious non-compliance of the question and answer received related age, residence (mainly permanent resident's) relation to head of family as well as the degree of form filling, requested verification of several documents forwarded by people under survey. This instruction was given from statistical offices to census commissions. The official document certifying holder's citizenship and identity is the Ministry of Interior issued the Identity Card in Albania at the beginning of 80. Its last replacement was performed after Albania's proclamation "Socialist Republic", by the Constitution of 1976. It was based on the Fundamental Register of Citizens and included these elements: Name, Last name, father's name and mother's name, date of birth, place of birth, residence and nationality.

In Albania, every baby born alive and of joint nationality, the civil status offices temporarily wrote in the certificate one of them, usually the father's nationality, receiving a declaration of the parents as well. If parents did not reach an agreement on this issue, than the head of the local power took a decision on the

child's nationality. In any case the child officially had this nationality. When he reached 18 he enjoyed the right to choose between the two nationalities of his parents.

According to Governmental Decree of January 1988, the information gathered by the census of population and households, families, revenues, equipment etc, following the direct declaration and technique complimentary documents issued by Statistical Directory for methodological objectives. Individual and personal data were divided into demographic, educational, labour or unemployment, social-professional and economic activity information. These data were certified through the Identity Card, declaration of employment issued by the Firm. Types of nationalities required with the census of 1989 were respectively, Albanian, Greek, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Italian, Romanian, Czech, Bulgarian, other Former Yugoslav Republics, and other (Russian etc) nationalities.

Table 1. Statistics on national minorities during censuses

Census Years	Population	Population of other than Albanian nationality	% of minorities
1950	1,218,945	35,201	2,9 %
1955	1,391,499	47,227	3,4%
1960	1,626,315	44,570	2,7%
1969	2,068,155	Not gathered	
1979	2,590,600	54,687	2,1%
1989	3,182,417	64,816	2,01%
2001	3,069,275	Not gathered	

Table 2. Distribution of ethnic and linguistic national minorities according to kind

Non Albanian nationality according to censuses years					
	1950	1955	1960*	1979**	1989
Total	35,201	47,227	44,570	54,687	64,816
Greek	28,996	35,345	37,282	49,307	58,758
Macedonian	2,273	3,431	4,235	4,097	4,697
Serbian-Montenegrin	893	1,613	...	66	100
Aromanian	1,876	4,249	782
Others	1,163	2,589	3,053	1,217	479

*) In 1960 are not collected particular information on Macedonian, Serbian and Montenegrin nationalities.

They were considered of Yugoslav nationality.

***) In the census of 1960 dhe 1979 information was not gathered on Aromanian ethno-linguistic minorities.

As it may be observed by information gathered by the censuses, the percentage of non- Albanian population is low and it fluctuates between 3,5 % to 2 %. Among the non-Albanian population, the national minority prevailing is the Greek minority constituting almost 85% of the total figure occupied by national minorities. Even the census of 1989, presents this situation on national minorities in Albania.

Table 3: Distribution of national minorities during the census of 1989

Districts	Total	Albanian	Greek	Maced	Mon/Ser	Others
Total	31,824,117	3,117,601	58,758	4,697	100	1,261
1 Berat	176,398	176,324	49	12	2	11
2 Dibër	149,650	149,605	17	20	5	3
3 Durrës	245,499	245,249	192	12	8	38
4 Elbasan	241,950	241,789	131	8	5	17
5 Fier	245,062	244,881	123	9	7	42
6 Gramsh	43,565	43,545	13	3	0	4
7 Gjirokastër	66,373	45,978	19,921	9	4	441
8 Kolonjë	24,781	24,752	20	7	0	2
9 Korçë	215,221	210,515	158	4,361	6	181
10 Krujë	106,852	106,826	17	5	2	2
11 Kukës	101,302	101,267	17	14	2	2
12 Lezhë	62,001	61,978	15	4	0	4
13 Librazhd	71,982	71,927	33	15	2	5
14 Lushnje	134,280	134,209	51	9	3	8
15 Mat	76,674	76,638	22	7	2	5
16 Mirditë	50,447	50,421	16	7	0	3
17 Përmet	39,775	39,330	442	2	0	1
18 Pogradec	71,446	71,386	19	37	2	2
19 Pukë	48,969	48,938	17	5	2	7
20 Sarandë	87,763	50,995	36,531	22	17	203
21 Skrapar	46,503	46,482	16	5	0	0
22 Shkodër	236,289	236,158	53	30	15	33
23 Tepelenë	49,850	49,789	57	3	0	1
24 Tiranë	368,213	367,361	610	79	11	152
25 Tropojë	44,779	44,757	16	4	2	0
26 Vlorë	176,788	176,501	202	8	3	74

Being that the greatest part of the population belonging to national minority in Albania is the Greek minority, which in total occupied 1.85 % of the population in 1989 with 58.758 persons, or 90,6% of national minorities. We will present only few aspects of this population in this year. Population of Greek nationality, in the majority of cases is established in southern bordering districts (96.1 %): in Gjirokaster, Delvine and Sarande.

This minority constitutes 30.1% of the population in Gjirokaster. In Saranda district (including in administrative division of 1989 even Delvina), the Greek minority occupies 41.6% of the population and is to be found in all communes. However, the Greek minority is spread through out the territory of the country. It is concentrated mostly (not compared to Sarande, Delvine and Gjirokaster) in Tirane, Permet and Vlore. Macedonian minority is mainly concentrated in Korçë, constituting thus roughly 93% of the total figure of this minority existing within the state territory of the Republic of Albania.

Present evaluation on the number of national minorities

During the last census of the population and households of April 2001, the question on nationality was not included within the number of identifying questions made to the individuals. Social and economic development in the country and the attitude of the population regarding migration resulted in a different basic form, compared to that of 1989. Political and social changes allowed free movement and without any consequences, within and outside the country. This factor was not the only one affecting the registration form. It was combined with other objective reasons.

Modification of official statistics in the country would not continue to gather information from families or individuals and confirm their status through official documents. It should be based on self-declaration of individuals on questions asked. The new Constitution of the Republic of Albania does not state very clearly whether in case of ethnic issues an individual is asked, self-declare any information or indiscreetness is preserved.

Even from the technical point of view we must stress that this question could not stand alone within the form. I should have been accompanied by other questions related to religious belonging and mother tongue. Presenting a question on religious belonging presented its difficulties. Practice of religious activities for almost 25 years in succession and destruction of religious cults, created secular generations. After the 91-92, the freedom of religious practice caused revival of faith in God, but different from the past, it was very confused and without any clear and defined form. Thus technically, asking a question on religious belonging caused difficulties.

Adding to these factors, “irresponsible functioning” of the Civil Status Offices, which manipulated individual characteristics, including here even nationality, were easily obtained through informal payments, made it very difficult gathering of a qualified information on nationality, religion and mother tongue.

The Central Committee of REPOBA also discussed this issue, during preparatory phase for the census. It decided that the block of questions was included within the identifying information collected for individuals during the census. In compliance with the Framework Convention (Article 3, point 1) On Minority Rights, ratified in 1999, considered that including these questions within a certain group was not an obligation deriving from it. All these reason together brought us to compile a questionnaire identifying only the nationality.

Presently INSTAT has terminated the general census of population households in April 2001 and all statistical data are available, it is working on 59 typical

analytical and synthetic tables on population, families and individual. Information on number of minorities are offered at national level considering these hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1:

National minorities are concentrated mainly in the same areas like in the census of 1989

Hypothesis 2:

Structure of distribution of a certain minority group at national level has not changed.

Hypothesis 3:

Evaluation on national minorities is performed on existing population.

These three hypothesis have to be considered in the frame of several statistical events occurring in INSTAT after the last census. They are related to population projections and differences occurred in direct counting of population in the filed, as well as data offered by surveys conducted by INSTAT within families.

During 1992 and 1993, INSTAT in close cooperation with UNFPA (Van Der Pol), u presented an evaluation related to Albanians living abroad up to 1992 (350.000 persons), as well as population projections up to 2010.

Table 4. Population Projections

Years	Total	Males	Females
1989	3.214	1.649	1.565
1990	3.287	1.686	1.6
1995	3.249	1.608	1.641
2000	3.42	1.688	1.732
2001	3.418	1.704	1.713
2005	3.623	1.788	1.835

General registration of population and households of 2001, confirmed that projections performed did not form a sufficient source of information. The number of population present in the country's territory was lower than the one predicted and the number of those migrating was two times higher. Total figure of population in 2001 was 3,069,275, while migration figure was evaluated in 600-700 thousand habitants. Greek minority population is concentrated mainly in the South of Albania, like: Dropull i Poshtem, Dropull i Siperem, Pogon, Dhiver, Aliko, Livadhja, Finiq, Mesopotam, thus in Sarande, Delvine and Gjirokaster. In the above-mentioned districts lived 96.1% of population with Greek nationality. It was evaluated through the census 1989, while population of other nationalities like Macedonians, are mainly settled in the Commune of Liqenas.

The Serbian – Montenegrin are settled mainly in Vrrake. A decrease in the figure of these groups derives from the right to choose residence. It influences the creation of a population, which is free to migrate and decide itself whether to migrate and where. This demographic phenomenon lowered the population of with almost 45%. (The population of three districts got together in 1989 was

154.141 habitants and in 2001 became 99.798 habitants). In these conditions, the decrease of the presence of Greek minority population in these areas is comprehensible. We must underline the fact that if during the previous census, population of these districts represented 4,8% of the total population figure, presently they represent 3,3% of the total population figure. With regards to Greek minority presence in other districts, evaluation was based on average annual level of growth of population figure in total.

Table 5. Greek minority statistics

Minority districts	Greek Minority		
	Population	Families	Memb/fam.
Total	35,829	9,163	3.9
1 Gjirokaštër	18,668	4,412	4.2
- Com.Dropulli sipërm	8,525	1,986	4.3
- Com.Dropulli poshtëm	7,558	1,733	4.4
- Com.Pogon	907	284	3.2
- Others	1,678	409	4.1
2 Sarandë	11246	2,671	4.3
- Com.Livadhja	3,393	783	4.3
- Com.Aliko	2,668	653	4.1
- Others	5,185	1,235	4.2
3 Delvinë	3,784	1,581	2.4
- Com.Finiq	735	282	2.6
- Com.Mesopotam	1,320	579	2.3
- Others	1,729	720	2.4
4 Other districts	2131	499	4.3

With regards to Macedonian minority, the last census indicated that it was mainly concentrated in Korçe and Devoll, especially in the Commune of Liqenas. Surveys of families conducted in 1998 and 2002 witnessed that this minority was not affected by migration factor. This grouping presented in the last census 92.8% of this minority in the country. Assuming that this structure

has not changed during these years, Macedonian minority is evaluated to have around 4,148 habitants.

Table 6. Macedonian Minority statistics

District Korçë	Macedonian Minority		
	Population	Families	Memb/fam.
Com.Liqenas	4,148	1,063	3.9

Regarding the presence of Montenegrin population in Albania, they are concentrated in the Commune of Gruemire of Malesia e Madhe, basically village Grile (Vrake). The population of this region is 678 habitants.

Ethnic-linguistic minority of Aromanians comprises 992 habitants. The evaluation is based on the population structure of 1989, assuming that annual population growth is 2% per year and that this group of population is not affected by the migration factor. Evaluations performed by INSTAT, recomfirmed by the results on national level produced from LSMS (Living Standart Measurement Survey), are provided hereinafter:

Table7. Statistics on present minorities in Albania

Population	Total	%
Population	3,069,275	100
National Minorities	42,892	1.4
From this:		
Greek	35,829	1.17
Macedonian	4,148	0.14
Montenegrin	678	0.02
Aromanian	992	0.03
Others:	1,245	0.04

Note: This material was prepared from INSTAT in coperation with Foreign Affairs Ministry,
Direction of Minority

Statistical archive data on the size of minorities in Albania

In view of the continuity of statistical information on minorities in Albania archive documents which contain data on the numbers of minorities in Albania have been analysed.

As the majority of the minority population in Albania is constituted by the Greek minority - which in the registration of 1989¹ constituted 1.85% of the population and consisted of 58.758 persons or 90.6 % of the minority population - we will present some statistical estimates based on archive sources.

In 1922 the Investigating Commission of the League of Nations carried out an inspection in South Albania and through the comparison of Albanian, Greek and Turkish data it estimated the number of the Greek population in South Albania to be 35.000- 40.000 or 1/6 of the overall population of this area² . According to the Report of the 84th session of the Council of the League of Nations, on 18.01.1935, in South Albania there were 36 schools in Greek language in 1922 and attended by 2.614 students.

According to Albanian official sources of the census carried out in 1930 the size of the Greek population in Albania is 37.271 inhabitants³.

After the Second World War statistics on national minorities in Albania were published for the first time with the 1945 census and later on a question on nationality was included in the 1950 census but the number of aliens and persons belonging to national minorities resulted much lower than the numbers registered in 1945. This situation is related to the repatriation of many Italians and Yugoslavs who were living in Albania in the aftermath of the war. Therefore the data that should be analysed in order to estimate the size of the minority population begin in 1950.

Namely:

Data on national minorities in Albanian censuses

Year of census	Overall population	Population of non-Albanian nationality	Minority population as percentage of overall population
1950	1.218.945	35.201	2.9%
1955	1.391.499	47.227	3.4%
1960	1.626.315	44.570	2.7%
1969	2.068.155	Not collected	-

¹ The registration of population and housing of the year 1989, funded by the UNO, is the last census whose identifying questions included a question on nationality.

² The Report of the Investigating Commission of the League of Nations, over the period 1922-1923.

³ The data of the Albanian Government, reported in the Verbal of the 84th Session of the League of Nations, 18 January 1935.

1979	2.590.600	54.687	2.1%
1989	3.182.417	64.816	2.01%
2000	3.069.275	Not collected	-

Distribution of national and ethno-linguistic minorities

Persons of non-Albanian nationality in censi by year	1950	1955	1960	1979	1989
Total	35.201	47.227	44.570	54.687	64.816
Greeks	28.996	35.345	37.282	49.307	58.758
Macedonians	2.273	3.431	4.235	4.097	4.697
Montenegrins	893	1.613	66	100
Aromanians ⁴ [5]	1.876	4.249		782
Other	1.163	2.589	3.053	1.217	479

⁴ The census of 1960 and 1979 did not contain data on the Aromanian ethno-linguistic minority.

Geographical distribution and size of the Greek national minority compared to overall population:

NO.	District	Greek Minority	Overall population
1.	Saranda dhe Delvina	36.531	87.768
2.	Gjirokastra	19.921	66.373
3.	Berati dhe Kuçova	49	79.398
4.	Fieri dhe Mallakastra	123	245.062
5.	Gramshi	13	43.565
6.	Kolonja	20	24.781
7.	Korça dhe Devolli	158	215.221
8.	Lushnja	51	134.280
9.	Përmeti	442	39.775
10.	Pogradeci	19	71.446
11.	Skrapari	16	46.503
12.	Tepelena	57	49.850
13.	Vlora	202	176.788
14.	Dibra	17	149.650
15.	Elbasani dhe Pëqini	131	241.950
16.	Durrësi dhe Kavaja	192	245.499
17.	Kruja dhe Laçi	17	106.852
18.	Kukësi dhe Hasi	17	101.302
19.	Lezha	15	62.001
20.	Librazhdi	33	71.982
21.	Mati	22	76.674
22.	Mirdita	16	50.447
23.	Puka	17	48.969
24.	Shkodra dhe Malësia e Madhe	53	236.289
25.	Tirana	610	368.213
26.	Tropoja	16	44.779
	IN ALL ALBANIA	58.758	3.182.417

Thus, the population of Greek nationality is mostly established in the southern and border districts (96.1%) - Gjirokaster, Delvine, Sarande and constitutes 1.85% of the overall population.

The comparison of these data with the 1922 data of the Investigating Commission of the League of Nations- whereby the Greek population consisted of 1/6 of the overall south Albanian population- and the 1930 census, taking into account the growth rate of the Albanian and Greek population after the Second World War, demonstrates a continuity in statistical data on minorities in Albania.

The above data show that the Albanian population is ethnically quite homogeneous with a small percentage of minority population - between 3.5 and 2 percent over the whole period after the Second World War.

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS

**ACTION-PLAN
FOR THE ROMA MINORITY
IN
THE FIELD OF CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS**

TIRANA, 2006

	Objectives in accordance with Government's Strategy	Measures and actions to be taken	Responsible Structures	Period of achievement	Comments
A	OBJECTIVES				
1	<i>Involvement of the Roma tradition in the national activities of inheritance</i>	<p><i>The annual Package of inheritance national Projects. Because of the particularities of the Roma musical folk, it is proposed to raise awareness for the participation of Roma tradition, with precedence in the:</i></p> <p>a) <u>National Inheritance Projects Package</u></p> <p>1) <i>The National Folkloric Typological Festival (FFTK) of Harmonics in Korça</i></p> <p><i>a) Notification of Roma musical associations to participate.</i></p> <p><i>b) Presentation of the issue in the meeting of the Organizational Committee.</i></p> <p><i>c) Incorporation of a Roma group in the festival, based in a quality selection after the equal competition of the groups</i></p>	<p>The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (MTCYS). Directorate of Cultural Inheritance. National Centre of Folkloric Activities, Respective municipalities</p>	June 2006	To our opinion, the involvement of this tradition in the national network of the organising and functioning of the national activities is strongly recommended

		<p>b) <i>Presentation of the issue in the meeting of the respective board.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Incorporation of a Roma group in the festival, based in a quality selection after the equal competition of the groups</i></p> <p>3) Folkloric Festival "Oda Dibrane", Peshkopi</p> <p>a) <i>Notification of Roma musical associations to participate.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Incorporation of a Roma group in the festival, based in a quality selection after the equal competition of the groups.</i></p> <p>4) Folkloric Festival "Sofra Dardane", Tropoja</p> <p>a) <i>Notification of Roma musical organisations to participate</i></p> <p>b) <i>Incorporation of a Roma group in the festival based in a quality selection after the equal competition of the groups</i></p>		<p>September 2006</p> <p>June 2006</p>	
2	Involvement of the Roma musical tradition in the official musical parade of Inheritance "Spiritual	<p>a) The Registration of the musical material and preparation of the sample.</p> <p>b) The scientific study on this material, part of text from the CD (Albanian and English).</p> <p>c) Reproduction of 1000 pieces of CD-s</p>	The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. Directorate of	During 2006	The Parade "Spiritual Inheritance in CD" is the first one offered to the Albanian public in this form. Through it, it is

	Inheritance in CD"	<p>containing this music tradition.</p> <p>d) Their distribution in the cultural, education, scientific institutions, etc.</p>	Cultural Inheritance. The Roma Community		aimed to the popularisation of the Albanian spiritual traditional value. The presentation of these values in a digital form will ensure an international audience and will integrate this culture more naturally in the global mosaic of the cultural inheritance. In this parade we think to include a separate CD with Roma music.
3	Care for Roma youth as part of the Youth National Strategy	Creation and treatment of equal representation opportunities and their integration, creation of special conditions to promote activities of Roma youth organisations, to find out alternatives for youth employment, participation in debates and discussions.	The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. Directorate of Youth Policies Co-ordination	Ongoing	It is taken in consideration the fact (need) of public opinion awareness on the positive aspects of Roma culture by criticising discriminative attitudes and behaviours towards Roma minority.
4	Performance of common pathfinder and collecting expeditions with the Academy of Science.	<p>a) Photographic expeditions on this tradition.</p> <p>b) Publications of this tradition as tales for children, etc.</p> <p>c) Musical transcription of the Roma tradition.</p> <p>d) Organisation of ethnographic pavilions and different crafts of Roma tradition.</p>	The Institute of Folk Culture. The Academy of Sciences.	Ongoing	This initiative includes the collection and study of this tradition in different communities and ages. This will be performed through work in the field.

5	Encouragement of Roma cultural organisations to become members of the Albanian section of CIOFF	Co-operation of Roma organisations with the Albanian section of CIOFF to participate in the annual activity that is organised also with the support of MTCYS.	CIOFF Section Përmet. MTCYS. Directorate of Cultural Inheritance.	Ongoing	Being a member of CIOFF gives considerable facilities of financial nature to associations, mainly for participation in the international folkloric activities.
6	Draft of a pilot project to set up a public library and information centre near the big Roma centres.	In the framework of increasing contacts with written culture and with the tendency of fast information, it is proposed the set up of a public library and information centre near the big Roma centres.	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. Directorate of Written Arts and Culture. The National Library. Respective municipalities.	Ongoing	The Library will serve to increase access of Roma children for books and we think that this investment will bring a new conception of the followed policies so far for this community.
7	Support of cultural artistic projects of the Roma community	In the interest of integration of cultural values of the Roma community, support to the initiatives of this community to accomplish projects in the field of spiritual inheritance, publications, etc	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. Respective directorates and dependent institutions.	Ongoing	These activities will help the promotion of cultural values of Roma community.

8	Support to accomplish sports activities	Increase of sportive activities for Roma community and attraction Roma youth in these activities.	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Sport Directory	Ongoing	Increase of sports' activities for the Roma community and attraction of this community in the local and national sportive activities.
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Strategy National

for improving *Roma* living conditions



This publication is funded by the OSCE Presence in Albania

National Strategy

“for improving **ROMA living conditions**”

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OPENING REMARKS

The entire Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and its participating states, as well as the OSCE Presence in Albania, consider the situation of the Roma minority as an issue of concern for the country. Over the past years, the Presence has implemented several projects in order to support Albania's efforts to improve the conditions in which this community lives. The Presence has been one of the organizers of the first round table for Roma and Roma issues in the country and has played an advisory role during the creation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions.

The Office of the People's Advocate, being the safeguard of human rights for the Albanian people, believes that the rights of Roma should be respected and will make every effort to ensure that the government indeed lives up to expected standards.

The Presence and the People's Advocate believe that publishing the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions is not only a concrete contribution in itself but also a practical and necessary step toward implementing this Strategy. Thus the organs of the central and local government, as well as all the other interested national and international actors, will have access to this important document which is to guide further work. The publication is to be distributed to all the above-mentioned actors so that they can be familiarized with the content and work towards its implementation.

The Presence and the People's Advocate share the opinion that much more effort will have to be made by the organs of the central and local government, both in terms of focusing their work and allocating funds, in order to fulfill the obligations set up by the Strategy. The situation of the Roma people in Albania needs significant improvement in order for this community to have a decent life in a democratic society. The Presence expresses its readiness to assist the government in its efforts toward the implementation of the Strategy and calls upon all civil society actors, especially Roma NGOs, to play an active role in this regard.



Pavel Vacek
Head of OSCE Presence in Albania



Ermir Dobjani
People's Advocate

DECISION

Dated 09/ 18/ 2003, Number 633

**CONCERNING THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE LIVING
CONDITIONS OF THE ROMA MINORITY**

Based on Article 100 of the Constitution, upon proposal from the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs,
the Council of Ministers

DECIDED:

1. To endorse the strategy for improving the living conditions of the Roma minority as per the body text attached to this decision.
2. The responsibility for the implementation of this strategy is assigned to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Territorial Adjustment and Tourism, the Ministry of Public Order, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Transports and Telecommunications.

This decision takes effect following its publication in the Official Gazette.

**PRIME MINISTER
Fatos Nano**

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE ROMA MINORITY

The National Strategy for “Improving the living conditions of the Roma Minority” has been formulated by an inter-ministerial group under the leadership of Mr. Ahmet Ceni, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs. The Working Group was comprised of:

Gramoz Bregu	Ministry of Education and Science
Vasil Tole	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
Agim Shehi	Ministry of Health
Genta Qosja	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
Anila Selmani	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
Rezarta Bitri	Ministry of Justice
Shyqyri Dade	Ministry of Public Order
Violeta Qebini	Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization
Shqipe Rrumbullaku	Ministry of Economy and Privatization
Doris Andoni	Ministry of Tourism and Territorial Adjustment
Geraldina Ducka	Ministry of Finance
Agim Gjevori	Ministry of Transports
Brunilda Minarolli	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The inter ministerial working group was coordinated by Merita Gjashta.

The National Strategy for “Improving the living conditions of the Roma minority” has been designed with the contribution of Mr. Refik Tare, representing the Roma organizations on the inter ministerial group. Also, the Strategy has benefited from inputs made by the Roma non profit organizations (NPO-s), such as Roma for Integration, Amaro Drom, Romani Batx, Shanci Rom, Amaro Dives, Disutni Albania. Special thanks go to leaders of these organizations: Arben Kosturi, Hasan Sula, Miranda Fejzo, Sabri Mile, Estref Pellumbi, Kujtim Gajtani, Latif Kazanxhi, Ilmi Ademi, Nesti Zeqiri, Xheladin Taco, Pellumb Fortuna, Kujtim Shabani, Skeder Veliu, Muhamet Xhambazi, Gurali Mejdani, and Ramazan Elmazi.

List of Acronyms

MLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOPO	Ministry of Public Order
MTTA	Ministry of Territorial Adjustment and Tourism
MEP	Ministry of Economy and Privatization
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLGD	Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
CEO	Committee for Equal Opportunities
NES	National Employment Service
SIL	State Inspectorate of Labor
ISS	Institute of Social Securities
DPH	Directorate of Public Health
SMSEA	Small and Medium Size Enterprise Agency
ICOFF	International Cultural Organization of Folk Festivals
LGU	Local Government Units
ED	Educational Directorate
SD	School Directorates
IFC	Institute of Folk Culture

INTRODUCTION

Short note on historical background

Historically, the country of Albania has been singled by for the harmonious co-existence between the dominant society and ethnic minorities. The peaceful co-existence has withstood the times of history to make Albania a point of reference with regard to tolerance among ethnic and religious communities.

The Roma community in Albania is defined as a linguistic minority group. As a genuine census of the Roma population in Albania has never been conducted, official statistics are not available.

Roma people have been living in Albania for over six hundred years. They reached the country before the Ottoman occupation. Research studies indicate that they may have come from India to the Balkans and later Europe. Due to lack of hard and fast historical evidence, their origin is rather conferred from linguistic analysis. At the time of the Ottoman occupation, for reasons related to their safety and security, the Roma population converted to the Muslim religion, following the example of the dominant Albanian population. During the Second World War, unlike what had happened in other Eastern European Countries, Roma people in Albania were not sent to the death camps. Moreover, Roma in Albania joined the ranks of the anti fascist fighters. After the War, the Albanian Government pursued a policy of assimilation trying to make Roma part of the mainstream population. Thus, during the communist regime, the Roma population, too, were beneficiaries of the land reform, lifelong employment, mandatory education, housing facilities, ensured future, etc. Notwithstanding the numerous shortfalls of the previous system, it should be noted that it provided equal treatment for all, including Roma, which practically integrated minorities into the mainstream society. Based on the policy of life long employment for all, Roma men and women without distinction were provided with jobs based on their educational credentials and vocational skills. The fall of communism and beginning of democratic changes exposed Roma to the hardships of the transitional period. They were the first to loose their jobs, as a result of which they plummeted fast to the bottom of society. Lack of education and training were the root cause of the worsening of their status in society. Due to the ensuing impoverishment, with few exceptions, the youngest generation of Roma, have dropped out of school to pursue jobs to ensure the survival of their families. Roma children have turned to beggars and fallen victims to prostitution and other forms of human trafficking. Presently, the economic status of Roma in Albania and their living conditions are at the lowest levels ever due to high unemployment rate affecting Roma worse than the non-Roma population. Consequently, health and housing conditions have constantly deteriorated.

For the first time, Roma were recorded in Albania in the years 1522-23. Their numbers were recorded at 1270 people. Roma names started to appear in the old Albanian manuscripts from the year 1635. In the year 1930, according to popular perception, Roma were said to number a total of 20 thousand people scattered throughout the country. Based on French sources, in the year 1980 Roma in Albania accounted for 62 thousand people. The French themselves referred to English records. In 1995, the International Group of Minority Rights placed the number of Roma people in Albania between 90,000 to 100,000. Also in 1995, the University of Maryland announced that there were up to 120,000 Roma living in Albania. Present day estimations show that the growth rate of the Roma population is 3% and higher than the growth rate of the Albanian population. As no population census in Albania has ever recorded the accurate numbers of Roma, accurate figures are not available.

Roma people are scattered almost allover the country's territory. However, the greatest number of Roma is concentrated in Central and Southeastern Albania in the areas of Tirana, Durrresi, Elbasan, Fieri, Berati, Korca, Pogradeci, Bilishti, Gjirokastra, Delvina, Kruja, Shkodra, etc. Roma people prefer to live either in the big cities (mainly in segregated quarters) or in villages close to the towns.

Figures collected empirically show that there are about 1500 Roma people in Gjirokastra, in the quarter called Zinxhiraj (Chain area). The greatest part of these people live in stark poverty, in

makeshift homes, without running water and sewage facilities. The majority of the Roma people in this part of the country tend to immigrate to Greece seasonally, especially in the summer time, to seek jobs on the Greek farms. Other people try to make a living by importing inexpensive clothing items and consumer goods to sell in the Gjirokastra popular marketplaces. One thing is certain: life for Roma people is getting more difficult by the day.

In Fier, in the quarter called Azotiku (the surroundings of the Fertilizers Plant) there are about 500 Roma families, each numbering an average of 8 members. The community dwells in a site that runs parallel to the main railroad track dividing the city of Fier in two. As no road connects the Roma quarter with the city, Roma people walk along the rail track often to become the victims of accidental misfortunes. Roma in Fier are afflicted by unemployment. Few children go to school, among other things, also because of the long distances they have to walk.

In Levan Fier, there are about 500 families with an average of six members. The majority of children do not go to school and the majority of young people are unemployed. Their livelihood is very difficult and they try to survive by farming or by crafting metallic cooking pots. Roma community in this area is divided into two groups: those who own land and those with no land.

In Baltez (muddy area) of Fier, there are about 250-300 families with an average of 5 to 6 members each. The greatest number of the families live in good houses and own plots of land. They have established their own community school to teach Roma language and Roma culture to their children.

The Roma community in Kulleiri in Korca numbers about 600 families. Generally, Roma here live in conditions comparable to the Albanians'. They live in apartment buildings, are employed and send their children to school.

In Shkodra, the Roma community lives in the area close to the Bridge of the Buna River. They live in the worst of conditions imaginable, worse even to those of other Roma communities in Albania. The number of households ranges between 27 and 50. Their homes are plastic improvised structures and the whole area has no access to drinking waters. Consequently, the members of the community drink river water because they do not have access to other sources. Unemployment reigns absolute at 100 per cent.

In Elbasan, the community living close to the stadium is in considerable numbers. However, the exact number is not known. Roma people in Elbasan are mostly involved with the sale of used clothes.

Roma in Fushe Kruja are estimated at 1200 people. They live in very difficult conditions with no housing and no access to drinking water. They, too, are forced to drink water from the river. Unemployment is in very high levels.

In Berat, the Roma community is concentrated in the Lagja e Re (New Quarter). Their number is relatively small with no more than 60 households settled mainly on the banks of the main river of Berat. The community lives in deep poverty, as they possess no land and own no property whatsoever. They have not even registered themselves with the local authorities to be eligible for social welfare.

It is believed that the greatest number of the Roma population is settled in Tirana. Roma populated areas include Kinostudio, Lapraka, Bregu i Lumit, Selita, Yzberisht, etc. Roma in Tirana, as elsewhere, are faced with a multitude of problems such as unemployment, poverty, school drop out, child trafficking, lack of access to health, education and communication, lack of housing, lack of sanitation facilities, etc. A good part of the Roma community in Tirana survives by digging into the mountains of garbage in the suburbs of Sharra, or by begging on the streets. A great number of families live in makeshift houses made with salvageable materials scavenged from landfills. About 100 families on the Road Irfan Tomini have received notice by the Municipal authorities to evict their homes or will be forcefully evicted because of city planning works.

BASIC PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE
FORMULATION OF THE STRATEGY

First part

Need for the strategy

The Strategy emanates from a critical analysis of the problems of the Roma community. The root cause of the state of the art of the Roma minority in Albania lies in their social and economic situation.

The strategy design process relied on a careful study of the needs of vulnerable groups. The study took count of the quantity and quality of needs that these groups have. It utilized statistical data from official and unofficial sources regarding the scale of vulnerability and social exclusion, the locations and density rate of populations at risk. Information from these sources, although incomplete and often times inaccurate and unverified by second sources, have served to identify the trends of socio economic development, to detect emerging phenomena, to sense the dynamics of change, as well as to assess the impact they produce on the lives of the Roma community.

The efforts to design this strategy have drawn on the analyses, studies, surveys and reports released by governmental and non-governmental organizations concerning such areas as Korca, Fieri, Novosela, Vlora, Berati and Fushe Kruja. Also, the working group has utilized the outcomes of seminars, round tables, conferences and symposiums held to increase the understanding of the Roma communities of their own situation and the need to take action to improve their status.

In view of the difficult situation of the Roma community in Albania, the Albanian government commits itself politically to design this strategy towards the upgrading of the status of the Roma community in Albania, through the institutionalization of policies and programs to reduce Roma poverty and to mainstream Roma with the dominant society, while guaranteeing the preservation and development of Roma ethnic identity. The Albanian Government counts on the Roma community as a cooperating partner during both the formulation and implementation of this document that maps the road to their development.

Legal background

The Albanian legislation pays special attention to the guaranteeing of fundamental human rights and freedoms as the pillars of the modern civilized society. Provisions concerning minority groups in the Republic of Albania comprise a number of articles contained in the Constitution, the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code, in the normative acts of the Council of Ministers and the conventions ratified by the Parliament of Albania.

Albania is a member of the United Nations Organization since 14 December 1955 and has ratified almost every major convention of the United Nations concerning human rights. Some of these instruments ratified by Albania are: Universal Human Rights Declaration of 1948 (Albania became signatory in 1955); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1969 (signed in 1994); International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 (signed in 1991); International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1976 (signed in 1991); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1980 (signed in 1996).

Albania is a member of the OSCE and a signatory to all of its documents: the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference of 1975; Copenhagen Declaration of 1990; the Charter of Paris for a New Europe of 1990; Document of the Moscow Conference of 1991, etc.

As a member of the Council of Europe since 13 July 1995, Albania has ratified a great number of important instruments, like the Convention for the protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms of 1951 and the Framework Convention for the Protection of Ethnic Minorities.

As a result of all these acts, the protection of ethnic minorities is guaranteed by both Albanian national legislation and the International Acts that determine the regime of minority rights and freedoms.

The Republic of Albania has ratified the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of Ethnic Minorities. In practice, the Albanian Government guarantees equal treatment for all, which generally translates into the fact that minorities overall have the same living standard as the dominant society. However, the Roma community's status is below the average living standard in

Albania. Roma are faced with greater economic and social hardships, poor housing conditions and a less enabling environment for raising and educating their children. Although Albanian legislation does not refer to the Roma minority as an ethnic minority, but rather as a linguistic minority on the grounds of lack of reference to country of citizenship, the Albanian Government fully honors the principles of the Framework Convention for the protection of Ethnic Minorities with regard to the Roma population, too.

Social solidarity and equality of races and minorities

Albania has historically been noted for the peaceful and harmonious coexistence between national and religious communities. Every minority has demonstrated its originality in contributing to this co-existence. Moreover, the originality and identity of every community has been respected and conditions have been created to preserve the peculiarities of each minority through the generations.

The Roma minority is characterized by concentration in separate dwelling sites, as well as by diffusion with the dominant society, which is an indication of general acceptance and co-existence.

Partnership to identify problems and remedies to the situation

During the years of the previous system, the Government applied equal treatment for all minorities for purposes of integrating them into the mainstream society.

Following the nineties and the change of the system which brought about the re-instatement of the right to free speech and association, the minorities organized themselves into various establishments to protect their interests and rights in society.

An important role in the identification, study and mitigation of social problems is played by foreign and domestic non-profit organizations. These civil society organizations also carry out important services for the society. The work of such organizations has been crucial in building public awareness on the threat of such negative phenomena like child, women and girls trafficking, corruption of the police and public administration, etc. The activity of civil society organizations has covered a wide range of issues and sometimes coordination has not been effective enough to ensure the maximization of the resources of the community to the benefit of improving the status of ethnic minorities. The mission of Roma civil society organizations is the presentation and dissemination of Roma values, their intellectual wealth and Roma history. They also strive to increase Roma participation in policy and decision making at the central and local governance levels, especially on issues related to Roma life. These organizations lobby to protect Roma interests, too. This strategic document is the output of joint efforts of government and Roma minority representatives. Both the Government and Roma people are aware that the implementation of policies, programs and projects in the context of this strategy requires the establishment of a sustainable and working partnership between the two. The representatives of the Roma communities should intensify and step up their efforts and work to raise awareness and understanding of Roma people with regard to the negative phenomena in Roma life. Special attention should be paid to working with those families that either intentionally or unintentionally prevent their children from having a normal life, as a consequence of which they fall victim to the various forms of trafficking, early marriages, and forms of exploitation that permanently damage the future of Roma children. On its side, the Albanian Government should encourage the formation and consolidation of a Roma intellectual and economic elite to facilitate the implementation of socially integrating policies and modernization projects.

Also the Government should take steps to fight stereotypes, prejudice and practices of employees at central and local level discriminating Roma citizens by placing them in a less privileged position compared to the other citizens.

Preservation and transmission of the values of Roma culture

An important and common task for the entire society is the preservation of the cultural values of the Roma minority, which as of presently have been severely underserved. An important orientation is represented by efforts to develop and transmit the Roma language from generation to generation.

These efforts should not target the Roma minority alone. The entire society should learn about Roma values and Roma traditions as one of the ways to contribute to the acceptance of the other and the reduction of prejudice as part of the efforts to strengthen social cohesion and increase tolerance and solidarity.

The Roma minority has made commendable efforts to preserve its language and to pass

on to the future generations their values and traditions. The Roma civil society organizations play an important role in strengthening the cultural identity, the revival, enrichment and transmission of values and language from one generation to the other. Through the dissemination of the results of their research, study, publications and other activities, Roma civil society organizations working in the cultural field have been successful in creating a new vision and understanding of Roma culture. They have made a contribution to the increase of self esteem and self respect within the Roma minority itself and the change of society's attitudes and expectations towards the Roma community.

Financial support and division of responsibilities for upgrading ROMA economic status

As regards funding for efforts to upgrade the economic status of Roma people, special care should be taken to ensure adequate resources for housing, economic aid, unemployment benefits, job openings, etc.

Presently, there are a number of civil society organizations covering a wide range of needs like education, culture, development, etc. Among these organizations, the most proactive are: Roma for Integration, Amaro Drom, Romani Baxt, Shanci Rom, Amaro Kham, Amaro Dives, Disutni Albania, Alba Rom, etc. Despite the increasing number of Roma organizations in the latest years, their efforts to produce positive

change in the Roma condition have not been sufficiently productive, to say the least, as some of these organizations have even created negative effects.

The Roma organizations have implemented a wide range of projects, such as publication of journals, opening of schools and kindergartens, development of football tournaments, opening of exhibitions, book publication, establishment of community centers, conduct of summer schools, concerts for children, round tables on Roma issues, etc. The majority of these projects have been funded by foreign donors.

Roma representatives and Roma organizations have committed themselves to the implementation of the priorities established in this strategy.

Protection of human rights and prevention of discriminatory practices

The Albanian Government does not discriminate citizens on any grounds at all and forbids by law the use of discriminatory acts and practices. To prevent the incidence of such acts, in addition to adopting relevant laws and international instruments, the Albanian government has set up appropriate structures to ensure the implementation of laws. Although all necessary laws are in place to prevent instances of such discrimination from happening, there have been cases of hidden discrimination against Roma individuals, including by people in public office.

Roma economic and social status

Poverty and poor quality of life, as well as the underprivileged status of the Roma population living in Albania, have been commanding the attention of governmental bodies and wide public opinion. Indicators of the social status of the Roma population are at the bottom of national averages. The overwhelming majority of Roma people live in unsafe conditions, in deep misery and below the poverty line.

Massive unemployment that ensued after the nineties afflicted Roma worse than any other social group. Roma people were thrown out of the labor market due to total lack of opportunity to adapt and respond to the newly rising labor market demands.

Before the nineties, net enrollment rates of Roma children in mandatory education were quite satisfactory and at levels almost equal with the rest of children living in Albania. Enrollment rates drastically fell in the secondary and tertiary levels of education. In the first years following the nineties, enrollment rates generally fell for the entire population, but the Roma population suffered the biggest drop out rate.

The difficult situation of the Roma community in Albania is of a composite nature. Their social status is low because of their low educational and training levels. In addition, their households are quite sizeable and have limited access to health and education services. Prejudice and social stigma build obstacles that make their acceptance and advancement difficult. The majority of Roma people live in pocket areas with underdeveloped infrastructure. They are the ones who suffer the most from social crisis. As a consequence, Roma live in conditions below the country's average. In most of the cases, all of the above factors combine to make Roma exclusion even deeper and starker.

Consequently, the improvement of Roma status requires the solution of a multitude of problems. The cumulative effects of the negative factors at play further deteriorate the situation. The big Roma households, without any regular income due to lack of employment opportunities, are unable to make a decent living. With no resources, they can not afford to pay for decent housing. Neither can they afford to pay electricity bills and other public goods and services. Therefore, they

are constantly traveling in search of less costly dwelling sites where they settle often without legal authorization. As a consequence, they are further segregated from society and more marginalized with less access to public services such as education and employment opportunities.

The situation of Roma cannot be reduced to a mere poverty problem. Nor can it be regarded simply in the context of policies about minority groups. A thorough assessment of the situation reveals that exclusion and self exclusion of Roma is the result of economic, sociologic and psychological factors.

The Roma minority scatters widely and travels constantly also because of their traditional lifestyles and cultural and spiritual constitution. As a result, Roma are forced to cope with great hardships when it comes to housing, education and employment. These hardships cause their situation to be very unstable both socially and economically. The lack of stability negatively impacts the possibilities of identifying and implementing long term solutions. On the other side, the constant shifting and migrations of the Roma families leave their imprints in the lives of their children. Left without proper education, they cannot adapt to the demands of the labor market and therefore enjoy fewer opportunities than the rest of the dominant society. This becomes a vicious circle in which poverty breeds poverty and the social problems recycle themselves from one generation of Roma to the other.

Lack of sexual education and family planning information cause Roma families to be quite big. Sizeable families normally have difficulties to maintain decent living standards in the conditions of fewer opportunities. Given the free market economy where individuals compete for chances, Roma are afflicted by unemployment. Left with limited opportunities to find mid and long term solutions to their basic needs, due to the low economic, educational and social status, many of the households of the community are plagued by serious social problems such as domestic violence, battering of children and women, divorce, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, inability to manage family resources, etc. Members from these families fall victim to criminal individuals and groups, who exploit Roma for their various trafficking activities such as prostitution, forced labor and illegal organ transplants. Often times Roma children are victimized with the consent of their own parents. Taking advantage of their miserable situation, family relatives persuade Roma parents to sell their kids for petty gains. These children are forced to beg, sell, carry out illegal actions, etc. Most of the time, they also become victims of social and sexual abuse.

Child trafficking is a problem that affects the entire population. It hits most severely the vulnerable communities because of their poverty and the difficulty to survive. Traffickers target problematic households, single parent families, or children living with their grandparents due to parents' death, divorce or disappearance.

Collected data show that Roma unemployment is highest in the areas of Tirana, Korca and Fushe Kruja. Only a small fraction of the Roma community is integrated into the mainstream Albanian life, mainly in the cities where they have adopted a lifestyle similar to the dominant population.

While creating a wide range of opportunities, structural reforms, institutionalization of markets, liberalization of prices and, generally, the restructuring of economic relationships also caused the deterioration of certain living standard indicators such as lowering of the population's purchasing power, increase of unemployment, etc. These costs are mostly borne by the vulnerable groups of society where the Roma people belong.

Emigration and migration are social phenomena that accompany transitions. Albania has higher emigration rates as compared to the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Along with the positive effects of the improvement of the economic conditions in the Albanian households, emigration generates adverse consequences in such social aspects as reduction of the able bodied work force, increase of the number of households headed by women, increase of the number of abandoned children and elderly, exploitation of minors from the criminal bands, etc.

Given the adverse social and economic situation, many of the Roma youth immigrate to the neighbor countries in search of a better life. The desire to leave the country is among the main reasons leading to the trafficking of Roma boys and girls who fall victim to the promises of prostitution and trafficking criminals.

Despite the positive changes and the improvement of the living standards for certain population groups, considerable numbers of the population live under the official poverty line. To help these households make both ends meet, they are placed on modest economic aid (cash based assistance). Poverty is first of all a rural phenomenon, because the greatest number of the rural population is forced to cope not just with scarce resources and insufficient income, but also with lack of infrastructure and inefficient social service delivery, etc.

Early marriage is an additional cause leading to the break up of Roma families, traumatizing their members, especially children.

Roma minority is characterized by constant mobility. They do not live for very long in

the same place. The consequences of this constant mobility creates problems for the population itself and for the state, too. The change of the living place, taking children from one school to another, difficulties to re-train and find employment and to integrate into new environments, produce adversities of a wide-ranging nature. Many of the households do not benefit from the aid schemes, because in their constant moving and shifting from place to place, they do not register with the civil registrar offices. Such is the situation of many families living in Fushe Kruja and Elbasan, but also in many other areas of the country.

In a social perspective, the status of the Roma minority is reflected in a much wider range of problems. In fact, it is the root cause of many negative phenomena such as involvement of Roma youth in criminal activity, school drop out, exploitation of child labor, exploitation of children, women and girls for prostitution and other illegal gains, cultivation and consumption of drugs, etc.

OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY
MEASURES TOWARDS STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION

Second part

SCHOOLING AND AWARENESS

Many of the Roma first graders have problems understanding the Albanian language as their mother tongue is Romani. Due to language difficulties they encounter problems with school progress and consequently drop out of school overwhelmingly. To overcome the problem, the Government will strengthen pre school education for Roma children.

Profound poverty, parent's limited perspective, low levels of education prevailing among the Roma communities, are some of the factors leading children to drop out of school and join their parents to contribute to the survival of the family. As school is the place to acquire skills to be competitive on the labor market, measures will be taken to ensure that all Roma children complete mandatory education and many of them follow through with secondary and even higher education.

To help Roma children stay in school, it is necessary to help Roma families counter economic hardships through policies aimed at ameliorating their living standards. Measures such as scholarships and other supportive schemes will be considered on a priority basis.

Competition on the labor market and competition in general requires Roma children to be educated and professionally capable. The Ministry of Education and Science will establish quotas for seats at the universities for Roma students to study programs such as public administration, social sciences, law, economics, engineering, etc., so that the new Roma generation become part of the civil service at all levels of the public administration.

Pre school education	Preschool education for Roma children will be accomplished through the following steps: (i) identification of the number of children in the preschool age cohort; (ii) determining pre-school enrollment rate for Roma children; (iii) building awareness of the Roma communities on the need to send children to preschools; (iv) determining accommodation capacities of preschool facilities in the Roma quarters in order to design future interventions; (v) rehabilitation of old and damaged facilities; (vi) construction of new facilities where there is a shortage of such institutions based on a preliminary needs assessment; (vii) introduction of Albanian language teaching in the upper levels of preschool to prepare Roma children for first grade; and (viii) assignment of experienced Roma instructors in preschools in cooperation and consultation with the Roma communities.
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Education of Roma children	Education of Roma children will be attained through: (1) identification of the school age population; (ii) study of the state of the art of the Roma children's education; (iii) building awareness of the Roma community on the benefits of sending children to school; (iv) designing and instituting measures compelling Roma to send their children to school; (v) determining the accommodation capacity of school facilities in Roma quarters; (vi) undertaking the rehabilitation of schools; (vii) building new schools where needed; (viii) assigning highly experienced and qualified teachers in Roma schools and providing appropriate incentives to them; (ix) providing free textbooks for pupils in the grades 1-9; (x) holding extracurricular events; (xi) networking and inter working constantly with Roma parents towards building better attitudes towards the school; (xii) equipping schools with teaching and learning materials to make school a nice place to be at; (xiii) providing Roma schools with computer and foreign language laboratories; (xiv) establishing Roma language courses and professional training courses to suit Roma traditions and talents in the secondary schools with considerable numbers of Roma students; (xv) organizing Albanian language courses for first graders who have difficulties with the Albanian language; (xvi) organizing summer schools with the participation of Roma and non Roma children; (xvii) holding individual lessons with gifted pupils to develop their talents in order to be able to enter art and vocational schools; and (xviii) organizing courses to fight illiteracy among Roma adults.
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Scholarships and support schemes for Roma children

To encourage the education of Roma children, the Government will provide scholarships and other support schemes for Roma pupils. Especially, the Government will (i) assign social workers in schools with considerable numbers of Roma students, (ii) hold awareness building and other activities with the participation of Roma parents and pupils to open their eyes to the need for education; (iii) assign special quotas for Roma students in the higher schools; and (iv) award scholarships for students from low income families.

Education of Roma in specialties

Education of Roma in specialties attracted by the Public Service such as social sciences, police and military academies, law and economics, teacher training, etc.
To further the cause of improving education levels of Roma minority, special seats will be assigned to Roma students in all of the public higher education schools in Albania.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FAMILY

Family

To achieve the goal of integrating Roma into the mainstream society, it is of paramount importance to change the Roma mindset with regard to a variety of issues such as early marriages, domestic violence, etc. Given the Roma traditions and manner of the community's inner organization this process will take a long time.

Presently, Roma women are discriminated and underprivileged even in their own families. They are uneducated, forced to do housework, give birth to and raise children. Given the important role of women inside the family, it is of primary importance that Roma women are provided with education and employment opportunities which will help their integration into society, but will also empower her economically and improve her status in the family. Given their illiteracy levels, Roma women are not aware of their legal and human rights. Therefore, this strategy proposes that efforts to improve the status of Roma women should focus on their legal and human rights education alongside with the increase of schooling, training and employment opportunities.

Change Roma mindset with regard to family lifestyles

To change Roma mindset and mentality with regard to their way of living will take a relatively long time. In order to increase understanding of Roma way of living, efforts will start by focusing on the (i) study of Roma concepts and notions about family and lifestyles. This study will be conducted by the Committee for Equal Opportunities in cooperation with Roma women and children civil society organizations. To further increase knowledge of these phenomena, (ii) meetings and interviews with Roma families will be conducted; (iii) awareness and training events will be organized to acquaint Roma with their rights in the light of both international and Albanian legal instruments; (iv) production and distribution of posters, leaflets, TV and radio discussion forums in the private and public mediums will be encouraged. However, change of mindset is a long-term objective closely connected with every objective in all of the orientations of activity to improve Roma status in society as laid out in this strategy.

Improve women status in the Roma families through elimination of discrimination by way of programs specially designed for women and girls.

Given that women in the Roma families are discriminated and their participation levels in social life is very low, the focus of efforts to improve their condition will be placed on the elimination of discrimination in the family through upgrading women education and training levels. The organization of vocational and professional training programs will be closely linked with employment opportunities for Roma women and girls by giving priority to the trafficked women and girls, as well as women in single parent families.

Culture

Despite their constant traveling and moving from place to place, Roma communities have preserved and transmitted their rich culture and traditions through the centuries down to the present times. In full recognition and appreciation of Roma values and culture, the Albanian Government will implement policies to facilitate the preservation and transmission of Roma values and history from generation to generation.

These policies will focus on enhancing opportunities for Roma intellectuals, writers, musicians, etc., to unfold the wealth of Roma culture and to contribute to Albanian and world cultural heritage. The more familiar the society with the Roma culture, traditions, rituals and spiritual wealth, the greater the acceptance of the dominant society of the Roma minority members.

Support to the Roma history and values

To preserve the values of the Roma minority the following measures will be taken: (i) Roma artists will be invited to participate in the annual national festivals such as the folk festival of harmonicas in the city of Korca, the festival of the civic song in Elbasan; (ii) inclusion of Roma in the projects of cultural tourism such as the festival of magical flute, the International Festival of CIOFF; the festival of the domino dance and the festival of folk instruments; (iii) inclusion of Roma music in

the musical heritage project: “Spiritual heritage in CD” and study of the collected musical material to be included as the text of the CD (both in Albanian and English); production of 1000 CD-s for distribution in the educational, cultural and research institutions. In addition, (iv) joint tracking and collecting expeditions will be organized jointly with the Academy of Sciences. Also, priority will be given to the organization of Roma photographic exhibitions, production of various publications, musical transcripts and the holding of ethnographic and handicraft wards with products of the Roma tradition; (v) encouraging the membership of Roma cultural organizations in international for a, such as in the Albanian Chapter of CIOFF. Further, (vi) steps will be undertaken to design and implement a pilot project for the establishment of a public library and a free information center in the biggest Roma dwelling site.

Youth

As the most vital and flexible part of the population that will bring about positive change in the lives of Roma people, Roma youth should be mainstreamed with the country’s younger generation. It is a lot easier to fight against prejudice early in life, rather than later on. Youth are especially sensitive to prejudice and willing to fight to eliminate them from their lives.

For this reason, efforts will be made to increase interaction between Roma and non Roma young people, not only in the workplaces, but also through other ways and means such as joint entertainment programs, festivities and sports events, as means to provide opportunities for younger people to get to know and accept each other.

Given that the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is in the process of designing the National Youth Strategy, among other stakeholder, Roma youth should also be involved in the process to: (i) identify target groups that this Strategy should benefit; (ii) create conducive conditions for the promotion of activities of Roma Youth Organizations towards enhancing youth employment opportunities and increasing Roma youth participation in debates and discussions.

Sports

Generally, the Roma community’s sports life is weak. The community only has one representative football team of young players. Since sports is a means contributing not just to good health, but also to the forging of relations between people and to keeping open the channels of communication, steps will be taken to establish sports clubs for the various types of sport.

i. Enlivening sports life

To enliven the Roma community’s sport life it is necessary to (i) create clubs for the various types of sports; (ii) create sports terrains for training purposes and play, and (iii) prepare coaches for the Roma teams.

Media

Media has a key role to play in the change of stereotypes and the creation of a realistic picture of the reality.

Efforts will be made to involve the media, both electronic and written, in the presentation and reporting of local and national initiatives and processes that encourage the integration of Roma with the larger society. So, media will be invited to present the progress of increased participation of Roma in the country’s life as well as progress in the improvement of their living conditions, upgrading of their internal organization and the development of the sites where they live and work. Special importance will be paid to the presentation of life examples that contribute to the improvement of the Roma image: their efforts and work to improve their status, their cultural activities and festivities, the achievements of Roma leaders and the values that the Roma people contribute to the larger society.

Access to Public Media

Media, as the fourth power, will support the efforts to provide the Roma minority with access to public media. Specifically, coverage by public media will be ensured through: (i) TV programs and writings in both the written and electronic media, (ii) special editions and periodic publications to uphold the rights of the Roma minority, its values and history, and (ii) the denunciation of instances of discrimination or distortion of the Roma image.

ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Business development

Employment, business creation, professional training courses and job creation projects are some of the ways to reduce poverty and integrate minorities into the mainstream society.

Provision of consulting services for business development, market surveys and access to credit for Roma communities to establish their private businesses.

To deliver the services necessary for business development to the Roma community, especially as regards consultancy and access to credit, it is necessary to: (i) identify traditional Roma businesses, (ii) establish relations between Roma business associations and micro credit and credit institutions and (iii) provide consultancy for business start up and development.

Employment and professional training

A great number of the unemployed Roma have been unemployed for many years now and many of them will not be able to find employment even if the economy grows.

Among the many reasons for the massive and protracted unemployment among Roma people, mention can be made of (i) lack of schooling; (ii) regional disadvantages; (iii) lack of opportunities due to structural changes of the economy; (iv) discrimination; and (v) low efficiency of policies designed to address Roma unemployment issues. It should be said that many of the Roma have not registered as unemployed with the local employment services.

Based on recent surveys, not only did a great number of Roma lose their jobs, but they have also been pushed out of the workplaces more than any other social group in Albania. Even those Roma who managed to cling to their positions in the labor market, have done so at the cost of giving up the right to work legally by accepting to be pushed into the black labor market.

To help Roma integrate on the labor market, it is of primary importance that training courses be provided to upgrade their skills in response to changing demand for labor skills. In addition, measures should be taken to increase opportunities through regular education and schooling.

The National Labor Service, in cooperation with the local governments, should design and enact programs to tackle unemployment in the long term. These strategies and policies should be designed and implemented jointly with the training centers and complemented by efforts to combine training programs with public works projects.

In the context of efforts to increase employment rate of the Roma population, it is of great importance that the local employment offices assist not just the registered unemployed, but reach also the unregistered part of the Roma able-bodied unemployed population.

In order to increase the number of employed Roma, representative of the Roma community should take part in the conception and formulation of special programs. To make sure that plans and strategies do not remain on paper, businesses employing Roma people should be entitled to financial incentives. Incentives should also be provided for trainers and coaches of Roma people in the workplaces.

Public works programs and local jobs created by local governments are ways of engaging unqualified labor, thus providing opportunities for disadvantaged people to make income for their families. Such programs play a significant role in the mitigation of poverty and social problems while building facilities and infrastructure that will serve to the community in the long run.

Implementing special programs to increase employment opportunities for Roma people

To generate jobs for Roma, special programs will be enacted to (i) employ Roma in public works carried out with budgetary funding; (ii) attract unregistered unemployed Roma; (iii) train and re-train those who need professional upgrading of their capabilities; and (iv) be also delivered through regular schooling years.

Enactment of advantageous policies for companies employing members of the Roma community.

This objective will be attained through: (i) the exploration of funding opportunities to establish businesses by Roma entrepreneurs to employ Roma people; (ii) the provision of financial incentives for companies and businesses employing Roma people; and (iii) subsidies for Roma products and Roma handicrafts.

Integration of the Roma community in the mainstream educational and vocational training system.

To integrate the Roma community in the mainstream system of education and vocational training the following steps will be taken: (i) identification of professions that may be learned and mastered by Roma; (ii) establishment of professional training courses for the identified professions in both the public and private centers of vocational and professional training; (iii) identification of Roma candidates to be employed as teachers in pre-school education; (iv) training these individuals through custom-tailored programs and (v) employment of these people in institutions attended by Roma. Further steps will include (vi) the creation of favorable conditions for the professional training of Roma unemployed through the (vii) establishment of legal grounds to stimulate and encourage Roma professional training.

Assistance to communes and municipalities to attract Roma to the labor market

The mainstreaming of Roma communities requires the mobilization of all governmental structures, starting from the level of local government. In this chain of responsibilities, the communes and municipalities should (i) take note of the needs for jobs and professions that this population is capable of; (ii) analyze at least two times a year the level of unemployment among the population and the root causes of the situation, (iii) fund public works projects in relation to improving the infrastructure of Roma populated sites.

Social protection

The Albanian Government will protect the groups at risk of the Roma population such as street children, low income households and other vulnerable individuals and groups.

Integrating Roma street children into normal children's world

Steps to attain this objective include the establishment of day care centers for these children that will serve both as shelter and education facilities. These centers will be funded jointly with foreign and local donors and will be entrusted to NGO-s whose mission is the education and development of this category of children. Institutions such as the State Labor Inspectorate will run systematic periodical controls to prevent the exploitation of the labor of Roma children.

Economic aid for poor families

Since Roma are not largely aware of their rights, many Roma families do not benefit from economic aid programs. To increase Roma awareness with regard to benefits guaranteed by law, (i) an awareness campaign will be designed to inform Roma about social welfare schemes they are eligible for, such as unemployment benefits, economic aid for poor families, maternal leave payment and other rights granted by the Albanian legislation. Also, (ii) a decree will be sent out to the communes and communities to obligate them to provide technical assistance to the Roma families to complete the documentation required for inclusion into such schemes.

Support for Roma civil society organizations to improve interaction with and service to their constituents

To obtain this objective it is necessary to (i) identify and help Roma civil society organizations register in the court of law; (ii) create a network of Roma NGO-s; (iii) assist Roma NGO-s to establish relations with the local government; (iv) establish an institute or center that would monitor the implementation of this strategy.

Labor conditions

Enactment of measures to eliminate violation of labor code provisions by employers (labor conditions, salaries, work hours, etc.)

are necessary to strengthen controls by the State Labor Inspectorate in businesses employing Roma people. At the same time, it is necessary to build the awareness of both employers and employ-

ees with regard to rights and responsibilities of the sides when entering an employment contractual agreement.

Social securities

Putting the Roma workforce on the mandatory social security scheme in the circumstances in which the greatest part of Roma is engaged in informal activities.

Since the overwhelming part of the Roma retired population enjoys no coverage from the social security scheme due to their non-participation in the schemes of contributions, it is a long term objective to enable the present working generation to obtain information with regard to the social security scheme. To achieve this objective various means of public information and awareness building will be used. The Institute of Social Securities jointly with the State Labor Inspectorate should make efforts to place informal activity under control, so that Roma people employed in private businesses are included in the social security scheme.

Civic status

The exact number of Roma living in Albania is not known since no census of Roma has been carried out so far. However, estimations point to a range of 80 – 120 thousand Roma living in Albania. Frequent change of dwelling sites and the constant traveling of Roma, early marriages and ignorance of the law has resulted in Roma people's lack of registration with the Civil Registrar's Offices. As a consequence, many Roma do not benefit from the financial support schemes they are entitled to under the Albanian laws. In these circumstances it is of primary importance to design a program to carry out the full registration of the community.

Registration of the Roma population in the Civil Registrar's Office

Starting from the serious problem of the Roma population's non-registration with the Civil Registrar's Office, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization should embark on a program to register the members of this community and should assign the necessary financial, human and logistic means to complete Roma registration as soon as possible.

HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Health

Living conditions are determined by social, economic and educational status. These factors play a crucial part in the population's health conditions.

Given the poor standards of Roma living, their health situation is below the average of the mainstream population. Inequalities in economic status and differences of lifestyles are more manifest in the health status of the Roma population.

In these circumstances, importance should be paid to giving children a chance to start their lives safely. Child and maternal health will be placed at the focus of Government's efforts to guarantee the health of newborn babies. Also, measures will be taken to improve health care for the entire population, particularly children.

Improving mother and child healthcare

To ensure good health for children, measures will include: (i) implementation of mandatory vaccination for children 0 – 14 years of age; (ii) promotional, educational and awareness programs for mothers; (iii) dissemination of information on modern methods of family planning among the Roma communities throughout Albania, (iv) improving health care for pregnant women and newborn babies.

Medical aid and free medications for big households and poor families.

Improved access to medical care will be achieved through a re-arrangement of the system to make it more efficient to respond to the needs of the Roma community and to ensure coverage of their residential sites. Special efforts will be made to identify poor and sizeable households so that free medical aid can be made available to them.

Assessing disease incidence and mortality rate in the Roma community and identifying measures to reduce and control them.

To attain this objective, it is necessary to (i) identify causes of diseases and deaths and compare the findings with those affecting the rest of the population; (ii) improve environmental conditions, such as hygiene of the surroundings, quality of drinking water, infrastructure of the residential sites, etc. The needs assessment for these interventions will be conducted jointly by the local governments and the Health Ministry.

Housing conditions

At the time of the pyramid schemes, due to poverty and low levels of education, many of the Roma families sold their apartment homes and put the money into pyramid schemes. The collapse of the pyramid schemes caused Roma to lose their investments and remain homeless. To survive, they were forced to improvise makeshift homes without the minimum hygienic and sanitation conditions. To improve the Roma housing conditions, the Government and the Roma community together will design adequate housing projects for Roma households.

Meeting minimum housing conditions

To meet the minimum requirements for Roma housing, efforts will begin with (i) an identification of the families in need of housing, the size of families and their present living conditions, to be followed by (ii) an identification of houses in need of rehabilitation and repair work, (iii) the design and costing of rehabilitation work; (iii) the identification of ownership rights over the land on which Roma have made their homes; (iv) an estimation of needs for land and construction material and calculation of bill of quantities; (v) encouraging the Roma community to contribute labor to the building and repair work; and (vi) the construction of inexpensive modest homes for the homeless and families in the worst of conditions.

Coverage of the entire Roma residential sites with water supply and sewage pipes and electricity grid

The local governments jointly with the Ministry of Tourism and Territorial Adjustment and Roma community representatives in Roma residential sites will (i) assess the needs for water supply and sewage pipes; (ii) make efforts to convince the community to contribute labor to build such infrastructure; (iii) to connect these pipes internally; (iv) to improve hygiene and sanitation in the territory of the sites. To improve the situation of electricity supply, measures should be taken to install electricity cabins where they are missing.

Providing Roma residential sites with access to national roads

To enable the free movement of the members of the Roma community throughout the country's territory and to put an end to their segregation from the rest of the overwhelming society it is necessary to carry out a study of the secondary road network. In the sites in which such network is absent or inadequate for the free movement of people and goods, projects should be designed to build and improve road outlets. The Government should pay priority attention to the construction and rehabilitation of secondary roads and make efforts to involve the Roma community in such work.

PUBLIC ORDER, JUSTICE, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public order

For purposes of reducing discrimination in everyday life, it is necessary to create a sense of solidarity with the Roma population. Valuable help in this connection can be contributed by the media which can give an invaluable contribution in winning over the public opinion. In addition, efforts should be made to prevent incidences of domestic violence, trafficking of Roma women, girls and children, petty criminality, etc., through early detection and intervention.

Identifying typology of crime among the Roma community and instituting prevention measures

The work will include (i) identification of crimes and (ii) institution of measures to prevent the trafficking of children and young women; and (iii) design of efficient steps to prevent cases of abuse by police and other authorities in public office.

Recruiting Roma people in the ranks of police

To enable the recruitment of Roma individuals in the ranks of public order police, work will start with the (i) creation of opportunities for Roma youth to compete and succeed for acceptance at the Police Academy; (ii) assigning seats at the Academy to be filled by the best of Roma candidates.

Prevention and of trafficking of Roma women and children

Of crucial importance is the identification of trafficking endeavors to stop criminal individuals to exploit human being for their illegal gains by designing special programs against trafficking. These programs will be implemented by the Albanian Government in cooperation with international organizations operating in this field like OSCE, UNHCR, IOM, etc.

Third part

STRATEGY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Strategy design steps To design the draft of the strategy “Improving the living conditions of the Roma community” an inter governmental working group was set up with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Public Order, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Privatization, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Territorial Adjustment and Tourism, the Ministry of Transports, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

An agenda of work was established for the inter ministerial working group which set the tasks to be completed by the group members, the time frame for each action and the counterpart people and partner institutions responsible for each task.

A number of round tables were held (from 9 to 10 January 2003 and one round table was held on 3 February 2003) funded by the Council of Europe and OSCE/ODHIR under the program “Roma and the Stability Pact for South – Eastern Europe”. The round tables were attended by representatives of the Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Commission, as well as from Albanian institutions and Roma civil society organizations. In the meeting of 3 February 2003 a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between the representatives of the Ministries and the representatives of the Roma civil society organizations to continue to be partners until the finalization of this strategic document.

OSCE, whose representatives have assisted the inter ministerial group with expertise, have been constantly updated on the progress of strategy formulation process.

The representatives of the Roma civil society organizations have supplied the working group with data and information, and have assisted the sub groups established at the various participating institutions throughout the process of strategy design.

In view of the hardships that Albania is currently going through, and in consideration of the fact that many of the problems afflicting the Roma population afflict the entire Albanian society, too, the working group has made efforts to determine solutions for issues which are not covered by the strategies that the Government is implementing for the improvement of the overall situation of the Albanian population.

The Strategy “Improving the status of the Roma population” has been designed through the steps described in the following:

1. *Design process*

- establishment of the inter ministerial group
- design of the working group agenda
- holding of the round tables
- signature of the Understanding Memorandum between the representatives of the Albanian government and the Roma civil society organizations
- establishment of sub working groups with representatives of the Albanian government and the Roma civil society organizations
- collection of data and information
- Drafting of the strategy.

2. *Endorsement process*

- round table to discuss the draft document
- submitting the strategy to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilir Meta
- submitting the draft strategy to the Council of Ministers
- Endorsement by the Council of Ministers.

3. *Monitoring process*

Monitoring entities

To ensure the implementation of this strategy it is necessary to establish a governmental structure (integration institute or center) with the responsibility to follow through the implementation of priority measures contained in this document.

The monitoring structure may be housed under one of the line ministries which will be charged with the task of creating a conducive environment for strategy implementation. The structure should become operational immediately following endorsement of the strategy and should be comprised by 3 to 5 experts in the field of education, culture, urban planning, infrastructure management, social affairs and family, economy, business and employment.

The mission of this structure shall be to cooperate with the Ministry of Finances and various donors to raise the funds needed for the implementation of this strategy as regards infrastructure

investments. In addition, the structure will interact with the Roma civil society organizations in order to identify workable solutions to the issues that require the cooperation and responsibility of the Roma people. An important task for the structure will be the encouragement of the different governmental bodies to include in their development plans the objectives of this strategy. Another task shall be the constant follow up of implementation plans and monitorable indicators and reporting to the implementing institutions or the Council of Ministers with regard to the status of progress. More specific tasks shall be designed and elaborated once the structure has been established.

Monitoring indicators

In order to measure the progress made in the implementation of the strategy, it is necessary to determine indicators against which to compare achievement. These indicators will be a quantifiable expression of the objectives attained and will indicate real life progress. Indicators must be diverse and flexible which means that they should be set for a certain period. Later, these indicators may be revisited and replaced with more up – to – date objectives.

Indicators are set based on the principle of identifying fundamental objectives in the entirety of envisaged priority measures. In a generalized manner, these indicators may be presented as follows:

1. number of children attending pre school in comparison with the total number of Roma children,
2. number of Roma children enrolled in school throughout the system of education in Albania (from lower primary to university level);
3. number of Roma instructors and teachers trained to teach in pre schools and schools;
4. number of scholarships awarded to Roma students;
5. number of Roma students attending schools in specialties employable by the public sectors, such as economics, social sciences, Police Academy, Military Academy, law, teacher training faculties, public administration, etc.;
6. number of marriages before 16 years of age;
7. number of females employed in the private and public sectors;
8. participation of Roma artists in artistic events contained in the artistic calendar of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports;
9. number of arts, cultural and sports club established at the Roma communities;
10. number of TV programs, publications, periodical journals and editions dedicated to the Roma community;
11. number of Roma businesses and number of people employed in these businesses;
12. reduction of Roma unemployment rates according to regions;
13. budgetary funds allocated to job creation for Roma community members;
14. reduced numbers of Roma street children through integration into mainstream life;
15. completing the census of Roma population;
16. number of Roma families receiving economic aid;
17. number of Roma people retiring every year;
18. number of health centers, doctors and medical support staff for 1000 inhabitants of the Roma community;
19. reduction of disease incidence and mortality rates in the Roma community;
20. number of apartments built to house the Roma community;
21. reduction of the number of trafficked children;
22. number of Roma individuals employed with the police forces, public administration and other public sectors.

National Strategy
"Upgrading Roma status"
CHAPTER 1 – SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION

No	Area	Objectives	Priority area	Responsible actor	Time frame	Cost
1.	Schooling and education	1. Preschool education	<p>1. 1. Identifying the number of children at preschool age.</p> <p>1. 2. Identifying the state of the art of Roma children enrollment at pre school level.</p> <p>1. 3. Surveying accommodation capacities of pre school facilities in Roma quarters and make recommendations for the future.</p> <p>1. 4. Building awareness of the Roma community on the need to send children to pre – school</p> <p>1. 5. Rehabilitation of pre – schools in the quarters inhabited by Roma communities.</p> <p>1. 6. Construction of new facilities in the Roma inhabited areas to accommodate the community's needs.</p> <p>1. 7. Start Albanian language courses for children in upper pre-school level to prepare them for first grade.</p> <p>1. 8. Assign experience teachers jointly with the representative of the Roma community.</p>	<p>Education Directorate- Roma NGO-s</p> <p>Educational Directorate</p> <p>ED – Roma NGO-s</p> <p>Educational Directorate</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Science – ED</p> <p>MOES – ED</p> <p>ED</p> <p>ED – Roma Community</p>	<p>From 2003 onwards</p> <p>From 2003</p> <p>Constantly</p> <p>Constantly</p> <p>From 2004 onwards</p> <p>From 2004 onwards</p> <p>Annually starting from 2004</p> <p>Constantly</p>	<p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>5 000 Euros annually</p> <p>-</p> <p>1 million</p> <p>5 million</p> <p>250 000</p> <p>-</p>
		2. Issues encountered by Roma pupils with school progress	<p>2. 1. Identifying number of children of school age</p> <p>2. 2. State of the art of net school enrollment rates of Roma children</p> <p>2. 3. Build awareness of the Roma community on the need to send children to school</p>	<p>ED – Roma NGO-s</p> <p>ED – Roma community</p> <p>ED – Roma NGO-s</p>	<p>Constantly</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>5 000 annually</p>

National Strategy
“Upgrading Roma status”
CHAPTER 1 – SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
			<p>2. 4 Enforcing sanctions for households that do not send children to school</p> <p>2. 5 Determining accommodation capacity for facilities in the Roma inhabited areas and making suggestions for the future</p> <p>2. 6 Rehabilitation of schools in the areas inhabited by the Roma community</p> <p>2. 7 Constructing two schools in the areas inhabited by Roma communities in which the number of students is greatest.</p> <p>2. 8 Assigning experienced teachers in classes with Roma pupils; provision of training and incentives for these teachers.</p> <p>2. 9 Distribution of free text books for Roma pupils in grades 1-8.</p> <p>2. 10 Attracting increasing number of Roma pupils in curricular and extra curricular activities.</p> <p>2. 11 Intensifying work with Roma parents to make them aware of the need to adopt a more positive attitude towards the school.</p> <p>2. 12 Equipping schools with the necessary learning and teaching materials</p> <p>2. 13 Equipping schools with foreign languages and computer laboratories.</p> <p>2. 14 Open up Roma language courses and vocational courses in high schools with considerable Roma enrollments, in accordance with their natural talents and traditions and the school's orientation.</p> <p>2. 15 Open up Albanian language courses in schools for Roma students enrolled for the first time and those who have big gaps of the Albanian language.</p> <p>2. 16 Institutionalize the practice of summer schools with the participation of Roma and non Roma pupils.</p>	<p>MOES – ED</p> <p>ED – NGO-s</p> <p>MOES – ED</p> <p>MOES – ED</p> <p>MOES – ED</p> <p>ED</p> <p>ED – School Directorates</p> <p>ED – Roma community</p> <p>ED</p> <p>MOES – ED</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p>		

National Strategy
“Upgrading Roma status”
CHAPTER 1 – SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
		3. Scholarships and support schemes for Roma pupils	<p>2. 17 Conduct individualized work with promising students to discover talents and create opportunities for them to compete for admission in artistic and vocational oriented high schools.</p> <p>2. 18 Open up literacy courses for grown ups that are illiterate.</p> <p>3. 1 Appoint social workers in the schools with the greatest number of Roma students.</p> <p>3. 1 Appoint social workers in the schools with the greatest number of Roma students.</p> <p>3. 2 The entire activity of the schools should be geared towards increasing awareness of parents and students on the need to continue the higher levels of education.</p> <p>3. 3 Award scholarships for children from low income families</p>	<p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p> <p>MOES</p>		
		4. Schooling and education of Roma people in specialties preparing civil servants, such as public administration, social sciences, Police Academy, Military Academy, law, economics, teacher training, etc.	4. 1 Allocate quotas of seats for students from Roma community	MOES, Department of Public Administration, Ministry of Public Order	2004 onwards	

National Strategy
"Upgrading Roma status"
CHAPTER II – CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FAMILY

No	Area	Objectives	Priority area	Responsible actor	Time frame	Cost
1.	Family	1. Changing mind sets with regard to mode of living in Roma families	<p>1.1 Conduct research of the concepts underpinning life in Roma families.</p> <p>1.2 Meeting and interviews with households of the Roma community to confirm concepts and thoughts on family life</p> <p>1.3 Build awareness of and train Roma members with regard to the rights they are entitled to according to international instruments and Albanian laws.</p> <p>1.4 Distribution of posters, leaflets and printed materials. TV and radio programs</p>	<p>Committee for Equal Opportunities in cooperation with women and children NGO-s and Roma NGO-s.</p> <p>Committee for Equal Opportunities, NGO-s</p> <p>Committee for Equal Opportunities, NGO-s</p> <p>Committee for Equal Opportunities, NGO-s</p>	<p>From 2004 onwards</p> <p>Constantly</p> <p>Constantly</p> <p>Constantly</p>	<p>50 000</p> <p>-</p> <p>4 000 Euros annually</p> <p>3 000 annually</p>
		2. Women in the Roma families, measures to eliminate discrimination, special programs for women and girls	2.1 Vocational training courses for women and girls for purposes of increasing employment opportunities for females, primarily single parent mothers	Committee for Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Constantly	100 000 annually

National Strategy
"Upgrading Roma status"
CHAPTER II – CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FAMILY

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
II	Culture	3. Support to the history and Roma Culture	<p>3. 1. Involving Roma in the annual National Festivals of Cultural Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Folk Festival of the Typology of Wind Instruments – Korca, o Folk Festival of the Typology of Citizenry Song – Elbasan <p>3. 2 Involvement of Roma in projects of Cultural Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "Magical Flute Festival" in Butrint o International Festival CIOFF in Permet o Festival of domino dances (dances by two people) in Librazhd o Festival of Folk Instruments in Gjirokaster <p>3. 3 Inclusion of the Roma music in the official musical column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recording the musical material, - Conducting the scientific study of the material (to be part of the text in the CD – in both Albanian and English), - producing 1000 CD-s of Roma music - Distributing these CD-s in scientific, cultural and educational institutions. <p>3. 4 Conducting joint tracking and collection expeditions with the Academy of Science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photographic exhibitions to document the findings - Publications regarding Roma traditions, like fairy tales for children, etc. - Musical transcripts of Roma traditions - Ethnographic wards with handicrafts of the Roma people. <p>3. 5 Encouraging the membership of Roma cultural organizations in the Albanian chapter of CIOFF</p> <p>3. 6 Design a pilot project for the establishment of a public library and information center in one of the big Roma residential sites</p>	<p>Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Directorate of Cultural Tradition</p> <p>M C Y S – D C T</p> <p>M C Y S – D C T</p> <p>Institute of Folk Culture – Academy of Science</p> <p>C I O F F & M C Y S</p> <p>M C Y S Book Directorate</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Each time there is a festival</p> <p>2004 onwards 2004</p> <p>2005 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 - 2006</p>	<p>60 000 per festival</p> <p>60 000 per festival</p> <p>15 000</p> <p>36 000</p> <p>100 000</p>

National Strategy
“Upgrading Roma status”

CHAPTER III – ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
III	Youth	4. Involving Roma youth in the National Youth Strategy	4. 1 Identifying individuals and stake holders in the National Youth Strategy 4.2 Creating conducive conditions for promotion of activities by Roma Youth Organizations; Identifying employment opportunities for young Roma people. Promoting debates and discussions.	MYCS, Directorate of Coordinating Youth Policies Directorate of Coordinating Youth Policies	Constantly Constantly	MYCS Budget MCYS Budget
IV	Sports	5. Enlivening of sports life in the Roma communities	5. 1 Establishing Sports Clubs 5. 2 Establishing sports ground for the physical training of Roma Youth 5. 3 Training coaches	M C Y S – Sports Directorate M C Y S – Sports Directorate M C Y S – Sports Directorate	2004 onwards 2004 onwards 2004 onwards	100 000 100 000 20 000
V	Media	6. Increased access to the Public media	6. 1 Producing TV programs and publishings for written and electronic media 6. 2 Sponsoring publications and dissemination materials promoting Roma values and furthering the issue of human rights and other minority rights, with focus on Roma rights. 6. 3 Support efforts to denounce discrimination against Roma people and distortion of Roma image	MC Y S, Committee for Equal Opportunities MC Y S, Committee for Equal Opportunities MC Y S, Committee for Equal Opportunities	2004 - onwards 2004 – onwards 2003 - onwards	10 000 10 000 5 000

*National Strategy
"Upgrading Roma status"*

CHAPTER III – ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No	Area	Objectives	Priority Measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
1	Labor Market	1. Encouragement through special support programs in the field of consulting, market surveys and access to credit to Roma entrepreneurs for business start up and business development.	<p>1. 1. Identifying traditional Roma businesses</p> <p>1. 2. Establishing relations between Roma businesses and financial organizations</p> <p>1. 3. Management support through consulting services</p>	<p>Ministry of Finance, Agency of Small and Medium Businesses</p> <p>Roma Business Organizations – SMSEA</p> <p>Roma Business Organizations - SMSEA</p>	<p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p>	<p>10 000</p> <p>5 000 annually</p>
	Employment and Professional Training	<p>2. Implementation of Special programs for promoting the employment of Roma people</p>	<p>2. 1. Employing Roma through public works. Launching the implementation of this Program (earmarking public funds for public works)</p> <p>2. 2. Involving unemployed Roma people in the public works programs. Employing Roma in the following programs: - Encouraging the employment of the unemployed job seekers, - Encouraging employment through professional training courses, - Encouraging employment through systemic institutional training.</p>	<p>National Employment Service</p> <p>M L S A – N E S - M O F</p>	<p>From 2004 onwards</p> <p>From 2004 onwards</p>	<p>36 000 in 2004 72 000 per year</p> <p>15 000 in 2004 36 000 per year</p>

National Strategy
“Upgrading Roma status”

CHAPTER III – ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
		3. Design and implement fiscal incentives to stimulate the companies to employ members of the Roma community	<p>3. 1. Exploring opportunities for setting companies where both employers and employees belong to the Roma community.</p> <p>3. 2. Surveying the opportunities of providing fiscal incentives for companies that employ members of the Roma community.</p> <p>3. 3 Exploring the possibilities of subsidizing business dedicated to the production of traditional Roma handicrafts.</p>	<p>MOE - M L S A – M O F</p> <p>M O F</p> <p>MOE - M L S A – M O F</p>	<p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p>	<p>10 000</p>
		4. Integration of the Roma community in the public general and professional training education.	<p>4. 1. Identifying professions preferred by the Roma</p> <p>4. 2. Establishing professional training courses for the preferred vocations</p> <p>4. 3. Identifying Roma individuals that may be employed as instructors in pre schools.</p> <p>4. 4. Training the individuals to become instructors in pre schools attended by Roma.</p> <p>4. 5. Assigning these individuals in institutions attended by Roma children</p> <p>4. 6. Creating conducive conditions for the vocational training of the unemployed Roma</p> <p>4. 7. Establishing a legal base to support and stimulate Roma’s professional training</p>	<p>M L S A – N E S jointly with Roma NGO-s</p> <p>M L S A - N E S</p> <p>M L S A - M O E S jointly with Roma NGO-s</p> <p>M L S A – M O E S, Roma NGO-s</p> <p>M L S A - M O E S jointly with Roma NGO-s</p> <p>M L S A</p> <p>M L S A</p>	<p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2003 onwards</p>	<p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>10 000</p> <p>-</p> <p>100 000</p>

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“Upgrading Roma status”*

CHAPTER III – ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
		5. Providing support to communes and municipalities to attract Roma to the labor markets	<p>5. 1 Communes and municipalities to identify employment needs of the Roma communities and professions they are mostly skilled for</p> <p>5. 2 Analyze no less than two time a year the level and causes of unemployment among Roma</p> <p>5. 3 Local government units to earmark funding for public works in order to improve infrastructure in Roma residing sites</p>	<p>M L G D</p> <p>M L G D</p> <p>M L G D</p>	<p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2003 onwards</p>	<p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>100 000 per year</p>
	Social protection	<p>1. Integrating Roma street children into mainstream children’s life</p> <p>2. Enlisting poor households on the economic aid scheme</p>	<p>1. 1 Establishing day care centers</p> <p>1. 2 Cooperating with foreign and local donors, as well as with Children NGO-s to fund and implement projects dedicated to the education and development of this category of children</p> <p>1. 3 The State Labor Inspectorate to systematically look for cases of child labor exploitation</p>	<p>M L S A</p> <p>M L S A</p> <p>M L S A – S L I</p>	<p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 onwards</p>	<p>10 000 per year</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
			<p>2. 1 Staging an awareness campaign to sensitize Roma people to the rights they are entitled to with regard to social protection schemes such as economic aid, unemployment benefit, pregnancy and birth benefits and other schemes supporting the poor.</p> <p>2. 2 Putting out an administrative decree ordering communes and municipalities to provide for help and assistance to the Roma to fill in the documents required to benefit from the schemes.</p>	<p>M L S A – I P H- M L G D</p> <p>M L G D</p>	<p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2003 onwards</p>	<p>5 000</p>

National Strategy
“Upgrading Roma status”

CHAPTER III – ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
		3. Supporting the establishment and strengthening of Roma civil society organizations	3. 1. Identification and registration of Roma NGO-s 3. 2. Establishing a network of Roma NGO-s 3. 3. Cooperation between the governmental decision making bodies and the network of Roma NGO-s 3. 4. Establishing an Institute or Center for Roma integration	M L S A Roma NGO-s M L S A – Roma NGO-s Council of Ministers	2003 onwards 2003 – 04 – 08 2003 onwards 2004	10 000 - State Budget
	Working conditions	1. Taking steps to control abusive practices and cases of violation of the provisions of Albania’s Labor Legislation (working conditions, salaries, working hours, etc.)	1.1 Strengthening the controls of the State Labor Inspectorate with the business and institutions employing members of the Roma community. 1. 2 Strengthening the understanding of the Roma people with regard to the rights granted by the labor legislation	M L S A – S L I S L I	2003 onwards 2003 onwards	- 10 000 per year
	Social securities	1. Enlisting able bodied working Roma in the mandatory schemes of social securities (in the circumstances in which Roma overwhelmingly work on the informal sectors)	1. 1 Using public media to build awareness and understanding of the security schemes 1. 2 Cooperating with the State Labor Inspectorate to exert control on the informal businesses for purposes of enlisting Roma workers in the social security schemes	Institute of Social Securities I S S - S L I	Continuously Continuously	10 000 every year
	Civil Registrars	Registration of the Roma population in the Civil Registrars Offices	1. 1 Designing an effective registration program 1. 2 Ensure the necessary human, material and financial resources	M L G D and Roma NGO-s M L G D - M O F	2004 2004 - 2005	50 000 State budget

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“Upgrading Roma status”*

CHAPTER IV – HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
	Health	<p>1. Improving the health of Roma mother and child</p> <p>2. Providing free of charge medication and other health care items for poor households and households with numerous children</p> <p>3. Assessing morbidity and mortality rates among the Roma communities and taking measures to reduce them</p>	<p>1. 1. Applying mandatory vaccination for children 0 – 14 years of age.</p> <p>1. 2. Enacting promotional and educational programs on reproduction health among the Roma communities</p> <p>1. 3. Building awareness of the Roma community on the usefulness of modern family planning methods (increasing usage of contraceptive methods)</p> <p>1. 4. Improving health care for pregnant women and newborn babies</p> <p>2. 1. Identifying poor households and households with many children</p> <p>2. 2. Improving access to health care services through improving health care infrastructure (construction of health care centers and ambulances to ensure full coverage of the Roma communities in accordance with applicable legislation)</p> <p>2.3. Providing free of charge medications in case of sickness in the poor Roma households</p> <p>3. 1. Identifying disease incidence and death causes among Roma in comparison with the non Roma population</p> <p>3. 2. Improving livelihood of Roma communities by providing for clean water, environmental hygiene and other conditions for healthy life in the sites inhabited by Roma communities</p>	<p>M O H – Regional Public Health Directorates</p> <p>M O F / I P H and R P H D</p> <p>M O F / NGO-s</p> <p>M O H and R P H D</p> <p>P H D - Local Government Unit</p> <p>M O H – L G U</p> <p>M O H - L G U</p> <p>M O H - P H D</p> <p>M O H – L G U</p>	<p>2003 onwards</p> <p>2005 - 2006</p> <p>2005 - 2010</p> <p>2004 onwards</p> <p>2004 – 2006</p> <p>2005 - 2010</p> <p>2005 onwards</p> <p>2005 – 2010</p> <p>2005 - 2015</p>	<p>State budget 10 000</p> <p>200 000</p> <p>State budget</p> <p>-</p> <p>100 000</p> <p>50 000 per year</p> <p>State budget</p> <p>-</p>

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CHAPTER IV – HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
	Living conditions	4. Meeting minimum housing needs	4. 1. Identifying housing needs based on: - Number of households - Headcount per household - Present state of living conditions. 4. 2. Identifying living places in need of repair and prepare bill of quantities 4. 3. Identifying ownership of land on which Roma people reside 4. 4. Estimating the costs of land and construction material while encouraging Roma people to contribute labor 4. 5. Building modest housing premises for homeless Roma and Roma living in uninhabitable premises	M L G D – L G U – Roma NGO-s M T T A – L G U – Roma NGO-s L G U – Roma NGO-s L G U – Roma NGO-s M T T A – L G U and Roma communities	200 3 - 2005 2004 – 2005 2004 – 2005 2004 – 2007 2004 - 2010	200 000 - - - State budget and donors
		5. Ensuring coverage of Roma inhabited sites with water supply and sewage pipes and with electricity grids	5. 1. Estimating needs for water supply and sewage pipes, electricity and telephone lines in the Roma inhabited sites 5. 2. Encouraging the community to contribute labor in the infrastructure works 5. 3. Connecting secondary infrastructure works with the mainstream system with governmental and donor funding 5. 4. Ensuring the necessary materials to equip the internal sanitation standards of Roma homes 5. 5. Supplying electricity cabins in necessary numbers in the sites inhabited by Roma	M T T A – L G U Roma NGO-s M T T A – M L S A – M O F – L G U – NGO-s M T T A – M L S A – M O F – L G U – NGO-s L G U – M L S A – M O F, Roma NGO-s A E C – M O F – L G U	2003 – 2005 2004 onwards 2004 onwards 2004 - 2006 2004 onwards	State Budget and donors

National Strategy
“Upgrading Roma status”

CHAPTER IV – HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
	Internal road networks	6. Connecting Roma inhabited sites to the national highways	6. 1 Conducting the study and designing the projects 6.2 Building the roads 6.3 Mobilizing the community	L G U – M T T A MLSA Roma communities L G U – Roma NGO-s	2003 – 2004 2004 – 2007 Continuously	200 000 State budget and Donors

CHAPTER V – PUBLIC ORDER, JUSTICE, CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

N0	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
1.	Public Order	1. Identifying typology of crimes committed by Roma community members and taking measures to control criminality	1. 1 Fight against: - trafficking of Roma children and females - criminality among Roma population 1. 2. Taking effective measures to stop police officers from applying discriminatory practices against Roma 1. 3. Check compliance with law in cases of police intervention and control in the Roma sites 1. 4. Increasing cooperation among police and Roma N G O –s for purposes of crime prevention, prevention of trafficking, violence and abusive practices by police officers. 1. 5. Increasing cooperation between police and Roma communities	M O P O M O P O M O P O M O P O – Roma NGO-s M O P O	2003 – 2005 - - - -	35 000 - - - -

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CHAPTER V – PUBLIC ORDER, JUSTICE, CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

No.	Area	Objectives	Priority measures	Responsible actor	Time frame	Costs
2.	Police	2. Recruiting police officers from among Roma communities in the Roma inhabited areas	2. 1. Creation of opportunities for Roma youth to participate in entrance exams for admission in the Police Academy. 2. 2. Training Roma youth in order to facilitate their being hired as members of the police forces. 2. 3. The Police Academy to set yearly quotas to be filled by recruits from among Roma youth	M O P O M O P O M O P O	2003 – 2005 - -	- - -
3.	Trafficking	3. Prevention of and striking against the cases of human trafficking, including members of the Roma community, with particular focus on the trafficking of Roma children and young girls for purposes of exploitation	3. 1. Identification of trafficked cases 3. 2. Taking measures to prevent the trafficking of Roma girls and children 3. 3. Designing a special program to fight the trafficking of Roma children and Roma girls and women	M O P O – Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with international organizations such as UNHCR, which is launching the creation of shelters - M L S A	2003 onwards	35 000 - -

DECISION
No. 127, dated March 11th, 2004

ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MINORITIES' STATE COMMITTEE

Based on articles 20 and 100 of the Constitution, on Law No. 8496, dated June 3rd, 1999 “On the ratification of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe “For the protection of the minorities””, on article 10 of Law No. 9000, dated January 30th, 2003 “On the organisation and functioning of the Council of the Ministers”, on articles 21 and 27 of Law No. 8379, dated July 29th, 1998 “On the drafting and the implementation of the State Budget of the Republic of Albania” as well as on article 7 of Law No. 9165, dated December 23rd, 2003 “On the State Budget for year 2004”, upon proposal of the State Minister for Coordination, the Council of the Ministers

DECIDED:

1. To constitute the Minorities' State Committee to further urge the participation of persons belonging to minorities in the public life as well as to suggest measures for the exercise and the protection of the rights and freedoms of these minorities.

2. The Minorities' State Committee is a central institution that holds juridical personality and depends by the Prime Minister.

3. The Minorities' State Committee cooperates with the government bodies, central or local, and with legal organisations and associations who carry out activities for the exercise of rights and freedoms of the persons belonging to the minorities.

Also, the Minorities' State Committee cooperates, for different matters, in the interest of persons belonging to minorities, with the relevant international organisations and institutions.

4. The Minorities' State Committee

- proposes to the State bodies to keep into consideration issues of particular importance for the minorities, especially regarding the implementation of constitutional obligations and other special acts which regulate the rights and freedoms of the persons belonging to these minorities;
- proposes to bodies of the government, either central or local, potential measures to be taken to improve the situation of persons belonging to minorities, wherever they are located;
- offers opinions and proposes measures for the economic, social, cultural and educational development, as well as urges for the broadcasting of programmes for the minorities in the public media;
- demands or receives from the central or local government bodies data and reports dealing with minorities' issues;
- calls or demands the participation of representatives from central or local government bodies' representatives for issues under the responsibility of the Minorities' State Committee.

5. The Minorities' State Committee is chaired by its chairman and is composed of five members. The chairman of the Minorities' State Committee and its members who are proposed by the chairman, are appointed by the Prime Minister.

The Minorities' State Committee decides upon the majority of votes of its members.

6. During the appointment of the composition of the Minorities' State Committee, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the committee, based on the official data, establish the number of members for each minority.

7. The structure, the personnel and the regulation of the activity of the Minorities' State Committee is approved by the Prime Minister upon proposal of the Council of the Ministers' General Secretary.

8. The salaries of the employees of the Minorities' State Committee will be in accordance

with annex no. 1, attached to this decision and integral part of it, while the other employees shall be paid in accordance with attachment II-5 of decision no. 726, dated December 21st, 2000 of the Council of the Ministers “On the salaries of employees of budgetary institutions”, as changed.

9. The financial consequences, needed for the functioning of this committee, shall be afforded through use of the reserve fund of the Council of the Ministers.

10. The State Minister for Coordination and the Minister of Finance are charged for the implementation of this decision.

This decision enters into power after publication in the official gazette.

DECISION
Nr. 822, dated 28.12.2005

ON SOME CHANGES IN THE DECISION No. 127, dated March 11th, 2004
“ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MINORITIES’ STATE COMMITTEE”

Based on articles 20 and 100 of the Constitution, on Law No. 8496, dated June 3rd, 1999 “On the ratification of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe “For the protection of the minorities””, on article 10 of Law No. 9000, dated January 30th, 2003 “On the organisation and functioning of the Council of the Ministers”, on articles 21 and 27 of Law No. 8379, dated July 29th, 1998 “On the drafting and the implementation of the State Budget of the Republic of Albania”, upon proposal of the Prime Minister, the Council of the Ministers

DECIDED:

1. The following changes shall be done to the decision no. 127, dated 11.3.2004, of the Council of the Ministers:

a) Point 5 changes as follows:

“5. The Minorities’ State Committee is chaired by the chairman, the deputy chairman and is composed of five members. The chairman of the Minorities’ State Committee, the deputy chairman and the members of this committee, who are proposed by the chairman, are appointed by the Prime Minister. The Minorities’ State Committee decides upon the majority of the ballots of its own members”.

b) The annex no. 1 shall be replaced by another version with the same number, attached to this decision and integral part of it.

2. The financial consequences shall be afforded by the budget of year 2005 which was approved for the Minorities’ State Committee.

3. The Minorities’ State Committee is charged for the implementation of this decision.

This decision enters into power after publication in the official gazette.

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Central Power Bodies

And

Local Government Units' Bodies

On

**The Cooperation in the field of protection and respect of
the Minorities' Rights in Albania**

Based on:

Articles 3, 15, 20, 112/2, 122/1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania,

Article 11 of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe “For the Protection of National Minorities”,

Articles 4/2, 8/I/b, 8/VII/b, 32/1/II of Law no. 8652, dated July 31st, 2000 “On the organisation and functioning of the local government”;

Article 6 of Law no. 8927, dated July 25th, 2002 “On the prefects”;

Considering that the use of mother tongue of the minorities constitutes an essential element for preserving and developing their national, cultural and religious identity;

In the framework of the Stabilisation and Association process between Albania and the EU, as well as in the framework of the commitments taken in the Action Plan for the Implementation of Priorities of the European Partnership, aiming to the achievement of the highest standards regarding the protection and respect for minorities’ rights;

The parties agreed as follows:

I. Goal of cooperation:

Incitement of cooperation between central power bodies and the local government units for the application of the right of use of the minorities’ mother tongue.

For this reason,

(a) The local government units commit to create the *adequate conditions* and *take measures* for the preservation and development of national, cultural and religious identity of the minorities, though the development of different activities related to the history and culture of the national minorities in Albania, in the areas where there is considerable presence of persons belonging to minorities;

(b) In the areas inhabited in considerable number by the minorities, the bodies of the local government units commit for the strengthening of the cooperation through fostering of a regular communication with individuals belonging to minorities, aiming to the creation of the necessary space for evidencing and solving the minorities' problems;

(c) In this framework, the local government units commit to draft a regulation to increase information on the rights recognised to individuals belonging to minorities;

(d) In the areas inhabited in considerable number by the minorities, when there is sufficient demand by individuals belonging to minorities, the local government units commit to establish and taken measures for the appearance of traditional names of places, roads, squares and other topographic indicators for the public, as well as names of institutions belonging to minorities in both Albanian and minority language.

In establishing the traditional names of places in areas inhabited in large numbers by minorities, the local government units, respecting the legislation in power and considering the limitations due to urban management rules, shall take into account:

- The opinion and the name traditionally and actually used by individuals belonging to minorities in these areas,
- The language spoken by the population of the area,
- The opinion of the representatives from civil society organisations operating in these areas,

- As well as the historical tradition regarding the use of the names.

II. Changes and termination.

This memorandum of cooperation may be changed only in written.

III. Solution of disagreements

Parties will try to solve in the most appropriate manner any disagreement deriving from this memorandum of cooperation.

IV. Entry into force

This memorandum of Understanding shall enter into force after signature by the Parties.

In presence of the authorised representatives of the Parties, this Memorandum was signed in (___) original copies, being all (___) copies of the same authentic quality, on the date declared below.

For the Central Government

For the Local Government Units

Prefects

Heads of Communes

Date

Date

QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(Questionnaire, completed by Minorities' Associations and the Civil Society).

I. Questionnaire of the Advisory Committee, completed by the Albanian Helsinki Committee.

1. Please comment on steps taken by governmental authorities to enlarge the implementation area of the Framework Convention.

The Albanian Government recognizes as ethnic minorities the Greek minority, Macedonian minority and the Serbo-Montenegrin minority and as ethno-linguistic minorities the Roma minority and the Aromanian one. The Albanian Government acknowledged the Vllahs and Romas as ethno-linguistic minorities in 2003. Their recognition is a positive step by the Albanian government, which made possible the implementation of the Framework Convention for these minorities as well. The recognition of Roma as a minority generated premises for the approval of the National Strategy "For the improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority", through decision no. 633 of the Council of Ministers, taken on September 18th, 2003.

Among the above mentioned minorities, there also exists the Egyptian community. This community makes continuing efforts to be recognized as a minority, but is not recognized yet as such by the Albanian Government due to lack of the linguistic element. This community is pretty much in the same social and economic conditions as the Roma minority. So far, no plan or strategy to improve conditions of this community is approved.

One of the main problems that still remain unresolved is the lack of updated official statistics for the minorities' figures in Albania. Figures given by minorities' organizations and governmental institutions are controversial.

The Albanian Helsinki Committee has performed continuous observations to look into the minorities' situation in Albania. In this framework, AHC notes that during the period of 2002-2005, improvements have been made in the maintenance of particular evidences of minorities from the local structures part, especially for the Roma minority in the locations where they are mostly concentrated.

From the AHC observations performed during the period 2002-2003, it resulted that a considerable number of Greek minorities' intellectuals and officers hold positions in the local governmental structures, public administration, public order bodies, etc.

Also this year, the police forces have started to identify data related with minorities' employees' number in the police bodies.

2. Please comment on any legislative development with respect to national minorities, mainly allied with language use of minorities in relation with administrative authorities and the appearance of traditional local names and topographic indicators in minorities' language.

Legislation

The Albanian legislation does not provide a specific law for minorities, but their rights and obligations are part of the legislation as a whole. The minorities protection is part of the penal, penal procedural, administrative, labor, election legislation, etc.

Topographic signs

In the minorities' villages, especially of Greek and Macedonian minorities, the topographic labels are used in the Albanian and minority language.

3. Please comment any step or plan taken to strengthen the legal and institutional background to prevent discrimination.

Legal Reforms

To prevent discrimination in total, work is being done to emit a project-law which is in discussion phase by the civil society.

Meanwhile in September 2003, the Council of Ministers, through its decision no. 633, has approved the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority” which foresees concrete measures and appropriate instruments for the fulfillment of its objectives through drafting of work programs, their approval and observance of the enforcement of these programs by the governmental institutions established for this function. It is noted that there is lack of measurement indicators for its results¹.

Institutional Reforms

Inside the Albanian Parliament, it is set up and functions the Permanent Parliamentary Commission for Legal Issues, Public Administration and Human Rights which deals with minorities’ issues as well.

Since 2000, it was established the Office for Minorities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania. The Office was merged with the reorganization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 2006 was set up the department of OSCE and EC which covers minorities’ issues in Albania as well.

In the Ministry of Education and Science there are inspectors who takes care of the education of minorities in Albania, moreover, even in the Education Directorates of different districts there are special inspectors who deal with minorities’ education.

¹ For more details, refer to point 5 of questionnaire.

Also, under the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization, in the Prefectures' Directorate, there was a specialist who dealt with the participation of minorities in the decision making process, in the local governance and in the public administration. Meanwhile, with the reorganization that was done to Ministries in general, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization was merged and its competencies have been passed to the Ministry of Interiors. As far as AHC is aware of, the above mention position no longer exists.

In the mean time, through decision no. 127, dated March 11th, 2004 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania, the National Minorities' Committee is established, as a central institution with juridical authority dependent by the Prime Minister.

4. In the education area in native language. Please comment encountered steps to develop opportunities for individuals who belong to national minorities to learn their own language and get education in that language.

In the academic year 2002-2003, the Economics branch with 2 courses: finance and accountability, was opened in Dervişan village. During observations and meetings that AHC performed in 2002-2003, it was expressed that this division will soon convert into a faculty by the Gjirokastra University. Though this, from the information that AHC disposes so far, this is not done yet².

As far as relates to the Macedonian minority, the concern raised lately has been the lack of ABC (primer book) in Albanian language and the exclusion of Macedonian minority schools from the 9-years program³.

As far as concerns the Serbian-Montenegrin minority, AHC has no information for the opening of any school for this minority. From the local authorities it was communicated that neither a school, nor special

² The information is given by the correspondent of AHC in Gjirokastra

³ This information is given by the correspondent of AHC in Korça.

classes were opened because the legal criteria according to which a minimum established number of school children is required, were not satisfied by the minority in Shkodra. The Education Directorate of Shkodra District has paid attention and particular sensitivity towards problems related with the education of members of this minority. Upon the request of the Ministry of Education and Science, in some of the 8 years schools (elementary-schools) of Shkodra district as; “Shtoj i Ri”, “Shtoj i Vjetër”, “Skënderbeg”, “Azem Hajdari” and “Ndre Mjeda”, it was prepared an evidence where school children who belong to Serbian-Montenegrin minority have been registered, based on their individual declaration.

According to the first registration, in the “Ndre Mjeda” school none of the school-children resulted from this minority, in the “Skënderbeg” school 12 school-children were declared as such, in the “Azem Hajdari” school the number was only 3, in the “Shtoj i Ri” school 83 school-children were declared as such, while in the “Shtoj i Vjetër” school the number went up to 97 school children.

After this registration a second one was carried out, with the same subject, but taking as criterion the data in pupils’ birth certificates and in this registration none of the school children resulted to belong to this minority⁴.

In connection to the Roma minority, the Albanian Government has given the chance to this minority to open courses and private schools where it is possible to learn the Roma language. Up to date AHC has no information for opening of Roma language courses inside public state schools. This has been achieved only by the private contribution of this minority.

The opening of private schools is also made possible for the Vllah/Arumun minority.

⁴ Taken from the AHC publication “Minorities in Albania”, published in 2003.

5. *Please comment on the implementation of Roma Strategy that was approved in September 2003, including its monitoring, and give comments on the achieved results so far, especially in connection with dialogue development with Roma minority.*

In 2003, the Albanian Government, through the decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 633, dated September 18th, 2003, approved the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma Minority”. The main goals for the development and integration of Roma minority in society, steps that should be taken, institutions which will deal with their practical implementation, duration of time and the budget needed to put those in practice are established in this Strategy. This Strategy is long term and has an implementation period of 15 years. The approval of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority” is evaluated as a positive step from all international and national actors as for the objectives and measures foreseen and for the involvement of the Roma minority itself in its drafting process.

Besides the existence of an almost adequate legal framework in the area of minorities’ rights protection in Albania, the implementation in practice of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority” has encountered difficulties and moved forward slowly. Achievements in this direction have been little and modest; as a result far from what is required. The reasons and difficulties that has prevented the full effective implementation of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority” are numerous and of different nature. In this direction, it is worthy to mention that in the implementation in practice of the Strategy, the lack of full effectiveness of the responsible Government institutions to ensure appropriate measures to fulfill established objectives has had an important impact. The Government institutions have not enforced promptly responsibilities and obligations determined in the term appointed in the Strategy⁵. Lack of

⁵ In this framework, following some meetings that representatives of AHC had with representatives of Government institutions in November 2005, AHC has sent an official note to Mr. Sali Berisha, Chief of the

effective involvement in the implementation of the Strategy is more obvious in the local Government structures. For this reason, many established objectives and planned activities have not been achieved or have not been implemented.

Also, another factor that prevented effective implementation of the Strategy is related with the way it has been drafted. The established obligations, terms and financial budgets for their application have not been foreseen in realistic, clear and measurable terms. The strategy lacks the indicators of success to assess and evaluate the achieved results, as well as the approval of a specific plan in the relevant areas in order to analyze in details and with established responsibility for all the objectives and measures foreseen in it.

Another factor preventing achievement of positive results in the framework of the implementation of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority” is the lack of close and effective cooperation and coordination between responsible actors for its implementation. It is noteworthy mentioning the lack of cooperation between local and central governmental institutions to exchange information related to completed and uncompleted measures as well as between governmental institutions with Roma organizations and different actors of civil society who work in the protection of Roma minority area. The involvement of expertise from these two actors in the implementation of the Strategy has been very little. Even though particular achievements were noticed in the direction of improvement of living conditions of Roma minority, from the governmental institutions, civil society and Roma organizations, these have been sporadic. The lack of their coordination affects the effectiveness and measurement of achieved objectives of the success of the Roma minority’ National Strategy. The lack of the appropriate professional capacities of the Roma organizations as well as

Council of Ministers and to Mr. Genc Pollo, Minister of Education and Science, on the 14th of November 2005, No. 414 of the Protocol, suggesting the inclusion in the 2006 draft-budget of relevant funds to implement the legal obligations regarding the respect of minorities’ rights in the education area in the framework of the implementation of the National Strategy on the Roma minority.

the lack of capacity of the responsible structures to monitor the Strategy influences even more in this direction.

The dialogue development with the Roma minority by the governmental institutions has been very little because of non-involvement of this minority from the part of governmental institutions and lack of its direct contribution in the process of Strategy implementation. This is one of the most important concerns of Roma minority who perceives themselves as excluded from the Strategy implementation process in practice, taking into account that its principal recipient is the minority itself.

Also, by monitoring in practice the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma minority, it is noticed the lack of coordination and cooperation of this strategy with other local and national strategies that are already approved by the Albanian government. For this reason, a better coordination of common actions and efforts is necessary, in order to achieve more positive results.

In this framework it is worthy mentioning the initiative started by the Foundation “Open Society for Albania” (SOROS) with some specialists of the Albanian Helsinki Committee and the Center for Protection of Children’s Rights in Albania to monitor the measures undertaken and results achieved from the implementation in practice of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority” for a time period of 3 years since its approval⁶.

For this reason, the Albanian Helsinki Committee, the Foundation “Open Society for Albania” (SOROS) and the Centre for Children’s Rights Protection in Albania organized a workshop on: “Presentation of monitoring conclusions of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority”⁷. This monitoring was carried out in 5 main districts of the country where this minority has a major concentration; respectively in Tirana, Fier, Korça, Elbasan and Shkodra.

⁶ This initiative is financially supported by the Foundation “Open Society for Albania” (SOROS).

⁷ The activity was organized on July 5th, 2006 in the Tirana International Hotel.

The achievements, problems, identified weaknesses, reasons for not accomplishing the objectives foreseen to improve living conditions of Roma minority, and also the relevant recommendations for the local and central governing structures, Roma and other organizations that work in the human rights area were presented in this round table. A full and definitive report that will contain the concrete recommendations and suggestions of the National Strategy “For the improvement of living conditions of Roma minority in Albania” monitoring will soon be prepared.

6. Please comment on any developments related to the participation of individuals who belong to national minorities in the decision making process. In this framework please comment on any developments in the area of institutionalized forms of dialogue between national minorities and authorities including also the State Committee for Minorities in Albania.

As far as the participation of Roma minority in the decision making process is concerned, it is in a very low level. Roma minority it is not involved as it should in the implementation process of its Strategy. Irrespective of the minority requests to have its representatives in the Monitoring Section of the National Strategy “For the improvement of life conditions of the Roma minority”, nothing has been done. This is one of the main proposals that Roma minority suggested to the Government in the framework of the cooperation with governmental institutions for the implementation of the National Strategy. The request for the involvement of Roma minority in the process of implementation of their Strategy as its principal recipients requires the development of professional Roma representative organization capacities to serve as partners with equal rights nearby the governmental institutions. Also it is worthy mentioning that it is necessary that the monitoring section of the strategy itself needs to increase its professional capacities.

II. Questionnaire of the Advisory Committee completed by the Albanian Group for Human Rights (AGHR).

- *Please comment on steps taken by state authorities to enlarge the implementation area of the Framework Convention.*

On one hand, the Framework Convention is a very positive initiative to improve the situation of minorities in the Republic of Albania. On the other hand the minorities situation in Albania, where in particular we can mention the people of colour, is still in the same situation of some years ago.

Hence, the approval of the Framework Convention did not bring any obvious difference in the improvement of their situation.

The approval of the Framework Convention should create a specific operating space to help all minorities in Albania and especially the minorities with population of colour.

- *Please comment on any legislative development with respect to national minorities, mainly allied to the use of minority's language in relation to administrative authorities and appearance of local traditional names and other topographic indicators in minorities' languages.*

National minorities are mostly characterized by a more developed level of rights in comparison with other language minorities existing in Albania. From this point of view, the more privileged is the Greek minority, what is influenced in particular way from the higher number of members of this community and on the other hand from the pressure applied by the Greek Government towards the Albanian part. Hence, in relation to this minority, legal favourable procedures have been applied by helping to the placement of names in two languages and the use of Greek language in relations to this minority. Related to other minorities as Macedonian or Serbian-Montenegrin, the fact is less sensitive.

- *Please comment on any step or plan established to strengthen the legal and institutional framework to prevent discrimination.*

The Albanian Government, aiming to improve the life of Albanian citizens should not make differences and should legally stop discriminative practices and behaviours. This should be realized through legislation, Albanian institutions and adoption of international instruments in this area. Roma and Egyptian minority has not been subject of discrimination legally, though there have been identified hidden discrimination cases by certain individuals in power.

- *In the education area in native language. Please comment steps undertaken to develop opportunities for individuals who belong to national minorities to learn their own language and get education in that language.*

In relation to national minorities this practice is more obvious when the question is for the Greek minority while it is less noted when in question are other national minorities as the Macedonian or Montenegrin.

- *Please comment on the implementation of Roma Strategy that was approved on September 2003, including its monitoring, and give comments on achieved results so far, especially in connection with the dialogue development with Roma minority.*

The Strategy of Roma minority is a very “positive” initiative by the Albanian State but unfortunately, its implementation is impossible because it does not contain an established cost equivalent to a monetary value and moreover it has no monetary means that would help its development for the benefit of Roma minority. It is useless to discuss the achievements since its approval because no changes have been identified so far. In few words this strategy was not implemented at any time since the time of its approval.

It is unacceptable in a democratic state the concept of dialogue development with citizens, despite if the latter ones belong to a particular minority or not. Nevertheless the dialogue has not served to improve living conditions of Roma minority.

- *Please, comment on planned measures in the area of statistic data collection on minorities, including data on economic situation of minorities groups and the situation of women and girls belonging to these groups.*

In relation to the statistic data it is clear that since long there are no exact data that would help to determine the exact number of minorities in the Republic of Albania. There were made only different studies by civil society actors, NGOs, or particular Government subjects, which give relatively close figures of minorities and their economic situation.

- *Please comment on any development related to the participation of individuals who belong to national minorities in the decision-making processes. In this context please comment on any development in the area of institutionalised forms of dialogue between national minorities and authorities including also the State Committee for Minorities in Albania.*

The decision making process in the framework of monitoring minorities is an issue that was not implemented at any stage. The Albanian State has positive obligations to undertake for the benefit of minorities' integration in this process but unfortunately there are no substantial elements. Their conditioning in the decision making process is obligatory through the participation of the minorities members in the political forces in power.

On the other side the merging of the Minorities' Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by perceiving it as an institutional reform by giving functions only to the State Committee for Minorities will not serve in favour of the minorities situation in the Republic of Albania.

- *Please comment on the development in the area of increasing awareness and information of communities, including Roma and Egyptian community, in the trafficking of persons' issues and possible steps taken to involve organizations of relevant minorities in fighting this phenomenon.*

In reality many initiatives have been undertaken for the awareness of Roma and Egyptian community related to trafficking issues. The civil society or different NGO and less the State instances generally took such initiatives. In this aspect, a special place was dedicated to the involvement of minorities' organizations in the fight and awareness against this phenomenon.

- *Please comment on the Albanian cooperation with neighbouring countries and cross border contacts related to national minorities' protection.*

No particular distinguished and touchable measures were really taken to affirm any change or such climate of cooperation.

II. III. Questionnaire of the Advisory Committee, completed by Organization of the Serbo-Montenegrin minority, Moraça – Rozafa.

1. *Please comment on steps undertaken from governmental authorities to enlarge the implementation area of the Framework Convention.*

State authorities of the Republic of Albania in the first Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention had dedicated a small part to the description and facts about history, identity and culture of the Serbo-Montenegrin national minority, which lives in the Republic of Albania's territory. One of the main concerns is the use of the term Montenegrin minority by formally excluding from the application of the Framework Convention the part of members, which are declared as Serbians. It is the wish of the Serbo-Montenegrin national minority which by sharing the same language, culture and last and first names,

customs, and co existence between them, to be treated as a unique national minority, as members of Serbo-Montenegrin minority.

Measures for widening the implementation of the Framework Convention are insignificant. There is lack of involvement of the representative organizations of national minorities in drafting policies about minorities, as in the case of amendments to Law on Public and Private Radio and Television this year where no representative from the national minorities who will be proposed by minorities' organizations is foreseen in the composition of the Albania Radio and Television Directive Council. Also the amendment of the Election Code was done without taking in consideration the suggestions of the minorities' organizations and their representative structures.

In the central and local radios and televisions it is not broadcasted any program in Serbian language and there is no financial support to encourage written media in this language, which is totally missing.

2. Please comment on any legislative development with respect to national minorities, mainly allied to the use of minority's language in relation with administrative authorities and appearance of local traditional names and other topographic indicators in minorities' languages

The Serbo-Montenegrin minority organization "Morača-Rozafa", as the only representative organization of this minority has continuously raised the concern of the native language use in relation to the administrative authorities. The existing legislation does not regulate this problem at all and there is no legislative development in this area yet.

The native language of this minority is not used in any of the communes or municipalities where the members of the Serbo-Montenegrin minority live, the documentation is issued only in the Albanian language, communication with local authorities is conducted only in Albanian and no written signs of villages' names of the Serbo-Montenegrin national minority in the Serbian language and in the Cyrillic or Latin alphabet

exist. We point out that naming of villages have been conserved and have not been changed even in during the dictatorship period. Issues related to the right of use of traditional names and last names is resolved with the amendments done to the law “On the civil state offices” by giving the chance to minority members to make this change by presenting a simple request.

3. Please comment on any step or plan established to strengthen the legal and institutional framework to prevent discrimination

We are not aware of any plan undertaken to strengthen the legal and institutional framework to prevent discrimination. The legal initiatives have been very vague in this area and without the right consultation from groups of interests.

4. In the education area in native language. Please comment undertaken steps to develop opportunities for individuals who belong to national minorities to learn their own language and get education in that language.

There is lack of education and teaching in the native Serbian language. Despite the continued requests, towards which is always given the justification of absence of pupils of Serbo-Montenegrin nationality who wish to continue school, as recorded in the registers of civil state offices, the education in the native language is still missing. This is a result of the lack of a general population census where individuals from the Serbo-Montenegrin national minority could declare about their national and language belonging and because of the impossibility of the Serbo-Montenegrin national minority to afford the high financial cost to change nationality in legal way.

In the round tables and contacts with Government we have raised the concern of adopting an current legislation that will regulate the education and teaching in the minorities’ languages especially of a specific law to teach the language and alphabet of the national minorities in accordance with European Convention for Regional Languages and

Minorities and with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. We emphasize that the actual legislation for the minorities' education is all dated before the ratification of the Framework Convention and contradicts the Framework Convention principles.

5. Please comment on the implementation of Roma Strategy that was approved on September 2003, including its monitoring, and give comments on achieved results so far, especially in connection with the dialogue development with Roma minority.

No comments.

6. Please comment on planned measures in the area of statistic data gathering on minorities, including data on economic situation of minorities groups and the situation of women and girls belonging to these groups.

The data statistic situation is very vague, there are some studies from INSTAT which present non-realistic information and are not based in an exact counting of population. INSTAT gives the figure of 1.4 % of population of the Republic of Albania as minorities; instead representatives of minorities' organizations pretend a figure at about 25% of the population. Taking into account the importance that full and exact statistic data have for implementing the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities, the compilation of the Population Registration and Households, where should be included the right for self-declaration of nationality of the population and minorities, remains a constant requirement.

7. Please comment on any development related with participation of individuals who belong to national minorities in the decision making process. In this framework please comment on any development in the area of institutionalised forms of dialogue between national minorities and authorities including even the State Commission for Minorities in Albania.

The Serbo-Montenegrin national minority, through its representative organization “Morača-Rozafa” is politically involved with the Human Rights’ Union Party, which has three members of Parliament in the actual legislature. Also it has representation in local level in the directorates rank. A member of the Minority State Committee is appointed from the members of Serbo-Montenegrin national minority and in the framework of the Committee’s competencies, has proposed legal and institutional measures to resolve problems of concern to the Serbian-Montenegrin minority.

We evaluate that the level of representation locally and centrally is insignificant. The Minority State Committee should be dependent upon the Parliament and have more competencies in the process of drafting and proposing minorities’ legislation, more institutional independence and appropriate funds to support projects financially for the identity, culture development and minorities’ integration.

8. Please comment on developments in the area of increased awareness and information of communities, including Roma and Egyptian community, in the trafficking of person’s issues and possible steps undertaken to involve organizations of relevant minorities in fighting this phenomenon.

9. Please comment on the Albanian cooperation with neighbouring countries and cross border contacts related to national minorities’ protection.

The cooperation of Albania with neighbouring countries in different areas had been common, including also the bilateral instruments as free trade agreements, cooperation in the culture area and other different issues. The Serbo-Montenegrin minority organization has insisted to achieve a bilateral agreement for the reciprocal protection of national minorities between the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro, as it is also recommended in article 18 of the Framework Convention, but there has been no reply from the Albanian authorities’ side. Cross border contacts are very limited and mostly related with the

development of the Shkodra lake area, which is partially populated by members of the Serbo-Montenegrin minority.

No common programs in the area of national minorities protection exist.

**THE UNION OF THE ALBANIAN ROMA
“AMARO – DROM”**

**THE SECOND REPORT OF ALBANIA ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
“FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MINORITIES”
2001-2005**

Tirana 2006

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ANNEX 1

The activity of Albanian Roma Union 2001-2005

The Union of the Albanian Roma Amaro – Drom is created from a group of intellectuals with the purpose of development and integration of this minority in the Albanian society.

The Union was created on March 4th, 1996 with upon the Tirana court decision No. 1513/2 and has the status of a non governmental, non politic, non profitable organization.

The Union of Roma in Albania is the only organization that operates at national level. The activity of this Union is spread in all the Albanian territory, wherever a Roma community lives. The Union is organized in 22 branches, 7 sections and 7 sub-branches.

The Union of Albanian Romas in its philosophy, operates from the local level where is the biggest concentration of the Roma population, to the national and international level.

A special importance is also given to the organization and functioning of these groups of Roma community:

- children
- youth forums
- women forums
- students
- community as a whole

This sort of organization is part of the Union's statute and operates as a very active structure in the daily life of the community and in the organization itself.

The priority of the Union during this period has been and remains the motivation, self organization and the guidance of these groups with the scope of having the capacity for the development and integration of this minority. The Union has always taken into account "The development of democracy elements" where we distinguish: the respect for the free speech, opinion, dialogue, experience, the respect for the right to the

decision taking. We emphasize that all these elements have been respected by organizing the National Conferences, with the broad participation from all the Albanian territories.

The Union respects the basic rules of democracy where once in 4 years we have referred to respecting of the statutory rules. This not only to report but also to:

- Build social policies to the benefit of the Roma society.
- Respect the democratic rules.
- Election and respect for the highest leading structures of the Union.
- Training on voting

The Union of Albanian Roma has hold on December 6th, 1996, the first conference in Fier, on January 22nd – 23rd, 2001 the second and on February 4th, 2006 the third national conference.

We stress that in the second national conference was decided as a priority “The treatment and the development of the local areas”. Referring to the philosophy of “Development and integration of Roma minority in Albania”, the third national conference set up and approved very important priorities for the UNION future activities.

A priority for the Union remains:

Support, collaboration and partnership with the State institutions, the Albanian government, locally and nationally.

All the activity of the Roma Union in Albania is based on the building and operating of some structures like below:

1. The executive board
 - An active participation of the experienced Roma people.
 - The general secretary.
 - Experienced external experts who are not Roma, without the right of taking decisions.

2. The highest body of the Union is the “General Assembly”. This body takes decisions and according to the statute gathers once in 6 months.

The activity of the Union is led by the Executive Board and the Executive Director has the exclusive right. Everything is approved by the National Conference. The UNION operates divided in five Departments:

- The Department of information (media).
- The Department of education (education, education for the Rights)
- The Department of the Economic-Social Problems.
- The Department of Art, Culture and Sports.
- The Department for Community Development.

Some administrative structures also operate to write down all the policies and to bring this minority close to the Union.

The centre **Amaro – Drom** of Albanian Roma is composed of qualified staff of Roma and non-Roma people of different profiles such as lawyer, journalist, social workers, economists etc.

We stress that the Union of Albanian Roma operates as a full time institution in the service of the minority. It has a positive experience, with the capacity and the right infrastructure to work.

- It mainly does surveys, researches and monitoring.
- It offers services in different fields.
- It obtains funding through projects.

The centre **Amaro – Drom** with its work has made possible to collect, to provide and to create the documentation, the archive for the first time for the Roma minority.

We stress, that from time to time the Union has served to support many Albanian OJFs (Non Profitable Organizations), State institutions, faculties and international organizations operating in Albania.

According to the ambitions, visions and ideas the Union of Romas has built its work base on programs, platforms and alternatives. This clearly

shows the steps, the experiences, the qualifications, the visions for the accomplishment of the mission of Roma people in Albania.

The Union of Albanian Roma plays the role of the lobbying and advocacy in the protection of the Roma minority in Albania.

The Union Amaro – Drom respects and operates within the norms and the legal framework of the Albanian State.

ANNEX 2

THE STEPS THAT THE AMARO – DROM UNION HAS UNDERTAKEN IN THE VIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION IN THE PERIOD 2001-2005.

1. The Roma have made their efforts towards the achievement of their rights.

The Roma community has made its own efforts to be identified as a nation like the other minorities. As starting point for the integration of Roma in the European processes has served the fourth Conference of Roma held in Warsaw in the years 1990 where the International Roma Union started to take part actively in the European organisms. In the same year, a meeting was held in Copenhagen. It concluded a document that determines the national minorities, their rights and the freedoms for their choices (development of the ethnic identity, the freedoms, the learning of the official language of the respective State etc.). Furthermore, the national language of the Roma people has been proclaimed, approving a joint alphabet for all the speakers of the Roma language.

As for the steps that the State authorities have undertaken in the period 2001 – 2005 for the implementation of the Framework Convention, different symposia have been organized in Albania relating to the status and the rights of the Roma minority in Albania. Since early 2001 and after, some of the authorities responsible in central level for this issue have not offered their help sufficiently. In the conferences, meetings and seminars that the organization Amaro – Drom has organized, it could be noticed the absence of the Albanian Government, in a situation when everything can be said nicely in letter, but it is very difficult to be applied. The frequent change of the political systems has made the progress in this process more difficult. As an organization that represents the Roma minority, we have undertaken steps in the field of rights with national and international organisms and have asked for support of the Albanian State. On April 8th, 2001, a symposium was held with representatives only from the Ministry of Education and Science. The support of the foreign organisms has been undisputable.

Representatives from HELSINKI COMMUNITY, SOROS, COUNCIL OF EUROPE , OSCE, ERRC Budapest, etc. have frequently been active participants in the education of the Roma minority rights in Albania. The Roma communities, together with the staff of the Amaro – Drom Union have been trained for years by expert organizations from Albania and abroad in the field of rights. What the Union wants from the Albanian Government is the implementation of these rights. Training with the women, the youth, and the children almost in all Roma communities have taken place. In the period 2004 – 2005, the Amaro – Drom Union, together with organizations that focus on legal matters such as: The Foundation for the Conflict' Solution and CAFOD Albania, has organised round tables and seminars with the Roma communities in Levan, Korça, Tirana etc. The purpose of these meetings and seminars was to raise awareness among the Roma communities for the problems of their registration in the civil state offices, as well as in the field of rights, emigration, education, etc. It should be mentioned that since 2002 and after the Amaro – Drom Union has had a close collaboration with the local authorities in the Roma communities. The Union itself has trained members of the Roma community to work with the local authorities. In the major part on the implementation of the projects in the development field, the Union has found support from the Education Directorates, Municipalities, Communes in the local level. Work was handled in three levels: community – local authorities – Union. This has shown to be a success for the Roma people. The local authorities have supported with a part of the budget allocated to Roma people. We still continue to have good relationships. We are always in coherence and partnership with the local authorities by exchanging not only information, but also support for the problems concerning the Roma communities. The period 2005 – 2006 has been a period of frequent meetings with the government for the Amaro – Drom Union. A considerable part of the Government has become aware on the need of official meetings with the Amaro – Drom Union. We have held some meetings with representatives from the local branches of the Ministries for the implementation of the Strategy, for programs for Roma people etc. This is a very positive stage for the Roma people.

2. The regional or the minority languages.

The regional or minority languages are the component of the cultural patrimony of Europe and as such they must be preserved and promoted. Since 1992, the European States have confirmed their commitment to protect this patrimony by signing an instrument of the Council of Europe, the European Charter on Regional Languages. The parties commit themselves, regarding those who speak regional languages or minority languages, inside the territories where these languages are spoken, depending on the situation of each of them and in the scale that the public authorities directly or indirectly are competent, have the power or play a role in this field by respecting the principles of independence and the media autonomy as such:

- For as much as the radio and the television have a mission of the public service:
- To provide the opening of a radio station and a television channel in the regional or minority language or to encourage for the opening of one television channel in the minority language.
- To encourage or ease the opening of a newspaper in the regional or minority language.
- To handle the supplementary expenditures of the media in which the minorities' language is used, whenever the law provides financial help.
- To pay attention that the interests of those who speak the minority language are represented or taken into consideration in organisms that can be created according to the law to guarantee the freedom and the pluralism of the media.

The Republic of Albania as a member of the Council of Europe and a party signatory to this Council of Europe's document that refers to the protection of minorities, has obligations for the accomplishment of some of the clauses listed above. But regrettably we can say that none of these clauses have been implemented in the Roma minority living in Albania.

The Union of Romas in Albania has made some attempts nearby the Albanian Parliament and the National Council of the Albanian Radio-

Television for opening of a space for some hours for speakers in Roma language, but this has not happened yet despite the international obligations that the Albanian State has towards the minority and regional languages.

3. The prevention of discrimination.

The European Convention of Human Rights

(Article 14 – The prevention of the Discrimination)

“The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.”

The cohabitation among Albanians and other minorities is admirable. But this does not mean that the mentality, the prejudice and the discrimination do not exist especially in the Roma minority.

This discrimination is not self proclaimed, but it proceeds silently in every aspect of the life of the Roma people, in education, employment, in the justice' institutions, in the police, in the local and central level as well as in different fields of the daily life. The facts are different and real.

A. Cases of violation of rights of the Roma minority in Albania.

Case 1

The Roma were taken out of their barracks with violence.

The Roma community of Lana

Around 25 Roma families were taken away in the streets in the cold of January. The Roma people become object of a flagrant racism in the capital city of Albania, Tirana. In the midnight of January the 6th, the Construction Police went to their barracks and drag them out with force. This action was done in the presence of the Construction Police, the Public Order Police and the landlady Mrs. Miranda Boçi.

The Union presented a complaint before the Albanian State and the international organisations identifying the case of Lana as a discrimination of the fundamental human rights that happens to this minority in Albania.

For this case the Union approached OSCE to do something emergent for these abandoned families. Immediately OSCE held a meeting with the Government and other international organisms where was decided the following:

- The Netherlands would offer to fund the building of 50 apartments.
- A health centre was to be built.
- The Red Cross would offer tents for two months.
- A Contract would be reached with the Petrela Commune for 5 years until the city planning plan would be ready.
- The houses would be given only in possession to these families.

Case 2

On May 16th, 2002, at around 14.30 hrs., Ilir Dule, 33 years old, married and father of children was arrested. Present in a quarrel, the police took him without a reason and insulted the Roma women that protested against his unjust arrest. He was taken to the commissariat for 7 hours without being interrogated.

On May 17th, 2002, the police went to Ilir's land and asked him where he was hiding the weapon. Gazmend, the 14-year old nephew of Ilir, went there by chance. They were both arrested and punched them without leaving apparent signs. After the objections of the relatives and the neighbours they were released. The police, without a motive and a logic reason, destroyed the houses' doors, broke the furniture and maltreated the women dragging them down but no signs of violence were left.

The uncle of Ilir, Avdul Dule, 60 years old, was arrested on May 16th, 2002, at around 14.30 hrs. He was maltreated by a civilian police before entering in the commissariat. He has signs in the lips. He was interrogated and was released after 5 hours.

Case 3

Llakatund – Vlore

The existence of racism is showed against dead people. Such case is that of the inhabitants of the village Llakatund in Vlora, who did not allow the burying of a Roma person in the village cemetery. This has never happened before between Albanians and Roma. This case deserves thinking about.

Case 4

Fushe – Kruje

The habitants of a quarter in Fushe-Kruje, where the Roma people are settled, do not want these last to live near them. The inhabitants put pressure on them by pretending that the land where the Roma people live is a private property and for this the Roma have to pay the tax or otherwise their houses will be destroyed. This is a non-seldom phenomenon, but we think that it has its beginning in the prejudices and the mentality of the Albanian society.

Case 5

Cuke – Sarande

An entire Roma family, composed of 5 people, is missing because of a unknown criminal hand: The father, the sons, the daughter and the daughter-in-law.

The motive: Some people form Saranda took his daughter and the daughter-in-law inside the house as hostages. When the head of family, the father of the murdered, came back from Greece they executed him as well.

The reason: He reported the event to the police.

Case 6

Rrapisht – Elbasan

It might seem somehow unbelievable when we say that a policeman employee deceives a Roma.

However, this is true and happened in the Rrapisht quarter in Elbasan, when two so-called friends, one a police employee and the other Roma, have exchanged between them a golden necklace. The police employee

took the golden necklace and after that denied to have taken from the other the precious object. This caused a conflict between them that deteriorated in quarrels. Late at night, the police employee, making use of his position, went to the same quarter with a police car and maltreated the members of the Roma family, here including his pregnant wife.

Case 7

Tirana

In January 2001, A.O., a 34 year old Roma, inhabitant of one of the quarters in “Tirana e Re” was caught incidentally by the police. After the control that took place, the police found him a fake banknote of 1000 Leks, what might happen to anyone in this chaos of informal market. After maltreatment in the police for 48 hours, the family of the abovementioned was asked for his release an amount of 30,000 Leks. Unaware of the legal procedures, his family paid the requested amount and the person was released. Such occurrence happens often in the police commissariats of the capital city, where some innocent Roma often become prey.

Case 8

Korça

A police employee quarrelled without any reason with the vice-chairman of the Roma organisation, for the Korça branch, Mr. Artur Lamova. He punched Mr. Lamova and the next day Mr. Lamova asked for an appointment with the chief of the police commissariat. In the meeting, he complained for the unmotivated attitude of the police employee. The measure of dismissal from his post was taken against the police employee, but he still continues to work there.

The Albanian Constitution

Article 18 of the Albanian Constitution guarantees full equality for all citizens before the law, free from discrimination. It gives a clear list of the criteria including gender, race, ethnic origin, language, political and religious convictions, the income and the social status.

B. The discrimination on the children.

For all Roma children living nowadays all over the world, the equal chances for education are for now just a mirage. In many countries, more than half of all Roma children abandon the school because of the mentality or poverty of their families. Since these target-groups are denied the right of education, they are often unfairly discriminated and stigmatised by being called on undesirable labels. As a consequence, when they grow up they often have difficulties in employment, difficulties that are connected with the work mentality, the low salary, etc. In many countries around the world, Roma children are often divided in special classes from those that are not Roma. This is a consequence for the racial discrimination that exists there.

Based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26, every individual has the right to education. The education is a fundamental right for every individual despite his race, colour or origin. All have the right to get knowledge and to earn a profession in the future.

C. The barriers of the education in the Roma community.

Regarding this problem, many Roma children have never had the possibility to go to school. In many countries, the combination of a lot of bureaucratic barriers and the indigence at work, has excluded the Roma children from the educational system. The major part of them is obliged to work instead of being schooled and educated. This is a big irony of life because they are just children and they need to grow up little by little. Hence, an important duty in the aspect of the rights of Roma children is their education as a basic element in the development of the community. The Union Amaro – Drom has as one of his policies also the fight against the illiteracy in the Roma people. For the first time in 2001, the Union undertook the first initiative for creation of summer schools in three areas of Tirana where the illiteracy was more evident. 100 children took part these summer camps, where 70% were Roma and the other 30% were non-Roma. Other steps that the Union has undertaken with the local or central authorities have always had this as a priority. Training and round tables have been organised with the Roma communities to

make them conscious for the education of their children. In the local Roma communities, the Union has set up schools, kindergartens, community centres to develop and to integrate the Roma children and the Roma youth. This can be noticed in the common schools where Roma and non Roma children are educated. Such an example is the elementary school “Vakthi Sheme” in the village Baltëz, in Fier, that shows clearly on the integration of Roma children in the society. In this school there is a special class to teach Roma children on the Roma culture and also non Roma children. The Roma communities have a long cohabitation with the other non-Roma population. Together they have tried and they are still trying to integrate the Roma community in the society.

The cohabitation among Albanians and other minorities is admirable. But this does not mean that the mentality, the prejudice and the discrimination do not exist especially in the Roma minority.

This discrimination is not self proclaimed, but it proceeds silently in every aspect of the life of the Roma people, in education, employment, in the justice’ institutions, in the police, in the local and central level as well as in different fields of the daily life. The facts are different and real.

4. The process of decision taking among Roma people.

The participation of Roma in politics is one of the principal elements of the integration and the lessening of some of the problems for the Roma community. For the first time in 2001, a group of intellectuals from the Amaro – Drom Union were included in the parliamentary elections of that year, taking part as candidates in three districts of Albania: Tirana, Fier and Elbasan where the biggest numbers of Roma are concentrated. The Roma people in these areas were represented with three candidates: one in the municipality council (Devoll, Bilisht) and two others in the communal council Morave / Berat and Levan / Fier. According to law, the Roma communities cannot elect a parliament members in a certain area, because the number of the Roma electors does not reach the number requested by law. In the following years the Roma intellectuals have tried several times to be involved in decision – taking processes, but have never found support. In 2005, in accordance with the strategy on

the Roma, the Monitoring Section for the Roma Minority at the Ministry of Labour has taken an initiative to involve three experts from this minority, who have a long experience with the Roma communities in different fields of life. We are still waiting for this decision, because of the need of drafting a supplementary budget for these experts.

5. The evaluation on the strategy.

As many different countries around the world, Albania has made efforts in her struggle to decrease the poverty. Since the Roma community is one of the communities mostly touched, with regard to employment, which is in levels of 80 – 90 %, a draft Strategy was drawn in 2003 “On the improvement of the conditions of the Roma community in Albania”, proposed form a vice-administrator group headed by Mr. Ahmet Ceni, ex vice-minister of Labour and Social Affairs. This initiative is strongly supported by the Amaro – Drom Union which operates as the voice of the Roma community in Albania.

This strategy was important for two factors:

First: The Roma minority felt appreciated.

Second: This showed that the cooperation between the State and the minority was necessary for the achievement of effective results.

A working group with representatives from different Ministries such as: the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Public Order, Ministry of Economy and Privatisation, Ministry of Transports, Ministry of Finance etc. is set up for drawing up the draft – strategy.

This strategy is based in 5 main fields:

- Education and schooling.
- Cultural and family patrimony.
- Economy, employment, reduction of poverty and social protection.
- Health and infrastructure.
- Public order, justice and civil administration.

The setting up of a State structure that would engage in the identification of problems and implementation of priority arrangements was necessary to ensure the implementation of this strategy. As a structure, this would

function immediately after the approval of the strategy, having in its composition 3-5 experts in different fields.

To make sure that the strategy would be concretely implemented, it was necessary the drawing of a rank of indicators through which the work would be calculated. The principle of raising of these indicators would be the achievement of the fundamental objectives.

Some of these indicators would be:

- The number of the children who attend the kindergartens in comparison with the general number of the Roma children.
- The number of the pupils who attend school in all the education levels and the percentage of the attendance of the schools according to the group-ages of Roma children.
- The number of the Roma educators and teachers in kindergartens and schools.
- The number of the scholarships given to the Roma pupils.
- The number of women employed in the public and private sector.
- The number of artistic, cultural and sportive groups created in the Roma communities.
- The number of Roma families that benefit economic aid.
- The number of trafficked girls and women.
- The number of people employed in the administration and public sectors, etc.

Deficiencies:

Monitoring Groups from the civil society have noticed that difficulties have come across during the implementation of this strategy. This due to the fact that some established targets and planned activities have not been applied. The general opinion of the Roma organizations is that: the contribute of the State organs regarding the integration of Roma community has not been very efficient. We emphasize the deficiency of a serious commitment by the State institutions and lack of inclusion of this community in the process of the implementation of the strategy.

Recommendation:

- It is necessary to increase the coordinative role of the State and its structures with the local government units, with the Roma organizations and the other actors of the civil society. The cooperation and the exchange of information between all the actors involved in the implementation of the strategy should be institutionalised.
- The organs of the local power should have more responsibilities and commitment in the fulfilment of the priority measures settled in the National Strategy on the Roma minority.

6. The cooperation and the partners of the Union.

The Union gave a special importance to the cooperation, the cross - boundary integration, during the period 2001 – 2005, where we distinguish:

- The cooperation with many non – profitable Roma organizations, with capacity, experience and qualifications in fields of expertise.
- Cooperation (the network of non profitable Roma organizations that operates in Albania)
- Cooperation and partnership in the local level, non profitable organizations and local power for a number of activities.
- Cooperation with the non profitable Roma organizations in the countries of the region and in Europe.
- We distinguish amongst these the Albanian Helsinki Committee KSHH, the Albanian Centre for Human Rights QSHDNJ; the Centre for the Children’s Rights CRCA, CAFOD, non profitable organizations involved in legal issues, Task-Force, the Ombudsman, the Institute for Economic and Social Studies, the office of the Council of Europe, OSCE, UNDP, The World Bank, SOROS, etc.

The Amaro – Drom Union adheres to:

1. The Balkan Roma Federation, whose centre is located in Sofia, Bulgaria (Albania is the vice-president).
2. The Youth Roma Forum in Albania that is part of the Youth Roma Forum in Europe.

3. The European Roma Rights Centre Budapest (ERRC); a partner since 1998.
4. The European Roma Information Office (ERIO), in Brussels, since 2004.
5. Many networks in national and international level.

ANNEX 3

THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMATIC FOR THE ROMA MINORITY IN ALBANIA.
SOME STATISTICAL DATA FOR THIS MINORITY.

Almost 120,000 – 15,000 Roma live in our country. They are concentrated in the following districts: Tirana, Elbasan, Durrës, Berat, Fier, Korça, Vlora, Fushe-Krujë, Gjirokastra, etc. There are no exact dates on their registration, because these statistics are made in 1996 by the Amaro – Drom Union. The figures on the level of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and trafficking are scary because the situation in this community is really hard.

EDUCATION

The right of education is violated.

The low level of education is the main and the most serious problem that has delayed the integration of this community into the society. The lack of education has brought other problems that need to be faced.

Hence, the illiteracy comes as a result of:

1. The linguistic difficulties that children have in the elementary school.
2. The poverty of their families.
3. The early commitment in ordinary works.
4. The long distance between the residences and the schools.
5. The wrong mentality that the parents often present.

Since these children, due to the reasons listed above and for other reasons not mentioned here, do not get any education, this means that their future is in danger. This often leads these children, when they grown up, in works such as: cleaners, garbage collectors, tin collectors, and the one that is the oldest profession of theirs “the begging”.

According to numerous studies and evaluations on the Roma community in Tirana, approximately 5 % of the general number is educated; there is no figure until what age other part attends the school.

64% of the ages 7 – 20 years result as undereducated (this is a non confirmed but alarming figure). In 1999 the Department of the State reports “A high level of illiteracy and extremely bad conditions of living”.

UNEMPLOYMENT:

A part of the Roma receives social support, others are involved in selling used clothes, or do ordinary work to keep their family. The most impressive thing is that a considerable part of the people of this community gives blood to win some money to keep their families. This is a factor that affects negatively in the prosperity of a society. From a report of the World Bank, it results that 80-90% of this community is unemployed.

THE EMIGRATION AND MIGRATION:

The opportunities of employment, education and low salaries oblige the Roma people to emigrate in the neighbouring countries. The emigration is illegal, therefore this factor leads to other problems such as: divorce of the partners, weakening of the tradition and culture, prostitution of Roma women, trafficking of Roma children and the abuse with the rights of this minority. Regarding migration problems they are mainly connected to housing, education and financial problems.

TRAFFICKING

Trafficking is a phenomenon stimulated from the economic conditions. It is a very serious problem and is difficult to manage. The prostitution and the trafficking affect as main factors in the deepening of the poverty, even though they are often used as a manner to cope with it. An important initiative to be undertaken in this case is the enforcement of State policies to deal with the phenomenon of trafficking.

Based on a study that the Amaro – Drom Union carried out in 2005, it results that:

56% of the whole Roma population are more affected by this phenomenon where: 59% of Roma women are mostly affected by trafficking, 30% are Roma children, 4% emigrants, 7% all of them.

The poor 96%; the undereducated 96%.

HOUSING:

Most of this community lives in very bad conditions of living. A big part lives in barracks made of plastic or wood, where electricity, potable water

and other hygienic-sanitary conditions are very minimal and in some cases they are totally absent. It is important that the situation of this community is taken seriously by all the parties concerned to try to change somehow this difficult reality.

The Union, in cooperation with the Ministry of Territory Regulation and Decentralization, has undertaken some steps for the involvement of the Roma minority in the housing program in 2005. It has contacted and participated in frequent meetings with the Directorate of the Residences Body in this Ministry. We hope that this program will be implemented.

THE ROMA WOMAN:

The trafficking of Roma women is another frequent and serious problem in this community because the Roma woman is often in conditions as follows:

- A victim of the emphatic patriarchal system, an phenomenon that leads to her devaluation in the daily life.
- Our society has the tradition of the male domination in the family and this often devaluates the important and incontestable role of the woman.
- The women are considered as weaker and as a result they just have to take care of their families. This naturally leads the economic dependency from their partners. As a result they often become prey of the maltreatments and the violence in the family. They do not have the right of their voice. Intervention is needed in this situation to have sexual equality between males and females.
- Another problem is the lack of self valuation, the consciousness for the positive values that they have, the faith in their forces and the possibilities that they have for the resolving the problems.
- The Roma woman is mostly endangered from different transmittable sexual infections that might be caused due to their lack of interest for information, the low level of education and their lack of interest to get the necessary services to assure sexual and reproductive health, as well as to assure an important information on family planning.

➤ **The evaluation of the health care impact in the Roma community.**

The evaluation of the health care impact is very important because this target-group is very marginalized in our country. The evaluation of this situation is made to improve the health care structures and to increase the consciousness of the community to receive services, as an undeniable right that they have. Based on other studies conducted by the organizations that work in the human rights field, it results that this community is obliged to pay extra money when they need health care.

The health care centres are far from the place where these communities are settled and the health care providers rarely understand the culture and the tradition of this community, therefore, in most of cases, they are not prepared to fulfil the requests of the community. The studies report that most part of the interviewed do not prefer the health care centres. They mostly prefer the hospitals.

Another identified problem is that the Roma women get married very young compared to the majority, they do not consider family planning and the number of births is very high. As a result, this leads to a lot of problems such as the lack of education, lack of employment, and certainly the most evident is the poverty of these families.

Based on contacts taken from the centres of family planning and reproductive health, it results that the Roma women do not prefer these services. Many of the Roma women avoid this necessity as a result of the culture, the linguistic difficulties and the long distance of these centres from the places where they live.

➤ **The factors are related to the primary use access in the health care services**

The living conditions in Roma community are different compared to the other part of the population. This happens due to social-economic, culture and education factors. All these factors, which determine the health of these target-groups, have influenced for a long time.

According to the studies, the social discrimination toward this community is present also in health centres services. The health care centres, which are near their dwellings, are in bad conditions, have a lack of medicines and unqualified personnel.

This community is characterized by a seasonal work, which exclude them from the social and health care insurance. As a result, every service offered to them is very expensive. It is very important for the community to be introduced with their rights regarding the benefit of the health services in the same level as the majority of population.

Pharmacies

The pharmacy is considered by 94% of the Roma community as a place where they fulfil their health necessities. This happens because they consider the pharmacy as a fast and emergent solution for their problems despite the fact that they are expensive.

Hospitals

The hospital is considered by the major part of the community as the most completed environment, with the capacity to manage their health problems in a fast and right way. The hospital gives them more security and a great number of doctors available to them. The Roma community frequents the hospitals very often. This is explained by the high security they get there. The Roma community has difficulties to change their obtained wants as well as their beliefs. They are included in the marginalized groups, therefore they do not frequent the private hospitals.

➤ The Mentality

The Roma community avoids the health services. This is strongly related with both the social status and the economic factor. The Roma community is characterized by a poor life and by difficult conditions in infrastructure. This is a phenomenon, which influences in their health and social life. The lack of knowledge, lack of education and unemployment induces them to abuse with themselves and their children's life. In addition to the above mentioned factors, it is noteworthy to mention their culture, as a basic element, which

characterizes the Roma community. Their culture is very beautiful, regarding their typical songs and dancing which are preserved with fanaticism.

ANNEX 4

THE PUBLICITY AND THE LOBBING FOR THE ROMA MINORITY FROM
2001 TO 2005

The media near the Amaro – Drom Union has played an important role for the awareness increase of the Roma community as well as a good part of the civil society. The Amaro – Drom Union will consolidate its voice into other communities through media and publications. The publication of the activities in bulletins and leaflets has given to the Union of Roma in Albania, power and seriousness. The Amaro – Drom Union has been available at any moment through its publications, to reveal the programme values in interest of the Roma community. The publications are equivalently delivered in all Roma communities.

Amaro – Drom Union has reflected some of the main problems of Roma minority through Roma media, in cooperation with printed and electronic media. It has been a kind of lobbying or public pressure to attract the attention of some organisms to help and support Roma community. We want that, through our voice in the media, both the civil society and responsible institutions to have at least more detailed information on the Roma community problems. Different local televisions and radios in Albania have produced programmes for the situation of the Roma community in Albania. We have seen as opportune and necessary the participation of the media in the meetings where different organisations, institutions, Roma community etc, have also been present discussing on the Roma community problems.

The Amaro – Drom Union has found the media as the best lobbyist to be included in the Roma movement. Amaro – Drom Union is of the opinion that through the Roma movement, it will achieve some of its goals. The Union has strongly supported the Roma movement and has fought towards its widening. The youth and women forum have played an important role and have discussed frequently for their integration in the society.

A. The publications' summary

1. In the framework of the Stability Pact, the bulletin “The Roma Rights, The Youth Generation” was published in 2001, in five publications, in three languages: Albanian, English and Roma language.

“See Youth Initiative Grants” and “OSI Soros Foundation” supported this bulletin.

2. The bulletin “The Roma community rights in Albania” was published in 2001, in two languages: Albanian and English. This was supported by ERRC and OSI – RPP, Budapest, Romania.

3. The same bulletin continued also in 2002.

4. The bulletin “The children’s voice is calling us” in 2002, in two languages, Albanian and English, supported by the Amaro – Drom Union.

5. The bulletin “The roads toward integration” was published in 2003, in two languages, Albanian and English, supported by International SPOLU.

6. The bulletin “Together for the development and integration” was published in 2004, in two languages, Albanian and English, supported by International SPOLU.

7. The bulletin “The development of the community” was published in April 2005, in two languages, Albanian and English, supported by International SPOLU.

8. The bulletin “The steps toward progress”, was published in October 2005, in two languages, Albanian and English, supported by International SPOLU.

9. Leaflets with the brief activities which are implemented during the three year programme in the Roma communities, in the programme “ The development of the community” were published in 2005.

10. The Report on the Roma Minority Trafficking “The Innocent Smile” was published in 2005, in two languages, Albanian and English, supported by the Group of the Minority Rights in London, in the framework of the “Fight against the Roma Minority Trafficking in Albania”.

11. The bulletin “The achievements in the Roma community” was published in 2005 and in 2006, in two languages Albanian and English, supported by International SPOLU, Netherlands.

B. A short description on bulletins

The bulletins are divided in specific chapters, where each chapter reflects activities, problems, experience' exchanges, round tables, trainings, workshops and conferences that are implemented recently in the Roma communities as well as the steps that the Roma community has taken to evolve each year.

The problems that have to do with the Roma community in Albania are sharply reflected in the bulletins, such as:

- The Problem of the registration of the Roma children at schools for the school year 2004-2005. The focus in the efforts of the Amaro – Drom Union to register the Roma children in all communities where this organisation operates. The efforts have been at a local level in cooperation with the Education Directorates in the districts. The Amaro – Drom Union made possible the contacts of the board members with the families, which have unregistered children, through the local boards of the communities.

- Although the Union is not operating in Tirana, “The problem of the Lana Inhabitants” has affected us all. One of the basic principles of the Union is to protect the Roma rights all over Albania. The Information Department has published this news in some of the printed and electronic media, to resolve this issue, because this problem has caused too much concern for the Roma minority in Albania. The Lana inhabitants’ problem was sent for a solution to the municipality of Tirana, as the only responsible institution.

- The problem of the registration of the Roma children in the Civil State of Korça district.

This problem is one of the most emergent ones and not only in Korça but in all communities in Albania where the Romas live. This is a problem that has been published many times in local newspapers aiming to raise the voice before the respective institutions.

C. The publication in the Printed Media

There are two articles of the Information Department near Amaro - Drom Union, which are published in "Albania" newspaper and "Gazeta Shqiptare". The first article is "The marriage in the young age in the Roma community" and the problem of "Trafficking in the Roma community in Albania".

The Roma media has archived in the form of a book, which is called "Shtypi - Press", all the main titles of the materials that Amaro - Drom Union has published during these years, starting from the magazines and bulletins to the daily events, which are revealed in the local newspapers in Albania, always referring the problems of the Roma community. These articles raise awareness of the public opinion, that the Roma community itself, is already aware and active to reduce the problems that this community has in Albania.

ANNEX 5

SOME OF THE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN THE ROMA COMMUNITIES DURING 2002-2005, BASED ON THE THREE YEAR PROGRAMME “THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY”

August-December 2002

- The construction of a school and an ambulance (Morave / Berat)
- The construction of the water-supply system (Novosele / Vlora)
- The sewerage (Levan/Fier)

January-March 2003

- The construction of an ambulance (Levan / Fier)
- The paving of the road (Morave / Berat)
- The reconstruction of the houses (Novosele / Vlora)

September-December 2003

- The construction of a kindergarten (Korça)
- A culture centre for children (Kucove)
- The construction of the water-supply system (Durrës)
- The reconstruction of the houses (Morave / Berat)
- The paving of the road (Novosele / Vlora)
- The reconstruction of the houses (Grabian / Lushnje)
- The construction of the water-supply system (Grabian)
- The activities for the increase of the incomes “ Pig Breeding” (Levan / Fier), Support to the Football Team (Levan / Fier)
- The reconstruction of a school (Baltez / Fier)

January-June 2004

- The reconstruction of the houses (Durrës)
- The paving of the road (Baltez / Fier)
- The construction of the water-supply system (Fushe – Kruje)
- The reconstruction of the houses (Kuçove)
- The construction of a community centre (Morave / Berat)
- The activities for the increase of incomes “Sheep Breeding” (Novosele / Vlora), “Birds Breeding” (Levan / Fier), “Ducks Breeding” (Morave / Berat), “Goose Breeding” (Novosele / Vlora).

July-December 2004

- Morave, Kucove: Professional trainings for the Roma youth.
- Saver: A water-supply run, sanitation, paving of roads.
- Levan: Paving of roads.
- Novosele, Morave, Durres, Grabian: Support to the Football team.
- Kucove: Sewerage.
- Korçe: Professional trainings for the Roma youth.
- Grabian: paving of roads.
- Baltez / Fier: The reconstruction of the houses.

January-June 2005

- Kucove: Paving of roads.
- Baltez/Fier: Cemetery Enclosure.
- Saver: The reconstruction of the houses.
- Korça: The ecologic day, Support to the Football team.
- Durres: Environmental campaign.
- Morave: Sheep Breeding.
- Levan: Rabbits Breeding.
- Grabian: Chicken Breeding.

July-December 2005

- Elbasan: A water-supply run, a public potable – fountain.
- Levan: The Sewerage of the non – potable waters.
- Durres: Clothing trade.
- Korçe: Tailoring activities for women.
- Pogradeci: The paving of the roads.
- Saver: Agriculture (Corn Cultivation).
- Baltez: Sheep Breeding.

ANNEX 6

SUMMARY OF THE TRAINING, CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND ROUND TABLES THAT THE “AMARO DROM” UNION HAS ORGANISED DURING THE PERIOD 2001 – 2005.

Name of activity	Year and place	Themes / Target Groups	Organisers	Participants
1. Training	Tirana, 2001	<p>“The human Rights” / Roma youth.</p> <p>1. How can the Roma community become aware of their rights.</p> <p>2. The development of Roma youth seen against the changing of the society.</p> <p>“Computer course” / The Roma and non-Roma youth.</p> <p>1. The professional proficiency of Roma youth.</p> <p>2. The integration of Roma youth with the majority for culture exchange.</p>	<p>1. The Stability Pact for the Youth Initiatives of the Southeast Europe, Soros Foundation.</p> <p>2. “Amaro – Drom”, the Union of Roma in Albania.</p>	25 young Roma from the districts of Fier, Korça, Berat, Tirana, etc
2. Training	Tirana, 2001	“In the benefit of the Roma	1. YWCA “The	The Roma girls and women form

		woman” / The Roma women and girls from Tirana and Fushëkruja. Goals: 1. to teach Roma women and girls the elementary rights belonging to them. 2. to teach Roma women on education and growth of children as well as family planning.	Christian Woman Association” in Albania. 2. The Roma women forum “Amaro – Drom”.	Tirana and Fushkruja.
3. Training	Levan/Fier 2002	“The awareness of the Roma community on the property rights, as foreseen by the Albanian Legislation” / Roma communities.	1. The Local Power. Mr Ylli Asimetaj, the lawyer of the district of Fier. 2. Mr. Refit Dule, coordinator for the Roma community in Fier.	Members from Roma community.
4. The Second National Conference of the Roma	Tirana, 2002	“The analyses of the 4-year work of the “Amaro – Drom Union in the period 1997 –	“The Amaro – Drom” Union	1. Roma community delegates from some Albanian districts.

community.		<p>2001”.</p> <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accomplishments of the Union. - democratic processes developments and their impact on the Roma. - treatment and development of rural areas. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Non-profitable organisations. 3. Personalities and State Institutions.
5. Workshop	Tirana, 2003	<p>“The Roma movement for community development”. / Roma Organisations.</p> <p>Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The discussion of ideas and experiences between Roma organisations. 2. The strengthening of the capacities of these organisations for the local development. 3. The stimulation of cooperation 	<p>The Netherlands International Foundation “SPOLU”, supporter for the three-year program “Community development” whom the “Amaro - Drom” Union has worked with.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eleni Tsetsekou, representative from the Council of Europe. 2. Jef Helmer, the director of SPOLU foundation. 3. The Roma non-profitable organisations in Albania: Amaro – Drom, Rrohmano Kahm, Romani Baxt, Amaro – Dives, Alba – Rom, etc. 4. Members from the Roma organisations.

		between the Roma organisations.		
6. Round tables	Tirana, 2003	<p>“From papers into the reality” / Roma organisations</p> <p>Goal: The role of the Roma organisations in the implementation of the national strategy on Romas.</p>	<p>1. Council of Europe</p> <p>2. “Amaro – Drom” Union.</p>	<p>1. The Roma non – profitable organisations in Albania</p> <p>2. Mr Sciclum, from the Council of Europe.</p> <p>3. Mr Jef Helmer, the director of the SPOLU foundation.</p>
7. International Conference for Roma community	Tirana, 2003	<p>“The possibilities for the Roma movements to Europe” / Roma organisations of East and Central European countries.</p> <p>Goal: Experience’ exchange between countries; visits in the Roma communities; establishment of the networks in</p>	“The Amaro – Drom” Union	<p>1. Roma organisations from 7 countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Czech Republic, Moldavia, Slovakia, Albania.</p> <p>2. Spolu Foundation</p> <p>3. Roma communities</p> <p>4. Printed and</p>

		international level.		Electronic Media.
8. Round Tables	Fier, 2004	<p>“A mini – study conducted by the Amaro – Drom Union and the Helsinki Committee”</p> <p>Goal: The monitoring of the Health and Education situation for the Roma community in the Fier district.</p>	<p>1. Amaro – Drom” Union</p> <p>2. Albanian Helsinki Committee</p>	<p>1. Representatives from the Fier communes.</p> <p>2. Representatives from the municipality of Fier, who cover the health sector.</p> <p>3. The Fier Education Directorate.</p> <p>4. The 8 - years school teachers.</p> <p>5. Members from the Roma communities.</p>
9. Workshop	Korça, 2004	<p>“The community development” / The Roma community of Savra.</p> <p>Goal: The stimulation of activities for the development of the community and the activities for the increase of the incomes,</p>	<p>Amaro – Drom Union, a three days workshop in Korca.</p>	<p>1. Local Boards</p> <p>2. The Roma and non – Roma organisations’ network.</p> <p>3. The Education directorate of Korça town.</p> <p>4. Different organisations in Korça such as: “Korca woman”;</p>

		as a tool for the improvement of the situation of the Roma community in Albania.		“Dorkas”; “Help for children” foundation; the centre for the development of the civil society “Oriada”; Show Agency in Korça, etc.
10. Training	Saver/Lushnje 2004	“The community development” / Roma community of Savra Goal: The increase of the leading capacity of the local board of Savra for the “Community Development” method	Organised by the “Amaro – Drom” Union.	Members of the local board, the youth and women of Savra.
11. Training	Levan, Morave, Novosele, 2004	“How to draft and prepare a project proposal, raising of funds, leadership” Goal: The growth of the professional level of local organisations and the improvement of their work in the	Organised by Amaro – Drom” Union	Members of the local boards, local organisations operating in these communities.

		communities.		
12. Training	Tirana, 2004	<p>“The increase of knowledge” / The young Roma leaders.</p> <p>Goal: To make possible for the Roma youth to grow their knowledge, in order to face effectively and with competence different issues of the community as the future leaders.</p>	Organised by “Amaro – Drom” Union	The Roma leaders from the Roma communities such as: Korça, Levan, Savra, Kucova, Balteze, Novosela, Morava, Grabiani, Durres.
13. Round tables	Tirana, 2005	<p>Goal: The integration and improvement of the situation of the Roma youth in Albania.</p>	Organised by “Amaro – Drom” Union. Supported by the Soros Foundation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Roma youth from the 9 communities where the “Amaro – Drom” operates. 2. Five Roma Non – Profitable Organisations (Amaro – Drom Tirana; Alba Rrom Durres; Romano-Kham Tirana, Romano – Drom Fushe-Kruje; “The Roma woman of tomorrow”

				<p>Tirana.</p> <p>3. Members of the local boards in the Roma communities such as: Korça, Tirana, Durres, Kucove, Levan, Saver, Grabian, Novosele.</p> <p>4. Representatives from the Council of Europe in Albania.</p> <p>5. The Albanian Committee for Minorities, the Albanian Helsinki Committee.</p>
14. Visit to exchange experiences at international level with the partners of “Integros” in Bulgaria.	Tirana, 2005	Goal of the visit: Work experience and information exchange between two partners that work for the same target group such as the Roma community.	Organised by the “Amaro – Drom” Union.	The working group of seven persons from “Integro” and “Amaro – Drom” associations.
15. Meeting in the Amaro	June, 2005	Goal of the meeting:	Organised by the	The local boards in the Roma

<p>- Drom Offices with Alfia Abdikeva, a foreign expert / London.</p>		<p>The discussion with the local boards in communities for the National Strategy of Roma community.</p> <p>Topics for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of the local board in the compilation of the strategy; - The role of Amaro - Drom in this strategy. - which is the national strategy of the Albanian State for the Roma community. - How much information does the Roma community have on this strategy. 	<p>“Amaro - Drom” Union. Supported by MRG / London “The group for the minority rights in London”.</p>	<p>community; The “Amaro - Drom” Union.</p>
<p>16. Round table with the government, as well as national and international</p>	<p>May 2005, Tirana</p>	<p>Goal: Evaluation and special recommendations in relation with the national strategy on the</p>	<p>The Amaro - Drom Union. Supported by MRG / London “The group for the minority</p>	<p>MPCS, UNDP, OSCE, Tirana Municipality, The Strategy Monitoring Group.</p>

organisations in Albania.		Roma community by the government and other responsible organisms.	rights in London”.	
17. Round table.	December 23 rd , 2003, Tirana.	<p>“The national strategy on Roma community in Albania”</p> <p>Goal: The awareness of the governmental organisms, non-profitable organizations and other partners for the responsibility that they have towards the Roma community in Albania. The stimulation and compilation of the social policies on the Roma community.</p>	Organised by the Amaro – Drom Union. Supported by MRG/London “The group for the minority rights in London”.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Ferit Hoxha, Advisor of the Prime Minister, Mr Sali Berisha. 2. The association “Legal Initiative”, Tirana. 3. The “Terre des homes” mission. 4. The monitoring group of the national strategy on Roma community. 5. The Albanian Minorities’ Committee. 6. The Albanian Helsinki Committee. 7. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. 8. The Ministry of Urban Management

				and Decentralisation. 9. Members form the Roma community and Roma non-profitable organisations.
18. Round table	Tirana, 2005	<p>“The trafficking phenomenon in the Roma communities”</p> <p>Goal: Prevention of the trafficking phenomena, what should the civil society do?</p>	Organised by the “Amaro – Drom” Union.	Legal experts, the Ministry of Public Order; UNDP; the Albanian Helsinki Committee; CRCA, the Municipality of Tirana; the Reception Centre for the victims of trafficking; Media; The Albanian Minorities’ Committee; the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
19. Round tables and workshops	2004 – 2005 – 2006 period, Korça, Levan, Tirana.	“Legal aspects for the Roma communities” / Roma community.	Legal organisations. “The Conflict Resolution Foundation”, CAFOD,	- Legal experts. - Representatives from the Communes, Municipality and

		<p>Goal:</p> <p>The awareness of the Roma community for their problems related to their registration in the civil state offices, in the field of law, emigration and education.</p>	Albania.	<p>the Education Directorate at local level;</p> <p>- Roma community and Roma non – profitable organisations.</p>
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ANNEX 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS IN THE FIELD OF RIGHTS

- The Roma minority in Albania should enjoy the rights of the national minority and not the rights of a linguistic one.

The base: The experience of the Balkan countries, where they have the national minority status. This idea is given and accepted by the Council of Europe, but it should be analysed by the Minorities' Office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- The Roma minority should have all the rights, which derive from the Constitution, as well as from the minorities' status.

We emphasize:

1. Roma to be treated as a first hand citizen, not as the second hand citizen.

Cases:

1. When it is abused with their rights, mainly in the demolition of their shelters and their dwellings. It is the case of the destruction of 110 families' shelters in Lana, Tirana, by the Municipality of Tirana. No measure has been taken up to now.
2. When in issues of education, economy, infrastructure, employment, health, etc. the Strategy for the improvement of Roma living conditions should be respected.

In the university education:

All Roma community children who finish the high schools should be given the possibility to attend the universities. This possibility does not exist up to now. There have been many cases since 2002 and onwards, that the Roma community children wanted to attend universities, but

they have not taken more than 100 points in the exams. This is their capacity, but we demand the Ministry of Science and Education that in the law that this Ministry has either drafted or approved, priority should be given not only to children from Kosovo or to children of the formerly political persecuted people, but also to the Roma community children.

In the education:

In the new education curricula, it is necessary to treat the Roma language, culture, history and tradition. These values should become known and should be learned even from the majority children, the same as the Greek and Macedonian minority are treated.

We suggest that:

the above mention subjects should be treated as supplementary subjects, where the educated community representatives (high school education) will have the right to make the reference of different profiles. The pedagogic qualifications should be done in the proper time and moment (in the summer time), in training mode. There is such kind of examples like for the northern part of Albania or wherever there is lack of teachers.

The right to employment

Representatives of the Roma community who are educated, graduated from the high school or the university, should be given the possibility to be part of the governmental administration, at the local or central level.

Examples: The neighbouring countries' experience in the region.

The participation in politics

According to the laws and the Albanian Constitution, the Roma community cannot ensure their participation in the local or central power up to now. The Roma community has not achieved to ensure the appropriate number of votes in the majority or proportional system. The Roma community is often a victim of the Albanian political parties.

We suggest :

The creation or opening of vacancies for the Roma minority, in order for them to have the right to be represented in the local or central power.

The experience: The neighbouring countries are implementing and have this experience already in place.

REPORTER: ALMA LLESHI

Social worker for the problems of the Roma minority in Albania.

The Union of Roma in Albanian “Amaro – Drom”.

Tirana on July 11th, 2006

OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE ARUMUN ASSOCIATION IN ALBANIA ON THE DRAFT – REPORT

1. Regarding the statistical evaluations

Since the material is prepared by INSTAT in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and “The Office of Minorities” long time ago, the Arumun association suggests that it should be definitely omitted from the Report.

According to them, it would be more correct to say that there are no statistical data than to report on 782 Arumun inhabitants, for whom maybe it would not be worthy to mention, since there could no kind of massive progress would their language and the culture have with such a number, compared to 3 million of Albanian inhabitants!

For example: a survey done by this association in Pogradec and the villages around, there are 4,000 Arumuns; 250 families with around 1,200 family members only in Divjake; the “Andon Poci” village in Gjirokastra, an Arumun and not a Greek village, has over 1,500 members who speak and preserve the Arumun language, culture and tradition.

2. On the State Minorities’ Committee

The Arumun Association claims that the Minorities’ Committee hides behind some reports done by others, but it has not contacted with representatives of the association (in the last years) and it has not asked for any information, not even in a confidential way. Its activity seems as of a Committee created only for the Greek minority. It is a fact that in its composition or in its technical staff, it has no representative from Arumun ethnicity, even though this ethnicity, present in the Albanian population, has the greatest number, at least upon the respective surveys.

We propose to either reformulate the terms of reference of this Committee, or totally dissolve it as an unnecessary shackle if it works as it has worked up to now.

3. On the language, history and culture

a. The language

Concerning the opening of classes for the Arumun language, it is proposed the establishment of clear rules on the criteria foreseen for the opening of classes to learn the language into schools (Arumun language) by the MES, as well as the elimination of bureaucratic procedures for the opening of schools, leaving the competences to the Local Power (commune or municipality), so that where the conditions are fulfilled, the opening of schools be decided.

b. History

The participants of this minority suggest that, in the educational programs, the contribution of this minority in the Albanian history, literature and art be evaluated.

c. Culture

Regarding the “Multiethnic Annual Festival” which is organised every year in Përmet, this association claims that this event has become personalized, meaning that the institution is related to two or three persons, perhaps experts of songs and dancing, and does not contact at all with the associations which represent the ethnicities, creating a big confusion of the ethnicities. If a song or a dance from Dibra, from the Çam community or from Shkodra is presented, it immediately is part of this festival called as multiethnic, when it is known that Dibra, Shkora and the Çams are of Albanian ethnic origin only.

They propose that, since it is supported by the Albanian taxpayers and has the multiethnic name, it should be different from the Folkloric Festival of Gjirokastra. Hence it should be a festival for the ethnic minorities which live in Albania and they are already known: **Arumuns, Egyptians, Greeks, Montenegrins and Romas**, no others (*the ordering is done according to the alphabet order and not according to any subjectivism for the evaluation of one or the other, as it is often written also in the draft*).

d. In the churches

In the churches where the majority of the devotees are from the Arumun ethnicity, it should be authorised that: as per the opinion of the community and the priest, the offices should be made both in Albanian and Arumun language. The State may intermediate for this purpose with the Archbishop of the Albanian Autocephalous Church.

e. For the media

The access that the languages of the minorities should have in public and private media should be clearly determined. These should not be left on the competences of the Albanian National Council of Radios and Televisions (KKRT) or the Council of Albanian Radio – Television (KRTSH). They should only control how this law is implemented instead of making laws.

For this reason:

1. Access should be given to Tirana Radio (Station 2), which have to program the preparation and broadcasting in each minorities' language, 30 minutes or 1 hour per week and this should be funded through the funds allocated to this institution.
2. Local State Televisions (Shkodra, Korça and Gjirokastra) should have the right and the obligation to prepare programs and to broadcast them in the language of minorities.
3. Private televisions should not have any restrictions to prepare and broadcast in minorities' languages.
4. All these should be legal and for no one's permission should be required.

- **Information of the National Serbian – Montenegrin Minority Association “Morača Rozafa”**

I. Information on problems specific to the national Serbian – Montenegrin minority.

The national Serbian – Montenegrin minority has been through years a target of injustice and arbitrary acts by the totalitarian power of Enver Hoxha which had as an aim the total assimilation and elimination of its identity. First of all this was done through obligation by force to change the nationality in the civil state documents and determination of their nationality as Albanians. The problem of changing of individuals' nationality has not yet been resolved despite our commitment through giving suggestions and proposals. We consider that the self identification and self declaration of the persons who belong to national minorities is a personal and an unquestionable right, and the legal practice of changing the nationality through judicial ways is contrary to this European and worldwide principle, as is the case of Law no. 9029, dated March 13th, 2003 “On some amendments to Law no. 8950 “On the civil state””, which stipulates as follows:

Article 37/1 **Nationality**

The child takes his/her parents' nationality when they have the same nationality, documented in the Basic Register of the Civil State. This nationality cannot be changed except when, according to the law, the inaccuracy of the parents' nationality is verified or when there is a final court decision to change the fatherhood or motherhood. The changing of nationality, in any case, is done with court decision.

The decision of keeping traditional Serbian and Montenegrin names was also forbidden by the totalitarian regime because of their conflict policies. Members of minority were obliged by force to change their traditional family names into other Albanian family names which for their own meaning were very humiliating and disparaging, such as:

Druri – wood, Arra – nut, Hekuri – iron, Pambuku – cotton, Fojleta, Tavani – ceiling, Dritarja – window, Shelqi, etc.

In addition to these measures the parents' of newborn babies of the minority were obliged to put Albanian names to their children, taken by a list of Albanian names compiled by the organs of that time.

The last school in Serbian language was closed in 1934. Today, there is no form of education or teaching in Serbian language for the members of the Serbian – Montenegrin minority.

It went further with the destruction of the worship objects strongly related with the centenarian culture of the Serbian – Montenegrin minority.

There is lack of any form of information in the electronic and written media in Serbian language, in the territory of the Republic of Albania.

Regarding the statistics related to the concentration and the number of the Serbian – Montenegrin minority members, we evaluate that around 20,000 people of Serbian and Montenegrin origin live in the territory of the Republic of Albania, who share the same characteristics as language, culture, wish to protect their national identity, etc.

There is no form of using the Serbian language – the language of the national Serbian – Montenegrin minority – in relation to local and central power while the names of the villages are kept in their old form, but there are no labels with the names of the villages where the minority lives, written in Serbian language.

The national Serbian – Montenegrin minority has a representative in the State Minorities' Committee. It has no other representative in any Ministry or other central department.

At the local power level, in the framework of the political representation of the 'Human Rights Union' Party (PBDNJ) 5 (five) directors of the Directorates in districts are in leading roles, mainly in the Directorate of Inspectorate of Funa in Shkodra, the Directorate of IFSSH, Shkodra, the Directorate of Maize Growth Institute in Shkodra, etc. We have no precise data on the number of the Serbian – Montenegrin people in the public order structures. There is no predetermined number of posts in the police structures or in the army in order to employ Serbian – Montenegrin minority' members.

Most of the military officers, members of the minority, were dismissed due to the reform in the Army.

The funds given for the areas where the Serbian – Montenegrin minority lives are very scarce. They are concentrated mainly in the irrigation system.

The freedom of movement is ensured through movement towards the Republic of Montenegro without visas, while the Serbian authorities have also enabled the Serbian – Montenegrin minority members to be issued multi – entry visas for free to go to Serbia.

There has been no financing by the Albanian State, regarding our media and written press projects, the TV broadcasting in the mother tongue or the publications relating to the national Serbian – Montenegrin minority's life, culture and history.

We have participated in some activities organised by the national organs for the implementation of the Framework Convention, mainly in Tirana. We have also participated in some round tables that have been organised by the Albanian Helsinki Committee, the Albanian Human Rights' Group and many other NGOs which work for the awareness increase, training and information of the minorities' members on the ways to follow and implement the international acts on the human and minorities' rights and freedoms.

The gamma of the minorities' problems is broad and the Albanian State should strongly intervene towards the improvement of actual legislation in the field of protecting the minorities' rights and freedoms and its approximation with the European legislation. We express our willingness to contribute with our suggestions and proposals regarding the legal acts and amendments that should be brought forward. The attention of the governmental organs' on the positive discrimination should grow through legal acts on the minorities, with the purpose of intensive implementation of their rights. Special attention should be paid to the real funding of the minorities' organisations' needs and projects. A special fund should be created for this aim. The identification and registration of the people, who belong to national minorities in general and to the national Serbian – Montenegrin minority in particular, should be a priority of the Albanian government; without it, the application of European standards for the minorities will be very difficult.

- **Information of the Aromanian minority Association
“Arumunët e Shqipërisë – Aromanians of Albania”**

I. A short presentation of the association

“Arumunët e Shqipërisë – Aromanians of Albania” is approved as a cultural association since 1991.

The conference with participation from all the districts where the Aromanians live was held in April 1992. Its main purpose has been the identification of the Aromanian ethnicity, the preservation of the language, culture, folk, the clothing characteristics and other traditions. Nowadays, it has 16 branches organised according to a districts’ basis, such as in Tirana, Lushnja, Elbasan, Pogradec, Korça, Fier, Selenice, Përmet, Kuçova, Durrës, Librazhd, etc which have direct connections with the general headship of the association, centred in Tirana. The elections of the leading organs in the branches and in the general association level are held once in four years.

Many activities in memory of the people of Aromanian origin who have contributed for Albania, for the celebration of religious holidays, for the commemoration of the Aromanian national day (May the 23rd) etc have been developed during these years.

Special work is done towards the language, reaching to the establishment of a private school in Divjake, where the children of this minority learn how to write and read in Aromanian. Different international festivals and symposiums on the Aromanian history and folk have been organised or have been attended.

There is a church in Korça town, where the wafers are held in Aromanian language.

A very important path that was taken was the publication of different materials such as: the Aromanian history, literature creations in Aromanian language as well as the publication since 10 years of the newspaper “Fratia” (Brotherhood), monthly newspaper in two languages (Albanian and Aromanian). Here it is also noteworthy to mention two volumes of the Aromanian history, over 5 volumes of poems in Aromanian language by Aromanian authors in Albania, the book “Tragjedia e Voskopojes” (Voskopoja Tragedy), a monograph of more than

200 pages in two languages (Albanian and Aromanian language), the book “Through the labyrinths of the Aromanian history”, etc.

All the activities and the publications were covered financially by the Association itself and through some sponsorship, by applying in different projects.

This association has been a participant of all the meetings organised on the minorities’ problems, organised by the State organs, representatives of international institutions such as the Council of Europe, OSCE, etc, as well as by foundations and organisations which deal with the protection of human rights.

This association has also been involved in programs which have been organised by the Media Institute for the minority press. In 2005, upon the assistance of a Danish foundation, four programs on the culture and traditions of the Aromanian ethnicity, all in Aromanian language, were prepared and broadcasted in Tirana Radio 4.

II. Problems specific to the Aromanians

1. Preservation and learning of the language;
2. Knowing of this ethnicity’s history in Albania and the Balkans, including this also in the school programs;
3. Specification of the Aromanian ethnicity for the public celebrities in all the fields in our country, be they past or present celebrities;
4. Partial material support by the State for Aromanian cultural activities;
5. Partial material support by the State for the publication of a monthly newspaper in Aromanian language and the elimination of the rent burden for the offices where this association carries out its functions (similar to the Macedonian and Romanian model);
6. A space in the public electronic media, where programs and news in Aromanian language shall be broadcasted. (On this purpose, persons who know this language should be employed for a part time or full time job, similar to the Macedonian and Rumanian model).

7. The private media should have special instructions by the competent organs on their freedom to broadcast any program in Aromanian language, same as for other minorities.
8. For some special duties, such as in the State Minorities' Committee or in other institutions dealing with minorities, persons who belong to this ethnicity should be employed.

III. The learning of the language.

Regarding the use of language, the legal recognition by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of the right that the Aromanians have to learn their language in schools where pupils of this minority are, remains a problem. MES should also have funds to finance the compilation of the unique programs and appropriate texts for the learning of this language, same as for other minorities' languages.

This institution should activate experts of this language, either for the compilation of the programs or also for teaching in Aromanian language, because otherwise the Aromanian language, this unrepeatably wealth, risks disappearing.

IV. Statistics

It is quite necessary the organisation the collection and obtaining statistical data on the number of persons who are declared as Aromanians in Albania. This should be achieved through surveys, as well as through general registration of the population where the ethnicity should also be a request.

V. Inclusion in the decision – taking

Regarding the involvement of persons who belong to the Aromanian minority in the decision taking, this association evaluates that the State Minorities' Committee should have as part of its functional duty to attract the opinion of this association, in any case when draft laws or decisions which deal directly with the Aromanian minority are reported or brought forward.

The experience of the Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC) in the minorities' rights area.

The Albanian Helsinki Committee has implemented several projects in the field of minorities. A list of projects that AHC has implemented to protect and respect national minorities' rights are as follows:

- Diversity and Coexistence of minorities and communities in Albania - An important factor for stability in the region; Implementation period July 2002 – June 2003, funded by Council of Europe.
- Promotion of minorities' rights and growth of international co-operation; Implementation period March 2003 – June 2003, funded by Balkan Human Rights Network¹.
- The role of civil society in protecting and raising awareness of the public for the national minorities' rights; Implementation period January – December 2004, financially supported by the Soros Foundation.
- Promotion of minorities' rights and increase of inter-community understanding; Implementation period March 2003 – June 2005, funded by ADI, Macedonia.
- Regional report of human rights; Implementation period August 2005 – July 2006, funded by the Belgrade human rights' Centre.
- Implementation of the national strategy for the improvement of living conditions of the Roma minority in Albania; Implementation period November 2005 – continuing, a Soros Foundation project implemented in cooperation with the Albanian Helsinki Committee and CRCA.
- Monitoring of the minorities rights' respect in Korça Municipality; Implementation period August 2005 – July 2006, funded by Fridrich Ebert Stiftung.

¹ The Albanian Helsinki Committee is part of this human rights Balkan network.

Publications of the Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC) in the minorities area.

1. Minorities Issue in Europe, Tests and analysis. (Translated publication by AHC in 1996).
2. Minorities in Albania (AHC publication in Albanian and English, in 2003).
3. Leaflet – Know and protect our rights (AHC and Soros Foundation publication, in 2004).
4. Poster – Know and protect our rights (AHC and Soros Foundation publication, in 2004).
5. Alternative report on the respect for Roma minority' rights in Albania (The report has been published in edition of the organization Association for Democratic Initiatives, "Framework Convention on National Minorities, Shadow Report", edition of 2004).
6. Informative brochures related to the "Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities", the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the Albanian legislation on minorities' rights (AHC and Soros Foundation publication in three languages; Albanian, Macedonian and Greek, published in 2004).
7. Study on the Roma minority strategy' monitoring in the education field (online version in the AHC website, www.ahc.org.al; in 2005).
8. Study report on the monitoring of the Roma strategy' implementation (Publication of Soros Foundation, AHC and CRCA still in process).

Albania: Economic Development in Minority Areas ***A Comparative Case Study***

The southern district of Gjirokaster is one of the most representative areas where the Albanian community lives alongside the Greek, the Aromanian, and the Roma communities. The Greek community is concentrated in the Dropull region, the Aromanians live in the Odrie commune, while the Romas are spread out all over the region, although they are found in greater numbers in the outskirts of Gjirokaster region. A comparative study of the economic development of these areas, prepared in the framework of the Minority Rights in Practice program, was the topic of a roundtable debate with representatives of these communities and the local authorities, as well as with pedagogues and students of Gjirokaster University. The debate was given a wide coverage by the local media.

The main economic activity in these regions has traditionally been agriculture. They plant mostly wheat and maize. After the division of the land in the first transition years¹, private farms began to be set up on very small plots of land, therefore agricultural produce was not competitive quantity, quality and cost wise. Thus the inhabitants lost their main economic source of income, while over half the farming land was left barren. Large-scale emigration to the neighboring state, Greece, filled partially the gap created and became the prevailing feature both for the Albanian majority and for the three minorities. Economic necessity is estimated to be the main factor accounting for emigration. Part of the population that could not emigrate was displaced from the rural areas to the city of Gjirokaster, but this is typical only of the communes inhabited by the Albanians.

Transition has not had a uniform influence on the pace of economic development of these regions, hence, also on the poverty level of these communities. The Romas have become extremely poor. It is estimated that the bulk of the Roma people live below the official poverty line. The poverty is high also among a considerable part of the Albanian population. The economic situation of the Aromanians is however better, while the economic situation of the Greek minority has considerably improved.

In the Dropull region, inhabited mainly by the Greek minority population, the largest part of the labor force has emigrated, leaving the farming land untilled. Only a small part of this land was transformed into pastures or vineyards. In the meantime, the private business has undergone major development. Although Dropull is a rural zone, the private businesses make up about 15 percent of the total number of businesses registered as juridical persons in Gjirokaster district, while their annual turnover is very high, accounting for about 62 percent of the total turnover of all the businesses of the district taken together. The very special development of large businesses is attributed to the geographical proximity with the Greek border, the free movement of this minority to Greece, and the fact that it is easier for them to establish links and set up joint businesses with the Greek firms. The radical improvements in the road infrastructure along with the water and electricity supply of these zones, thanks to the investments of the Albanian state and the considerable contributions by the Greek government, have had a positive impact on the overall business development.

¹ Political and economic transition in Albania started in 1991.

The remittances of the emigrants have likewise played a major role in the improvement of the life of the minority families. It turns out that remittances are the main source of revenues for the other family members, mainly for the parents and children who have remained in the country. The remittances are also used for the reconstruction or the building of houses and for their furnishing. Hence, about 65 percent of the houses in Dropull area have been reconstructed or built anew and furnished recently. The number of the minority people, who use remittances to invest in their regions, turns out to be small, because in general they regard investments as unsafe and the success of their business uncertain.

The pensions accorded by the Greek government to the retirees of the minority villages, which are several times higher than the pensions granted by the Albanian government and which can compare to the salaries of the public servants in the Albanian public administration, have also played a special role in the improvement of the living standards of the minority families.

The Aromanians rely for their living on three main economic sources: emigration, livestock and manufacturing businesses. Just like the Greek minority, they are considered favored regarding their free movement to the border. Most of them have official residence permits to live in Greece. But unlike the Greek minority, many Aromanian families have recently returned for good from emigration and opened small livestock activities, agro-processing businesses and handicrafts, which supply the whole region with goods. Hence the economic situation of the families has increased and the region has recognized a boom in modern constructions. Considerable state funds have been invested for the construction of the center of the commune, the road network and the water supply.

The majority of the Roma community lives together in a poor neighborhood of the city where the state has invested the least. The Romas have been left outside the attention of the local government. They suffer water and electricity shortages, and poor roads and live in wooden huts, which they abandon in winter when they migrate to Greece. The Romas live on the revenues they make from seasonal work in Greece, where they work in agriculture, gather iron scraps, trade used clothes, and engage in artisan work, by mainly manufacturing straw baskets. It is believed that the Romas are not disfavored in terms of getting Greek visas, on the contrary are advantaged. The number of the Roma families living in good economic situation is very limited. In general, these are families where the husband and the wife are employed or, in rare cases, families that have their own businesses.

The differences in the economic situation of the various regions can be seen in the shares of the families receiving economic assistance². In the Greek minority zones, this indicator is about 23 times lower than the district average while in the zones inhabited by Aromanians about twice as low. In communes inhabited mainly by Albanian communities, which compare in terms of size and distance from the town with the communes inhabited by the Greek and Aromanian minorities, this indicator is up to 2.5 times higher than the average of the district, while in the city of Gjirokaster it is about 1.6 times higher. It is a paradox that only 10 Roma families benefit economic assistance due to the fact that most of them are not registered on account of moving from one place to another.

² This is a state budget support for the families without incomes.

Support by the central and local government of the Roma population with promotional employment policies and investment for the creation of the minimal living conditions is necessary especially for the Roma community. The alleviation of poverty for this community is linked with the creation of the facilities for the Romas of this zone to resume their old traditional skills, especially the manufacturing of straw baskets and the cultivation and processing of the willow.

Minority Rights in Practice In South East Europe

Newsletter 1 – November 2005

Albania:

Media coverage of 2005 Parliamentary elections and minorities

The focus of media attention in Albania this year has been the country's parliamentary election, which took place on July 3rd. National and local media can play a key role in promoting harmony between minorities and indeed a network of journalists from different communities is actively engaged in this in Albania.

As part of the Minority Rights in Practice in South Eastern Europe programme, a group of experts, from HDPC and various NGOs, monitored the activities of two local TV channels, two national newspapers and two local newspapers from May up until Election Day. This report covers the group's findings as well as the content of a forum to discuss media coverage of the election.

Local TV

Observers noted that some progress was seen on local TV, both in the way that minority issues were raised by journalists, who themselves were much more aware of this problem, and by the way that such problems were really debated by politicians for the first time. This replaced the usual accusations by minorities and highly defensive stance by political candidates. Nevertheless, it was a little disappointing that minority issues covered were confined almost entirely to the Greek minority, with very little attention given to other minorities and also that debate was largely political, rather than addressing specific local minority problems.

Newspaper coverage

Where debate did appear in the national press, it was correct in its style but here too discussion tended to concentrate on the Greek minority, whilst the huge problems and difficulties of the Roma community were not mentioned.

The two local (Greek language) newspapers monitored devoted much space to the two main parliamentary candidates and the political fights and insults exchanged between them but, unlike the other media, the local newspapers also published articles that not only criticised the government but also contained constructive and well-balanced comments suggesting ways in which minority problems might be resolved.

“Elections, media and minorities” forum

Journalists from local and national media, representatives from local government, central government institutions and NGOs concerned with minority issues met to discuss the media monitoring during the election.

The consensus of opinion was that the media had concentrated on political debate with relatively little attention being given to the real problems of minorities in the region. One explanation given was that media owners were more interested in increasing circulation during an election rather than discussing real issues of ethnicity. Insofar as minorities were discussed, it was essentially the Greek minority, despite the fact that the economic and social hardship suffered by the Roma is incomparably greater than that suffered by other minorities.

The monitoring findings were judged to be so valuable that it was proposed to hold a debate on national TV, in which representatives of political parties as well as MPs from minority regions could discuss minority problems. The forum's conclusions would also be presented to the new Parliamentary Commission on Media and Human Rights.

For further information please contact:

Human Development Promotion Centre - 'HDPC'

Mrs Lindita Xhillari - hdpc@icc-al.org

An initiative of the King Baudouin Foundation in partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Soros Foundations

United Nations Development Programme

To address challenges that marginal groups face, and to celebrate Albania's cultural diversity and heritage UNDP works with partners to support integration of disadvantaged minorities within national structures and policies.

Information about, UNDP's investments in the field of promoting the protection and integration of minorities.

Last fall UNDP embarked on a modest initiative to increase capacities and to raise awareness among the "majority" Albanian population' including government, media, and other civil society actors on minority rights and protection.

In a study that we are now completing we have tried to assess some aspects of the socio-economic conditions of the Roma community in Albania. We are also Looking to work together with the United Nations Agencies in Albania in supporting the Roma Committee at the Ministry of Labour and Equal Opportunities in the implementation of the Roma strategy. In addition, UNDP's Local Governance Programme has been working within the region of Gjirokaster to address infrastructure and governance needs of the Greek minorities.

The attachment provides an overview on the ongoing activities and investments that UNDP has made through the Minorities project as well as achievements within the Local Governance Programme in the Gjirokaster region.

1) Project on Minorities Capacity Building and Advocacy

Improving the knowledge on human rights and capacities in dealing with sensitive development issues of vulnerable minority groups in Albania has been a key objective of UNDP's project on Minority Capacity Building and Advocacy. One outcome of the project builds capacities among central and local government officials, and Roma and Egyptian communities on minority rights by introducing ways to preclude passive discrimination and promote social integration. This is being done with the development and training delivery of a minority rights training manual, "*Respecting Human Rights and Promoting Interculturalism in Albania.*" The training programme emphasize the role of the individual and the state in respecting human rights and identifying the necessary means to combat discriminatory behavior on an individual and collective level.

The training manual and establishment of a core group of expert minority trainers is a fundamental part of the project work. This initial groundwork will help shape governmental policymaking and will assist key Albanian institutions to overcome indirect discrimination practices and promote social inclusion throughout Albanian society.

The project also raises awareness about disadvantaged minorities through a comprehensive public information and media strategy campaign, supporting national media to foster mutual Understanding and promote social inclusion of disadvantaged minorities. These advocacy activities involve the filming and broadcast of a 15-minute documentary as well as televised programming promoting both the positive aspects and challenges faced with minorities in the country. In addition, UNDP together with UN Volunteers unit is currently planning a community film event that will bring mainstream films and educational documentaries into Roma communities of Tirana.

2) Vulnerability Assessment Study: Roma in Albania

This study that is being finalized analyses some aspects of the socio-economic, cultural, institutional and historical state of the Roma community in Albania. The main objectives of the study are to increase the awareness of the central and local government, private sector and civil society on the socio-economic needs of the Roma community that have particularly emerged during the transition; and to help through the findings, quantitative and qualitative data, the Albanian government, UNDP and other potential donors to compile policies and specific programs that can facilitate the inclusion of the Roma community in the Albanian society. The findings of this study are based on the analysis of the quantitative data of a survey conducted by UNDP Regional Support Center in Bratislava at the beginning of 2005, with 450 Roma families in 15 Albanian regions. This survey included 450 families of the non-Roma population that lived near the minority community. This created for the first time the prospect of analyzing and comparing directly, at a national level, the quantitative data of the Roma population with those of the majority population.

Investments: 3000 USD

Support the National Roma Strategy

UNDP is joining forces with other UN bodies including Unicef, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Resident Coordinator's Office and International Organization of Migration (IOM) for this pipeline project to support the National Roma Strategy. This joint UN initiative will establish a sustainable monitoring and progress reporting mechanism within the Roma Committee based at the Ministry of Labour and Equal Opportunities (MoLEO). More specifically, this project involves developing a sophisticated set of indicators and identifying targets to the main objectives of the National Roma Strategy; installing and delivering training on the use of DevInfo - a user-friendly software programme that manages data and presents it in visual graphs; as well as a publication of a progress report on the status of the Roma strategy highlighting recommendations on future steps of action,

4) UNDP Local Governance Programme Supporting the Greek Minority in Gjirokaster Region

During the period from 2002 to 2004 UNDP's Local Governance Programme has been supporting the Greek minority living in Dropulli i Poshtem Commune. The support has consisted in raising the capacities of the local staff of the commune, and improving infrastructure and governance of minorities in this area.

Eleven Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have been formed including the participation of the Greek minority. The organized communities together with the local government have supported 8 infrastructure projects with financial and in-kind contributions. The respective amounts are given in the table below. Projects done within the Greek minority community have included water supply system, systematization of torrents, as well as social and cultural centers.

Some more support has been given to the Greek minority women living in this area. They have been part of the Women Artisan Association that was formed in 2004. They have been supported, with trainings in managing their' embroidery businesses and at the same time even with some revolving grant funds to expand and improve their activities.

In addition to the Local Governance Programme there has been another project that has focused on the restoration and preservation of cultural heritage.

The project conducted a course of restorers for seven youth, It is worthy to mention that the youth are belonging' to the Roma and Egyptian ethnic groups, therefore such

a training has been even a tool for a better integration of this community in the region.

Investments:
UNDP Contribution = 17.373.436 Lek (173.734 USD)
Municipality Contribution = 4.840.959 Lek
Community Contribution = 3.417.391 Lek

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Matrix of UNICEF Child-Protection Supported Projects on Minorities in Albania and Counter-Trafficking

2005-2006

Project Description	Total Committed in LEKE (2005-2006)	Disbursed up to 30.06,2006	Planned to be disbursed up to 31.12.2006
<p>Title: CARE – Community based action to reduce children’s vulnerability and to empower marginalized groups</p> <p>Implementing partner: Children of the World Albania - Femijet e Botes dhe Shqiperisem, FBSH</p> <p>Description: The CARE project works to strengthen protection for and provide educational and social integration support to vulnerable children and families, primarily from Roma and Evgjit communities in the impoverished Tirana neighbourhood of Kinostudio. The project activities are conducted in the FBSH community centre, as well as in three neighbourhood schools and involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing educational support to children who have dropped out of school, or those at risk, through a combination of integrated and extra-support classrooms. Referring older children to vocational training courses, as needed. • Providing psychosocial support to children and families through home visits, one-on-one psychosocial counseling, and discussion groups for adolescents, young mothers and women. • Providing material support to particularly vulnerable families, including foodstuff, food supplies and medicines. • Providing social support through referral and/or accompaniment to services, including birth registration, medical care, legal support. • Mobilizing the community through the organization of community events and awareness raising activities. <p>From 2002 - 2006, FBSH successfully re-integrated 136 out-of-school children (mostly Roma and Evgjit) in the public school system. Over the past year, the</p>	15,075,760	10,575,760	4,500,000

<p>number of children participating in school support classes rose by 11% to 434 with high levels of interest and support by children, parents, teachers and school directors. More than 1000 adolescents participated in discussion groups held at the centre, in schools and in the community. An average of 100 persons each month use the drop-in psychosocial services of the centre, and 300 families benefit from monthly psychological, material, social and health care assistance. 50 unregistered children were identified, 21 of whom were registered, and 5 of whom are currently in process. 80 children were identified and contacted working on the streets of Tirana.</p>			
<p>Title: TOMKA – Coordination of Social and Scholastic Prevention, Protection and Reintegration Actions for At-Risk Children in their Community</p> <p>Implementing Partner: Help the Children - Ndhimë Për Fëmijët (NPF)</p> <p>Description: The TOMKA project works to ensure children’s right to education and prevent school drop out by providing educational and social support to out-of-school children and those at risk and their families, primarily from the socially excluded Roma and Evgjit communities. NPF runs activities in six cities in south central Albania, namely Korca, Elbasan, Berat, Cerrik, Kucova and Pogradec. The project activities are conducted in neighbourhood schools and in the communities themselves and involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing educational support to out-of-school children or those at risk through special extra-support classrooms. During the summer months, summer camp activities are organized • Providing psychosocial and material support to families of children through home visits, regular meetings with parents, and follow up of individual children. • Organizing community events to mobilize the community and raise their awareness about child rights. • Lobbying with the Ministry of Education to provide special provisions for especially vulnerable children. <p>From 2005-2006 NPF successfully saw 450 children at-risk, mostly Roma and Evgjit, integrated into and regularly attending school. The material and psychosocial wellbeing of these children and their families was improved through the provision of</p>	12,908,843	12,908,843	--

<p>material and psychosocial support, and regular follow up by social workers. 45 social teachers and 6 social animators worked to address the special needs of children at risk, and 24 school directors increased their capacity to assist the children in the realisation of their obligations concerning the education of children in their neighbourhoods.</p>			
<p>Title: ROZAFa – Preventing Child Abandonment and Promoting Family Reunification</p> <p>Implementing Partner: Help the Children - Ndhimë Për Fëmijët (NPF)</p> <p>Description: The ROZAFa projects works to prevent child abandonment and promote family reunification by providing psychosocial and material intervention and support to vulnerable children and families, the majority of which come from Roma and Evgjit communities. The project is centred in Korca and involves the following key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying children and families at risk, in residential care institutions and in the communities. • Providing psychosocial support through home visits and follow up of families. • Placement of children with extended and foster families if they cannot stay with biological families. • Providing support to family and child towards their reunification with the family. <p>Since 2004, ROZAFa project has successfully: identified 78 children at risk of abandonment (aged birth to 5 years) and provided their families provided with relevant psychosocial and material support; supported an additional 158 children (under the age of 15) from 67 families - out of which 54 come from Roma and Evgjit communities – through psychosocial, material and medical assistance; provided parents with job counseling and referral, some of who have found employment and are better able to financially support their families; Improved the living conditions of one impoverished squatter community through the installation of a drainage system and safe water system as a result of lobbying and collaboration with the municipality; provided families at risk are with ongoing assistance and referral including through accompaniment to pediatric and other medical visits, psychosocial</p>	<p>2,363,575</p>	<p>2,363,575</p>	<p>--</p>

support, monitoring of schooling, referral to family planning.			
<p>Title: TACT – Transnational Action Against Child Trafficking</p> <p>Implementing partner: Terre des Hommes</p> <p>Description: The TACT project works to prevent child trafficking and ensure those children who are trafficked are provided with appropriate reintegration and other support through a combination of awareness raising, social and material support, and referral. TACT has a presence in 16 regions throughout Albania and the majority of beneficiaries come from Roma and Evgjit communities, who are among the most socially excluded populations and at high risk of trafficking. TdH’s main interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness about trafficking with children and educators throughout the country. • Identifying and registering children at risk in a central database. • Referring at-risk cases to relevant authorities for follow up and support. • Providing social assistance through a combination of home visits, and material support, and ongoing long term follow up with children and families. • Raising awareness with decision makers and communities about child trafficking and related protection measures. <p>During the period 2003-2006, TACT has identified and assisted 1,200 children who are risk, victims or former victims of trafficking; accompanied more than 50 children returning to Albania; and reintegrated more than 600 children in school. Additionally, more than 36,000 children and 1,600 teachers and headmasters have benefited from widespread school information campaigns sensitizing children and educational personnel to the phenomenon of child trafficking. The project also invested in strengthening the child protection system by mobilizing municipal social workers with trainings, joint field visits and through anti-trafficking roundtables.</p>	7,068,800	2,063,100	5,005,700
Title: Social Services for Street Children in the city of Tirana,	745,700	608,647	137,053

<p>Implementing Partner: Child Protection Unit, Municipality of Tirana</p> <p>Description: The Social Service for Street Children project aims to increase protection for and reduce the number of children working on the streets of Tirana, the majority of whom come from Roma and Evgjit communities. The main project activities involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting an assessment of the situation of street children in Tirana. • Identifying and documenting street children in a central database. • Coordinating NGO and state response to children by chairing regular coordination meetings. • Compiling and publishing a resource directory on services for child protection and distributing it to relevant organizations for use as a referral tool. <p>The pilot project saw some initial results including a better sense of the situation of street children, based on a situation analysis involving interviews with 150 children living and working on the street. Community resources for child protection increased through the establishment of the Child Protection Unit, and local authorities and other stakeholders were more aware about what protection services are available for children. 500 copies of a resource directory for child protection services was compiled, published and distributed to professionals, who are better able to refer children and families to appropriate support services as a result.</p>			
<p>Title: Strengthening the Child Protection Component of the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking</p> <p>Implementing partner: National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking, State Social Services</p> <p>Description: The project aims to ensure the rights of children affected by trafficking are promoted and protected by strengthening the child protection component of the National Reception Centre. The main project activities involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing standard intake and case management procedures for children and minors in line with the CRC and other international standards. • Building the capacity of staff and relevant professionals to provide age-appropriate assistance and support to children and minors in line with the best 	1,630,000	1,630,000	--

<p>interests of the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the rehabilitation and integration of children and minors at the Reception Centre through support to recreation activities. • Ensuring children have appropriate protection and support after they leave the Centre (in their homes or in out-of-home care) by conducting a risk assessment prior to their return home, accompanying them home and providing periodic follow-up support to them and their families after they leave the centre, in partnership with local NGOs. <p>The project successfully contributed to improving the quality of care for children housed in the Reception Centre – including minor victims of trafficking, children at risk of being trafficked, and children of victims of trafficking. Over 40 social workers, psychologists and staff of three shelters for victims of trafficking throughout Albania participated in a series of training sessions on child protection, child rights and counseling skills. Child friendly spaces were created in the Reception Centre, including a toy room and outdoor playground. In 2005, 19 minors were assisted at the centre (four aged up to 7 years, eight aged 7-12, and seven female minors 13-18), 7 minors returned to their families, and 3 were referred to longer term care or reintegration centres. Follow up support in the form of home visits by social workers and counseling was provided to 10 minors after leaving the centre. Minors as well as adult victims of trafficking have participated in a series of recreation and leisure activities which contributed to reducing their stress levels and to their longer term reintegration.</p>			
<p>Title: ONACT - Operational Network Against Child Trafficking</p> <p>Implementing Partner: All Together Against Child Trafficking (Se Bashku Kunder Trafikimit te Femijeve - BKTF)</p> <p>Description: The ONACT project aims to strengthen BKTF's capacity to reduce the vulnerability of children in Albania to trafficking by promoting effective and coordinated services, networking and research on trafficking of children. Project activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and coordination among members to ensure the availability of comprehensive services. 	9,924,000	9,924,000	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection and dissemination to ensure comprehensive and up-to-date information about the situation and the response mechanisms in place. • Advocacy with relevant state agencies and international and intergovernmental organizations in Albania and abroad to promote the best interests of the child. <p>The ONACT project has seen key positive results including incorporation of child protection issues in national level policy including the National Plan of Action to Combat Child Trafficking, National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking, Bilateral Agreement on the return of unaccompanied minors between Greece and Albania, Government Order for the establishment of a National Responsible Authority and the establishment of Regional Committees on Anti-Trafficking. The network has facilitated the joint case management and referral of twenty cases of trafficked children and those at risk. Regular coordination meetings and working groups on specific topics have served to facilitate information sharing and coordination among the thirteen member NGOs and strengthen their respective interventions. Child Trafficking has been recognized as a key issue on the national agenda, and child protection issues are incorporated in relevant policy frameworks as a result of ongoing advocacy and lobbying by the coalition.</p>			
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<u>Matrix of UNICEF Child-Protection Supported Projects on Minorities in Albania and Counter-Trafficking</u> <u>2005-2006</u>			
Project Description	Total Committed in LEKE (2005-2006)	Disbursed up to 30.06,2006	Planned to be disbursed up to 31.12.2006
<p><u>Title:</u> Birth registration activities</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Implementing</u></p> <p><u>partner:</u> Tirana Legal Aid Society, TLAS</p>	4,000,000	3,000,000	1,000,000

<p>Goal of the project</p> <p>The goal of the project is to improve access to civil rights and services for disadvantaged children in areas defined, contributing to the prevention of trafficking and their long-term integration.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Provide legal advice and other legal services for Roma and other vulnerable children with focus to registration issues and those related, through legal aid services in office & mobile conditions services in the communities.</i> b) <i>Assist in the integration of potential victims of trafficking through the implementation of paralegal services for the registration of children in schools, kindergartens that shall be executed before and after the registration procedures are finished.</i> c) <i>Raise the awareness of Roma and non Roma community members respectively through street law activities and TLAS law publications on the necessity of legal rights in general with the focus on the registration of children.</i> d) <i>Raise the awareness of employees working in civil offices units and members of grassroots associations in the communities related through awareness workshops on the necessity of implementation of Civil Status new draft of legislation.</i> <p>Description: The birth registration of Roma children and other non Roma vulnerable children remain still a big problem in different rural areas of Tirana district as well as in other areas of the country. The implementing partner of the project, TLAS, worked on a series of birth registration cases during 2005 and 2006 and more than 432 Court decisions for unregistered children are finalized as a result</p> <p>-Activities of the project have been :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing birth registration through legal aid and court proceedings of 			
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<p>difficult cases of the vulnerable children (Roma and non-Roma).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Mobile Legal Aid Service for the focused communities • Registration in schools and kindergartens of children. • Providing street law activities in the focused areas • Lobbying and advocacy for legislative changes on Birth Registration and contacted working on the streets of Tirana. 			
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ON THE REPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE ROMA MINORITY IN ALBANIA

The Albanian government approved in 2003 the National Strategy “For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority”¹. This is a long-term strategy, which includes an implementing period of around 15 years and foresees in a detailed way taking of a series of measures covering all fields of life.

The approval of the National Strategy for the Romas is seen as a positive step by all actors and by the Roma minority itself. The strategy has determined the main objectives for the development and integration of the Roma minority into the society, the steps that should be taken, and the institutions that should be involved in their implementation, the date and the necessary budget for the practical implementation of these practices. The involvement of the Roma minority in the drafting of the strategy had a great importance in two ways:

- *First*, the Roma minority felt involved and evaluated.
- *Second*, it revealed that the cooperation of these two actors: State – minority is necessary to achieve effective results in the favour of both parties.

Considering the fact that more than two years have passed since the strategy was approved, an initiative of monitoring its implementation was undertaken by Soros Foundation. As a result of a one – year work a report was prepared, where all the realized achievements in its framework, the measures taken by the State institutions for the implementation of the main objectives as well as the identification of the main problems and gaps which have a negative impact in the missed implementation of the objectives decided in this strategy are analysed².

Another purpose of this report is to raise the awareness of the Roma opinion in general and of the organisations that represent this minority in particular on

¹ Decision of the Council of the Ministers No. 633, dated September 18th, 2003.

² Work done by a group of experts from the SOROS Foundation, the Helsinki Committee and the Albanian Centre for Children’s Rights.

the necessity of cooperation with the State institutions on the aiming to their integration into the society.

The report has as a monitoring target the implementation of the National Strategy “For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority” in the five main districts of Albania, where this minority has the great concentration and expansion, respectively in Tirana, Fier, Korça, Elbasan and Shkodra.

This report aims to present some data regarding:

- The implementation of National Strategy “For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority” in the five main fields where this strategy is based, respectively as follows:
 - Education;
 - Cultural and familiar heritage;
 - Economy, employment, poverty reduction and social protection;
 - Health and infrastructure;
 - Public Order, justice and civil administration field.
- The steps taken by the State structures for the implementation of the strategy in this fields;
- The corresponding recommendations on the improvements that should be done for the full implementation of this strategy.

The drafting of the report is based on a certain methodology. Some data on its implementation were collected in certain forms such as:

- Interviews with representatives of the State institutions in Tirana;
- Interviews with representatives of the local power institutions in four districts, respectively Fier, Korça, Shkodra and Elbasan³;
- Interviews and contacts with representatives of some Roma organizations in Tirana and in the districts which were object of study;

³ These interviews were carried out through the assistance of the Albanian Helsinki Committee correspondents in these districts.

- The participation in many activities, round tables, conferences regarding the development and integration of Roma minority in Albania;
- Contacts with representatives of non – Roma organisations and associations which work with the Roma minority;
- Revision of the National Strategy “For the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority”;
- Revision of the corresponding legal framework in certain fields;
- The experience of the civil society experts who are involved in this expertise in the field of preserving the Roma minority’s rights, publications, alternative reports, involvement in some surveys, national and international round tables and conferences, etc.

According to the experts’ opinions, the implementation of this strategy in practice has faced some difficulties. Despite of the existence of a full legal framework and the ratification of the National Strategy, the Roma minority is still in very miserable economic conditions.

Taking into consideration the methodology used for the monitoring of the strategy, it came as a conclusion that its implementation has progressed in slow steps and many of the decided objectives and planned activities have not been achieved or have not found any implementation.

The general opinion of the representatives of the Roma organisations is that the state organisms’ help and contribution regarding the integration of this minority into the society and their inclusion in the public life has not been so efficient. They say that the State has not done enough towards improving their living conditions.

In addition to the lack of a serious engagement of the State institutions in the implementation of the National Strategy, another source of the above mentioned difficulties, according to their opinion, is the lack of inclusion of this minority in the strategy implementation process. Representatives of Roma minority think that this factor is strongly connected to the efficient

implementation of the Strategy, considering the fact that its direct beneficiary is the minority itself⁴.

Other factors that make difficult the efficient implementation of the National Strategy of the Roma minority are:

- The lack of an efficient coordination and cooperation between the State institutions themselves for the exchanging of the information according to the realised and unrealised measures;
- The lack of necessary capacities in the Roma organisations;
- The lack of capacities of structures responsible for the monitoring of the Strategy.

It is necessary to develop the coordinating and leading role of the Albanian State and its corresponding structures with the local power units, Roma organisations and other civil society stakeholders; as well as to institutionalise the cooperation and the exchange of information between all the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the strategy. This would relief the coordination of the measures undertaken by the State but also would ensure a greater responsibility and a more serious engagement of the State institutions, especially at the local level.

The Local Power organisms should have more responsibility and engagement in the realisation of the priority measures decided in the National Strategy for the Roma minority, as well as a better coordination with the central organs.

The request for the involvement of the Roma minority in the implementing process of their Strategy, as its direct beneficiary, requires the growth of the capacities of this minority's representative organisations in order to serve as partners with equal rights, next to the state institutions. The Strategy

⁴ Hence, part of the involvement of the Roma minority in the processes of implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy would also be the participation of a representative from this minority in the National Strategy Monitoring Section – division on the Roma minority, at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. This is one of the main proposals that the Roma minority has done to the government in the framework of cooperation with the State institutions for the implementation of the National Strategy.

Monitoring sector needs to increase its professional capacities, ensuring the inclusion of the Roma minority in its composition⁵.

Though this, it is noteworthy to mention that the central and local power institutions have taken measures, even though modest ones, for the improvement of the Roma minority's living conditions. Such is the case of the Elbasan town where the local power organisms (municipality) have undertaken a range of measures for the improvement of infrastructure around the area where this minority lives, such as paving the main street, cleaning the river that passes close to the quarter as well as measures for broadening the roads and for putting rubbish bins. The local power organisms have helped to ensure a better communication of the Roma minority with the local media. The local power organisms have taken concrete measures to improve the living conditions of this minority also in Korça town.

⁵ These data were presented upon the participation in the round table on "The development and integration of the Roma community, priority of the government", organized by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on February 9th, 2006 in Mondial Hotel.

DIFFERENT PROJECTS OF SOROS FOUNDATION FOR MINORITIES

During the period 2000 – 2004

MINORITIES – year 2000

Human Development Promotion Centre	Monitoring and evaluation of projects on minorities	\$ 7,170
Social and Economic Studies' Centre	Deepening of dialogue and cooperation between the ethnic communities	\$ 8,480
ARB Association	Inter religious understanding and cooperation in the north	\$ 8,500
“Audelo” Association	The community peace	\$ 8,500
Amaro – Dives	Centre for training, employment and coexistence with the minorities	\$ 8,500
“Egnatia” Association	Together for a better life	\$ 6,990
Sociology Institute of Saranda	Coexistence of the Albanian population with the Greek minority	\$ 8,300

MINORITIES – 2001

Association “The Specialists of Education”	Minorities in the South-western part of Albania, achievements, solutions and problems	\$ 6,000
Association “The voice of children is calling us”	Each step of coexistence today, a communication bridge tomorrow	\$ 5,565
Association “Protect the woman’s rights”, Përmet	The education and integration of youth in the Çarshova commune	\$ 5,500
Association “Activists of Human Rights”, Saranda	Encouragement of the relations between the Albanian population and the Greek minority in Lefterako, Varfaj and Kakadhiq villages	\$ 4,000

Public Health, Elbasan	“Talking to each other”	\$ 4,210
Association “The south town”, Gjirokastra	The growth of media role in the strengthening of interethnic relations	\$ 4,489
ARB Journalists’ Association, Shkodra	Youth, religion and tolerance	\$ 5,200
Social Integration Centre, Tirana	The building up and consolidation of binding bridges between Roma, Egyptian and Albanian communities in the “Bajram Curri” high school and surroundings	\$ 4,790
Youth Council, Gjirokastra	Youth for the future	\$ 6,909
Woman’s Forum, Elbasan	The integration of Roma and Egyptian women into the other part of the community	\$ 4,039
HDPC	Local implementing partner for the project “Improvements of interethnic relations in South-eastern Europe”	\$ 30,500
“Amaro – Drom” community	8 th of April – International day of Romas	462,200 leks
Association “Free initiative and opinion”	Organisation of common activities between Roma and non Roma children – a factor for their integration into the society	\$ 5,284
Democrat Union of Albanian Romas	Folk, a coexistence and good-understanding mutual factor between minorities	\$ 2,138

MINORITIES – 2003

Human Development Promotion Centre	Building of capacities, establishment of national network, monitoring and evaluating of projects of the “Improvement of interethnic relations in South-eastern Europe” programme.	53,520.00
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The civil society programme	A community centre for Roma youth and children, Elbasan	8,000.00
Youth Council, Gjirokastra	Coffee video project – activities with ethnic minorities.	7,980.00
Kristi Popa	Collection of minorities’ folk cultures	7,891.00
“Professional Journalists” regional Association	The establishment of a regional network of journalists to help in the improvement of interethnic relations in the southern and south-eastern part of Albania.	6,840.00
The civil society programme	Competition on “Literature with topics from the Romas’ daily life”	6,000.00
The “Gjirokastra” Association	Activities in the high schools: Together towards integration.	5,836.00
Woman in integration	Awareness increase on the need to soften the religious problems in the Shkodra region	5,200.00
Association of orphan children and youth, Korça	The integration of the Albanian, Roma and Egyptian children and youth in the community life through joint teaching, education and entertainment.	5,200.00
The youth centre, Saranda	The support for the stimulation of the minorities’ civil action, the regional ethnic groups, and the exercise of their rights according to the international charters.	5,000.00
“Disutni Albania”	The integration of the Romas through their own values.	4,866.00
The Macedonian women’ organisation	Macedonians, Vlachs and Albanians together.	4,800.00
“Jonian” professional journalists’ association.	The preservation and education of interethnic balance in the boundary areas’ media	4,700.00
Astrit Bastriu	The rebirth of Roma music and the development of Roma folk in Albania	4,552.00

The social – cultural Association “The rebirth of Apolonia”	Cultural activities for the Romas	4,500.00
“Stinët” association	A new spirit for a new generation – promotion of minorities’ culture	14,110.00
Football Club “The Romas”	Small competitions	3,982.00
Partners Albania	The improvement of interethnic relations through the natives and the Roma groups of population in the Durres region	3,968.00
ERA	The Roma and Egyptian youth integration through cultural exchange and cooperation	3,900.00
“Rebirth of Voskopoja” Association	Vlachs and Albanians: Two communities, two traditions, a life in full unity and harmony within a common territory.	3,800.00
“Jobless north-eastern woman” Association	Well-understanding, tolerance, cooperation and mutual respect between people, communities and nationalities, a decisive factor for a free society	3,800.00
“Gjirokastra” association	Together in the consolidation of the interethnic and inter religious coexistence	3,600.00
“Aremenji di Albania” Association (Vlachs of Albania)	The improvement of interethnic relations through activities in art and literature	3,488.00
“Amaro Karvan” foundation	The union of Romas’ organisations for community development	1,191.00
Pëllumb Furtuna	Participation in a meeting on the Romas’ in Poland	825.00
Gurali Mejdani	Participation in the parliamentary session of the Romas’ international Union, Hungary	620.00

➤ **Minorities' rights in practice (October 2004 – October 2006)**

The Human Development Promotion Centre project aims to ensure an equal participation of the minorities in the policies' development, as an inseparable part of our country's efforts for the integration into the European Union. The more expected specific results are: legal and regulator framework improved and implemented in practice, more qualified capacities in the institutions at a level of communes and municipalities, more consolidated capacities in the civil society operating in the field of minorities' rights, better cooperation practices between NGOs and the power at different levels, more intensive public debate and a greater awareness regarding the issues of minorities in Albania.