

National statement of the Slovak Republic

to the proposed Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic

The Slovak Republic greatly appreciates the cooperation with the Office of the Commissioner for the Human Rights of the Council of Europe. We are very grateful for the continuous dialogue and sincere efforts of the Commissioner, Mr. Michael O`Flaherty of being instrumental to solve the issues of the Roma communities in our country. It was reflected by his visit of the country and subsequent issuance of report and latest initiative of publishing the *Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic*.

The document will be the subject of discussion in the Governmental Council of the Slovak Republic on Human Rights and Gender Equality which is the advisory body of the Slovak Government.

Slovakia would like to use the opportunity to comment the Memorandum and submits the following:

Barriers to the enjoyment of human rights by Roma

Access to education

With the adoption of the [Strategy for Inclusive Approach in Education and Training](#) and the **Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)** from 2021 onwards, **the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth has intensified its work in this area and continues to reform the education system, which emphasizes inclusiveness and equal access to education and equal opportunities.** The Ministry is implementing a number of synergic activities that build on each other and aim to ensure that all children are fully included in the education system and that every child receives an education in line with their individual learning needs and is fully integrated into society.

- In December 2024, the [Second Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for Inclusive Approach in Education 2025-2027](#) and the evaluation of the implementation of the First Action Plan were approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic;
- In May 2023, a [definition of segregation](#) in education was introduced in the Education Act (Act No 245/2008 Coll.);
- From the school year 2023/2024, one of the tools for the development of inclusive education was introduced - [the System of Support Measures](#);
- In September 2023, the new [Standards for Professional Activities in the Guidance and Prevention System](#) were also approved;
- In December 2023, the [Methodological Guide to Desegregation in Education](#) was published;
- In November 2024, the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth introduced the [Standards for Compliance with the Prohibition of Segregation in Education and Training](#).

The following **2 national projects** (hereafter referred to as "NP") to be implemented in 2024-2027 are **in response to a lawsuit filed by in December 2023** by the European Commission in the EU Court of Justice against the Slovak Republic in the case of segregation of Roma children in the school system:

- [NP Chance for All](#), which aims to pilot-test solutions to segregation in education in cooperation with participating localities (municipalities and cities);
- [NP Promoting Educational Opportunities](#), during which a temporary compensatory system of adaptive classes will be created to facilitate the transition to mainstream education for special education pupils who have been excluded with mild intellectual disabilities after pre-testing, as well as for the teachers and professionals who will work with them;
- Another currently implemented national project contributes to the prevention of early school leaving (NP ESL) - the aim of the project (which is under the responsibility of Research Institute for of Childs' Psychology and Patho-psychology) is to create an [early warning system for early school leaving](#) that identifies pupils at risk of dropping out of school and provides them with the necessary support.

In order to ensure quality and inclusive education for all from an early age, in August 2023 the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth launched a **grant scheme from the RRP** for "[Supporting the provision of early childhood care and early intervention for children aged 0 to 6 years from marginalised Roma communities and generational poverty](#)"

Indirect but very positive impact on increasing the inclusivity of the educational process, even from an early age, is also achieved through interventions such as:

- [The call](#) of compulsory pre-school education for 5-year-old children;
- [The call](#) of legal entitlement to kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds;
- The call by the RRP to increase the capacity of kindergartens;
- Call for project support for the elimination of double-shift operation of primary schools, a number of implemented and upcoming calls and projects under the responsibility of other ministries (NP "Healthy Communities", NP "Support for Helping Professions 3", NP "Development Teams I")
- Introduction of a [system for monitoring the risk of segregation](#) as a tool for identifying symptoms and risks of segregation in education and its prevention.
- Preparation of the *Analysis of Needs and Necessary Legislative Steps for Ensuring the Education of All Children in their Mother Tongue in Schools with Slovak as the Language of Instruction and the Language of Instruction of a National Minority in a Nationally Mixed Territory* - to propose the legislative changes and other measures to ensure an even more inclusive education system.

Treatment of Roma by law enforcement authorities

- At the beginning of 2025, the Control Department of the Presidium of the Police Force entered into an intensive cooperation with the Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava in the field of "**Protection of Human Rights**" in order to address common everyday

violations of the rights of persons restricted on personal freedom with the involvement of the students of the Police Academy and the members of the Police Force in direct performance of duty, i.e. in the front line, and to strengthen their knowledge of and awareness in the subject matter.

- The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic is proactive in preventing of anti-Roma attitudes, stereotypes, police misconduct and any other forms of discrimination by setting up the most effective teaching process for the students of the police schools and Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava. For this purpose, it is very significant the role of **the Control Department of the Presidium of the Police Force and a Prevention and Support Activities Unit** by their attendance during learning process, and by organizing the lectures, trainings and social networking.
- As regards the possible cases of non-reporting of crimes and the need to build trust between the Roma community and the Police Force, it is important to point out that within the Police Force there exists the post of "**Senior Officer for Work in the Communities**", who, in his/her official activities, primarily focuses on creating, maintaining, strengthening and guiding mutual relations between the Police Force and the Roma community.

Living conditions of marginalised Roma communities, access to healthcare and forms of discrimination in healthcare settings

The Slovak Republic is committed to fostering the health and well-being of all its citizens, with a particular focus on marginalized communities, including the Roma population. Through strategic initiatives and collaborative programs, such as the Healthy Communities Project, the **Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic aims to bridge gaps in healthcare access and promote social inclusion**. The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic serves as the intermediary body for the Slovakia Programme, tasked with the implementation of funds during the 2021 - 2027 programming period.

- In 2024, it supported the **Healthy Communities Project**, which aims to enhance the health status of the Roma population through the engagement of over 300 health support assistants. This project is slated to continue until 2029, with the Slovak Ministry of Health envisioning its expansion in subsequent programming periods. Currently, efforts are underway to identify strategies that will amplify the project's impact on the integration of the Roma community into society;
- Additionally, a noteworthy initiative is planned for 2025, **focusing on the prevention of viral hepatitis A** among selected marginalized community groups, particularly children aged 2 to 15 years. This project aspires to vaccinate as many children as possible by 2028, thereby aiming to reduce the overall morbidity associated with viral hepatitis A within the population.

Within the framework of the currently approved national programs and plans, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic engages in collaborative efforts, including the implementation of the following initiatives:

- *Action Plan for the years 2023-2025 concerning the National Strategy for the Development of Early Intervention and Early Care for the period of 2022-2030* - to establish necessary conditions that support the comprehensive development and social inclusion of all children in need of assistance in realizing their developmental potential.
- National Strategic Framework – *Strategy for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma until 2030*. It signifies the government's commitment to guiding public policies to effect measurable improvements in equality and inclusion for Roma communities. The document identifies five priority areas: employment, education, health (with the overarching objective of reducing health disparities between Roma communities, specifically, marginalized Roma communities, and the general population), housing, combating anti-Roma racism, and fostering community participation.

Reparations for cases of forced sterilisation

The Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic is preparing a legislation which will reflect the issue of compensation of forced sterilisation of Roma women over several decades. The aim of this legislation is to ensure that the burden of proof will be shifted to the state, i.e. the responsible institution will be obliged to prove that involuntary sterilisation did not occur if there is reasonable evidence that sterilisation occurred and was conducted in violation of law (e.g. was involuntary, without an informed consent or if consent was obtained under duress or in connection to providing of incorrect information).

- The plan is that this draft is **submitted to the Slovak Government by December 2025**;
- The Ministry of Justice also established a **non-formal working group** consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Public Defender of Rights and the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.