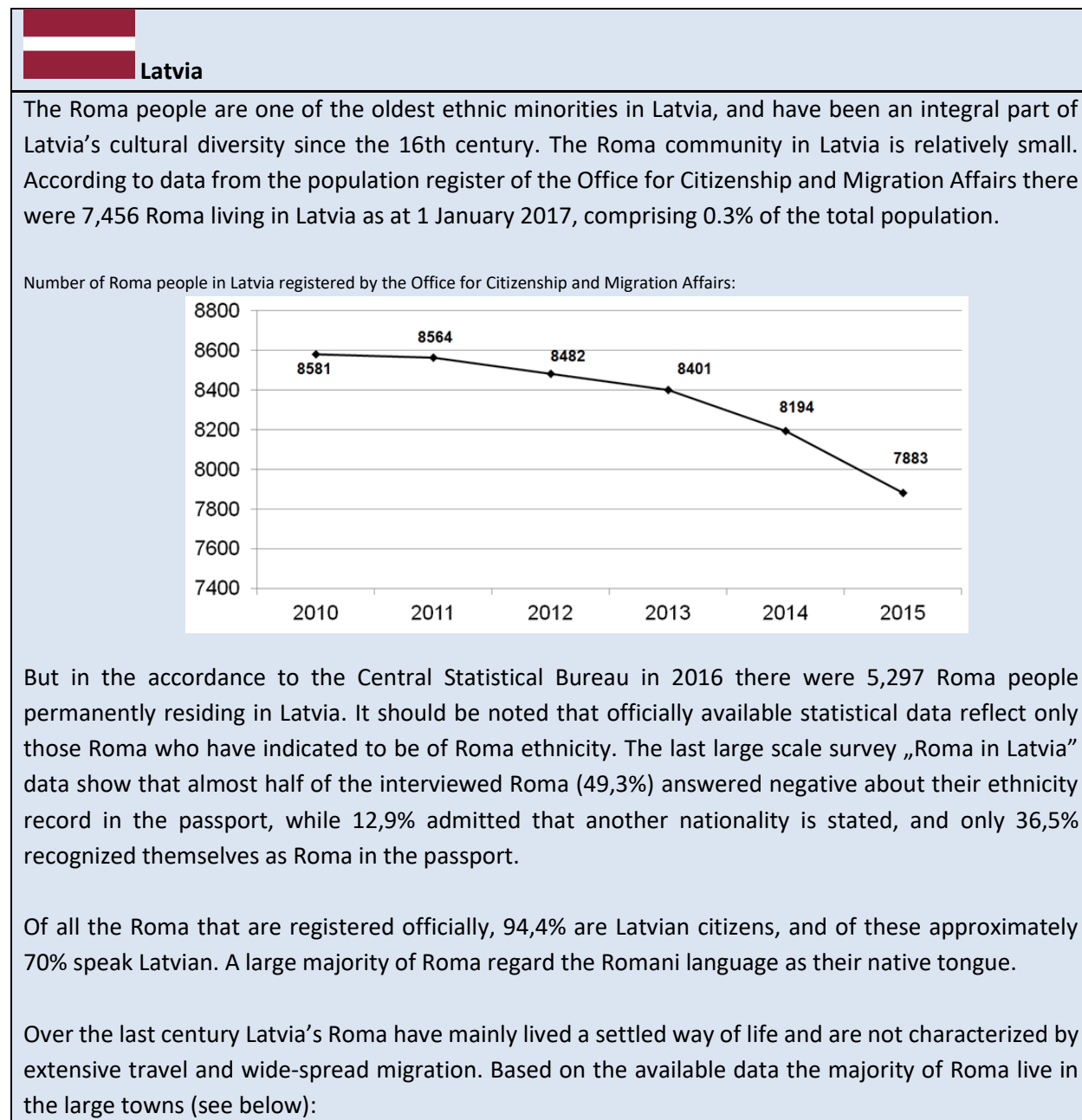
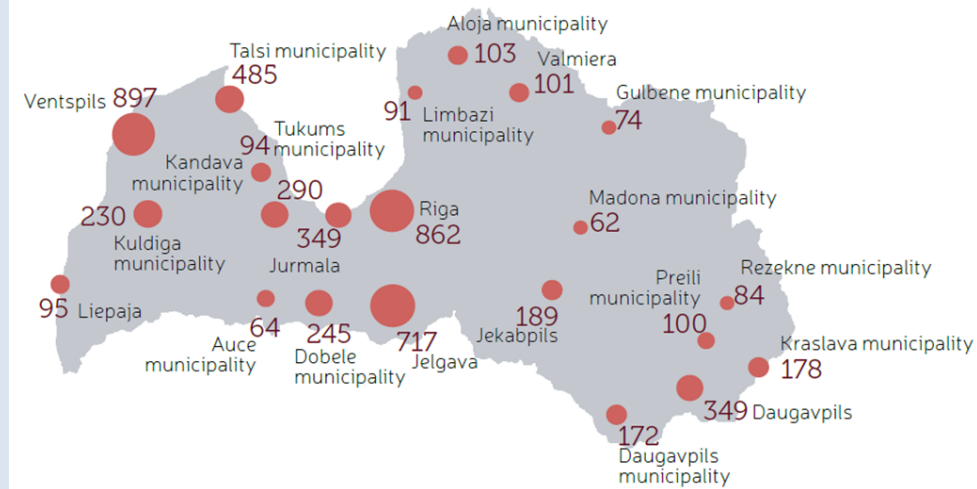


Appendix 4

Size, composition, language, lifestyle and situation of the groups in question in participating countries





In Latvia there is no so-called ghettoisation of the Roma community or segregation at the regional or local level; the Roma have formed a territorially heterogeneous group that communicates actively with the local community. Two different groups of Roma have lived in Latvia since ancient times: the Latvian Roma (*Lofitke Roma*) and the Russian Roma (*Xaladytka Roma*), whose differences manifest themselves territorially, linguistically, culturally and in their traditional way of life. In everyday communication most (87,5%) of the Roma families use the Romanes (rest: Latvian and Russian).

In 2011 Latvian state has developed a set of national Roma integration policy measures¹ (hereinafter – measures), which have been included in the National identity, civil society and integration policy guidelines 2012 - 2018. Current measures of Roma integration policy are reflected in the implementation plan of the National identity, civil society and integration policy guidelines for the period up to 2016.

¹ Available here http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_latvia_strategy_en.pdf.

to plan future policy measures. Since the Council was established in 2012, 6 Roma representatives, who are involved in the Council, had an active participation and made many proposals and suggestions to improve Roma integration policy at national level.

The Network of regional experts on Roma integration issues (thereafter – the Network) is set in October 2014 by The Ministry of Culture. The main aim of the Network is to foster regular exchange of best practices, experience and sharing information, providing consultations and informative support to the local government in order to use the programs of national and EU structure funds effectively as well as to develop cooperation between experts of local governments, representatives of Roma communities and the Ministry of Culture in order to make the implementation and designing of the Roma integration policy measures more effective.

Roma representatives are members also of such governmental consultative bodies: The Minorities Consulting Council of the President of the Republic of Latvia, The Consulting Council in Ethnic Minority Education Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Science, The Consultative Council of National minorities of the Ministry of Culture. As well representatives of Roma community are the members of several committees of municipalities at local level (Jelgava, Valmiera, Daugavpils).

The survey “Roma in Latvia” is conducted in 2015 aimed at the monitoring the situation of Roma in Latvia in the key areas - access to education, employment, healthcare and housing, identifying best practises and providing better elaboration and implementation of Roma inclusion policy in Latvia.² The study reveals that the Roma are to be considered a population group of risk-at-poverty. A considerable part of Roma households experience financial scarcity – the monthly income of more than one third (35,6%) of the interviewed does not exceed EUR 60 per household member; and less than one third (9,4%) has accruals of over €250 for covering unplanned expenses (e.g. medicine, operations); the status of low income or needy people is officially granted to more than half (53,7%) of the interviewed.

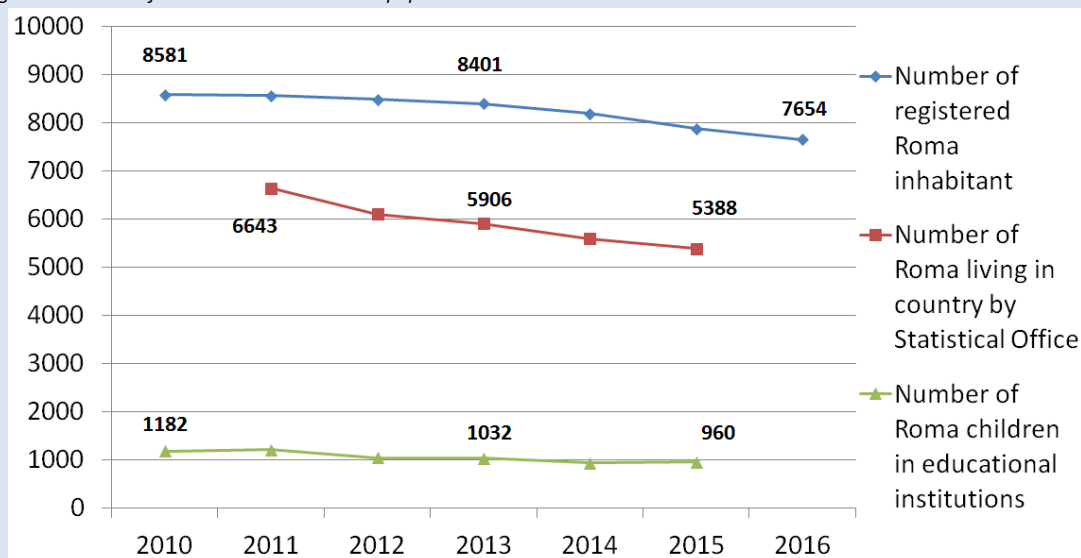
In general the Roma are informed where to seek assistance in everyday life situations related to education, employment, health care and housing. They are well-aware concerning everyday life situations, but there is comparatively low awareness about activities the implementation of which requires self-initiative or commitment.

Education as priority area of Roma integration

Results education level of almost half of the Roma (48,8%) does not meet the Ministry of Education and Science requirement of compulsory primary education. Due to this reason education is the national priority of Roma integration policy. The policy is focused on providing early-education, primary and secondary education to Roma and to motivate Roma parents to send their children in the school and to follow their achievement in the process of education.

² The survey “Roma in Latvia” is available in English https://issuu.com/sif2015/docs/en_research_roma_in_latvia;
http://oldweb.km.lv/lv/doc/nozaru/integracija/Romi/romi_latvija_petijums_ENG.pdf

Figure 1. Number of Roma in Latvia and Roma pupils in mainstream educational institutions



Source: The Ministry of Culture, 2016

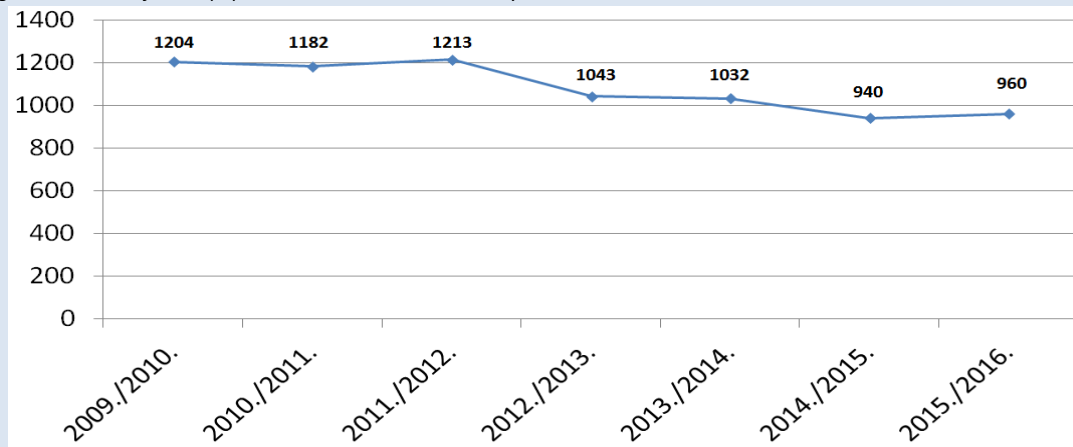
Though the situation of Roma education has slightly improved during the last ten year period, the comparatively low education level among Roma population still one of the basic problems for Roma social economic integration in Latvian society – 8,9% of the interviewed Roma have never attended school, 39,9% left primary school at different stages (among them almost one third (31,3%) before reaching form 7), one third (34%) have primary education, while only 17,2% have higher than primary education.

According to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science³ the number of educational institutions, where Roma pupils are learning, has risen (20% of the total number of educational institutions; in 2014 there were 16%). Significantly reduced the number of Roma students who had not obtained the compulsory primary education - 2015/2016 year 7.5% of the total number of Roma pupils had not obtained the compulsory primary education; in 2014 there were 15%. At the moment only 4 Roma teacher assistants worked in general education institutions. 21,5% of the total number of Roma students are provided with additional training measures (in 2014 - 26,4%). Number of Roma pupils in education and general secondary education institutions remains the same as that in previous years (3.6% of the total number of Roma pupils in 2015/2016).

³ Ministry of Education and Science in Latvia and other institutions are constantly monitoring achievements of Roma students, thriving towards the higher achievements among them. With accordance to the student's educational needs and issues involving Roma families, there has been a focus on training assistant teachers with Roma background, as well as on publishing manuals targeted towards Roma children's educators. In collaboration with the municipality Education boards and education institutions was conducted in Roma pupil monitoring by collecting data on the number of Roma pupils and their achievements in 2016/2017: Roma pupils who acquire general education programs, including pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational education programs; Roma pupils who haven't got the document for compulsory primary education; Roma pupils who have received supporting measures to improve academic achievement. As well as data on Roma teacher assistants who work in general educational institutions.

Ministry of Education and Science monitoring data show that 15,9% of Roma children are early school leavers and 250 children at school are in forms which are not appropriate to their age. Most of early school leavers are of the age 13-14 years when Roma adolescents choose to start a family and leave school.

Figure 2. Number of Roma pupils in mainstream educational system



Source: The Ministry of Education and Science, 2016

Above mentioned **study** reveals the positive role of Roma teacher-assistants (as well as Roma mediators) especially in the pre-school and primary school period.

The most significant achievement in last three years is the project “Integration incubator to support Roma children and youth” where mediators with Roma background are trained and employed in the resource centres for Roma children and their parents. The project is implemented by the NGO “Center for Education Initiatives” in cooperation with municipalities of Daugavpils City, Jelgava city, Valmiera city, Valdermarpils city and Ventspils city. There are 4 Resource centres established for Roma children and young people in October 2014, where Roma children can get support and improve their communication and civic skills. The main actors of the Resource centres are Roma mediators which promote the bridge and link between Roma community and local government institutions (especially educational institutions). There are 5 Roma mediators worked in these centres.

Labour market

The Roma people do not have equal opportunities to integrate into the labour market due to their low-level education, which practically not only excludes more than two thirds of Latvian Roma from the labour market but also limits their access to the employment promotion support measures as only those unemployed persons qualify for the professional development courses and courses for developing skills offered by the SEA who have completed the seventh grade education programme.

32,4% of economically active Roma declared they were employed, which means that in comparison with 2003 when according to researchers only 10% were employed, the situation has improved. But the Roma have limited opportunities to be employed – the survey results show that in 40,5%

households there is no legally working family member and the family mainly lives on social benefits and other financial aid.

Figure 3. Statistical portrait of unemployed Roma (31.12.2016.)

Range by specific characteristics		% of unemployed Roma
Unemployment duration	Less than 12 months	56.5
	1-3 years	21.4
	3 years and longer	22.1
Education level	Tertiary education	0.4
	General secondary and specialized secondary	10.8
	Lower than Elementary school and elementary school (including primary school) (1–9)	88.0
Age	Not specified	0.7
	15-24	10.8
	25-39	32.5
	40-54	38.2
	55 and older	18.4
Gender	Male	41.2
	Female	58.8

Source: State Employment Agency, 2016.

Health

Regarding to the Roma health, the results of the survey shows that 98,2% of the surveyed Roma have their own family doctor and that during the last year, 87,8% of respondents have visited their family doctor in connection with their health problems or those of their children (almost half of them or 47,5% have done it in the last month).

Housing

In accordance to the outcomes of the study, average of 75%-80 % of Roma families that live in Latvia encounter difficulties in the availability of housing and its quality provision. Low and irregular employment and insufficient income along with the absence of savings reduce Roma possibilities not only to rent or acquire housing but also cause difficulties in the maintenance of housing and deny them the possibility to enjoy the needed and desired living conditions in the chosen housing.

Some municipalities with significant number of Roma population provide support for social housing for socially disadvantaged Roma families. Roma make an active use of the assistance the municipalities and NGOs provide in housing area. The most frequently used possibility is to receive from the municipality an housing benefit – in the last three years more than half of the surveyed persons (53,7%) have received it.

	Estonia
<p>According to Estonian Population Register the number of Roma living in Estonia as of 1 January 2018 was 649, constituting 0,05% of Estonian population. The share of Roma population has remained the same over the years, although the number of Roma has slightly increased, most new arrivals came from Latvia. 59% are born in Estonia, 28% in Latvia, 10% in Russian Federation and 3% in other countries.</p>	
<p>Estonian Roma are documented and settled. Approximately one-third of Roma population (209) lives in Valga, in a small South-Estonian border city. 70 live in Tallinn, 68 in Tartu, 49 in Pärnu, 46 in Narva and 36 in Kohtla-Järve. In other municipalities the number of Roma inhabitants remains under 30 and is mostly limited to a few people. There are no Roma ghettos nor segregated areas, although many Roma live in less favourable neighborhoods.</p>	
<p>Roma live in Estonia permanently since 17th century, the majority arrived through Sweden and Finland (Lajenge Roma). In 1841 the Roma were settled to Laiuse Parish and their traveling was restricted. According to census in 1934, the number of Roma lived in Estonia was 776. During the Nazi occupation in 1941-1943, the majority of Estonian Roma were executed, only up to 10% survived.</p>	
<p>The Roma living in Estonia now came after World War II from Latvia and Russia. Thus, the dialects spoken in Estonia today are Lotfitka (Latvian) and Xaladytka (Russian) Romani dialects. By self-determination there is a third group of Roma, Laloritka Roma (Estonian Roma). Both, Lotfitka and Laloritka Roma migrated from Latvia and speak Lotfitka dialect, which is most common Romani dialect in Estonia. At present there is no speakers of Lajenge dialect.</p>	
<p>52% of the Estonian Roma are women and 48% men. 40% are Estonian citizens, 37% Latvian citizens, 14% Russian citizens, 8% people with undetermined citizenship (former citizens of Soviet Union) and 1% citizens of other countries. Mother language of 66% of the Estonian Roma is Romani language, 16% Russian, 10% Estonian, 1,5% Latvian, 1% other languages and 6% did not answer the question.</p>	
<p>The average age of Roma mother giving first birth was 21,8 (the average in Estonia is 30,2).</p>	
<p>Education</p> <p>According to the Population register (2018), the level of education of Estonian Roma was following: without elementary education - 40 persons (6%), elementary education - 155 persons (24%), basic education - 204 persons (31%), secondary education - 74 persons (11%), vocational education - 16 persons (2%), higher education - 6 persons (1%), unknown/not answered - 154 persons (25%).</p> <p>According to the Estonian Education Information System, during the schoolyear 2017/18, 55 Roma pupils studied in comprehensive schools. 15 pupils studied according to individual curriculum plan. 91% study according to the normal (i.e. not simplified) national curriculum. 22 pupils learned at first degree</p>	

(grades 1-3), 23 at second degree (grades 4-6) and 10 at third school degree (grades 7-9). The number of schools where Roma pupils studied in 2017/18 was 18.

According to the Basic and Upper Secondary Schools Act, a student with special educational needs in Estonia means a student whose talent, specific learning difficulties, health status, disability, behavioural and emotional disorders, longer-term absence from studies or insufficient proficiency in the language of instruction of a school brings about the need to make changes or adjustments in the subject matter, process, duration, workload or environment of study (e.g. teaching materials, school rooms, language of communication, including a sign language or other alternative means of communication, support staff, teachers who have received special training) or in the expected learning outcomes or in the work plan drawn up by a teacher for working with a class.

No one can be put to special school without a recommendation of the counselling committee and the approval of his/her parent. In Estonia, the majority of the students with special educational needs study in an ordinary class of their school of residence.

In 2018, the Ministry of Culture conducted a web survey among teachers working with Roma pupils. The biggest challenge is fulfillment of school attendance only episodically and high school dropout at third school degree. Study counselling for pupils with different cultural background, wider participation in pre-school education and application of individual curriculum in comprehensive schools are the educational measures on which Estonia focuses. Roma school mediators are not employed in Estonia. As mediating has proven to be a relatively effective integration measure, Estonia has taken steps to ascertain and train young Roma for future application as Roma mediators.

Employment

As it is hard to find any work without secondary education in Estonia, the **employment rate** of Roma is extremely low, only 72 persons work. The number of Roma at working age (15-74) is 540. There are no specific employment measures provided on the basis of ethnic origin. All public employment services are provided to the unemployed on an individual basis, based on one's needs, abilities and objectives. That means that if unemployed, a Roma receives employment and labour market services (there are around 50 different services available) on equal grounds with others.

Health care

An insured person is a permanent resident of Estonia or a person living in Estonia by virtue of a temporary residence permit or by the right of permanent residence, who pays the social tax for himself/herself or for whom the payer of social tax is required to pay social tax. Health insurance payments are made by the majority of the working age population, and from the social tax payable from the gross salary of a working person the treatment services also to the population groups in society who currently are not making insurance payments are compensated for. This group includes children, seniors and mothers raising small children at home, also the unemployed and pregnant women. All the medically insured people in Estonia are entitled to the same quality health care, regardless of whether or not they pay the health insurance tax. All persons staying in Estonia, whether legally or illegally, are ensured free emergency care.

Since 2000, the implementation of integration policy is based on the national integration strategy that is carried out through implementation plans describing activities necessary for the achievement of strategic objectives. The strategic objectives that have been established in the integration plan and in educational, cultural and social, as well as sectoral development plans focus on supporting the participation of people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in society, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity. Estonia has adopted three and carried out two national integration strategies: „Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007“ and „Estonian Integration Plan 2008-2013“. At the end of 2014, the Government adopted the current strategy, „Integrating Estonia 2020“. The Integration Strategy is implemented to include all the ethnic groups in the society; there are no separate strategies for including specific ethnic groups, although the strategy "Integrating Estonia 2020" notes: "In terms of linguistic-cultural communities, special attention should be paid to Roma, whose integration with society should be supported. Compared to other European Union Member States, the Estonian Roma community is rather small and this brings difficulties when considering them as a separate target group in integration policies. However, the Roma community still needs additional attention in the spheres of education, employment and social affairs."

According to the Strategy, a successful integration process mainly takes effect based on free choice and motivation, supported by the national and community-based institutional framework, in which, in addition to public sector organisations, organisations of the private sector and civil society are also included. The integration strategy "Integrating Estonia 2020" focuses on:

1. Supporting the improvement of **Estonian language** skills among people with different linguistic background.
2. Supporting the acquisition of **Estonian citizenship**.
3. Increase of mutual tolerance and **state identity** (sense of belonging to Estonia and Estonian people).
4. Supporting **intercultural contacts** between the members of society of different ethnic background and participation in civil society organisations.
5. Supporting the **awareness** of a common information space and of cultural diversity through media activities.
6. Promotion of ethnic **equal treatment in work collectives**. Supporting public and private sector organisations with a multilingual staff and informing people with a native language different from Estonian on career opportunities in the public sector.
7. Supporting the **native language and culture of ethnic minorities**. Funding for national minorities' Sunday schools and activities of cultural societies representing different ethnic nationalities, including training leaders and teachers of Sunday schools as well as supporting projects.
8. Developing support services and adaptation training targeted at **new arrivals**.

More information about the history and culture of the Estonian Roma http://romafacts.unigraz.at/view_pdf.php?t=culture&s=c_3_7&l=en



Finland

Legal status: Recognized as a traditional ethnic minority and Finnish citizens with full minority rights.

Number:

The Finnish Roma (kale) are a traditional minority in Finland and have no official identification other than that of being Finnish citizens. Finnish Roma are not registered separately by ethnic origin (Finnish legislation actually forbids this). An estimate of the size of Roma population (app. 10 000) is mainly based on Roma self-identification and to the estimates of the project workers and Roma mediators in different municipalities and regions. Finnish Roma identify strongly as Finns and wish to be treated as so with equal rights and obligations (such as electoral – voting rights, freedom of association, syndicalism, expression, etc.). The Finnish Constitution secures the basic rights and cultural minority rights of the Roma. According to the most recent estimates one third of the Finnish Roma population (app. 3000-4000 people) lives in the capital area, in the municipalities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa.

Roma population in Finland is not entirely homogeneous as there is a growing number of immigrant Roma groups from Romania and Bulgaria especially in the Southern Finland. Estimates of the amount of these new Roma varies between 300 and 500 people. However, they are predominantly families with children so the number of immigrant Roma is steadily growing in Finland. Some of these Roma are temporary migrants, seeking work opportunities in Finland and then returning back to their home countries. All of the Roma temporarily in the country, without citizenship or residence permit are outside welfare state's financial support system and state's education and employment programmes. Only emergency aid and health care of these Roma is been secured.

Housing and living conditions:

All Roma in Finland lead sedentarized lives. Roma continue to live in more or less the same localities that they lived in the past. There is no categorical segregation of Roma in housing which means that all Roma in Finland live in integrated housing alongside with their non-Roma neighbours of different social ranks. There are no segregated or sub-standard living areas for Roma in Finland. However, most of the unemployed Roma live in rental flats and especially in the capital area, in poorer neighbourhoods.

Education and employment:

Roma have been recognised by the Finnish state as one of the socially vulnerable groups. Although Finnish education system is fully inclusive and integrated Finnish Roma and migrant EU-Roma are still subject to multiple forms of social exclusion. The Roma communities face inequalities such as lack of support systems for vocational education tailored to their needs and problems with access to the labour market along with the existence of stereotypes and prejudices that lead to discrimination. Availability of special educational and employment supporting measures and the support provided by Roma mediators depends greatly on the place of residence. Some cities in Finland have really invested on

different support systems and equality work on Roma and some have not. Usually these differences between cities and regions can be explained through the differences pertaining to the educational levels, general activity level of the Roma citizens and the level of social integration among the local Roma but also through the differences in income and traditional professional profiles within the communities.

Representative bodies:

Finland established national Advisory Board on Roma Affairs already in 1956 and developed the representational and administrative co-operation system further in 1996 through establishing 4 regional advisory boards working in regional state offices. These advisory boards have been secured by a state degree (and will be secured by a new law in 2019).

Romani political action programmes:

Finland is among the pioneering countries what comes to the development of national strategies for Roma integration these date from 1999, 2009-2017 and the newest one has been developed for the years 2018-2022.

Data concerning the Education and employment:

The basis for developing Roma employment has been created through two surveys, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2008 survey on Roma people's position in the labour market and National Board of Education 2015 survey concerning the educational level of the adult Roma.



Georgia

Historical presence

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

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

Conflicts in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union provoked other migration waves and have left many Roma unprotected. At present, there is a temporary migration in Georgia from Azerbaijan, Turkey and other neighbouring countries which is essentially socio-economic but might also include human trafficking elements linked to beggars, street children and prostitution.

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

Georgia is the only country in the region, together with Turkey, to have Roma, Dom and Lom communities living on its territory. Prior to the thematic visit, the Council of Europe estimated the number of Roma (in its general sense, comprising Roma, Lom and Dom communities) was between 1,500 and 2,500 persons, i.e. approximately 0.04% of the total population. Following the thematic visit and taking into account Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research, **the total Roma population (Dom and Lom included) is estimated at 4,500, or 0.12% of the total population.**

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

Lom (Bosha)

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

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

unity, leading to efforts to mitigate internal ethnic and religious conflicts, including among the Bosha in Armenia and in Georgia.

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

Bosha in the past were leather sieves makers. Currently their main occupation is petty and itinerant trade. They travel across their region and within Georgia, buy agricultural production from peasants and goods from major markets, and re-sell them locally. Few of them maintain their own workshops on the markets for the production of tin products (including modernized version of the traditional sieves), leather hats, shoes, etc. Recently, after the introduction of visa-free regime with Turkey, some travel to Turkish markets too, where they are buying goods for mass consumption, which they re-sell in Georgia and also in Armenian town of Gyumri, and in the capital Yerevan.

The living conditions of Bosha are not different from their surrounding population (ethnic Armenians and Georgians). Their overall standard of living is even relatively good for Georgia, which is one of the poorest countries in the post-Soviet space.

Roma

In October 2013, the CAHROM member on behalf of Georgia had indicated that an estimated 750 to 1,120 Roma were living in seven settlements across Georgia (Abkhazia included, see below) following a research conducted in 2010⁴. Romani settlements are scattered across Georgia. In Tbilisi, where the largest community can be found, approximately 250-300 people live in rented apartments and homes. In Georgia’s eastern region of Kakheti, the Roma community consists of around 100-120 people living in typical rural homes that they own themselves. These people mostly carry Ukrainian family names and claim to have Ukrainian roots and ties with other Romani communities with Ukrainian last names in eastern Georgia. Next, a group of some 100 Roma claiming Russian ancestry lives in the Black Sea coastal town in Autonomous Republic of Ajara. These Roma claim that their relatives migrated to Kobuleti from Krasnodar Krai during WWII. In Kutaisi, a group of roughly 100 Roma lives compactly in Soviet-style apartments in the Avangard district. Finally, in Sukhumi, the capital of the *de facto* separatist Republic of Abkhazia, roughly 500 Roma live in private apartments and houses in a district to the north of the centre of the city.

Georgia turns out to be one of the few countries in Europe which do not actually host ‘own’ Roma. Probably the first Roma entered Georgia back in the nineteenth century in the times of the Russian Empire, but the first real migration began in the 20s of the twentieth century, followed by new waves

⁴ Source: presentation delivered by Mr Irakli Kokaia, CAHROM member on behalf of Georgia, at the 6th CAHROM plenary meeting in Rome, Italy, on 28-31 October 2013.

during and after WWII. The number of Roma in Georgia is fluctuating due to socio-economic cross-border migration. However, according to Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research **the maximum estimated number of Roma in Georgia is 2,000.**

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

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

Internal division of the *Roma* community in Georgia includes two main groups living also in the Russian Federation and Ukraine - *Vlaxi* and *Krimurya* (called also *Krymi*). Territorial demarcation between them is clearly expressed. *Krimurya* live in West Georgia, in Kutaisi, Batumi and Sukhumi. *Vlaxi* are living in Eastern Georgia, in Gachiani (together with some families of *Plashchuny*), Leninovka (Choeti) and in Telavi. The contact area between the two main groups now is the capital

Tbilisi, where (mainly in Samgori district) live in rented homes as well as *Krimurja* from Kutaisi as *Vlaxi* from Leninovka. In past, at the time of the USSR in Georgia lived also representatives of other Roma groups – *Ruska Roma*, *Servi*, *Kishinyovtsi*, and at least temporarily *Kelderari*. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, all of them have emigrated in the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Mixed marriages between members of different Roma groups are relatively few, more among *Vlaxi* with *Plashchuni*. The reasons are partly the group endogamy, also the territorial separation and different religions (*Vlaxi* are Orthodox Christians and *Krimurya* are Muslims). In both groups the "Gypsy court" (called *syndo* among *Vlaxi* and *davija* among *Krimurya*) ceased to function since at least two decades, because, according to our informants, the lack of adult respectable men (due high mortality of men, e.g. among *Vlaxi* is only one men in whole community, who is 50 years old, all others are much younger) and impossibility to invite respectable men from the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Mixed marriages between members of different Roma groups are relatively few, more among Vlaxi with Plashchuni. The reasons are partly the group endogamy, also the territorial separation and different religions (Vlaxi are Orthodox Christians and Krimurya are Muslims). In both groups the “Gypsy court” (called *syndo* among Vlaxi and *davija* among Krimurya) ceased to function since at least two decades, because, according to our informants, the lack of adult respectable men (due high mortality of men, e.g. among Vlaxi is only one man in whole community, who is 50 years old, all others are much younger) and impossibility to invite respectable men from Russia and Ukraine.

The links between Georgian Roma and their closer or more distant relatives were terminated as a result of country isolation and low living standards. The trans-border in-group marriages are currently non-existent, and now Roma in Georgia exist as small communities, in practice almost entirely isolated within national borders.

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

In general, in today's independent Georgia the financial and economic situation is heavy, but more severe it is for Roma. In Soviet times most of them, as well as throughout the entire USSR, worked, albeit irregularly, but instead developed a very successful small trading, according to the rules then classified as “speculation”, that allowed them to maintain relatively good standard of living. After the changes, the situation has radically changed and Roma not only lost their regular jobs, but more importantly, in a free market economy they were driven out by the surrounding population from their main economic niches. Some of them still live off the retail trade, in spite of huge competition and their traditional occupations (mostly mobile blacksmithing) are no longer suitable to the modern era. The majority of women (especially from Krimurya) keep trying to feed their families with fortune-telling on the streets of major cities. In fact, however, the main occupation of all Roma today is already begging (usually done by women, accompanied by their small children).

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

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

Dom (Garachi)

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

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

Dom are migrating from Azerbaijan to Georgia, where the standard of living is much lower, but it is due to the geographical proximity and convenient transport links, whereas the larger cities in Azerbaijan are much farther away. The main, and virtually sole, Dom's occupation in Georgia is begging for women, often with infants in arms, together with small girls and boys. Rarely beg also elderly women and men (usually men are with bogus or real signs of disability). Usually they have certain "own" places for begging, in city centre and major junctions (then they beg from passing cars), and urban markets. They have no serious problems with police. This gives reasons to the local population, including the media, to talk about "mafia of beggars", that corrupts local authorities. Widespread are many public stereotypes typical also of Roma beggars in Europe: about intentionally breaking arms and legs of children, and their exploitation by rich "bosses". Local population in Georgia (including Roma in Tbilisi and Kutaisi) are convinced that they all are Kurds. The Dom in Georgia usually also say in the public that they are Kurds; and their main language is Kurdish, with many preserved old 'own' words and phrases. Within their community their identity is of 'Dom', and they are distancing themselves from the Kurds, including in language and their self-identity is *Kurdi domlar* (Kurdish Dom). Since in the Transcaucasia generally everybody believes that the Kurds are Yazidis, and both designation are overlapping, so in the cases when the Dom want to distinguish themselves from the Kurds they underline, that they are real

Muslims and not Yazidis. They are unable to distinguish between Shia and Sunni branch of Islam, and in order to prove that they are real Muslim, they stress that they go regularly into the mosque, observe Ramadan, celebrate Kurban Bayram (Eid) and other holidays, which they consider important for Muslims, such as Navruz and Hidirlez.

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

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

Challenges

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

The fate of the 'Dom' and 'Roma' in Georgia reflect the post-soviet realities in the region and is situated between two extremes – emigration and labour mobility on one side, and on the other isolation, gradually crowding in the social periphery and marginalization, which can reach unexpected dimensions. Against this backdrop stands the unique case of the 'Lom', who in result of historical fate and contemporary development of the region intensified feelings of national unity and integration with Armenian minority. The relations between the three divisions 'Dom – Lom – Rom', whom the surrounding society in Georgia designated collectively as 'Gypsies' (using Russian designation *Tsygane*) are virtually non-existent. In practice, representatives of different communities are not able to communicate directly, because they live in different places, and in fact the only contact zones are the capital Tbilisi and Kutaisi (and only between 'Rom' and 'Dom'). Even in these conditions they avoid each other and they sharply set themselves apart from each other. Interestingly the surrounding population has a dual attitude towards them, they doesn't consider 'Dom' and 'Lom' to be 'Gypsies', but interconnect them. 'Dom' and 'Lom' from their side, often without being asked, are hurry to refuse to identify themselves as 'Gypsies' at all. As reasons for the distinction they indicate different mother tongues, different religions ('Lom' belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, 'Rom' are Orthodox Christians and Muslims, 'Dom' are Muslims), and some cultural characteristics. Even proposals for

inclusion in projects targeting Roma coming from the NGOs which offer respective financial support has so far been firmly rejected by the representatives of the 'Lom' and 'Dom' (BTW similarly the 'Dom' refused also the attempts of Kurdish NGO's to be included in their projects). So, at least at this stage, the construction of any kind of unity or achievement of at least some form of co-operation between the three communities seems impossible.⁵

The above mentioned migration flows are some of the reasons explaining the lack of identity documents among Roma in Georgia which is a serious obstacle to access any public services, including education. This starts the typical vicious circle: lack of education results in no employment, bad health and poor housing situation and grooving impoverishment among the Roma community. The result is the presence of many children in street situation: a 2009 study revealed the number of 1,049 children living/working in the streets of Tbilisi and other cities in 2007. The Georgian Government is aware that many children are living and working in the street. Due to their vulnerable situation, there is high risk for them to become victims of organised crime. Authorities are trying to strengthen the co-operation between the children's shelter mobile groups and the supervising mobile groups for timely detection and investigation of the alleged crimes⁶. To the end of 2015 there were 634 children in street situation and a majority of them had no identity papers. Moreover, the problem of domestic violence is unreported (and denied by community members) even though it influences not only the situation of women but also of children. The abusers are not only husbands but also other family members, including parents.

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences in Georgia puts Roma women in Georgia, alongside women from other minorities (Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian, Kist, and Yazidi) among the groups at risk: they are not only discriminated against because of their gender; their minority status also increases their vulnerability to specific forms of violence. Gender stereotypes and gender-specific roles within the family and in society are still prevalent in those communities. Child marriage and, consequently, early pregnancy, high dropout rate from school and domestic violence tend to be more prevalent in minority groups, particularly in rural areas⁷.

The phenomenon of child marriages among Roma communities is common, despite the fact that according to the Georgian law, it is prohibited⁸. The age of marriages between 13 and 15-years-old is widely accepted in the Roma communities. It results in low level of Roma girls' attendance to schools and high drop-outs rate. Another, not less important, reason for illiteracy among young Roma in Georgia is that education is still not highly valued in those communities, as children are expected to contribute to the household economy.

⁵ Source: Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov's research published in 2014 'The Gypsies (Dom – Lom – Rom) in Georgia'.

⁶ Public Defender Office, 'Situation of children in the streets', 2015: <http://www.eoi.at/d/EOI%20-%20Jahresberichte/Georgien/Situation%20of%20Children's%20Rights%20in%20Georgia.pdf>

⁷ Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to Georgia - A/HRC/32/42/Add.3, 22 July 2016, : <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/164/40/PDF/G1616440.pdf?OpenElement>

⁸ Since 1st January 2017, the parental consent for allowing marriages between 16 and 18 has been revoked (except in case of pregnancy which then requires a court decision).

In 2012, the Georgian government, with support of ECMI and local NGOs, started the registration process of Roma people. Still, the number of text devoted to those groups and available to wider international public is low.⁹ Similarly, the presence of related groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal) is not fully recognised in the reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) so far.

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



Lithuania

According to the 2011 population and housing census, 2,115 Roma people were living in Lithuania. Since 1989, the number of Roma in the country is gradually decreasing. In 1989 2,718 Roma people were living in Lithuania; in 2001 – 2,571.

According to the 2011 data, 81% of Roma lived in urban areas, 19 % – in rural areas. Most of the Roma lived in Vilnius (38% / 814 persons), Kaunas (23% / 482 persons), Šiauliai (11% / 224 persons), Marijampolė (10% / 214 persons) and Panevėžys (7% / 145 persons) counties.

The age structure of the Roma ethnic group is unique in the context of entire country, notably large share – even 49% – of all Roma people are children and youth under 20 years of age. While in overall Lithuanian population, children and young people (0-19 years) represent 22% of all Lithuanian population. In comparison with the 2001 general population and housing census, the share of children and youth within the Roma group has increased by 3 %, while in the whole of Lithuania the opposite trend is observed – the population share in this age group in the general structure of society has decreased from 27% to 22%.

Roma and the labour market

Since 2004, three projects were implemented that have helped disadvantaged and socially excluded Roma integrate into the labour market ("Development and Testing of the mechanism for Roma integration into the labour market", "Look back at the Roma: innovative measures for involvement of Roma into the labour market", European Roma culture and business park "Bahtalo Drom", "Let us work together with the Roma – new job opportunities and challenges"). Within the projects, models for

⁹ Some information is available in: ECMI; The Gypsies (Dom – Lom – Rom) in Georgia, by E. Marushiakova and V. Popov https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266387938_The_Gypsies_Dom_-_Lom_-_Rom_in_Georgia; Unwanted, rejected, unaccepted: around the problem of “invisible” Romani and Dom children in Georgia, by U. Markowska-Manista, 2015 <http://www.pwe.ug.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Markowska-Manista-nr31.pdf>; The contemporary expression of the identity of the Boshas, by H. Marutyan, 2011, <http://akademai.com/doi/abs/10.1556/AEthn.55.2011.2.3>; Roma Youth in Georgia: what are the challenges? by S. Velay-Mateu, 2017

Roma employment were developed and tested, training programs and methodical recommendations for recruitment specialists were prepared. Currently there is an on-going project "Let us work together with the Roma – new job opportunities and challenges".

Roma in educational system

The data of 2001 and 2011 population and housing censuses revealed significant changes in education – in 2011, education of Roma people grew significantly. The number of illiterate and primary school dropouts decreased by several times; the share of Roma with primary education increased, and also the number of people with basic education increased.

However, there is a notable decline in the number of people with secondary and tertiary education. Education of Roma children changed noticeably in 2001-2015 – compared to the data of 2001, illiteracy and incomplete primary education in this age group decreased by 39% (2001 – 47%, 2011 – 11%, 2015 – 8%), the number of people with basic education increased from 7% to 27%. In 2011, Roma children (10-19 years) education differed distinctly from peers across Lithuania only in acquiring secondary education, while literacy, primary and basic education indicators differed by 1%-5% (in 2001, these differences were 11% to 36%).

Roma children and young people are attending non-formal education groups and participate in other activities after school. According to the 2015 data, 33% of Roma children attend children's day-care or children's activity centres.

Roma in health care system

The 2015-2020 Action Plan for Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society provides for increasing the availability of health services for Roma people. This is important because the Roma are at greater risk of being in the category of persons without compulsory health insurance, thereby losing access to all statutory health care services.

Among people without the Compulsory health insurance (CHI) there are more men (20%) than women (9%) – usually these are unemployed and unregistered with the labour exchange persons. Insured by the compulsory health insurance are all children under the age of 18, as well as women, which receive statutory maternity leave, and unemployed women during their pregnancy period for 70 days. 2015 survey revealed that 29% of Roma evaluated their health as "bad and very bad", 50% noted that they have chronic diseases or have long-term health problems. In the Roma group, women more often mentioned long-term health problems, 25% of surveyed women said that in the past year they did not receive the necessary medical attention, 31% did not seek medical attention because of lack of time (due to child care, employment). 26% of Roma indicated fear of treatment and hospitals as the main reason why they did not receive the necessary medical consultations.

Roma women's situation

In the group of Lithuanian Roma, there is a slightly higher proportion of women than men. Significant differences in the gender distribution are visible in the group of Roma people aged 30 and older – here women account for 57%, men - 43% of Lithuanian Roma.

There are differences in education of Roma women and men, but they are not very big – slightly more women are illiterate and without primary education (difference – 1%), or with only primary education (difference – 3%), there are slightly more men with completed primary education (difference – 4%).

Integration of women into the labour market is particularly compounded by early marriage – about a quarter (25%) of Roma girls give birth to their first child while still being minors (younger than 18 years).

Although the number of women actively involved in social and political life is not big, their activities are very important for strengthening the integration of the Roma minority in Lithuania. Out of the seven Roma non-governmental organizations that are active, four are led by women. In the Council of Ethnic Communities, the Roma minority is represented by Božena Karvelienė, the chairperson of the "House of Roma Integration".

Implementation of the Roma right to housing

Roma often live in the state or municipality owned housing. Less Roma people have their own housing owned by private property rights, for Roma people it is difficult to rent housing from private individuals because of discrimination and negative attitudes of society. Results of the survey of public attitudes for the period of 2009–2013 show that about two-thirds of Lithuania's population would not want to rent housing to Roma.

Although Roma households tend to be larger (on average 4.8 persons live in one Roma household), the average Roma housing area is less than the national average housing area. A similar number (28%) of Roma families live in small and large blocks of multi-flat residential buildings.



No statistics are currently kept in Norway on the basis of ethnic background. However, on the basis of information provided by the Roma and persons who have contact with the Roma, it is possible to estimate the total number of Norwegian Roma registered in the Norwegian National Population Register at approximately 700 persons. Of these, the large majority (over 600) reside in Oslo.

The Norwegian Roma population is culturally and socially a part of the Vlach Roma sub-group present in Western Europe. In addition, during recent years, an increasing number of Roma have arrived in Norway, particularly from Romania. The number of Roma migrants is unknown.

Norwegian Roma are recognized as a national minority group together with four other groups under the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, i.e. Kvener/Norwegian Finns (kvener/norskinfer), Romani people (romanifolk/tatere), Forest Finns (skogfinner) and Jews (jøder). Norwegian Roma have been present in today's Norway since the 18th century at least.

The group of 4,000 to 10,000 Romani people is now mostly sedentary following past assimilation policies. Their language is called Romani as opposed to the language spoken by Roma called Romanes in Norway. As stated above, Romani people are recognised in Norway as a distinct minority, though both Roma and Romani people would fall under the general definition of Roma used at the Council of Europe. There is a certain agreement among experts that Roma and Romani people share a common lineage originated in India. In Norway however they represent two distinct groups with different culture and history and they face different challenges when it comes to dealing with the majority population and the authorities.



Slovenia

Roma community members live mainly in north east Slovenia (Prekmurje region) and south east Slovenia (regions of Dolenjska, Posavje and Bela Krajina), as well as in large cities like Maribor, Velenje, Ljubljana, Celje, Jesenice, Radovljica (the Sinti families live mainly in Jesenice and Radovljica). According to the applicable legislation in the field of personal data protection, the ministries, government offices and other competent institutions do not keep specific records of persons based on their ethnic origin or nationality. The official data on the number of Roma community members living in Slovenia is the official data from the population census from 2002, which does not distinguish between Roma who are permanently or temporarily resident in Slovenia. In the 2002 census 3,246 persons stated that they were Roma community members and 3,834 persons stated that the Romani language was their mother tongue. The register-based census performed in 2011, did not include the category of national/ethnic origin and mother tongue, therefore there are no more recent official data available.

Nonetheless, the state can rely on the estimates from institutions and non-governmental organizations (both Roma and other non-governmental organizations operating among the Roma population and with it) when preparing the policies and measures to improve the situation of the Roma community and for the protection of the rights of its members. The estimates of various institutions, like social work centres, administrative units and non-governmental Roma organisations indicate that between 10,000 and 12,000 Roma live in Slovenia. For example, following an assessment of the social work centres, 11,703 Roma lived in Slovenia, most of them in the territory of the social work centres of Maribor and Murska Sobota (3,000), Novo Mesto (1,500), Črnomelj (780) and Kočevje (550). The research performed by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia in 2014 in relation to this assessment indicates that this number does not cover the entire Roma population, as some social work centres do not systematically record the data and they do not wish to make any estimates.

Similarly to most other European countries, the Roma community in Slovenia is still among those groups of population, which are highly subjected to discrimination due to their national and ethnic origin and belongs to the lowest social classes, characterized by poverty. Even though there is internal stratification in the Roma community as well (which significantly differs by regions and in the regions by municipalities, settlements and families and therefore jumping to conclusions may lead to a distorted image of the actual situation), in most cases, the social status of the Roma population is nevertheless still markedly lower than the social status of the majority population. The unfavourable socio-economic status of the Roma community members is related to poverty, low level of education, elevated level of unemployment, inappropriate housing situation, with poor health condition and prejudices and stereotypes against the Roma. These negative factors, the causes and consequences of which are closely interrelated and intertwined, create a closed circle of exclusion, from which Roma cannot escape by themselves or have major difficulties in doing so. Consequently, Roma have no social power, they are excluded from events, permanently socially excluded and dependent on social assistance. They are not interconnected, they are fragmented by settlements and mostly disorganised or their organisation is structured in a local Roma community, which is usually limited to individual settlements; however, families from several settlements and regions can also be connected. It often happens that the people who start taking more advanced norms and rules are disabled in their own midst. When they are dealt with, they are dealt with as a problem that needs to be countered and not resolved. They are rarely actively involved in resolving problems. Poor housing situation, particularly in south-eastern Slovenia, constant social exclusion and social patterns in individual groups or communities contribute to their dependence on financial social support.

On average, the socio-economic situation of Roma is better in Prekmurje than in Dolenjska, Posavje and Bela krajina and other environments inhabited by Roma. There are also significant differences in socio-economic situation, lifestyle, education, employment, religious affiliation, customs and habits between the so-called non-traditionally settled Roma, who live in larger towns (Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Jesenice and Velenje), and the traditionally settled Roma in rural areas (the situation of the latter being much worse). Roma in Prekmurje mostly have a social status that enables them to regularly include their children in kindergartens and primary and secondary education. On average, the housing situation and the municipal infrastructure in the settlements with majority Roma community members is better arranged in Prekmurje and they represent a better basis for the integration of children in the education system and later in finding employment. However, prejudices and stereotyping by the majority population associated with Roma are still very present in all parts of Slovenia, since they are deeply rooted in Slovenian society and they are still passed on from generation to generation.

The legal basis for regulating the status of the Roma community is Article 65 of the Constitution, which specifies that the status and special rights of the Roma community living in Slovenia be governed by law. This is the legal framework for the adoption of protective measures. The constitutional provision was realised by the adoption of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act in 2007. Its adoption represented a giant step forward in the realisation of Article 65 of the Slovenian Constitution,

defining Roma as belonging to the Slovenian and European area and society, and creating a basis for improvement of the status of the Roma community everywhere in the Republic of Slovenia. Roma Community Act regulates the competences of national authorities and authorities of self-governing local communities concerning the implementation of special rights of the Roma community, the organisation of the Roma community at national and local levels, and funds for financing these activities. For substantial and effective implementation of the rights of the Roma community, the Slovenian government in 2010 adopted the National Programme for Roma for the period 2010–2015, intended to cover all areas defined in the Act, that is, all areas where measures for improving the status of Roma and affective implementation of Roma community rights are actually necessary.

In 2017, the new National Programme for Roma for the period 2017–2021 was adopted by the Government. The objectives of this programme are to improve the situation and promote social inclusion as well as reduce the social exclusion of women and men in all those areas for which, based on the experience of state authorities, municipalities, the Roma community and civil society organizations, this is considered necessary. The measures range in various areas of social life, with an emphasis on raising the level of education, reducing unemployment, improving health care, improving living conditions, eliminating prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination, preserving Roma culture, language and identity and promoting the information and publishing activity of the Roma community. In addition to the problematic starting point and the planned measures, this programme also includes the envisaged system for monitoring the implementation of measures, which is further strengthened compared to the previous period and directed primarily to monitoring the impact of measures in local environments. Throughout the process of the preparation, the Roma community was actively involved in its activities through its representatives, as was the practice in the preparation of the first program of measures.

The protection of the Roma community is also provided for in other laws. Aside from legislation, care for the realisation of special rights of the Roma community and the improvement of its status is incorporated in numerous programmes, strategies and resolutions in different social areas.