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COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ROMA AND TRAVELLER¹ ISSUES (ADI-ROM)

**THEMATIC REPORT
ON HOW TO STIMULATE GOVERNMENTS TO EMPLOY ROMA AND
TRAVELLERS IN GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION**

**Based on the ADI-ROM thematic visit to Skopje, North Macedonia
20-22 June 2022**

¹ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of Europe has many standards and policies preventing discrimination in employment. Namely, the European Social Charter guarantees the enjoyment, without discrimination, of fundamental social and economic rights. Of the rights guaranteed by the Charter, the right to work, the right to organise, the right to bargain collectively and the right to benefit from social security coverage which establishes minimum levels of protection in such areas as medical care, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age benefits, employment injury benefits, family benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity benefits, survivor's benefits, etc. The Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma and Traveller (2020-2025) covers the theme of employment in governmental institutions and public administration through its main lines of actions, among which are (i) democratic participation and promoting public trust and accountability and (ii) supporting access to inclusive quality education and training.

However, evidence has shown that Roma and Travellers, and particularly young persons and women, encounter a series of social barriers and prejudices which severely impede their capacity to effectively participate in public life. Hence, Roma and Travellers remain largely absent from local and national political and public participation and decision-making processes and this invisibility ultimately undermines the potential for Roma and Traveller political participation. Targeted minority participation mechanisms have not yielded adequate results and Roma and Travellers continue to be marginalised. Moreover, the employment of Roma and Travellers in governmental institutions and public administration, which would improve their visibility, remains very low and seldom reflects the national, regional or local ratio of the Roma and Traveller population despite recent improvements.

In many member states employment policies are mainstreamed and there is no disaggregated information on employment of civil servants available. However, some member states have adopted national employment policies and measures to increase the representation of minorities and in some cases Roma in particular in both the private and public sector. In most cases it is reflected through the implementation of Employment National Action Plans, providing inter alia for employment policies targeting Roma as part of vulnerable groups, or through National Action Plans for the social inclusion of Roma with an employment component too. Likewise, the combatting of discrimination has been pursued through temporary special measures in national employment policies targeting disadvantaged groups of the population, and in particular the Roma, as one of the most vulnerable groups in all European states. With the main aim being the establishment of equal opportunities while accessing the labour market, national action plans on employment or with an employment component are the main tool used in member states for addressing the problems met by Roma when accessing the job market.²

The thematic visit on how to stimulate governments to employ Roma and Travellers in governmental institutions and public administrations highlights how closely interlinked quality inclusive education, including early childhood education, is with employment whether it would be in the private or public sector. A solid education is even more relevant when

² 6.2 Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) [Implementation Report on Recommendation Rec\(2001\)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe](#) - Item to be prepared by the GR-SOC on 17 January 2012

trying to access a job in the public sector as external and internal competitions are usually a prerequisite.

Thus, how can governments be stimulated to employ Roma and Travellers in governmental institutions and public administration at the local, regional and national level? The report examines existing national policies and laws, employment agencies and recruitment bodies policies, special measures and employment policies for Roma and present good practices.

It compares general employment data and Roma employment data, identifies gaps and offers solutions on how to fill them including targeted measures to enhance the recruitment of Roma outside of the regular recruiting processes.

Key issues such as the permanent or temporary nature of recruiting measures such as externally or internally funded programmes or national unemployment schemes, measurable outcomes stemming from the recruitment measures and methodologies of approach such as career shadowing, youth targeting or training schemes are also broached.

General conclusions and lessons learned

The main conclusion is that to increase the number of employed Roma and Travellers, whether it would be in the private or the public sector, policies must be far-sighted and cover early childhood to retirement. Employment strategies should accompany people throughout their lives and embed structural and systemic policies which will last beyond changes in governments. It means policies guaranteeing access to quality early childhood education, kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and higher studies. Employment policies must then continue in this logical continuum to ensure equal access to employment through targeted measures and quotas when required. And then internal employment policies must ensure equal advancement opportunities and competitive salaries. Increasing the number of Roma and Travellers employed in governmental institutions and public administration is a long-term investment with long-term benefits.

To achieve higher Roma employment in public administration and governmental institutions, many active employment measures for Roma exist. A strong and active cooperation needs to be established between authorities and civil society to collaborate productively at the national and local levels to ensure the Roma inclusion strategy and its related action plans are implemented, followed-up and monitored.

However, the fact remains that more than half of the Roma employed in the public sector are in temporary public works schemes and are often offered these work schemes against their vote for a political party which highlights the issue of indirect vote buying. Regulations should be established to ensure that the same selection criteria apply to all candidates and that the selection process be transparent.

It was agreed that a critical mass of Roma civil servants in the relevant ministries is needed to effectively implement Roma Inclusion Strategies and Action Plans.

In the member states, employment policies are mostly mainstreamed and do not provide special measures to incite the employment of Roma. Although all the partner countries in the thematic visit have policies and measures to assist vulnerable and low-skilled workers gain employment, the effect on the Roma population is difficult to measure. Moreover, a stronger partnership or collaboration between Roma and pro-Roma NGOs and civil society and the relevant national authorities in the development of employment policies and

measures affecting Roma should be developed. The same is true for the monitoring of the latter in the framework of the National Roma Inclusion Strategies and the related action plans.

Employees in Employment Centres and other social services are not always aware of various measures offered, such as second-chance schools or free / subsidised transportation, to assist Roma job-seekers and other vulnerable or marginalised job-seekers. Capacity-building measures and trainings at national and local levels should be provided.

National measures and policies

Effective policies include quotas based on statistics and algorithms and the percentage of the overall population of ethnic minorities to determine the number to be hired in public services. This method implies that it is in the interest of the Roma people to declare their ethnicity as legislations, measures, and the percentage of dedicated social housing, scholarships or free tuition are based on those statistics. For the first time, a quota of 5% for inclusion in all employment programmes in the private sector has been set for the employment of Roma in North-Macedonia. However, this special measure for employment of Roma unfortunately does not apply to the public sector although there is a political will to employ Roma in the public sector.

In North-Macedonia, the Employment Service Agency (ESA) worked on the implementation of the Roma Strategy 2014-2020, and the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan for employment 2016-2020 through its participation in the National Coordinative Body. It monitored and reported on the employment of unemployed Roma persons in cooperation with the Ministries and other institutions involved in strategy implementation. ESA representatives in Employment Centres regularly cooperate with Roma Information Centres to provide information and facilitate access to services for job seekers and employers.

There is a systematic registration of Roma children in kindergarten free of charge in regular school which decreases the gap of Roma and non-Roma in school education. The focus is on increasing the education level of Roma children and mentor them to reach tertiary education level. Primary education is free of charge and scholarships are offered for secondary education. The Ministry of Education provides scholarships for tertiary education. These support measures are effective in increasing the number of Roma university graduates who obtain jobs quite easily in all sectors.

Active employment programmes and measures include:

1. Self-employment programmes through direct grants, capacity building;
2. Support for the creation of new jobs through direct financial assistance for companies hiring unemployed persons;
3. Employment and growth of legal entities: Micro, small or medium social enterprises;
4. Public works scheme for low-skilled Roma;
5. Care economy through care services providers;
6. Green investments.

These policies have proven successful and are a good basis for the development of new policies and measures. The specific measures and programmes are aimed at increasing employment including for specific target groups who face difficulties in obtaining

employment. The target groups include longstanding unemployed Roma, Roma youth and women and guarantee minimum assistance.

Some good practices include assistance and support in the transition from the education system to the labour market through the acquisition of skills and knowledge, subsidies to motivate employers to employ members of certain target groups or municipal and intercultural mediators to stimulate local authorities to employ Roma.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the thematic report and visit

Discrimination against Roma in the labour market harms both mainstream society and Roma because of a huge untapped potential. Equality of opportunity and treatment in employment are fundamental principles and labour rights are the foundation of social justice.

Promoting decent work for Roma, including Roma youth and women, is crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty, empowering Roma and furthermore giving them their dignity. Harnessing creativity and energy, and fully utilising skills and talents, can only boost economic growth and create wealth. Many initiatives have focused on Roma inclusion and non-discrimination over the last few decades. The overall balance of these initiatives highlights the need for further systemisation of approaches to address the underlying factors that impair Roma in their labour market integration and access to decent employment.³ It needs to be emphasised that the lack of equal access to employment not only affects low-skilled Roma and Travellers but also highly skilled and qualified Roma and Travellers. Ensuring equal opportunity, equity and non-discrimination in hiring practices is of the essence.

The [Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe](#)^[7] states that antigypsyism is one of the most powerful mechanisms of Roma exclusion. It recognises the interdependence of inclusion and anti-discrimination and therefore recommends that initiatives to improve the situation and integration of Roma should include measures to combat discrimination and address anti-gypsyism, in addition to measures promoting the social and economic inclusion of Roma in areas such as education, health, employment and housing.

The [Strategic Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers \(2020-2025\)](#) states that effective participation as full members of society is a fundamental principle for genuine inclusion and that access to employment can enable full participation in society in all fields. For some Roma it breaks the cycle of poverty and gives them dignity, for others it ensures equal opportunity.

It should also be recalled that [UN Sustainable Development Goal 8](#) aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

The [ROMACTED](#) programme “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level”, was designed to build political will and sustained policy engagement of local

³ [Promoting decent work opportunities for Roma youth in Central and Eastern Europe](#), International Labour Organization, 21.11.2016

authorities, to enhance democratic local governance and to build capacity and stimulate the empowerment of local Roma communities and thus their contribution to the design, implementation and monitoring of plans and projects concerning them. The ROMACTED programme can also be an effective partner in developing local employment policies and programmes.

Good Governance, defined as the responsible conduct of public affairs and management of public resources, is encapsulated in the Council of Europe's [12 Principles of Good Governance](#). It is the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication, and employment creation.

Principle 11: Human rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion, states that:

Within the local authority's sphere of influence, human rights are respected, protected and implemented, and discrimination on any grounds is combated. Cultural diversity is treated as an asset, and continuous efforts are made to ensure that all have a stake in the local community, identify with it and do not feel excluded. Social cohesion and the integration of disadvantaged areas are promoted. Access to essential services is preserved, in particular for the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

It needs to be recalled that employment, as a social and economic right, has three tiers of policy development and implementation:

1. **National level** which is usually rights based, setting the legality of recruitment (labour laws, workers' rights, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation)
2. **Local level** which develops capacity building opportunities and recruitment based on current and emerging needs. For example, through the ROMACTED programme, 35 labour inspectors in Skopje and Bitola were recently trained on protection from discrimination in the workplace with a focus on the public sector and vulnerable groups, particularly Roma persons.
3. **Civil society and labour unions** which oversee the legality and identify the gaps and inadequacies of policies and recruitment tactics by the first two.

One of the recommendations which emanated from the 8th Roma Women's Conference, as employment statistics show that Roma and Traveller women have a much lower employment rate, was that member states should create programmes for the employment of Roma and Traveller women and girls. New opportunities could be enabled through, namely Social Enterprise Legislation and Strategies and microcredits with the support of NGOs such as Roma Entrepreneurs Development Initiative (REDI) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) but also through employment in governmental institutions and the public services.

Despite these standards and recommendations, and although the engagement of Roma and Travellers in political and public life has noticeably increased over the past decade, Roma and Travellers still face considerable obstacles in securing political presence, sustaining representation and exercising influence. Evidence has shown that Roma and Travellers, particularly young persons and women, encounter a series of social barriers and prejudices which severely impede their capacity to effectively participate in public life. Hence, Roma and Travellers remain largely absent from local and national political participation, public participation and decision-making processes. This invisibility ultimately undermines the

potential for Roma and Traveller political participation. Targeted minority participation mechanisms have not yielded adequate results and Roma and Travellers continue to be marginalised. This report will endeavour to examine how the employment of Roma and Travellers in governmental institutions and public administration can help to erase this invisibility.

The purpose of this thematic visit was to identify how governments can be stimulated to employ Roma and Travellers in governmental institutions and public administration at the local, regional and national level.

The exchanges and peer review of the report allowed for an overview of the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of National Roma Inclusion Strategies (both in EU and non-EU countries), with a special emphasis on the issue of employment and namely employment in governmental institutions and public services. It also allowed for an examination of existing national policies and laws, employment agencies and recruitment bodies policies, special measures and exemption employment policies for Roma and present good practices.

It enabled a comparison of general employment data *vs* Roma employment data, identification of the gaps and the opportunity to offer solutions on how to fill them. Targeted measures to enhance the recruitment of Roma as separate from the regular recruiting processes were examined.

Key issues addressed were the permanent or temporary nature of measures such as externally or internally funded programmes or national unemployment schemes, the measurable outcomes that have stemmed from the recruitment measures and the methodologies of approach such as career shadowing, youth targeting or training schemes.

FACTS & FIGURES IN NORTH MACEDONIA

Roma are officially recognised as a minority in the Constitution.

- In 2022, 9761 unemployed Roma are currently registered in the Employment Service Agency (ESA)
- In 2021, there were 6121 registered unemployed Roma of which 35% young unemployed people.
- In 2021, 589 unemployed Roma participated in active employment measures
- 130 - 140 Roma work in Ministries and government institutions
- 797 Roma people employed in the public service, both at national and local level
- Quota of 5% of Roma in active employment measures in the private sector
- In 2020-2021, 48 young Roma (19 men, 29 women) received a scholarship from REF.
- Eastern Macedonia has the most Roma attending University with about 250 students.
- 6,400 Roma children aged 3 to 6 years attend pre-school free of charge in 20 municipalities

1.2 Composition of the thematic group of experts

The host country was North Macedonia, and the partner countries are Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Portugal and Slovak Republic. (See Appendix I).

1.3 Agenda of the thematic visit

The agenda of the thematic visit included meetings and discussions with several relevant ministries and state agencies including meetings at the ministerial and parliamentary level, and meetings with other international organisations, NGOs and other civil society actors. (See Appendix II)

1.4 Questionnaire to the hosting and partner countries

The hosting and participating countries were sent a general questionnaire before the first online meeting (See Appendix III). The purpose of this questionnaire was to clarify themes that are of interest to all partner countries.

1.5 European and international standards, reference texts and evaluation tools

(See Appendix IV)

2. NATIONAL PRACTICES AND GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES IN RELATION TO STIMULATING GOVERNMENTS TO EMPLOY ROMA AND TRAVELLERS IN GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

This comprehensive background information based on desktop research and provided by the host and partner countries figures in Appendix V.

3. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED, GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED AND ENVISAGED FOLLOW-UP

3.1 Conclusions regarding the organisation of the ADI-ROM thematic visit

The programme of the thematic visit was well developed and included meetings with all relevant ministries working on the issue of employment in general and Roma-specific employment. The high-level meetings demonstrate the importance afforded to the issue of Roma employment in the public and governmental sector. Meetings were organised with the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, high-level Roma officials including Ljatife Shikovska, a Roma MP, as well as active Roma NGOs monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma. The overview of the work carried out by the North Macedonian authorities was comprehensive (see programme appended).

The programme could have benefited from meetings with more operational or technical level Roma employees to get a full perspective.

3.2 General and country-specific conclusions, lessons learnt

3.2.1 General conclusions and lessons learned

Roma employment in public administration and governmental institutions in North Macedonia is significantly higher than in the partner countries and many active employment measures for Roma have been set up. NGOs are very active and collaborate productively with the national and local authorities to ensure the Roma Inclusion Strategy and its related Action Plans are implemented and followed-up.

However, the fact remains that more than half of the Roma employed in the public sector are in the temporary public works schemes and are often offered these work schemes in exchange for their vote for a political party which highlights the issue of indirect vote buying. Measures should be established to ensure the same selection criteria apply to all candidates and that the selection process be transparent.

It was agreed that a critical mass of Roma civil servants in the relevant ministries is needed to effectively implement Roma Inclusion Strategies and Action Plans.

Employment policies are mostly mainstreamed and do not provide special measures to incite the employment of Roma. Although all the partner countries in the thematic visit have policies and measures to help vulnerable and low-skilled workers gain employment, the effect on the Roma population is difficult to measure. Moreover, there is a lack of a strong partnership or collaboration between Roma and pro-Roma NGOs and civil society and the relevant national authorities in the development of employment policies and measures affecting Roma and in the monitoring of the latter in the framework of the National Roma Inclusion Strategies and related action plans.

Employees in Employment Centres and other social services are not always aware of various measures offered, such as second-chance schools or free / subsidised transportation, to assist Roma job-seekers and other vulnerable or marginalised job-seekers. Capacity-building measures and trainings at national and local levels should, therefore, be provided.

3.2.2 Conclusions and lessons learned in North Macedonia, hosting country

In North Macedonia, it is the Employment Service Agency (ESA), in the framework of its regular functions, which implements activities for Roma employment. It participated in activities to increase employability and employment of unemployed Roma and their successful inclusion, in the Roma Decade 2005-2015, specifically the Action Plan for Employment, through its involvement in the National Coordinative Body.

The ESA continued working on the implementation of the Roma Strategy 2014-2020, and the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan for Employment 2016-2020 through its participation in the National Coordinative Body. It monitored and reported on the employment of unemployed Roma persons in cooperation with the Ministries and other institutions involved in Strategy implementation. ESA representatives in Employment Centres

regularly cooperate with Roma Information Centres to provide information and facilitate access to services for job seekers and employers.

The ESA initiates services and implements active employment programmes and measures from the Operational Plan for active employment. Applications to participate in the services and employment measures is voluntary.

The quotas of ethnic minorities to be hired in public services are based on statistics garnered from IT-based information and algorithms and on the percentage of these ethnic minorities in the overall population. This implies that it is in the interest of the Roma people to declare their ethnicity as legislations, measures and quotas, such as the percentage of dedicated social housing, scholarships or free tuition, are based on those statistics.

According to the Ministry for Political Systems, which monitors the number of Roma working at the national and local public sectors level, out of a 2.8% of the general population, there are 1.14% Roma employed at the national public sector level. The population census indicates a number of 55 000 Roma, but NGOs estimate the real number to be between 80 000 and 100 000 as not all Roma declare their ethnicity. Unfortunately, it is reported that census-takers can be politically affiliated, and that some Roma are left out or bought out of participation. Proof of ethnicity, therefore, needs to be certified by a notary.

The increasing political participation of Roma is slowly increasing their influence on government policies and there is now one Roma woman Member of Parliament, Ms Ljatifa Shikovska. Ms Shikovska is part of a 10-member cross-party Inter-parliamentary group on integration and inclusion of minorities and ensures that Roma issues are kept as a top priority by highlighting these issues and proposing solutions such as amendments to officialise informal settlements. A Roma MP can also exercise influence on proposing Roma Responsive Budgeting and sufficient funds to effectively implement the Roma Inclusion Strategy and related action plans.

Although over 1300 Roma are employed in the public sector, more than half of them are involved in public work schemes which are not permanent and only operate on a 3 monthly basis. In order to have more influence and a stronger impact on mainstreaming Roma in all policies, and to implement the objectives of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma (2022-2030), more Roma need to work in public administration and in the secretariats of the relevant ministries. According to Roma civil society in 2020, there were 262 Roma employed in public works, 55 in municipalities, 465 in schools and hospitals and 765 in public enterprises.

However, the attractiveness of the public sector is decreasing as salaries are not competitive. There is an important emigration of qualified workers to other countries, the private sector or NGOs thus weakening the public sector.

The North Macedonian authorities collaborate closely with Roma NGOs such as REDI and Romalitico. This strategy allows for a multi-pronged approach to influencing the substance and relevance of the Roma Inclusion Strategy and its related action plans as well as ensuring their implementation and monitoring.

3.2.3 Conclusions and lessons learned in partner countries

Croatia

There are an estimated 25 000 Roma living in Croatia⁴, although the 2021 census result, published in September 2022, indicates there are 17 980 Roma, which is an increase compared to 16 975 in 2011. Major obstacles such as low levels of education, due to school drop-outs after the age of 15 (the end of obligatory education), and early marriages remain the biggest challenges faced by Roma when accessing employment in both the public and private sectors.

Roma employment in the public sector is rather weak. Cooperation and collaboration with Roma NGOs exists, but their effectiveness could be improved if the NGOs were more united in their vision. Moreover, although there are 200 registered Roma NGOs, only about 30 are active, so there is a clear need for a more active Roma civil society.

There are approximately 600 Roma employed in public works, and approximately half of them are employed through Roma associations, while others are mostly employed through municipalities.

There is currently 1 Roma MP (Mr Veljko KAJTAZI) in the Croatian Parliament elected to represent 12 smaller national minorities, with no affiliation to a political party necessary⁵.

⁴ GOHRRNM has conducted in 2017/18 a comprehensive research, including a collection of baseline data for the monitoring of the implementation of national Roma policies. It is available in English, Romani, and Croatian.

<https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti//Roma%20Inclusion%20in%20the%20Croatian%20Society%20-%20a%20Baseline%20Data%20Study.pdf>

The biggest research ever conducted with Roma population in Croatia involved a presurvey covering all locations with more than 30 self-declared members of the Roma national minority that, besides key information about the locality population, included detail information about locality (infrastructure, access to public services etc.). Mapping involved 1550 Roma households in 128 (concentrated and dispersed) localities in 12 counties with 30 or more Roma. Total coverage is 4,139 Roma households with total of 22,486 Roma, out of which 10,422 at 16+ age.

⁵ Article 16 of the Act on Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament stipulates that Croatia guarantees persons belonging to national minorities in Croatia the right to representation in Parliament. Article 17 of the same law stipulates that persons belonging to the Serbian national minority elect three members to Parliament in compliance with the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, the Hungarian national minority elects one member to Parliament, the Italian minority elects one member to Parliament, the Czech and Slovak minorities jointly elect one member to Parliament, the Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish national minorities jointly elect a member to Parliament, and the Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian national minorities jointly elect one member to Parliament.

Current Parliament – 3 MPs from Serb national minority, 1 MP from Italian national minority, 1 MP from Hungarian national minority, 1 MP from Czech national minority, 1 from Albanian (representing Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian national minorities) and 1 from Roma national minority (representing Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish national minorities).

Although discrimination has allegedly decreased in parallel with a lack of qualified persons available on the job market, salaries are higher in the private sector, and many young Roma with qualifications choose not to work in the public services or leave Croatia for other EU member states. For example, Roma nursing school students (there are currently about 30 enrolled), often migrate to other countries once they graduate.

Republic of Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova there many barriers to employment including:

- Deficiencies in general and professional education;
- Widespread lack of identity documents needed to register with the employment office;
- Preference for self-employed activities and lack of interest in formal employment;
- Reliance on unemployment or other social benefits;
- Discrimination by potential employers;

There is a lack of political will to implement Roma inclusion policies and there are few active measures directly promoting Roma employment.

Portugal

Roma communities have been living in Portugal for more than 5 centuries, but only became full-fledged citizens in 1882, though the Constitution.

Despite the progress of Roma integration policies and positive social transformations, the Roma population is one of the most vulnerable groups to poverty and social exclusion, while also being the target of multiple prejudices and stereotypes. The National Roma Communities Integration Strategy ENICC 2013-2020 was the first national plan specifically addressed towards Roma Communities. In 2018 the document was revised and adopted a new implementation period until 2022, through RCM nº 154/2018 29 November.⁶

The first National Study on Roma Communities⁷, financed by the High Commission for Migration and Technical Assistance Operational Programme and conducted by CEMRI-UAb (Center for Studies on Migration and Intercultural Relations, Aberta University) and CIES-IUL (Center for Research and Sociology Studies, University Institute of Lisbon), concluded by the end of 2014 and published on 20 January 2015, estimated more than 24 000 Roma persons in Portugal. The completion of the study was necessary and important since there is a general lack of information on the geographical distribution and the socio-economic situation of Roma in Portugal.

In 2013, the National Roma Communities Integration Strategy (ENICC 2013-2020) was approved by the Council of Ministers Resolution no. 25/2013 of 17 April, in line with the European Commission Communication "A European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020" of 5 April 2011. ENICC committed itself to bring about

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https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/Publicac%CC%A7a%CC%83o+ENICC_EN_bx.pdf/c129278c-86bc-4647-88e7-f362a61c56f1

⁷ <https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/estudonacionalComunidades.pdf/f4aa9b13-797d-40bb-a3b3-1c4011b05760>

improvements to the well-being and integration of Roma communities, to encourage mutual understanding and positive interaction and to deconstruct stereotypes.

However, the ENICC monitoring process has shown a need for changes to be introduced, on the one hand, regarding the clarification and implementation of measures, and on the other hand, regarding the identification of priority intervention areas – particularly gender equality, knowledge on Roma communities and their participation in the implementation of ENICC. Therefore, the Portuguese Government decided to review the Strategy to adjust its objectives and targets and, consequently, to enhance its impact on the improvement of living conditions for Roma communities. The main priorities are to improve the educational and professional integration as well as the living conditions of Roma people in situations of social exclusion, to recognise and boost intervention in intercultural mediation, to improve information and knowledge, and to combat discrimination against Roma communities.

The lack of education is an obstacle for Roma to access civil servant positions as there is a minimum education requirement to apply for government jobs. Exceptions are possible but can only be made if the person has the necessary and required professional training and/or experience.

Labour strategies are mostly mainstreamed and the public sector needs to be more sensitised to affirmative action measures. The National Roma Communities Integration Strategy addresses this issue through its Specific Objective – Promoting non-discrimination and anti-discrimination measures, Measure 2.1.2. – Strengthening of anti-discrimination instruments. In 2021, the target for the indicator "Number of training initiatives on interculturality and history and Roma culture aimed at central and technical personnel of the central Public Administration responsible for the integration of Roma people" was achieved, with 13 training actions being held for 217 participants.

The target for the indicator " No. of training initiatives on interculturality and history and Roma culture aimed at local management and technical personnel responsible for the integration of Roma people" was achieved, with 11 training actions being held for 178 participants.

University support programmes for young Roma students exist but the key issue is that not enough Roma students make it to the university level.

The Public sector employment is divided into:

- Operational level: secondary education not required (drivers, cleaners, gardeners among others)
- Technical level: complete secondary education required
- Higher technical level: complete university education required

There are currently two Roma university graduates (one man and one woman) working in the Support Unit for Roma Communities (NACI) of the High Commission for Migration (ACM). Also, there are several municipal mediators working in the scope of the Municipal and Intercultural Mediation Project (since 2018 37 mediators, 11 women and 26 men). We also have knowledge on school mediators, mediators in health and other municipal mediators, but as there is no possibility of systematic monitoring, there is no exact data provided.

Slovak Republic

As mentioned, data on ethnicity are not collected. Based on the 2021 Census, 156 000 people self-declared their Roma identity; however, more than half of them stated the Roma nationality was not their primary one. Based on the Atlas of Roma Communities⁸, there are approximately 440 000 Roma in Slovakia. The methodology used in the Atlas relies on the ascribed identity. Apart from the estimated number of the Roma population, the Atlas also reveals the number of socially excluded Roma (approximately 200 000).

The number of Roma working in governmental institutions and public services is not publicly available. However, there are Roma involved in high-level politics, 2 Roma elected to the National Council, 1 Roma elected in the EU Parliament. There are also about 45 Roma mayors and other elected members of mostly local and sometimes regional councils; among these is one female Roma mayor.

The Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities and its Office is the advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic which proposes, monitors and coordinates activities related to Roma inclusion. The mission is to implement systemic solutions towards the equality of the Roma population. The Plenipotentiary is responsible for the thematic enabling condition⁹, too.¹⁰ As a result, they coordinated the drafting of the National Roma Integration Strategy entitled the *Strategy for Equality, Inclusion, and Roma participation until 2030* (adopted in 2021) and its Action plans for the years 2022-2024 (adopted in 2022)¹¹. It also performs as the National Roma Contact Point for the European Commission.

Marginalised Roma face greater unemployment rates than the rest of the population in Slovakia. One of the reasons for it is the low rate of education. In addition, Roma often face discrimination in many fields, including the labour market. Results from an experiment carried out by the Institute of Financial Policy indicates that Roma have 50 % less chance of getting a job than non-Roma.¹²

Labour strategies and policies are mainstreamed. There is no specific form or measure for the employment of the marginalised Roma communities and so far, ALMPs has not succeeded in increasing the employment of Roma, specifically the marginalised Roma population. Moreover, it's difficult to provide measurable outcomes that have come out of the recruitment procedures, policies and measures implemented due to the absence of ethnic data collection (while such data is rather based on self declaration).

As mentioned above, Labour Offices, as one of the key actors in the field of employment, do not do enough to tackle unemployment. In addition, they are not always aware of measures such as transport allowances to employers, or second-chance education. Therefore, they do not actively offer these opportunities to unemployed people.

⁸ Atlas of Roma Communities, (2019). <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/atlas-romskych-komunit/>.

⁹ Specific objective: Promoting the socioeconomic integration of marginalized communities such as Roma people, Name of enabling condition 4.5. National Roma inclusion strategic policy framework.

¹⁰ Slovak Government Office. 'Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities'. <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/urad/?csrt=4169414378368801766>.

¹¹ More about the Strategy 2030 available here: <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/strategie/strategy-of-equality-inclusion-and-participation-of-roma-until-2030/>. Documents are available in English language.

¹² Institute of Financial Policy. (2014), *Bez práce nie sú koláče*, Komentár, Inštitút finančnej politiky, Bratislava. <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=9887>.

3.3 Good practices identified at international and national level

On 1 August 2022, the [Council of Europe Development Bank](#) (CEB) and Redi Economic Development SA (REDI SA) signed a €3 million loan to improve access to funding for entrepreneurs from Roma communities in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. The loan will be channelled to micro-lenders in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia by REDI SA, the first microfinance investment vehicle with a specific focus on Roma populations. The micro-lenders will in turn lend the funds to Roma businesses to aid them to finance eligible direct costs of fixed assets, productive equipment and working capital.

The [European Progress Microfinance Facility](#) (Progress Microfinance) for employment and social inclusion was established in March 2010.

In the EU Member States, microcredit institutions may apply to the European Investment Fund for guarantees and financed instruments (debt, equity and risk-sharing instruments), so they can become intermediaries under Progress Microfinance. They in turn grant microcredits (loans of less than 25 000 €) to micro-enterprises or individuals, including socially excluded persons and, more generally, any other person disadvantaged in obtaining a conventional loan. These funds must be used for the creation or development of micro-enterprises.

The [Poznan Declaration](#), adopted by the countries of the Western Balkans in 2019, stresses the significance of establishing formal channels and mechanisms for joint involvement of local governments and the Roma communities. It aims to continue and enhance efforts for full equality and integration of Roma in all areas, including employment, housing, education, health and civil registration.

[ROMACTED](#) ensures the participation of key actors and stakeholders at the local level through training sessions on a number of topics affecting Roma communities including the essential topic of Roma Responsive Budgeting. In June 2022, a training session was held with the participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLSP).

Under the ROMACT programme, the Council of Europe and the EU have developed a specific approach that brings together local authorities and Roma community representatives to agree on priorities, prepare action plans and secure funding for projects that help Roma people. [ROMACT 9](#) has just been approved, with a budget of €1.7 million, and it will run for 20 months from January 2023.

3.3.1 Good practices identified in North Macedonia, hosting country

The 2001 OHRID agreement recognised Roma as a national minority. In 2004, a special employment programme for national minorities was organised, financed by the European Union and in which 600 people were trained. In 2005, there were special recruitment campaigns of Roma organised by the government such as the PASSE 1 and PASSE 2 programmes. In the first programme, 21 young Roma were trained for 9 months and 19 were offered public services job. The other 2 dropped out of the programme.

North Macedonia has developed a long-term strategy for the employment of Roma and, through effective and pertinent policies and measures, the inclusion of Roma in employment, including employment in the public sector, is starting to bear fruit.

The newly established Commission for Non-Discrimination has one Roma Commissioner, the first Roma ever to sit on a Commission set up by the government. This Commission receives complaints of discrimination and currently has 32 complaints from Roma mostly on cases of access to goods and services. Interestingly, women file most of the complaints. There was recently a case of 4 Roma women dismissed from their sales jobs in a shop because of a suspicion of theft. The Commission found the charges to be discriminatory and the 4 women won their case.

Education and employment are closely interlinked and a two-pronged approach, early-childhood and inclusive quality education and special employment measures is pursued. In this framework, the project *Inclusion of Roma Children in Public Preschool Institutions* organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in partnership with the Roma Education Fund (REF) has enabled 6,400 Roma children aged 3 to 6 years to attend preschool and a new kindergarten is scheduled to open in September 2022. The rate of regular attendance in kindergartens increased from 60% to 90% in the period between 2006 and 2022 in the municipalities where the project was implemented. The transition rate from preschool to primary education improved from 80% to 96% for the same period.

However, despite notable progress in the number of Roma children enrolled in all levels of school education, the number remains 20 – 30% lower than among non-Roma. Enrolment is not constant throughout the country and can be explained by the lack of inclusive schools in certain regions. Areas with mixed or inclusive schools offer a higher level of education than segregated ones.

- The Roma Education Fund supports promising young Roma students to pursue their higher education through the award of scholarships. In 2020-2021, 48 young Roma (19 men, 29 women) received a scholarship. Eastern Macedonia has the most Roma attending University with about 250 students.
- In 2022, for the first time the ESARNM Operational Plan introduced a quota of 5% aimed at increasing the inclusion of Roma in active employment measures.
- Representatives of the **Employment Service Agency** of Republic North Macedonia (ESARNM), in cooperation with other Ministries and institutions (Roma integration 2020, Regional Cooperation Council), regularly participate in the development and preparation of programmes, projects and documents for the advancement of the condition of Roma. The ESARNM is involved in the implementation of the Strategy for Roma inclusion 2022-2030 (the section on employment), as well as in other activities connected with Roma inclusion.
- Spanish [Acceder](#) employment programme based pilot projects in Prilep and Tetovo in 2020-2022, implemented in the framework of the project led by the UNDP, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLSP) and ESA - **Creating Job Opportunities for All (2020-2022)** –supported by the UNDP in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in collaboration with the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG). It strongly focuses on enhancing the employability and facilitating employment of the most vulnerable persons, and particularly Roma and namely Roma women and girls. In this service, unemployed Roma have access to a team of mentors who motivate and regularly inform them, and other persons at risk of social exclusion, about employment possibilities and increased employability, but also act as facilitators

between local businesses and the target groups. An individual approach and assessment of knowledge, qualifications and skills, help to guide the job seekers towards suitable programmes and measures supported by the Operational Employment Plan. Ministry based programme with NGOs in Skopje, Tetovo and Prila. The pilot projects in Prilep and Tetovo are promising but a common understanding of the programme and its implementation needs to be ensured with the partner NGOs. As a result of this issue, it was decided to focus the project on Skopje, but the lack of coordination hindered the success of the project. Although the ACCEDER programme was successful in Spain, it proved challenging to replicate without the required conditions, as experienced by North Macedonia.

- **Youth Guarantee** activities, intended for youth (15-29 years) registering as unemployed for the first time, offer/supply them in the period of four months with: employment, continuous education and training, or participation in one of the active programmes and measures. In 2021, the Youth Guarantee activities included 979 young Roma.
- **Microcredits for Self-employment project** to provide suitable loans for Roma who want to start their own business, or legalise their informal business, and to create new jobs through self-employment. The beneficiaries are unemployed persons (active job-seekers), registered with ESA and the **Project Lending of legal entities (micro, small and middle companies) for creating new jobs.**
- **Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (REDI)** in North Macedonia works to economically empower Roma communities by promoting existing entrepreneurs and their businesses using business development services, coaching and access to finance. The overall objective of the project is to advance employment and the economic situation of Roma. The MLSP works closely with REDI and the North Macedonian government matches REDI funds. **REDI Fund** provides access to finance for Roma entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs active in Roma communities and partners with the CEB, DG NEAR, DG JUST, USAID, EEA Norway Grants, Open Society Foundation (OSF), among others. Current projects in North Macedonia include the **Roma Digital Boost (RDB)** project aimed at Roma entrepreneurs with new or existing businesses, start-ups, developing businesses, formal or informal businesses who want to expand or to move their activity online. Furthermore, **REDI Recycling** is a social enterprise led by Roma waste collectors using circular economy for recycling secondary raw materials and aims to formalise around 500 Roma waste collectors through their employment in the social enterprise.
- **Institute for Research and Policy Analysis (ROMALITICO)** advocates using evidence-based research to influence public policies . It prepares and leads the process in the development of national and local action plans which are implemented by the authorities and monitors them. It also monitors state budgets for Roma Inclusion Strategies and related action plans and prepares shadow reports. They namely advocate for the legal representation of the Roma community in state and public administration and gender equality mainstreaming.

Civil society organisations are actively involved in policy development and monitoring and work hand in hand with the MLSP in proposing measures in the operational plan for employment which has produced a positive outcome.

- Since 2019, under the Project **“Employed Roma women is equal to empowered women”**, The Health Education and Research Association (HERA) is working on the economic empowerment of Roma women with the aim to improve the socio-economic status of Roma women in the Republic of North Macedonia. In the framework of the project, an Advocacy Group for equal employment opportunities composed of Roma women activists was created. This advocacy group is currently the only Roma initiative that actively works on monitoring the implementation of strategic documents and promotes gender equality in the field of employment.

3.3.2 Good practices identified in partner countries

Croatia

The Croatian Employment Service provides support for employment by co-financing the cost of salaries to employers thus facilitating the acquisition of first work experience or internships.

Through financial support to all those who want to start their own business, the Croatian Employment Service provides support in the development of entrepreneurial ideas. The self-employment programme includes counselling on the development of an entrepreneurial idea, workshops for writing a business plan, financial support for starting a business, advisory support in the first year of operation for the sustainability of the business, and similar activities.

There are targeted measures in place to enhance the special recruitment of Roma in the form of:

- Prevention of early school leaving by appropriate choice of occupation – Roma minority students are supported in their career choices by vocational guidance experts in the final grades of primary and secondary school, which includes individual assessment and counselling on the most appropriate form of continuing education. In this process, students are additionally motivated to continue their education and receive information about employment opportunities after graduation.
- Empowering young unemployed Roma through education for personal and professional development – The two-month programme aims to raise awareness of their own opportunities, detect barriers to employment and define a more realistic picture of themselves and their employment opportunities as well as ways to overcome barriers to entry.
- Increasing the employability of Roma by acquiring new competencies required in the labour market – Depending on individual needs and opportunities, it is possible to include unemployed Roma in various education and training programmes which include primary school completion and first occupation programmes, adult education, workplace and through a combined model of education (at the employer and in adult education institutions). In the “on-the-job” training programme, participants have personalised

support from mentors and, upon completion of the programme, receive a certificate of acquired competencies.

- Employment support programmes – make it easier to enter the labour market and work full-time. They include co-financed employment and internships of up to 24 months to gain first work experience.

Republic of Moldova

The Roma Mediator Institute was established to facilitate the integration of Roma people in society, including into the labour market. It is a permanent measure, funded by state budget.

The Governmental Decree nr. 557/2013 offers a legal base for the Local Public Administration (LPA) to employ and organise the activity of Roma community mediators. As of September 2022, there are 48 community mediators active in 39 localities of the Republic of Moldova which reflects an increase of interest from the LPA in using Roma community mediators compared to 2015 when there were only 30 mediators employed in 29 localities. Their role is to facilitate and intermediate communication between Roma and the LPA in addressing the needs of the community through existing public services such as education, health, employment and social services.

Based on the initiatives on stimulating Roma women's participation in 2019, several Roma women, supported by the UN Women Moldova as a special project, ran for the position of local councillor in their community. As a result, 12 Roma women were elected as councillors.

Political parties invite Roma representatives to support their political ideal and become members of the party, however, to date, only one political party has succeeded in having a representative elected as a member of the Moldovan Parliament. This was the Action and Solidarity Party (Partidul Actiune si Solidaritate – PAS) in 2019 and also in the Parliamentary elections organised in July 2021.

Furthermore, a key measure representing the political will of including Roma in governmental institutions is the position of adviser in the Cabinet of the Prime-Minister dealing with the issue of human and minority rights, including Roma rights, which did not exist in the former cabinets.

In 2021, the National Agency for Employment (NAE) had registered 1830 persons of Roma ethnicity as unemployed which represents only 5% of the total number of job seekers. Most of those registered seem to lack a stable profession and have a low level of education which denotes a complex problem and reduced chances of employment. There is need for a long-term intervention. In this framework, the NAE organises special vocational courses and 126 persons of Roma ethnicity have graduated and have been placed in fields of work such as agriculture, viticulture, fruit and vegetable warehouse workers, seamstress, assembler-installer of thermal windows, to name a few.

Portugal

Regarding the measures on employment of the National Roma Communities Integration Strategy, it is important to mention the following achievements in 2021¹³:

- There were 1339 registrations (of which 645 were male and 694 female) of unemployed Roma and/or 1st job seekers in Employment Centers and Employment Training Centers;
- 1374 new Roma users have had a Personal Employment Plan – PEP (704 were female and 670 male users). In 2021, an average of 4891 PEP were active (2671 from female and 2220 from male users), 1584 PEP were finalised (779 from female and 805 from male users) and 2148 PEP were revised (1146 from female and 1002 from male users);
- 195 mentoring processes were developed for the monitoring of the professional integration of Roma people (81 female and 114 male users);
- In terms of the indicator "No. of Roma people covered by active employment measures or other initiatives promoting employability, including the creation of self-employment (e.g. Active Youth Employment measure, Youth Investment Programme, Employment-Insertion Agreement+, Professional Internship measure)", the target was achieved with 1,361 people covered, 637 of whom were female and 724 male users;
- The indicator "No. of initiatives aimed at ensuring eligible Roma can access active employment measures or other initiatives promoting employability (within the scope of the Choices Programme, the Local Plans for the Integration of Roma and Intercultural Mediators)", the annual target of 30 (thirty) was achieved and exceeded through the initiatives of the Municipal and Intercultural Mediator Projects (PMMI), reported by the PMMIs of Coimbra (65), Fafe (89), Braga (1), Águeda (7) and Castelo Branco (6);
- The Continuous Pedagogical Training of Trainers Reference Tool "Vocational Training in a Context of Cultural Diversity: Specificities of Working with Roma persons", was developed and integrated in the Continuous Pedagogical Training of Trainers Reference Tool "Intercultural Learning", which dedicates a 10 hour module to the Roma community "Roma communities in Portugal". This module aims to deconstruct myths about the Roma community and give additional knowledge on cultural and historical aspect of this community;
- Seven employers were involved in awareness raising actions for hiring Roma people;
- The indicator referring to "No. of initiatives promoting good practices for the professional integration of Roma people" was achieved with actions developed by the Municipal and Intercultural Mediators Projects (PMMI) of Braga (1), Águeda (4), Castelo Branco (3) and Moura (10).
- The indicator "No. of initiatives publicising positive action measures in the labour market" was also achieved in 2021, having been carried out a campaign through the Project "Conhecer para Integrar", financed by the National Roma Communities Integration Strategy Support Fund (FAPE) and promoted by Terras Dentro - Association for Integrated Development, to promote the hiring of Roma people. This initiative included testimonies of professional lives of Roma people, with different academic paths.

The main objective of the mainstream Employment-Insertion Agreement, promoted by the Institute of Employment and Professional Training, is that socially necessary work is performed by unemployed people receiving unemployment benefit or unemployment social benefit.

¹³ <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/estrategia-nacional-para-as-comunidades-ciganas-enicc-concig>

The development of the project “EmPoderar: Educação e Participação das Mulheres Ciganas, by a civil organisation (Portuguese Network for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women) in a partnership with a Roma women’s association (AMUCIP - Associação para o Desenvolvimento das Mulheres Ciganas Portuguesas), which aimed to increase the education level of young Roma women, between 18 and 35 years old, and to encourage their participation for the exercise of active citizenship in the community and for dialogue with different actors in the public space, based on intercultural dialogue. This project had components of training, mentoring and accompaniment of Roma women in self-employment.

The Project of Local Roma Integration Plans is coordinated by the High Commission for Migration and financed by the European Commission. The project was launched in 2018, and the main objective was to support the design of Local Plans for the Integration of Roma Communities (10 plans and 2 intermunicipal plans) and to design a Guide for the Elaboration of Local Plans, which could be disseminated to other municipalities after the end of the project. The project has its 2nd edition, started in the first quarter of 2021.

In the framework of the Local Plans Project, the participant municipalities are addressing measures of employment and training.

The **Operational Programme for the Promotion of Education (OPRE)** provides university scholarships, as well as a set of trainings, tutoring and follow-up measures for Young Roma higher education students and their families, helping them a better integration in labour market, including public services.

Project for Municipal and Intercultural Mediators, which gives the possibility to integrate Roma employees in local government institutions and services.

Slovak Republic

The Slovak Republic has been enhancing numerous job positions through investment of European structural funds. Jobs related to projects with positions addressing improvement in marginalized Roma communities in a large extent recruit Roma. Such positions are for example field social workers, workers in the community centres, civil patrols, and field workers in healthcare. Projects are implemented through the Office of Plenipotentiary of the Slovak government for Roma Communities, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Health.

Currently, there has been an effort to provide jobs that could reinforce Roma employment in different sphere, too. Ministry of Culture has launched the national project focused on restoration of historical castles. Project creates opportunities for unemployed people, and specifically for the Roma to participate in various related jobs, since the Roma should cover as much as 60 % of these jobs. Calls for expression of interest have been already published.

Government introduced set of measures during the COVID-19 related pandemic addressed to employers and employees to preserve existing jobs (measures such as First Aid, First Aid+, First Aid++). First Aid consisted of financial contribution to employers to cover 80% of salary and provision of financial support for self-employed people, too.¹⁴

¹⁴ Korona.gov.sk. 'Pomoc pre občanov a podnikateľov'. <https://korona.gov.sk/prva-a-druha-pomoc/>.

In addition, the country provided support to the agricultural area. In 2020, the government introduced allowance to support seasonal employment in agriculture. The support consisted of provision 398,52 € / month to the employer to cover compulsory public health insurance, social security contributions, and old-age pension contributions paid by employers and employees.¹⁵ Support of seasonal jobs and self-employment is relevant in the context of Roma, as many especially marginalized Roma perform in seasonal jobs and self-employment.

3.4 Envisaged short-term and mid-term follow-up

3.4.1 North Macedonia, hosting country

The recently adopted Action Plan for the Equality of Roma women within the framework of the Strategy for inclusion of Roma in North Macedonia 2022-2030 will be effectively implemented and the results and impact measured in order to further enhance existing and future policies supporting the equality of Roma women.

3.4.2 Partner countries

Croatia

Though the Action Plan 2023-2025 is currently being developed, it is expected that the Croatian Employment Service will continue the current scope of activities, and even further increase investments for the implementation of relevant measures. In addition, GOHRRNM plans further capacity building of Roma youth, women and councils of national minorities, as well as wide ranging projects focused on employment and education. The Ministry of Science and Education will also increase the use of European Social Funds and funds for Roma education. Following the 2021 Census results, Roma, according to the provisions of the Constitutional Act, will be able to increase their political participation at the regional and local level at next local elections in 2025 (including a post of deputy county prefect in Međimurje County), which will further improve their integration.

Republic of Moldova

Increasing the role of the National Employment Agency (ANOFM) in placing Roma in employment:

Organising annual roundtables for employment (STOFM) on International Roma Day (8 April), by territorial subdivisions, with the participation of representatives of community libraries, NGOs running Moldovan language and vocational training courses, employers and possibly Roma people on the theme "Roma at work", with the aim of overcoming prejudices of the parties on the social inclusion of Roma (the format of the event can be improved along the way);

¹⁵ Ministry of Employment. 'Ministerstvo podporí 5 000 pracovných miest'.

<https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/informacie-media/aktuality/ministerstvo-podpori-5-000-pracovnych-miest.html>.

Establishing a collaboration between the STOFM, where most unemployed Roma are registered, and local public authorities, in particular the community mediator services, in order to better inform them about ANOFM measures and services.

Portugal

Following the presented public policies and programmes, the mid-term aim is to guarantee the continuation these measures.

The new National Roma Integration Strategy would be more effective with a new follow-up and monitoring strategy, which could help to better monitor the impact of its measures.

Slovak Republic

During the preparation of the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030¹⁶ and in the subsequent follow-up to the Action Plans, the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities considers essential to incorporate important systemic measures and activities bringing necessary changes in the targeting of activities in upcoming years. The Plenipotentiary considers the need for:

- Ensuring that all available actions take into account the transition from education to the labour market, through systemic, targeted, and accessible options (support for first work experience, mentored placement) that lead to accelerating this process. The objective will be secured by improving both, basic and digital skills improving services, and support for the long-term unemployed and inactive as well as by increasing the skills base of the MRC.
- Increasing the effectiveness of available employment services and use of active labour market policy instruments as well as non-public providers to achieve greater efficiency and necessary assistance needed to make the transition to the labour market through measures aimed at comprehensive employability support approach as well as the availability of employment data.
- Using the potential of the social economy in Slovakia, which is seen as a new option for employing the most vulnerable groups, not excluding support for incremental steps to start business and to use all available assistance for starting it.
- Avoiding discrimination and manifestations of anti-Roma racism on the open labour market and in entry interviews, which is currently seen as one of the biggest obstacles that must be eliminated, as well as reducing the gender gap that leads to a multiple discrimination against Roma girls and women.

Regarding the above mentioned mechanisms and instruments, there is a prerequisite for accelerating the entry into the labour market, which should lead to a better standard of living, and reducing poverty with an emphasis on equal treatment in employment. The implementation of the above-mentioned basic lines of measures and activities will create a prerequisite for a real acceleration of Roma integration, and will prevent the deepening of the existing segregation on the labour market.

Further, it is important to mention some of the objectives of the Cohesion Policy of the Slovak Republic for the years 2021-2027:

- Increase employment of men and women from the MRC to 45% by 2030,¹⁷
- Increase employment of women from the MRC to 41% by 2030,¹⁸

¹⁶ Dokument available here: <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/dokumenty/>.

¹⁷ *Slovak Republic Partnership Agreement 2021-2027*, p. 32.

- Reduce the proportion of young people in NEET from MRC localities to 40% by 2030,¹⁹
- Reduce the proportion of women aged 16-24 from the MRC, who are neither in employment nor in education to 44% in 2030.²⁰

In addition, Slovakia should ensure:

- Smooth transitions of National projects (in the new programming period) focused on Roma inclusion to secure continuous implementation,
- Greater co-operation between the resort of employment and education to ensure the education is linked to the labour market demand,
- Awareness-raising amongst the Labour Offices and other relevant actors in the field of options (e. g. second-chance education) for people with low education.

3.4.3 ADI-ROM and the Council of Europe in general

The ADI-ROM should envisage a follow-up and stock-taking report to measure the impact of the Action Plans for Employment within the National Strategies for the Inclusion of Roma, on the basis of the recommendations made in this report and clear indicators. Further synergies should be established with the ROMACT and ROMACTED programmes and methodology to stimulate local authorities and municipalities to employ Roma.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations listed are drawn from the contributions received from the host and partner countries.

- Establishing a long-term employment strategy which is closely linked with a long-term education strategy at the national, regional and local levels.
- Enhancing the collaboration and partnership between the Ministry responsible for the development and implementation of the Roma Inclusion Strategy and its related action plans, namely in this case the Action Plan on employment, and the Ministry of Labour, the Office for Employment at the national level and the local offices, and active national Roma NGOs to implement and monitor the Action Plan on employment. NGOs could complement the official reporting on the implementation of the National Inclusions Strategies by drafting shadow reports and monitoring the allocated budgets and implementation of the measures.
- Specific training should be regularly organised to ensure staff of local and regional Labour Offices are aware of the existing and new measures available to assist job seekers to find employment and to motivate employers to hire them.
- Reporting on active employment measures must include measurable outcomes and the impact on Roma through pertinent data collection.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

- Special training sessions to prepare for public service competitions could be offered by NGOs at regular intervals through targeted projects but also by the national employment offices.
- Placing Roma public servants across all Ministries and administration to facilitate the mainstreaming of the Roma Inclusion Strategy and its related action plans and advance policies for Roma inclusion.
- Ensuring proportionate representation of Roma public servants and Member of Parliaments, according to the percentage of the national Roma population and take positive actions if needed.
- Ensuring Roma-responsive budgeting at all levels of government and in the overall government budget to help ensure funds and secure the sustainability of programmes even in the case of a change in government.
- Ensuring the sustainability of labour integration positive measures by fixing them in a broader local economic and employment development strategies and involving local employers and municipalities.
- Establishing bridges between education and employment. This could be facilitated by NGOs and implemented by the Offices for Employment.
- Granting renewable scholarships, through education funds, foundations, universities and other higher studies establishments to young Roma which are to be monitored throughout the course of their studies until completion.
- Establishing a network of municipal intercultural mediators in schools to act as a neutral facilitator to assists parties in resolving disputes impacted by cultural misunderstanding and which is adept at helping to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps.

Appendix I : List of participants

North Macedonia (host country)

KAMBERI Mabera

Vice-Chair of the ADI-ROM

Head of Department for Coordination and Technical Assistant to the Minister

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Croatia

TAHIRI Alen

ADI-ROM member from Croatia

Director, Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

Republic of Moldova

MARIAN Radu

Expert appointed the Republic of Moldova

Member of the Parliament of Moldova

Portugal

BARANYAI Berill

ADI-ROM member from Portugal

Support Unit for Roma communities (NACI)

High Commission for Migration (ACM)

Slovak Republic

RIGOVÁ Edita

Expert appointed by the Slovak Republic

Plenipotentiary Office of Slovak Government for Roma Community

Council of Europe and Secretariat

DERVISAGIC Lejla

Head of Operations

Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje

NEUMANN Petra

Programme Manager

Roma and Travellers Team

POPPE Valerie

Project Manager

Roma and Travellers Team

Appendix II : Agenda of the thematic visit

Monday, 20 June

Venue: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, ul. Dame Gruev No. 14 Skopje
Room 11

09.00-09.30	OPENING OF THE MEETING Moderator: Mabera Kamberi , Head of Department for Coordination and Technical Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, ADI-ROM member
09.00-09.15	Welcome speech Mabera Kamberi , Vice-President of the ADI-ROM and Head of Department for Coordination and Technical Assistant to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy
09.15-09.30	Objective of the ADI-ROM thematic visit and introduction to the topic Valerie Poppe , Project Manager, Roma and Travellers Team, Directorate of Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe
09:30-10.30	Meeting with Jovana Trenevaska , Minister of labour and social policy
10.30 – 11.00	Tour de table - presentation of national experts and their expectations
11.00 – 12.00	SITUATION IN NORTH MACEDONIA LEGISLATION AND POLICIES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT, NATIONAL ACTIVE MEASURES FOR EMPLOYMENT Moderator: Mabera Kamberi , Head of Department for Coordination and Technical Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, ADI-ROM member Mile Stojanovski , State adviser for labour, Ministry of Labour and social Policy Vladimir Krasic , Adviser, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Elena Grozdanova , State adviser for equal opportunities Exchange, conclusions and recommendations
12.00 – 12.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
12.30 – 13.00	MEASURES TARGETED AT STIMULATING ROMA EMPLOYMENT IN AGENCY FOR EMPLOYMENT IN NORT MACEDONIA Veljka Juran , Head of Unit, Agency for employment
13.00 – 13.30	Meeting with Roma employees, state officials in Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Nahida Zekirova , Adviser, Unit for implementation of Strategy for Roma Tanja Krstevska , Junior adviser, Unit for implementation of Strategy for Roma Exchange, conclusions and recommendations
13.30 – 13.45	Walk to Restaurant, "Klub na pratenici"

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14.00 – 15.15	Working lunch offered by the Ministry of Labour and Social policy Meeting with Elvis Memeti , Adviser to Prime Minister for Roma issues
15.15 – 15.30	Walk to Ministry of Labour and Social policy
15.30-18.00	EXCHANGE ON THE SITUATION IN PARTNER COUNTRIES Moderator: Valerie Poppe, Project Manager, Roma and Travellers Team, Directorate of Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe
15.30-16.00	Exchange on the situation in Croatia Presentation by the expert from Croatia 20' Discussion, conclusions and recommendations 10'
16.00-16.30	Exchange on the situation in the Republic of Moldova Presentation by the expert from the Republic of Moldova 20' Discussion, conclusions and recommendations 10'
16.30 - 17.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
17.00 – 17.30	Exchange on the situation in Portugal Presentation by the expert from Portugal 20' Discussion, conclusions and recommendations 10'
17.30 - 18.00	Exchange on the situation in the Slovak Republic Presentation by the expert from the Slovak Republic 20' Discussion, conclusions and recommendations 10'
18.00	<i>End of the first working day</i>

Tuesday, 21 June

Venue: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, ul. Dame Gruev No. 14 Skopje
Room 11

09.30 – 10.30	Atula Kasumi , State Adviser, Ministry for Political System
10.45 – 11.30	Ismail Kamberi , Commissioner, Commission for Non discrimination
11.45 – 12.45	Ljatifa Shikovska , Roma Member of Parliament
	EXCHANGES WITH ROMA NGOs AND CIVIL SOCIETY
13.00-14.00	Asib Zekir and Cristina Marian , Roma Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
14.15 – 14.45	Light lunch offered by Romalitiko
14.45 – 15.45	Elvis Shakiri , Romalitiko
16.00 – 17.00	Mila Carovska and Ms. Olivera , NGO HERA
	<i>End of the second working day</i>

Wednesday, 22 June

Venue: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, ul. Dame Gruev No. 14 Skopje
Room 11

Facilitators: **Petra Neumann**, Programme Manager, Roma and Travellers Team, Directorate of Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe
Valerie Poppe, Project Manager, Roma and Travellers Team, Directorate of Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe

9.30 – 12.30 **Debriefing meeting** between the experts of the ADI-ROM thematic group (from the host and partner countries) and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe
Preliminary draft text of the thematic report based on the debriefing

- Main conclusions as regards the way forward;
- Main issues and conclusions to be highlighted in the thematic report, including ECtHR case-law;
- Lessons learnt regarding the topic;
- Good practices identified in the requesting/partner countries to be highlighted in the thematic report;
- Possible follow-up envisaged to the ADI-ROM thematic visit, including joint initiatives and projects, as well as bilateral/multilateral cooperation;
- Information about the preparation and presentation of the ADI-ROM thematic report;
- Additional information and documents to be provided by requesting/partner countries;
- Timeframe for the preparation of the thematic report and desirable input from each requesting/partner country expert.

12.30 *End of the thematic visit*

Appendix III: Questionnaire to host and partner countries

Questionnaire to the host and partner countries on how to stimulate governments to employ Roma and Travellers in governmental institutions and public administration

Labour laws: Employment, training and equal opportunities

1. What are the existing labour laws and policies? Do they differ for the recruitment of civil servants? Do they ensure the employment of under-represented groups such as Roma and Traveller?

Governmental policies and measures on Roma employment

1. What is the latest situation in your country concerning policies in supporting Roma employment?
2. What are examples of policies and measures to support Roma employment and do they promote gender equality and youth? Are they effective?
3. Are there targeted measures in place to enhance special recruitment of Roma?
4. Are these permanent measures or are they of temporary nature ie external or internal programme funded, national unemployment schemes etc?
5. What measurable outcomes have come out of the recruitment measures?
6. What methodologies of approach were used, ie careershadowing, youth targeting, training schemes

Employment rates of Roma per sector (field of employment), private and public, disaggregated by gender, age and level of education

1. What are the current overall employment statistics in your country?
2. What are the current employment statistics concerning civil servants?
3. Is disaggregated information on employment available, if not, what are the obstacles and if so, what are the statistics?

How is Roma and Traveller employment addressed by the authorities and by civil society

1. What service/help is provided for Roma and Traveller job seekers?
2. What measures have been taken to help young Roma graduates to find a job?
3. Is there a bridge between universities or schools of higher studies and governmental human resources departments?
4. What measures exist to help low-skilled Roma to find a job?
5. Are there any strategies that have proved to be particularly successful for stimulating governments to employ Roma in governmental institutions and public administration? If so, what did they achieve and how was this managed?
6. Are the policies, measures or strategies fruitful in ensuring sustainable employment?

Inter-related phenomena

1. Have issues interrelated to employment been identified? (discrimination, education, poverty, remote dwellings and lack of access to infrastructure)?

Appendix IV - European and International Standards and Reference Texts

European Commission

[EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation 2020-2030](#)

[Council Recommendation \(2020/C 372/01\)\)](#) of 30 October - 2020 A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee

World Bank

- [Enhancing the Employment Chances of Roma, Knowledge Brief, March 2009](#)

International Labour Organization

[Policies to prevent and tackle labour exploitation and forced labour in Europe, December 2021](#)

[Indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee, December 2015](#)

[Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for Roma Youth in Central and Eastern Europe. An ILO Resource Guide, November 2016](#)

[White paper: Recommendations to promote youth employment in Montenegro, October 2016](#)

Council of Europe relevant texts and monitoring bodies' reports: ECRI and FCNM Committees

The [Strasbourg Declaration on Roma](#)

(34) Ensure equal access of Roma to employment and vocational training in accordance with international and domestic law, including, when appropriate, by using mediators in employment offices. Provide Roma, as appropriate, with possibilities to validate their skills and competences acquired in informal settings.

Council of Europe [Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#)

CM Recommendation [Rec\(2001\)17](#) on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe

CAHROM [Thematic visit on vocational training/education for Roma](#), Cracow, Poland, 26-28 November 2015

[Meeting Report of the 4th Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller Civil Society](#) (October 2017)

CAHROM [Implementation Report on Recommendation Rec\(2001\)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers on Europe](#), February 2012

North Macedonia**The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommendations²¹**

In its 5th monitoring cycle report adopted in March 2016, ECRI made the following comments:

59. **The 2014 – 2020 Roma Strategy** in North Macedonia focuses on five strategic areas: employment, education, housing, health and culture.⁷⁷ National Action Plans for the first four areas and for supporting Roma Women are to be adopted by the end of 2015. It is too early to assess the results of this strategy. However, it is not the first such initiative; it follows on the heels of other Roma strategies, including the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, which have had some impact.

60. Progress has thus been made in the area of public sector employment, where the proportion of Roma has increased from 0.33% in 2005 to 2.56% in 2012. The number of unemployed Roma who participated in an initiative to enhance their employability, such as training courses, also increased from 133 in 2010 to 612 in 2013; but the latter figure still only represented about 10% of all Roma who were registered as unemployed during that year (see also § 75). Such a low percentage is particularly problematic given that low levels of education and work-related skills are seen as the main obstacles to improving the employability of members of the Roma community. It is therefore positive that the new strategy aims at increasing this figure to 50% by 2020. [...]

73. In spite of the achievements mentioned in § 60 and ECRI's 2010 recommendation, there is little overall improvement in the unemployment rate of Roma, which the authorities still estimate to be between 60-70%, and even higher among Roma women. This is more than twice as high as the national average of 26%. The authorities acknowledged to the ECRI delegation that a shortage of staff and financial resources in the public Employment Agency limits the establishment of individual skill profiles and tailor-made training activities. Although this is not only a problem for Roma alone, they are disproportionately affected due to their already existing marginalisation in the labour market.

74. ECRI recommends that the authorities provide sufficient resources to the public Employment Agency to enable it to give the necessary support to unemployed members of the Roma community in the form of skills assessments and relevant training opportunities.

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON NATIONAL MINORITIES²²

4. [...] Roma remain dramatically disadvantaged from a socio-economic point of view and are, in addition, faced with discriminatory attitudes amongst public employees in state institutions. Incidents of police brutality and of ethnic profiling at the border continue to be reported regularly, whereby Roma, in an apparent effort to comply with the EU visa-liberalisation agreement, are not allowed to exit the country.

Assessment of measures taken to implement the recommendations for immediate action from the third cycle

5. Efforts have been made to address the problems that Roma confront in the field of education, mainly through increased attention being paid to the enrolment of Roma children in schools. A new Roma National Inclusion Strategy was adopted in 2015 following consultations with minority and civil society representatives. Yet, few of the comments provided were reportedly taken into account.

²¹ [ECRI 5th monitoring cycle report on the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", adopted on 18 March 2016](#)

²² Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities, [Fourth Opinion on "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"](#), adopted on 20 December 2016.

Moreover, there is no comprehensive and up-to-date action plan and no earmarked budget has been allocated for the implementation of comprehensive measures. The vast majority of Roma are not registered with the Employment Agency and thus do not benefit from its programmes to promote their inclusion in the labour market. [...]

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[2019 National Platform on Roma Integration in the Republic of North Macedonia / Policy Recommendations](#)

Croatia

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommendations²³

79. Another negative factor for Roma integration is their limited and unequal access to employment. According to a FRA EU-MIDIS survey published in 2016, 62% of Roma are unemployed (compared to 10,6% of the general population). Roma mostly trade in the informal economy, do seasonal work or work as cleaners in public utility companies. Against these limited areas of activity, ECRI takes positive note of the efforts of the Croatian Employment Bureau (CEB) to increase the access of Roma to the labour market, through vocational and on-the-job training as well as public works programmes, and assistance in registering Roma in active employment policies. ECRI also notes with interest the introduction of self-employment subsidies, covering the cost of starting a business, from which four persons benefitted in 2015. The continuous support of the CEB by paying visits to potential employers and sharing information on the employment opportunities for unemployed Roma are also worth mentioning.

80. Although these measures have had a positive impact on the employability of Roma, considering that 77% of young Roma aged 16-24 years are neither in work nor in education or training, ECRI encourages the authorities to endorse more innovative measures, particularly in reaching out to private employers, to increase the economic empowerment of this group.

81. On a related note, ECRI finds it striking that only nine Roma persons are employed as civil servants in the country. In addition to the reluctance of Roma to declare their ethnicity, reports continue to suggest that state institutions tend to overlook implementing the positive action measures for minorities in employment. In view of the ongoing public employment service reform, ECRI considers that the authorities should take a more targeted approach to break the vicious circles of unemployment of Roma.

82. ECRI recommends that the authorities increase the number of Roma who work in the civil service through effective implementation of the positive action measures available in the legal framework.

Framework Convention on National Minorities²⁴

The 5th Opinion on Croatia of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities adopted on 1 February 2021 outlines the following conclusions and recommendations

7. In the framework of its National Roma Inclusion Strategy, the Croatian Government has further

²³ [ECRI 5th monitoring cycle report on Croatia](#), adopted on 21 March 2018

²⁴ [5th Opinion on Croatia](#) of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted on 1 February 2021

implemented policies and programmes to improve the social inclusion of Roma in all fields of life and conducted a Baseline Data Study on Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society. Furthermore, it has adopted Operational Programmes for National Minorities for the period 2017-2020, both a general one for the protection and promotion of the rights of all national minorities, and specific ones for seven national minorities. The adoption of these programmes has been unanimously welcomed by persons belonging to the national minorities as it contributes to the exercise of the rights of national minorities and increases their cultural autonomy. However, some of the planned actions under the Operational Programmes for National Minorities lack clear indicators, timeframes or funding allocation. Furthermore, only a small number of the activities foreseen under these programmes have been implemented so far. For the Roma national minority, new areas should be explored through independent research under the envisaged post-2020 National Roma Inclusion Strategy, such as gender inequalities and the impact of early marriages on school dropouts and absenteeism, especially in the transition from primary to secondary education.

65. According to the Ombudsperson, the **Roma** and the Serb national minorities are among the groups most exposed to various forms of discrimination. [...] Persons belonging to the Roma minority face discrimination in the fields of education, employment, housing and health protection and are exposed to ethnic profiling, notably when entering shopping centres. Roma women face double discrimination on account of both gender and ethnic origin.

238. The Croatian Employment Service does not collect data by ethnicity in the Employment Register, but by indicators. According to these indicators, the Employment Service records persons belonging to the Roma national minority as facing the most acute difficulties in accessing the labour market, primarily due to low skill levels and a lack of knowledge of the Croatian language. Most of the Roma have difficulties in performing their traditional jobs and are faced with job insecurity and work in all kinds of uncertain and low-paid jobs.

239. The number of unemployed among this minority is estimated indirectly through proxies such as the place of the residence, social welfare system data and knowledge of Romani or Boyash Romanian languages. At the end of December 2019, there were 3 290 persons who identified themselves as Roma in the register of the Croatian Employment Service, i.e. 2.5% of the total unemployed population. The authorities acknowledge that this data might be an underestimate because Roma do not necessarily self-identify as such and might not all be registered in the Employment Services Records.²¹⁸

240. In the period from January to December 2019, 766 Roma from the register of the Croatian Employment Service were employed on the open labour market, out of which 277 were women (36.1%). Taking into account the specific needs of its beneficiaries, the Employment Service implements a series of active labour market policy measures aimed at disadvantaged unemployed people in the labour market and employers in need for preservation of workplaces. It also implements well-established active employment policy interventions that support employment, self-employment, permanent seasonal work, further training, vocational training, workplace training and inclusion of specific target groups in public works programmes and job preservation subsidies for employers in business difficulties.

241. According to information provided by the authorities, in order to create the preconditions for increasing the employment of Roma, all registered unemployed Roma are included in regular activities of the Croatian Employment Service and in activities aimed exclusively at Roma. These activities seek to influence their rapid integration into the labour market. In 2019, 3 290 unemployed

persons who identified themselves as Roma were covered by different labour market activities. In addition, to improve employability and to make the right decision on further career development, the Croatian Employment Service offers career guidance services to pupils in the final year of primary school, as well as to students and to all unemployed

242. The Advisory Committee reiterates that in order to promote effective integration of persons belonging to disadvantaged minority groups in socio-economic life, comprehensive and long-term strategies should be designed and implemented. [...] Adequate resources need to be provided in a timely manner at all levels of operation, especially locally. Furthermore, the implementation of such policies should be carefully monitored, and their impact evaluated, in close co-operation with representatives of the minorities concerned, with a view to adapting and strengthening them over time.

243. Despite these favourable policy measures, the Advisory Committee is concerned by the precarious employment situation of persons belonging to the Roma national minority and their over-representation in unemployment figures, considering that Roma represent less than 1% of the total population according to the last census. Their level of poverty therefore remains high. Discrimination faced by persons belonging to national minorities in accessing employment in the private sector, especially those living in marginalised and underdeveloped rural areas and not only Roma, seems underestimated (see Legal and institutional framework under Article 4 above).

244. The Advisory Committee notes with satisfaction, however, that some progress was reported concerning the employment of Roma in Međimurje County due to economic migration of many inhabitants of this county to other EU countries. It takes note that the number of Roma employees in both public and private sectors has increased and that, according to the opinion expressed by Čakovec municipal authorities, it has greatly contributed locally to a better image of Roma.

245. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to develop tailor-made training programmes and secure significant investment to promote the employment of persons belonging to national minorities in both the public and private sectors, especially those living in marginalised and underdeveloped rural areas.

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[National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020](#)

[Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study \(2018\)](#)

Republic of Moldova

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommendations²⁵

Greater financial and human resources should be made available for implementation of the actions included in the Action Plan to support Roma, particularly in the housing and employment fields.

According to the UNDP-WB-European Commission regional Roma survey 2011 on Moldova, only 16 % of Roma aged 16-19 are receiving a higher secondary education (as compared with 78% in the population as a whole).

88. ECRI has been informed that, because of the low unemployment rate (around 4 %), it is relatively easy for immigrants and members of ethnic minorities to find jobs in Moldova.

²⁵ ECRI report on the Republic of Moldova (fourth monitoring cycle), published in 2013.

89. The situation is quite different where the Roma are concerned. The first obstacle they encounter is their low level of education. Changes on the labour market have led to the disappearance of certain occupations traditionally practiced by Roma. Some Roma women cannot go out to work because they have to look after their children when they are not admitted to kindergarten.

90. In addition, Roma come up against considerable prejudice. A recent survey showed that only 46 % of the 1 200 respondents would agree to have a Rom as a work colleague. A young Rom who had completed a university course was refused a post in a ministry when he mentioned his Roma origins, but was able to find a job when he omitted to mention his origins in his application.

93. Under objectives nos. 8 and 9, the Action Plan also provides for increasing the employment rate among Roma. Actions nos. 28-39 of the Plan are designed to achieve those objectives. They include increasing the number of Roma registered with employment agencies, establishing co-operation between the National Employment Agency and Roma civil society, providing vocational training courses and traineeships in the public sector for young Roma, promoting seasonal employment among the Roma and supporting business start-up and development.

Framework Convention on National Minorities²⁶

25. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that many Roma, in particular, continue to face serious obstacles in accessing a number of important rights, including in the fields of education (see Articles 12 and 14), employment and social services (...). Roma women are especially affected by multiple layers of structural inequalities and discrimination, which impede their enjoyment of basic rights. The adoption of the Roma Action Plan 2011- 2015 was welcomed as a significant achievement and it is further welcomed that Roma representatives have been involved in preparing an evaluation report. According to them, the vast majority of measures foreseen in the action plan were not implemented, as the allocation of competencies for taking concrete action remained unclear and funding was grossly inadequate. In addition, the plan did not contain effective measures to address the widespread discrimination faced by Roma in their daily life, for instance when looking for employment.(...).

103. Roma continue to experience particular obstacles in finding employment (see also Article 4) as well as persistent discrimination in access to goods and services. Statistics collected in 2011 show a significant gap between the employment rates of Roma and non-Roma. Civil society organisations estimate, however, that the hidden unemployment among Roma is much higher than the published figure, as only very few Roma are registered with the national employment centres. This limits their opportunities for vocational and other professional training and impedes access to full health insurance. (...)

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"No Jobs for Roma"
Situation Report on D

²⁶ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on the Republic of Moldova, adopted on 25 May 2016.

Portugal

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommendations

ECRI report on Portugal 5th monitoring cycle (2018)²⁷

86. ECRI welcomes the adoption of a national strategy for the integration of Roma (SNIR) on 17 April 2013 through which the authorities have implemented a recommendation of ECRI's 3rd report. The strategy covers key areas of integration such as education, housing, health, employment and professional training. It sets out clear and ambitious objectives accompanied by indicators and target values. The objectives in the area of education for example are to ensure that 50% of Roma children can receive preschool education for at least one year in 2016, and 100% in 2020; that 40% of Roma children successfully complete compulsory schooling in 2016, and 60% in 2020; and that school drop-out is cut by 40% in 2016, and 60% in 2020. According to the 2016 report on the strategy's application, 94% of the measures provided for in the strategy have been put into operation and 1 173 initiatives have been carried out to implement it.

87. Substantial progress has been achieved, such as training and recruiting a sizeable number of Roma mediators, which has helped to improve school attendance rates and the results of Roma pupils in many districts; it is now planned to recruit 50 mediators on a more permanent basis. Under the OPRE programme, developed by civil society and the ACM, 30 young Roma, many of them women, were able to start university studies in 2017, which is seen as a historic turning point. During its field visit to Loures, the ECRI delegation was able to see for itself the enormous efforts required to move forward in this area. After her first year in the job, the mediator has managed to bring half of the 14 Roma children up from the last class of primary school class to secondary school.

ECRI report on Portugal 4th monitoring cycle (2013)²⁸

111. In its third report, ECRI encouraged the Portuguese authorities to continue to take all the necessary measures to assist members of Roma communities in obtaining employment, accompanied by measures to prohibit and penalise any discriminatory conduct by employers who refuse to take on Roma on the ground of their ethnic origin.

112. ECRI notes that the recent FRA/UNDP Survey on the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States mentioned above found that in Portugal only about one out of 10 Roma aged 20 to 64 was in paid employment. Just over 50% of Roma respondents aged 16 and above looking for work in the past five years in Portugal said that they had experienced discrimination because of their Roma background.

113. ECRI notes that the National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities contains numerous measures to counter the precarious economic circumstances associated with difficulties in entering the labour market and patterns of poverty and social exclusion. Examples include creating spaces for dialogue with business associations; involving NGOs, Roma associations and Roma mediators; setting up a mentoring project in the labour market to promote inclusion and the demystification of negative portrayals of Roma communities; training 30 Roma mediators to act as facilitators in the labour market; and establish local partnerships for employment and vocational training.

196. ECRI urges the Portuguese authorities to take steps to put in place a monitoring system to enable the collection of data, either by Government agencies or by recognised academic institutions, which may indicate whether particular groups may be disadvantaged or discriminated against on the

²⁷ [ECRI report on Portugal \(fifth monitoring cycle\) published in 2018](#)

²⁸ [ECRI report on Portugal \(fourth monitoring cycle\) published in 2013](#)

basis of “race”, ethnicity, religion or membership of Roma or other vulnerable communities, and to ensure that this is done in all cases with due respect for the principles of confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary self-identification.

A process of interim follow-up for these three recommendations will be conducted by ECRI no later than two years following the publication of this report.

Framework Convention on National Minorities²⁹

Recommendations for immediate action

- resolutely address and combat direct and indirect discrimination faced by persons belonging to the Roma communities by stepping up efforts to raise their awareness of legislative standards and of existing human rights and equality bodies, as well as of various mechanisms for filing complaints and remedies available to victims of discrimination, hatred and racism;
- endow the sectorial anti-discrimination complaints bodies, as well as the Ombudsperson, with proper investigative powers and the power to impose sanctions; effectively monitor cases of discrimination, hatred and racism; shorten and simplify complaint procedures; and provide timely follow-up and feedback to complainants on the status of and response to their complaint;
- extend the Intercultural Municipal Mediators Programme to more municipalities, whilst ensuring Roma mediators’ independence from undue interference, as well as regulating the professional status of the socio-cultural mediators, promoting and securing certified training and employability of Roma mediators, in particular women, and ensuring the programme’s sustainability through adequate state support.

The National Roma Communities Integration Strategy and ACM Action Plan

53. The Roma Integration Strategy covers key areas of integration such as education, housing, health, employment and professional training⁵⁹ and sets out clear and ambitious objectives. The Strategy has more action-based measures, clearer indicators and yearly targets. The implementation of the Strategy is regularly monitored, and assessment reports are regularly published.

60. The Advisory Committee recommends that key public administrations at state and local levels, in close cooperation with Roma communities, take ownership and assume responsibility for achieving the objectives of the Roma Integration Strategy falling within their area of competence and earmark necessary financial resources, as well as gather reliable data in their respective area of competence that can underpin policy progress overtime. The Advisory Committee also calls for a rigorous and regular assessment, in close cooperation with members of Roma communities, of the impact of policy measures and outcomes and to ensure sustainability of the actions.

Roma mediators and Community Action Groups

133. During its visit, the Advisory Committee was able to appreciate that Roma mediators equipped with adequate language and cultural skills and trained on intercultural mediation have been able to contribute to the progress made for Roma communities at local level. Roma mediators have contributed *inter alia* to the improvement of access to public services and hospitals, to the fight against discrimination, to increased school attendance, to solving housing-related issues, to the creation of job opportunities and to the promotion of Romani arts and culture. For the Advisory Committee, this pragmatic and participatory approach shows that cooperation between Roma and the general population at the local level, fostered by strong political support, is a worthwhile and cost-effective investment that needs to be supported and sustained. However, the Advisory

²⁹ [Framework Convention on National Minorities, fourth opinion on Portugal](#), adopted in 2019.

Committee underlines the importance of having Roma mediators more closely involved in devising and applying objectives and measures to respect cultural characteristics and specific needs of Roma families and individuals, for example in the housing and employment sectors. For Roma mediators to continue to have the trust of Roma communities, the Advisory Committee wishes to point out that it is important that they remain independent in their role.

Participation of persons belonging to the Roma communities in social and economic life

Employment

137. The Advisory Committee notes with regret that Portuguese Roma continue to experience a high unemployment rate which excludes them from effective participation in social and economic life. Unemployment is still disproportionately high among Portuguese Roma adults and many of them are at risk of poverty and social exclusion since they are only employed in low-skilled work. Access to the labour market is complex, but in the case of persons belonging to Roma, discrimination appears to be an additional obstacle, as well as stricter regulations in traditional activities of Roma families, such as street vending.

138. The Advisory Committee was made aware during its visit in Moura that most of the Roma from this region work in Spain, mainly on agricultural land, in jobs which are not always declared to the authorities. According to Roma representatives in Moura, they have great difficulties in being offered a job in the municipality and the surrounding area.

139. Several measures are taken by the authorities to foster the employability of persons belonging to Roma communities under Roma Integration Strategy. From January 2014 to July 2018, the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) identified a total of 13 991 persons as Roma and applied specific measures to increase their employability. A total of 30 643 interventions were carried out by the IEFP, in accordance with the Roma jobseekers' Personalised Employment Plans.

146. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to develop a plan for vocational education and training of Roma which would better match local employment needs.

147. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities consider increasing the validation of professional skills of young non-graduate Roma through the system of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC), further developing micro-credits for self-entrepreneurship and fighting discrimination systematically in the employment sector.

148. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to find ways to encourage employers, in particular in the private and agricultural sectors, to hire Roma, through for instance the recruitment of Roma mediators in local employment offices, the introduction of financial incentives for employers, or the setting-up of job fairs.

162. The authorities are invited to take account of the detailed observations and recommendations contained in Sections I and II of the Advisory Committee's Fourth Opinion. In particular, they should take the following measures to improve further the implementation of the Framework Convention:

- further improve the situation of persons belonging to the Roma communities, including through additional affirmative measures, especially in the fields of education and employment; strengthen the participation of Roma in economic and social life by building the capacity of Roma associations and evaluating the effects of measures taken in different policy areas, including through a sustainable and human rights-based ethnic data collection

system;
OTHERS
National Roma Communities Integration Strategy

Slovak Republic

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommendations³⁰
<p>96. The various programmes that promote the training and preferential recruitment of Roma as mediators, teaching assistants and members of civic patrols as positive action are having numerous positive effects. Firstly, they have created thousands of jobs and helped to lift thousands of families out of great poverty. Secondly, the Roma who perform these roles have detailed knowledge of problems and interactions within Roma communities and can intervene in a very targeted manner. Thirdly, many of them have been able to continue with their studies or acquire new professional skills. Fourthly, and lastly, because of their success in terms of work, these people serve as examples for pupils and their parents by showing that investment in education and regular school attendance lead to a lasting improvement in living conditions.</p> <p>97. ECRI considers that the authorities should encourage the employment of Roma without a school-leaving qualification or certificate even more widely within these programmes and make arrangements so that they can continue with their education in parallel with their work. At the same time, these positions should be turned into lasting jobs funded by the authorities and the contracts of employment should be long-term or permanent contracts. According to Law No. 112 of 2018 on social enterprises, Municipalities should recruit a larger number of Roma within their social enterprises, especially female and young Roma. ECRI welcomes the activities implemented in the framework of the Diversity Charter, which recommends and supports, for example, businesses wishing to recruit Roma in order to overcome the shortage of labour.</p> <p>98. ECRI recommends that the Slovak authorities expand their programmes to improve the living conditions of Roma, including in shanty towns, and fully encourage the employment of Roma as a whole, including through positive action.</p>
Framework Convention on National Minorities³¹
<p>10. The institutional framework of the agenda of human rights in Slovakia underwent significant changes during the period under review. In 2010 the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter referred to as the "Council") was established as a new permanent advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic. The Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities continued to perform his tasks and activities within the Government of the Slovak Republic. The advisory bodies of the Government of the Slovak Republic active until then in the field of human rights, discrimination and development of civil society have been included in the newly-established Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality. The Council has transformed these bodies into its permanent committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups; - Committee for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations;

³⁰ ECRI [6th monitoring cycle report on Slovak Republic](#), adopted on 1 October 2020.

³¹ [Fourth Report submitted by the Slovak Republic pursuant Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of national minorities](#), received on 28 January 2014.

- Committee for Seniors;
- Committee for Persons with Disabilities;
- Committee for Gender Equality;
- Committee for Children and Youth.

At the same time two new committees have been established: the Committee for Research, Education and Upbringing in Relation to Human Rights and Developmental Education and the Committee for Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and other Forms of Intolerance. The Committee for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations has been transformed into the Council of the Government for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations by Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 397 of 1 August 2013. The Committee for the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual Persons was established by Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 516 of 3 October 2012.

21. The Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities continues his activities. Improvement of the situation of the Roma in all areas of life remains one of the priorities of the Government of the Slovak Republic. In January 2012, the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 was approved by the Government as a comprehensive policy document that addresses challenges of social inclusion of Roma communities also at the EU level. Principles of the Strategy are intended to provide basis for policies related to unfavourable situation of Roma for the period up to 2020, in particular in the field of education, employment, housing and healthcare, and also for the programming period of 2014-2020 for purpose of using structural funds. Focus of policies on majority population is also an important element of the Strategy. The Strategy is based on three basic principles . de-stigmatization, desegregation, de-ghettoizing, and defines the priority policies in seven main areas of inclusion. In addition to the four basic ones (education, employment, housing and health), the Strategy has also outlined other priority topics such as financial inclusion, non-discrimination and attitudes to the majority population. For each of these areas the Government will or has adopted an action plan, and a structured monitoring report will be drawn up regularly . annually . in which the fulfilment of particular measures will be assessed. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities is the National Contact Point for the implementation of the Strategy. It also participates in the meetings of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion. During the drafting of the Strategy, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities also cooperated with NGOs, experts and activists; the expertise of UNDP was also used as well as the organizational capacities of the Open Society Foundation (OSF).

24. In April 2013 an amendment of Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended (Antidiscrimination Act) was adopted. The amendment has extended the definition of indirect discrimination to include, in harmony with EU Regulations, also the threat of discrimination. In addition, a definition of affirmative action was modified so that it includes an explicit reference to the elimination of disadvantages resulting from discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, affiliation to national minority or ethnic group. By this amendment the possibility to take affirmative action was extended to local authorities and private legal entities with a view to promoting its application.

83. During the period under review, Slovakia adopted several key policy programmes for Roma integration. In 2011, the Reviewed National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 updated for 2011-2015 was adopted, focusing on Roma integration in four priority areas (education, employment, health, and housing). In 2012, the Government approved the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020, which also recognized the Reviewed National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, updated for 2011-2015 as the Strategy's Action Plan for Roma integration up to 2020 for the four priority areas. In addition, the Strategy covers financial inclusion, non-discrimination and attitudes towards the majority. Action plans are currently being prepared in these areas. The Strategy is a comprehensive document which also covers the active involvement of Roma in the creation and fostering of its objectives at all levels.

84. The monitoring and evaluation of the fulfilment of individual measures forms an integral part of the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020. The Strategy brings an elaborated set of tools for the evaluation of the impact of governmental policies aimed at ensuring greater transparency and accountability with respect to the implementation of obligations towards the inclusion of Roma. It defines particular measurable indicators for each priority area in order to monitor how objectives are fulfilled. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, being a coordinator of the implementation of the Strategy, is the body with main responsibility for supervising the application of individual policies, programmes and projects. The framework of monitoring and evaluation based on outcomes is also a basic element for proving the outcomes of drawing funds from EU resources.

89. In the period of 2010-2015 the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Regional UNDP Centre are performing a project named "Statistical monitoring of living conditions of selected target groups". The intention of the project is to monitor the development of living conditions of marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia, with the aim to offer data and analyses for social inclusion policies focused on this disadvantaged target group. Based on the obtained statistical data, it will be possible to better target individual social policy instruments. The project is a continuation of the project already performed in 2005 by UNDP, which was also focused on monitoring living conditions in Roma households. In the period of 2010 . 2012, a representative quantitative monitoring in Roma households in Slovakia was performed (housing, education, medical condition, labour market, material deprivation, subjective perception of the situation), social surveying of concentrations of the Roma marginalized communities (the above-mentioned Atlas) as well as an in-depth survey of selected aspects of living conditions in the segregated environment (incomes, expenditures, consumption, common situations). The activities also included qualitative research named "Marginalized Roma communities in the eyes of the helping professions", which surveyed the situation and identified obstacles in the performance of services helping with the social inclusion of this target group. The analysis of projects of the European Social Fund in the programming period 2007-2013 was performed within the OP Employment and Social Inclusion, and their impact on marginalized Roma communities was evaluated. The knowledge from this analysis helped to reflect both strong and weak points in the current setting of the funds, and in such way helped achieve an optimum setting of the programming period 2014-2020. Selected outputs of the project have been presented at several expert conferences. The data from the project became crucial underlying documents for the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration up to 2020. The European Commission evaluates the above-mentioned Strategy as one of the best ones, exactly due to the application of

the number of exact indicators and a well-elaborated framework for monitoring and evaluation.

90. Slovakia pays special attention to the social inclusion of Roma. Support for the social inclusion of persons endangered by social exclusion or socially excluded persons through the development of services of care, with a special focus on marginalized Roma communities, is among the priorities of the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion (2007-2013). Emphasis on the creation of equal opportunities in access to the labour market and support for the integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market with a special focus on marginalized Roma communities is another important field of responsibility of the Operational Programme in the programming period 2007 - 2013.

91. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic is one of the key authorities to fulfil the tasks and measures resulting from the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, updated for 2011-2015. The Government has set a global objective focused on the improvement of access to work opportunities, with a particular emphasis on non-discriminatory access to the labour market as well as on active policies and programmes directed at the labour market, education, continuing education, and the support of self-employment activities. In 2012, the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereinafter referred to as the "Labour Office") provided a wide range of information and counselling services with respect to career choice, job selection and job seeking or job change.

92. Two national projects are currently being carried out aimed at the support of employment of persons from socially excluded communities, in particular from marginalized Roma communities. Annex 3 includes information on performed and prepared projects for disadvantaged job-seekers. Since 2012 the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic has been performing a national project on Field Social Work in Municipalities (2011-2015), focused on the improvement of living conditions in Roma settlements and on the promotion of employment. Based on preliminary estimates, the performance of work of 860 field workers and their assistants will be ensured within the project until 2015 in at least 250 municipalities. Community work has been performed since 2004, and it represents one of the most important tools for addressing the issue of marginalized Roma communities. Community work is also an important tool of social assistance. A national project of community centres for social inclusion is currently under preparation with the aim to further strengthen community centres. The project will create preconditions for the construction of the network for socially excluded persons or persons threatened by social exclusion, in particular the population from marginalized Roma communities. The main objective of the project is to support social inclusion and positive changes in communities, in particular in marginalized Roma communities. Its results are expected to contribute to the extension of social and community work and to the standardization of its activity, and thus to prepare an appropriate basis for the legal regulation of community centres. About 120 community centres are expected to be supported within the project.

OTHERS

[Slovak Republic: Situation of Roma, including employment, housing, education, health care and political participation \(2012\)](#)

[Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020](#)

APPENDIX V – BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE HOST AND PARTNER COUNTRIES

North Macedonia, hosting country

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) implements childhood to retirement policies. The strategy is to accompany people throughout their lives. It aims to embed structural and systemic policies which will last beyond changes in governments.

The MLSP is active in policies and activities for the inclusion of Roma in mainstream society and improving their situation. Its long-term goal is to achieve one society for all, erase discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all and a priority is improving the labour mobility of Roma. Social protection, minimum assistance measures guarantees are afforded to all vulnerable citizens.

For the first time, a quota of 5% for inclusion in all employment programmes in the private sector has been set for the employment of Roma. This affirmative action for employment of Roma unfortunately does not apply to the public sector although there is a political will to employ Roma in the public sector.

The MLSP has integrated gender equality and equal opportunities in its activities and has recently adopted an Action Plan for the Promotion and Empowerment of Roma Women, with specific activities and a sustainable budget with as one of its priorities the employment of Roma women. It will also host the 9th International Roma Women's Conference (IRWC) in 2023.

The increase of the educational level of Roma children was the main priority of the Roma Decade for the Inclusion of Roma with successful results reflected by higher numbers of Roma public servants. There are Roma public servants at senior level of administration including in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, the MLSP and the Commissioner's office and there is a Roma Member of Parliament. Roma make up 3% of the population of North Macedonia and represent 2.76% of the staff in the public service. Roma are officially recognised as a minority in the Constitution.

Systematic registration of Roma children in kindergarten free of charge in regular school. Decrease the gap of Roma and non-Roma in school education.

Results presented on the outcome of the enrolment. Compulsory education is from 6 to 18.

The Steering Committee has agreed that education is key for the integration of Roma. The focus is on increasing the education level of Roma children and mentor them to reach tertiary education level. Primary education is free of charge. Since 2006 there is a pool of 400 Roma children, who receive scholarships for secondary education. There is also a credit from the World Bank for parents, who leave their children in secondary education. The Ministry of Education provides scholarships for tertiary education.

Employment Service Agency of Republic North Macedonia and the Operational employment plan

Employment measures within the framework of the North Macedonia Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma 2022-2030 are implemented by the Employment Service Agency of

Republic North Macedonia (ESARNM). Previously Roma employment was under the responsibility of a Roma Minister without portfolio which produced limited results.

The ESARNM was involved in the Roma Decade 2005-2015, on the goals of planning, preparing and implementing actions over a ten-year period to improve and develop conditions for full Roma inclusion in society. Through its involvement in the National Coordinative Body, the ESARNM participated in the preparation of the Decade National Action Plan, and executed planned activities on employment.

Following the Roma Decade 2005-2015, the ESARNM continued working on the implementation of the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2014-2020, through its participation in the National Coordinative Body, by implementing and monitoring the National Action Plan for employment 2016-2020. The ESARNM continuously monitored and reported goals and activities and employment of unemployed Roma persons, as part of its agenda and in cooperation with Ministries and other institutions, involved in implementing the Strategy. The ESARNM, through its representatives in Employment Centres regularly cooperated with Roma Information Centres to provide information to unemployed Roma and facilitate access to services for unemployed people and employers.

Furthermore, in the framework of its regular functions, the ESARNM cooperates with **non-governmental organisations** working on the issue of Roma employment, by exchanging data, sharing information about activities for unemployed people, participating in projects, events, and cooperating in drafting information sheets, reports etc.

It is responsible for many activities to improve Roma employability and employment and as part of the vulnerable categories on the labour market, Roma are supported with the activation of services and active employment programmes and measures.

To reduce unemployment, the **operational employment plan** provides measures for employers to employ Roma or develop their businesses and efforts to increase the skills of the unemployed. On average, about 3-4% of Roma have been beneficiaries of active employment measures in the last few years. Although the absolute number of Roma beneficiaries is increasing, the relative share of the total number of beneficiaries covered by active employment measures remains unchanged.³²

According to the ESARNM Operational Plan, active employment programmes and measures include 6 programmes:

1. Self-employment programme: It is direct and finances up to 5000 euros per person for the purchase of equipment and material. Non-refundable grants. Good results for those in informal activities or those planning on developing their own businesses. Help with business plan, digitalisation support to apply for these funds, mentoring support for the inclusion in the labour market. This measure is the one which is mostly used and continues to be used and is expected to grow. Unfortunately, the application process can be cumbersome and could be facilitated.
2. Support for the creation of new jobs: This measure provides direct financial assistance which is used when unemployed persons are employed in a company. The

³² [North Macedonia Strategy for Inclusion of Roma 2022-2030](#)

company receives subsidies of 300 € up to 3, 6, or 12 months with a view to provide companies with financial assistance to create new jobs.

3. Employment and growth of legal entities: Micro, small or medium social enterprises. Funds to purchase tools and equipment. Each person employed must be above 29 years of age. 1500 € per person. If the company employs up to 5 people, it receives 2500 euros. Roma are defined target groups. The employed person shall remain employed for at least 9 to 12 months and should remain in their job. Trainings and training for IT skills. Training with employer, training for in-demand occupations, training for drivers. Gaining professional skills and employability. Increased skills and competitiveness. Internships provide people with practical work experience within companies with a financial support of 150 € (29 to 34 year old) for 3 months. The purpose is to acquire skills and increase employability in the labour market. 3425 unemployed Roma participated in the mentoring programme and some were offered jobs but the employer is not obliged to hire the trainee after the internship.
4. Public works scheme for low-skilled Roma: Part-time work for periods of 3 to 9 months. Participation of local self-governments in the schemes of infrastructural and environmental protection. High success rate of 90%.
5. Care economy: people with specific needs. 150 people trained to provide care services within the community. People with chronic disabilities, entrepreneurship for care services providers.
6. Green investments: Measure to create new jobs which are environmentally friendly such as energy efficiency in buildings or creating green jobs. Programme for 312 people. In 2021, 37 Roma were employed in the new jobs programme, 123 Roma overall in all the programmes.

In 2021, 589 unemployed Roma participated in the active employment measures. A majority were involved in the following programmes and measures:

- Job Engagement Programme – 216
- Support for creating new jobs/workplaces – 123
- Economy of care - 55
- Support for self-employment and entrepreneurship – 37
- Trainings – 30
- Youth allowance – 101

These policies have proven successful and are a good basis for the development of new policies and measures. The specific measures and programmes are aimed at increasing employment including specific target groups who face difficulties in obtaining employment. The target groups include longstanding unemployed Roma, Roma youth and women and guarantees minimum assistance.

A budget of 30 million € has been allocated to the 6 programmes and 14 665 unemployed persons will be included in the plan. The strategic document is completed with the contribution of the business community which helps to implement policies and increase employability.

The service Activation of Roma and other persons at risk for social exclusion is implemented by a network of Roma mentors, and by programmes based on international experiences such as the Spanish [Acceder](#) programme. The service is implemented in the framework of the project led by the UNDP, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLSP) and ESA - **Creating Job Opportunities for All (2020-2022)** – which is supported by the UNDP in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and in collaboration with the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG). It strongly focuses on enhancing the employability and facilitating employment of the most vulnerable persons, and in particular Roma. Through this service, unemployed Roma have access to a team of mentors who motivate and regularly inform them and other persons at risk of social exclusion, about employment possibilities, increased employability, and act as facilitators between local businesses and the target groups. An individual approach and assessment of knowledge, qualifications and skills, helps to guide the job seekers towards suitable programmes and measures supported by the Operational Employment Plan. Pilot projects based on the Acceder employment programme are being carried out in the municipalities of Prilep and Tetovo.

Minimum Guarantee Assistance beneficiaries are offered support services such as counselling for a successful labour market integration, psychosocial support and mentoring. Youth guarantee activities allow unemployed youth between 15 to 29 to take part in active employment measures, receive training from employers and take part in other types of training and career guidance. In 2021, about 1000 young Roma were enrolled in the programme. The only eligibility criteria is a first time registration with the Agency for employment in the last 4 months.

It is reported that in 2022, there are approximately 130 to 140 Roma working in Ministries and government institutions. Employment in the public sector used to be lucrative and offer job stability but in recent years it has become less attractive as NGOs and international organisations now offer higher salaries triggering a brain drain from the public sector. For example, for the same level of position, the public sector salary is around 400€, whereas NGOs pay around 800€. The Ministries are currently looking into upgrading positions and increasing salaries to retain their staff.

There are currently 797 Roma people employed in the public service, both at national and local level and the Unit for the Implementation of Roma Strategy at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy presently has 2 Roma staff members and is in the process of recruiting 2 more.

It is reported that in North Macedonia, young Roma university graduates are in high demand and find jobs easily.

Civil society

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLSP) works closely with Roma civil society in the development and monitoring of its Roma Inclusion Strategies and action plans. This is key to ensuring the success of the strategies.

The Roma Education Fund (REF) has enabled 6,400 Roma children aged 3 to 6 years to attend pre-school free of charge in 20 municipalities and a new kindergarten is scheduled to open in September 2022. It funds the employment of Roma assistants and offers

scholarships to high school students. Between 100 to 600 children are now enrolled thanks to the scholarships. All students can apply for it.

The Health Education and Research Association (HERA) promotes social justice for the inclusion and empowerment of marginalised people. It has signed a memorandum of understanding with the MLSP and actively partnered in the development of the Roma Inclusion Strategy (2022-2030) and the National Action Plan for Roma women. It advocates and works at the national and international level to highlight the issue of Roma employment and gender equality as national policy priorities based on data collected from Roma women employees in public institutions and on the monitoring of the utilisation of the National Operational Employment Plan measured by Roma women.

Project activities:

Monitoring the employment of Roma women in public administration

Yearly monitoring processes on the employment of Roma women in public administration is carried out in about 150 institutions. The monitoring is carried out by sending requests for information of a public nature, during which employment is monitored by gender, managerial and non-managerial positions, Roma employees, level of education of Roma employees and jobs. From the findings and recommendations arising from the monitoring report, HERA and the Advocacy Group advocate and communicate the recommendations to key stakeholders at local, national and international levels.

Advocacy activities at the local and national level

Cooperation with municipalities at the level of the City of Skopje, which commit to improve employment opportunities for Roma women at the local level. HERA and the Advocacy Group provide technical support to local governments to create Local Action Plans (LAP) for the employment of Roma women. LAPs were created in 5 municipalities: Gjorce Petrov, Gazi Baba, Karposh, Chair and Shuto Orizari and are currently implemented in the municipalities of Gjorce Petrov, Karposh and Gazi Baba . A memorandum of cooperation was also signed with the Gazi Baba municipality.

At the national level, a continuous cooperation is established with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Advisor for Roma Affairs at the Prime Minister's Office and other institutions.

Monitoring the National Operational Plan (NOP) for Employment

Yearly monitoring exercise on the use of measures and services provided by the NOP for the employment of Roma women is carried out. Unemployment is monitored according to education, age and gender of Roma and Roma women at the national level and at the level of the City of Skopje. The use of measures and services from the operational plan itself is monitored. The findings resulting from the monitoring report are used for advocacy and making recommendations for improving the measures to increase their use by Roma women.

Design of a pilot measure for the employment of Roma women that will be part of the National Operational Employment Plan.

Situation of Roma women on the labour market

Although efforts have been made for many years, the unemployment of Roma women tends to increase steadily. In 2020, the number of unemployed Roma women had increased by 57% compared to 2019, and as many as 94% of the registered unemployed Roma women, who have no higher education or who have primary education only. Only 205 Roma women used any of the employment measures, or 2.6% of the total number of beneficiaries. 4.1% received employment services. Six Roma women are employed in managerial positions out of a total of 156 monitored state institutions. No Roma women is employed in the 30 employment centres.

These figures were collected by the Advocacy Group in 2021 by monitoring the employment of Roma women in state institutions and monitoring the use of active employment measures and services by Roma women. Monitoring data for 2021 have been obtained and is currently being processed.

Design of specific measure for Roma women employment

Mila Carovska, consultant and former Minister of MLSP, is tasked to design a pilot measure for the employment of Roma women as part of the National Operational Employment Plan.

As part of the methodology, 100 unemployed Roma women responded to a questionnaire conducted by the Advocacy Group (online and in person) on the causes of unemployment and the need to increase their employability and a focus group was established.

The proposed measure for Roma women employment is multisectoral. It is based on three parts:

1. Roma women with higher education aged 22 to 38:

- Mediation
- Wage subsidy or payment to an employee
- Non-discrimination campaigns to employers
- Support in providing services (kindergarten, day care centre, home care for the elderly or persons with disabilities);

2. Roma women in secondary education with or without work experience, without age restrictions:

- Mediation
- Growth of legal entities (see Appendix 2)
- Support and mentoring until employment
- Support in providing services (kindergarten, day care centre, home care for the elderly or persons with disabilities); and

3. Roma women with completed or incomplete primary education without age restriction:

- Mediation
- Direct financial support for the employed Roma woman
- Requalification
- Support and mentoring until employment
- Support in providing services (kindergarten, day care centre, home care for the elderly or persons with disabilities).

The measure should be adopted in the Employment Operational Plan in 2023.

There is a strong link between the government and NGOs but the latter need to ensure a united voice to cooperate and work strategically and effectively with the government.

Gender equality

There is an obligation to implement the Law for Equal Opportunities between women and men and the Anti-discrimination law and mainstream gender equality in all policies.

The policy for non-discrimination and equal opportunities adopted in May 2022 includes special measures for Roma women and girls. Its actions are to be implemented over 5 years and covers the areas of access to health services, social services, and freedom from domestic violence.

The new Strategy for Gender Equality, soon to be adopted by the Parliament, is to be mainstreamed in all ministries and contains targeted measures for Roma women. It will be implemented through national and local action plans for gender equality for Roma women and girls. More operational level actions should be envisaged for women in rural areas, women victims of violence, women migrants, women victims of trafficking and vulnerable women.

Women are often not aware of the possibility that they have access to an independent Commission to deposit complaints of discrimination. There is a clear need to define discrimination and disseminate that information.

To promote gender equality in Roma communities, positive actions to promote Roma culture and traditions would be beneficial as well as ensuring that school material is not stigmatising Roma women.

In order to improve gender equality for Roma women, national and regional coordination in the Balkans is needed.

2.2 Croatia

Croatia has a wide framework for protection and improvement of minority rights. The Constitution recognises 22 national minorities, including Roma, with a wide scope of rights established in 2002 through the Constitutional Act on Rights of National Minorities (2002, 2010) and covering areas of usage of minority languages and scripts in public area, local and regional administration, judiciary etc; usage of traditional names, minorities insignia, and flags; rights in relation to culture & tradition, education in minority; religious matters, media, and, last but not least political participation, representation in the state administration, judiciary, and local administration.

There is currently a National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS) (2021-2027) with an accompanying Action plan 2021-2022, and Operational Programmes of National Minorities 2021-2024, including an operational programme to support the Roma minority

Members of the Roma national minority, as well as members of other national minorities, when applying for public vacancies and advertisements for employment in the civil service may invoke the right to priority based on belonging to a national minority. They will have an advantage in employment under equal conditions, only if they achieve the same number of points on the test and interview as other candidates with the highest number of points.

Governmental policies and measures on Roma employment

As part of the Action Plan 2021-2022 for the implementation of the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021-2027, the Croatian Employment Service is implementing activities aimed at efficient and equal access of Roma to quality, sustainable employment, which include:

- assistance and support in the transition from the education system to the labour market and support for the acquisition of skills and knowledge that improve the overall position of members of the Roma national minority in the labour market and encourage employment and self-employment
- targeted support for Roma women in employment that takes into account individual preferences and motivations and barriers and specific disadvantages as well as the reasons why they are unemployed
- targeted support for young people that considers individual preferences, motivations and barriers and the specific disadvantages of young Roma in addition to working with employers in order to introduce new practices to support training and development in the workplace.

As part of its regular active employment policy measures, the Croatian Employment Service implements measures intended for persons at a disadvantage in the labour market to integrate them into the market. In such a situation, where the position of marginalised groups in the labour market is further aggravated, subsidies need to motivate employers to employ members of certain target groups. In this way, employers have wider options and avoid hiring workers they consider less productive, due to lack of work experience, due to the perception that workers lack certain knowledge and skills, due to long-term unemployment, age, inexperience, etc.

These are permanent measures that are financed from the State Budget and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Measurable outcomes: The total number of Roma involved in active employment policy measures (AEPM) in the period from 2018 to 2021.

Intervention	Total number of persons involved in the Roma national minority in AEPM in the period from 2018 to 2021			
	Year			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Public works	570	716	421	623
Education of the unemployed			0	320
On - the - job training			0	9
Self - employment support	7	12	6	15
Preservation of jobs in the textile, clothing, footwear, leather and wood production				5

sector				
Employment subsidies	13	3	3	66
Permanent seasonal			0	5
Training grants			0	3
Internship grants				1
Vocational training for work without employment	1		0	
Total	591	731	430	1047

These indicators are determined on an annual basis based on available funds in each intervention, and in accordance with the average annual cost of the measure for each person.

In accordance with the legal framework concerning discriminatory provisions, the Croatian Employment Service does not monitor unemployed persons by nationality, and the number of unemployed persons of the Roma national minority is estimated through proxies, such as the place of residence of persons registered in the register of unemployed persons, mother tongue, or if they declare that they belong to the Roma national minority.

Labour laws: Employment, training and equal opportunities

Worker's rights in Croatia are regulated by the [Labour Act](#). Some of the most important rights include:

- **Non-Discrimination**

Any kind of direct or indirect discrimination is strictly forbidden. This applies to both the workplace and working conditions. Discrimination is forbidden at any time during the interview process, contracted employment, and termination. According to the Law on discrimination, you cannot discriminate on any basis including race origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, sex, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national background, social background, wealth, union membership, education, social status, marital status, family status, age, health status, disability, genetic heritage, gender identity, expression or sexual orientation.

- **Safe working conditions**

The workplace must be safe and set up to prevent accidents. Working conditions cannot endanger a worker's health, life, or right to privacy (Law on personal data protection). If equipment is required to execute the job, the worker must be provided with safety clothes, helmets, gloves, or any other necessary safety equipment by the employer.

- **Permanent employment agreement**

Once you have worked on a limited-term contract for 3 years, your employer is required to offer you a permanent employment agreement or terminate your employment. If your

employer fails to notify you at the end of your three years and you continue to work past the contract expiration, you have an automatic right to permanent employment. The window to terminate you without the offer of permanent employment expires on the last day of your three years.

- **Education at work**

If your job requires specific education, training, or improvement, it is your right as a worker to get this education. Your employer is required by law to provide or pay for it.

- **Working break**

Every employee who works for at least 6 hours per day has the right to a daily 30-minute break. This break is included in the daily working time and is therefore paid. The working day in Croatia usually lasts for 8 working hours. A worker has the right to a daily rest of 12 hours off between two consecutive working days. Each week, an adult worker has the right to a weekly rest of continuous 24 hours off, and minor workers to continuous 48 hours off. Weekly rest is used on Sundays and a daily rest is added to it and used on Saturdays or Mondays.

The standard work week is defined as 40 hours. You may work up to 60 hours per week, as long as you are paid overtime for this extra time. Overtime cannot be a substitute for the weekly rest you are obligated to have off each week. Also, you cannot work for more than 60 hours per week. That is also forbidden.

- **Holidays**

A worker has the right to an annual paid vacation of 4 weeks. During this vacation, the worker receives their salary as usual. You cannot give up these free days and you must use all of them before the end of the fiscal year, which occurs on June 30.

- **Pregnancy**

Every pregnant woman has the right to maternity leave in addition to other free days for childcare (shorter working hours, daily pause for breastfeeding, etc.). An employer cannot terminate an employment contract with a woman because she is pregnant during her pregnancy and up to 6 months after the child is born. The protection period after the child is born is longer for second and third children. Additionally, employers cannot ask for information about a woman's pregnancy.

- **Temporary inability to work (sick leave)**

If an employee is temporarily unable to work, (s)he has the right to return to his/her old position or a similar one once (s)he recovers. The employer cannot fire a person, while (s)he is on sick leave.

- **Salary**

Every person has the right to be paid and receive a salary for their work. Women and men have equal rights when it comes to work and pay. You also have the right to an increased salary due to difficult working conditions, overtime, and night work, as well as working on Sundays and national holidays. Every year, Croatia defines a minimum wage for full-time work.

- **Cancellation period and severance pay**

If you've been given notice or have quit your job, there are some rights that must be respected. A cancellation period is a term that starts after quitting your job, which lasts until you leave the company. The cancellation period usually depends on the number of days you worked in the company (ranging from 2 weeks to 3 months). Severance pay is a payment outside of your salary that you may get after being given notice or when you retire. The company pays you a specific amount of money according to the days you worked for the company (if you worked for them for at least two years).

Employment rates of Roma per sector (field of employment), private and public, disaggregated by gender, age and level of education

In June 2022, the Croatian Employment Service data indicates 106.488 unemployed persons (i.e., registered persons actively looking for a job).

In state administration bodies, professional services and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on Dec 31, 2021, there were 12 self-declared members of the Roma national minority, of which 9 are employed in ministries, 2 in state administrative organisations and 1 in Expert Services and Offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. There are no members of the Roma national minority within the judiciary.

Disaggregated data on gender, age and educational attainment are not available.

The Croatian Employment Service (CES) does not collect data according to ethnicity. The number of unemployed members of the Roma national minority is estimated indirectly through proxies such as the address of the residence, data of the social welfare system and according to the knowledge of the Roma/Bayash language. The available data is very approximative.

How is Roma and Traveller employment addressed by the authorities and by civil society

In order to create preconditions for increasing the employability of hard-to-employ groups of unemployed persons, the Croatian Employment Service pays special attention to the Roma national minority, especially those who have multiple restrictions on access to the labour market. All registered unemployed persons of the Roma national minority are included in regular activities of the Croatian Employment Service (individual counselling, workshops for acquiring job search skills, activation programme, activities within professional information and counselling, inclusion in AEPM measures, various group information, and inclusion in active employment policy measures).

Taking into account the specific needs of its users, the Croatian Employment Service (CES) implements a number of active employment policy measures aimed at unemployed persons at a disadvantage in the labour market. The CES thus implements standard interventions of active employment policy which encourage employment, self-employment, education and inclusion in specific public programmes of specific target groups.

There is no formalised cooperation of human resources units in state bodies and universities and higher education institutions.

Depending on individual needs and possibilities, it is possible to include unemployed Roma in various education and training programmes which include primary school completion and acquisition of first occupation, education in adult education institutions, on-the-job training and through a combined model of education (employer and institution) for adult education.

There are no specific measures targeting Roma employment in the government and public administration, outside of general policy framework of the Constitutional Act on Rights of National Minorities.

Many Roma women work in the public works scheme. The salary is 500 euros plus child allowance if they have children. The employment rate in Southwest Croatia (Rijeka and Istria) is higher than in Northern Croatia where the rate of social benefits is higher.

There are presently 12 Roma working in State authorities and local bodies and 5 Roma police officers. The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice informs the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities about numbers of national minorities, including Roma, working in governmental institutions.

There is 1 Roma MP (Mr Veljko KAJTAZI) in the Croatian parliament elected to represent 12 smaller national minorities, and no affiliation to a political party is necessary.³³

The current government has made Roma issues a priority and has allocated a 50 million € budget for the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2021-2027.

2.3 Republic of Moldova

Roma make up 3% of the population in the Republic of Moldova. Discrimination, low levels of education and poverty are obstacles to the employment of Roma.

³³ Article 16 of the Act on Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament stipulates that Croatia guarantees persons belonging to national minorities in Croatia the right to representation in Parliament. Article 17 of the same law stipulates that persons belonging to the Serbian national minority elect three members to Parliament in compliance with the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, the Hungarian national minority elects one member to Parliament, the Italian minority elects one member to Parliament, the Czech and Slovak minorities jointly elect one member to Parliament, the Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish national minorities jointly elect a member to Parliament, and the Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian national minorities jointly elect one member to Parliament

Current Parliament has 3 MPs from Serb national minority, 1 MP from Italian national minority, 1 MP from Hungarian national minority, 1 MP from Czech national minority, 1 from Albanian (representing Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian national minorities) and 1 from Roma national minority (representing Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish national minorities)

Radu Marian, a young Roma MEP from the Party of Action and Solidarity founded in 2016, works to advance the Roma agenda. His party pledges 4 key priorities for Roma: Access to education (literacy, graduation rates), Roma mediators, employment and universal coverage of ID.

There are no targeted measures to stimulate Roma employment as they fall under the mainstream legislation. However, there is a task force established under the new Prime Minister to work on Roma issues although the public service is reluctant to support them.

Labour laws: Employment, training and equal opportunities

Employment and unemployment insurance law, no.105/2018 establishes active labour market policy and employment services provided for all categories of the population. There are no separate measures for civil servants. The above-mentioned law determines categories of people that need additional support in accessing the labour market, such as: orphaned youth; people with disabilities, long term unemployed, victims of human trafficking and domestic violence, former detainees and drug users, and unemployed aged 50+.

Governmental policies and measures on Roma employment

The Public Employment Service (PES) from Republic of Moldova is the institution responsible to support Roma employment. PES implements active labour market policies through 35 local employment offices.

According to the Law no.105/2018 on employment and unemployment insurance, Roma can be included in and benefit from the following employment measures:

- Job intermediation, career guidance and labour market information;
- Professional training, including on the job training and internship;
- Subsidized employment;
- Supporting self-employment;
- Labour mobility grants

Employment policies are more effective when Roma people have a qualification.

To facilitate the integration of Roma, the Roma Mediator Institute was established. The Roma mediator is responsible for facilitating Roma integration in society, including into the labour market. This is a permanent measure, funded from state budget.

In 2021, 1830 Roma were registered as unemployed, including 1059 women. As a result of the latest recruitment measures, 126 Roma have been employed.

Methodologies such as youth targeting and training schemes have been used.

Employment rates of Roma per sector (field of employment), private and public, disaggregated by gender, age and level of education

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Economic activity rate, 15 years and over (%)	44,8	44,1	45,9	42,3	40,3	41,1
Employment rate, 15 years and over (%)	43,0	42,4	44,5	40,1	38,8	39,8
Unemployment rate, 15 years and over (%)	4,0	3,9	2,9	5,1	3,8	3,2
Long-Term Unemployment rate, 15 years and over (%)	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	0,7	0,8

There is no disaggregated information on employment of civil servants available. About 23% of people are employed in public administration in the Republic of Moldova.

Disaggregated information on most employment indicators is available, except by regions and nationalities. This is due to the small territory of the country and insufficient capacities of the NBS.

How is Roma and Traveller employment addressed by the authorities and by civil society

Job intermediation, carrier guidance and labour market information is provided by active labour market policies (ALMP).

Internships are offered to students by the Public Employment Service (PES) but there is no bridge between universities or schools of higher studies and governmental human resources departments.

Professional and on the job training, including scholarships are offered by PES to help low-skilled Roma to find employment.

Employment policies are quite fruitful in ensuring sustainable employment but need to be carried out in coordinating with economic, investment and education policies.

At the moment the NGO Roma Education Fund (REF) has shifted its priority to vocational training schools and is no longer funding Moldova.

Barriers to employment of Roma in 2021 are:

- Lack of general education and professional education;
- Lack of identity documents, which are required to register with the employment office;
- Poor understanding of the Moldovan language and the need for STOFM specialists to use simple language in discussions;
- Preference for self-employed activities and lack of interest in contractual employment;

- Discrimination by potential employers to employ Roma people;

Annex: Dynamics of indicators of services provided to Roma people

	2020	2021	Comparison 2020/2021
Total number of registered unemployed	50226	37001	-13225
No. of registered unemployed Roma (% of total unemployed)	2377 5%	1830 5%	-547
No. of unemployed persons placed among Roma (% of total no. of registered unemployed Roma)	92 4%	126 7%	34
No. of unemployed Roma vocational training graduates (% of total no. of registered unemployed Roma)	1 0.04%	5 0.3%	4
No. of unemployment benefit recipients (% of total no. of registered unemployed Roma)	23 1%	9	-14

Portugal

The Roma communities have been living in Portugal for more than 5 centuries, but they only became full-fledged citizens in 1882, through the Constitution.

Despite the progress of the Roma integration policies and positive social transformations, Roma population is one of the most vulnerable groups to poverty and social exclusion, while being the target of multiple prejudices and stereotypes. The National Roma Communities Integration Strategy ENICC 2013-2020 was the first national plan specifically addressed towards Roma Communities. In 2018 the document was revised and adopted a new implementation period until 2022, through RCM nº 154/2018 29 November.³⁴

The first National Study on Roma Communities³⁵, financed by the High Commission for Migration and Technical Assistance Operational Programme and conducted by CEMRI-UAb (Center for Studies on Migration and Intercultural Relations, Aberta University) and CIES-IUL (Center for Research and Sociology Studies, University Institute of Lisbon), concluded by the end of 2014 and published in the 20th January 2015, estimated more than 24.000 Roma persons in Portugal. The completion of the study was necessary and important since there is a general lack of information on the geographical distribution and the socio-economic situation of Roma in Portugal.

In 2016, the Observatory of Roma Communities (OBCIG), an integrated research unit of the High Commission for Migration, deepened the 2014 study and provided a mapping of Roma communities living in Portugal based on data collected from all 308 municipalities (100% of

³⁴

https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/Publicac%CC%A7a%CC%83o+ENICC_EN_bx.pdf/c129278c-86bc-4647-88e7-f362a61c56f1

³⁵ <https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/estudonacionalComunidades.pdf/f4aa9b13-797d-40bb-a3b3-1c4011b05760>

municipalities of continental Portugal, as well as the 30 municipalities in the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores). The study "Deepening of the National Study on the Roma Communities concluded that 37 089 Portuguese Roma men and women living in Portugal, and the Portuguese Roma population represents approximately 0.4% of the total population (compared to Portuguese residents 10,401,063).³⁶

Regarding the employment of Roma people in Portugal, the National Study on Roma Communities³⁷, from 2014, concluded that the main incomes come from family support (33.8%) and from the Social Insertion Income – Rendimento Social de Inserção (RSI) (33.5%) as shown in the following figure (Figure 1.). However, in terms of gender, the proportion of men with income from work is higher (12%) than the proportion of women (9%).

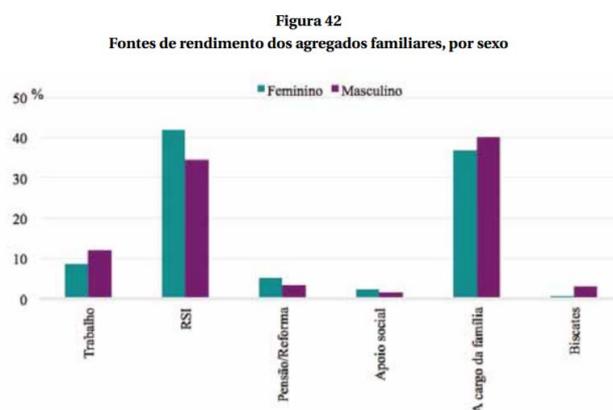


Figure 1.

Source: National Study on Roma Communities, 2014, p 186.

According to the 2021 data from the National Institute of Statistics, there are approximately 10.361,800 inhabitants living in Portugal, (4.928 800 male and 5.433 000 female).³⁸

Regarding the general Portuguese population, the employment rate of people aged between 18 and 89 was 55,3% in 2021.³⁹

The Statistical Synthesis of Public Employment (SIEP) is a quarterly publication, through which the Directorate General of Administration and Public Employment (DGAEP) releases summary statistical information on public employment within the scope of labour market statistics. According to this source, on 30 June 2022 employment in the general government sector stood at 741,698.⁴⁰

³⁶ <https://bit.ly/3ILXGHW>

³⁷ <https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/estudonacionalComunidades.pdf/f4aa9b13-797d-40bb-a3b3-1c4011b05760>

³⁸

<https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Popula%C3%A7%C3%A3o+residente++m%C3%A9dia+anual+total+e+por+sexo-6>

³⁹ [https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/taxa+de+emprego+total+e+por+grupo+etario+\(percentagem\)-1318](https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/taxa+de+emprego+total+e+por+grupo+etario+(percentagem)-1318)

⁴⁰ <https://www.dgaep.gov.pt/index.cfm?OBJID=ECA5D4CB-42B8-4692-A96C-8AAD63010A54>

In Portugal national minorities are not recognised, and the Portuguese Constitution doesn't allow any collection and publication of disaggregated data by ethnicity, race or colour (even in the census), meaning that the state agencies have no means to carry out this data collecting, so there is no specific data on Roma employment.

Labour laws: Employment, training and equal opportunities

In Portugal the General Public Sector Labour Law (Lei Geral do Trabalho em Funções Públicas - LGTFP) (Law n.º 35/2014)⁴¹ [frames the legislation on employment and workers' rights in the public sector](https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2014-57466875). As for the private sector, it is regulated by the [Labour Law \(Código de Trabalho\) \(Law nº 7/2009\)](https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2009-34546475)⁴², which is the legal instrument that regulates labour relations between employees and employers, such as information on remuneration, working hours, allowances, holiday periods and issues related to contracts and their termination, among others.

There are some differences between the private and public sector legislation, such as:

- The workweek in the civil service is 35 hours, while in the private sector it is 40 hours.
- In terms of the total number of vacation days, both the Labour Code and the General Employment Law in Public Services stipulate 22 days of holidays per year. However, the State grants an extra vacation day for every ten years of service, as a way of valuing the seniority of its employees, and what is foreseen in the Labour Code will always be the baseline rules, with employers being able to grant more vacation days. (Art 126º of LGTFP and Art 238º of the Labour Code).
- In terms of recruitment, there are some differences between the public and private sectors. In the public sector it is necessary to apply to a public tender. A public tender is a process posted in the Official Journal of the Republic (Diário da República) with rules and criteria defined by law (Art. Nº 33 of Title II, Chapter III of the General Public Sector Labour Law)⁴³, which in itself guarantees some transparency and impartiality.

On the private sector side, there are many more job offers, but recruitment policies, management and selection processes are of the full responsibility of the company holding the offer(s).

Another difference is the assessment of candidates' qualifications. In the public service, in many of the tenders there is a requirement to take both psychotechnical and specific evaluation tests for the position in question, the selection of the candidate for the post will be based on the marks obtained in the evaluation tests, along with the final interview. In the private sector, the company may decide to hire the candidate simply through a job interview, and, for example, the connection between the interviewer and interviewee may be more valued than technical skills.

⁴¹ <https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2014-57466875>

⁴² <https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2009-34546475>

⁴³ <https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2014-57466875-57503455>

Regarding the required educational level, in the General Public Sector Labour Law there is an Article (nº34) in its Title II, Chapter III⁴⁴ about the Qualification level requirement, which stipulates that the publication of the procedure may foresee the possibility of applications of those who do not hold the required qualification but consider that they have the necessary and required professional training and/or experience.

Governmental policies and measures on Roma employment

The **National Roma Integration Strategy** has various measures to promote Roma employment:

Strategic Objective 6:

Ensure the preconditions for the full and equal participation of Roma people in the labour market and professional activities.

Specific Objective 6.1:

Guarantees the access of Roma to employment and self-employment.

Measure 6.1.1 - Improving formal qualifications of Roma people.

Measure 6.1.2 - Promoting increased enrolment in the EC and CEEP and the integration of unemployed Roma and/or those looking for their first job.

Measure 6.1.3 Qualification of trainers and technicians based on the Reference Framework for Continuing Pedagogical Training of Trainers "Vocational Training in a Context of Cultural Diversity: Specificities of Working with Roma Persons".

Specific Objective 6.2:

Informs and raises awareness among employers for the employment of Roma.

Measure 6.2.1:

Awareness raising and mobilisation of potential employers to employ Roma and for the acquisition of products and services provided by Roma people, with the involvement of Roma.

There is also a mainstream measure, the Employment-Insertion+ Agreement⁴⁵, promoted by the Institute of Employment and Professional Training, The main objective of this measure is that socially necessary work will be performed by unemployed people receiving unemployment benefit or unemployment social benefit. This programme gives the following support:

- complementary monthly allowance, amounting to 20% of the social support index (IAS),
- transport expenses (if transport is not provided by the entity),
- meal or food subsidies for each day of activity, and
- insurance to cover risks that may occur during and because of the exercise of the activity

⁴⁴ <https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2014-57466875-57503456>

⁴⁵ <https://www.iefp.pt/emprego-insercao?tab=contrato-emprego-insercao->

This measure does not specifically promote gender equality or youth.

There are also targeted measures in place to enhance special recruitment of Roma, in the framework of the **European Social Fund** such as:

Project for Municipal and Intercultural Mediators⁴⁶, which aims:

- To facilitate the relationship and communication between different actors of the community (institutions, professionals and citizens);
- To increase stakeholder participation with a view to strengthening and developing the community;
- To match institutions and services to the characteristics of the community and its needs;
- To promote the prevention and regulation of the manifest and latent conflicts in the local community.

The Project for Municipal and Intercultural Mediators has proven to be particularly successful in stimulating local authorities to employ Roma. Until now have been participated 32 municipalities in the project and have been contracted 37 Roma mediators.

Project of Socio-professional Insertion of the Roma Community⁴⁷, which is already terminated and aimed at the:

- Acquisition of skills for employability of Roma people;
- Implementation of transition methodologies for the active life for Roma communities;
- Awareness raising for the promotion of workplace outline experiences for Roma community members;
- Integration of Roma persons in the labour market;
- Support in the implementation of sustainable businesses;
- Promoting awareness among employers and monitoring the outline of integrated Roma communities.

Regarding this programme, one of the beneficiary entities, the European Anti Poverty Network – EAPN Portugal (Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza), published a Technical Reference Handbook⁴⁸ which is an instrument resulting in first instance from the experience of the project, but also as a benchmarking tool where the principles, but also adequate and necessary conditions are signed to do better and differently in order to achieve the best results on this field.

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https://poise.portugal2020.pt/documents/10180/74906/ACC_3+09_Mediadores+Municipais+Interculturais_20180627_2aProrroga%C3%A7%C3%A3o.pdf/fff2404c-778a-4b7f-8408-cc6ce9a65961 and https://poise.portugal2020.pt/documents/10180/111406/Aviso+33-2021-02_v3.pdf/a8d37559-25d6-430b-969c-ac6ffe5c5d5b

47

https://poise.portugal2020.pt/documents/10180/77420/AAC+TO+3.08+Insercao+Socioprofissional+Comunidades+Ciganas_20180927+alte....pdf/83ab481c-a1f7-4087-85bb-6f9c7de735ba

48 <https://arquivo.eapn.pt/projeto/217/projeto-aceder-pelo-emprego-da-populacao-cigana>

The **Project of the Local Roma Integration Plans**, coordinated by the High Commission for Migration and financed by the European Commission was launched in 2018, and the main objective was to support the design of Local Plans for the Integration of Roma Communities (10 plans and 2 intermunicipal plans) and to design a Guide for the Elaboration of Local Plans, which could be disseminated to other municipalities after the end of the project. The 2nd edition of the project started in the first quarter of 2021.

Within the scope of the 12 Local Plans elaborated in the 1st edition of the project, there are 40 measures related to employment planned. Generally they mostly aim at improving qualifications, active job search, entrepreneurship and awareness raising. Among the most significant, we would highlight the creation of a youth entrepreneurship incubator (Municipality of Almada), awareness raising sessions for employers based on good practices and experiences of professional integration (Municipality of Figueira da Foz), on site contact actions with professionals aiming at providing the work experience (Municipality of Tomar) and entrepreneurship promotion sessions (Municipality of Oeiras)

The **Operational Programme for the Promotion of Education (OPRE)**, promoted by the High Commission for Migration since 2016, aims to reduce the existing barriers between the Roma communities and the formal education system, providing university scholarships, as well as a set of trainings, tutoring and follow-up measures for these young scholarship holders and their families. Since 2016, there are 28 Roma graduates students in several areas, such as: Social Education; Law; Sociology; Socio-Educational Animation; Business Management; Plastic Arts and Multimedia; Specialist Technician in Physical Exercise; Technological Specialisation Courses in Auditing and Management Systems; Heritage Management; Tourism and Hotel Management; Electro-technical Maritime Engineering; Gerontological Social Education; Anthropology; Communication Sciences; Physiotherapy; Dental Medicine; Social Work; Master's Degree in Law.

In Portugal some of the municipal social services have an employment support office. The Institute of Employment and Professional Training also provides a support service for job seekers

2.5 Slovak Republic

Labour laws: Employment, training and equal opportunities

- Act no. 5/2004 Coll. on employment services – regulates legal relations in the provision of employment services as well as the training
- Act no. 315/2012 Coll. on lifelong learning

Laws relevant in the field of recruitment of civil and public servants:

- Act no. 55/2017 Coll. on civil service
- Act no. 313/2001 Coll. on public service

As a considerable part of unemployed Roma registered in the Labour Office partake on the Activation Work Programme/Public Works (AWP), it is important to introduce a legislative framework that regulates its implementation:

- Act no. 369/1990 Coll. on municipal establishment – it regulates the conditions of participation in AWP on the basis of a contract between the unemployed jobseeker and the municipality
- Act no. 417/2013 Coll. on material needs assistance – it is also closely linked to the AWP as it regulates some of its details.

A more extensive list is available in appendix 6.

These are all mainstream policies in Slovakia. None of the ones relevant to the recruitment of civil and public servants pushes forward the topic of under-represented groups explicitly; in addition, there are no laws that would foster the recruitment of Roma in governmental institutions. Moreover, equal opportunities are secured by the Antidiscrimination Act (Antidiscrimination Act no. 365/2004 Coll.).

Governmental policies and measures on Roma employment

To introduce the current situation, it is important to bear in mind that the state generally implements mainstream policies. There are no specific forms or measures as concerns employment opportunities for people in marginalised Roma communities (MRC). Equal opportunities are legislatively framed in the Antidiscrimination Act.

The Slovak labour market faces large regional disparities with a high share of long-term unemployment (a majority of the Roma population lives in the eastern part of the country, while some of the regions are disadvantaged and characterised with high unemployment rate). Employment services within Labour Offices lack the provision of individualised support and counselling for the unemployed.⁴⁹ A big concern for the effective integration in the labour market also is absence of a guide on how to implement a profiling of long-term unemployed and other target groups of the Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs).⁵⁰

ALMPs is a set of different measures aiming to integrate unemployed persons into the labour market (via e.g. AWP, re-qualification courses, etc.). The goal has not necessarily been met, though. The ALMPs often do not fit the needs of the most vulnerable groups. For instance, re-qualification/re-education courses often do not admit people lacking basic education or skills, as the often-requested criterion for a course entry is completed primary school education. Notably, Slovakia received a critique also due to one of the lowest spending on ALMPs amongst the OECD countries, while investing just a little into education and training and mostly investing into supporting employment through incentives.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Hellebrandt, T. a kol., (2020). Revízia výdavkov na skupiny ohrozené chudobou alebo sociálnym vylúčením - Záverečná správa, p. 18, <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/15944.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 19.

⁵¹ OECD, (2022). *OECD Economic Surveys Slovak Republic*, p. 4.

<https://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Slovak-Republic-2022-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>.

Almost half of unemployed Roma (registered with the Labour Office) participate in the AWP, which is part of ALMPs. Participants of the AWP receive 70.40 €/month^{52,53} The AWP is the most common policy that has been widely practiced in relation to the integration of the Roma population into the labour market. Yet, research shows that it has not been effective, as it does not help participants to progress and increase their employability and employment.⁵⁴ The AWP is not a skill-building tool but rather one, which encourages participants to have a daily routine and the fundamental skills such as waking up at a certain time, commuting to work, performing some simple duties, though only to a certain extent. Due to this, it is considered a social policy, rather than the employment one, as it raises income of unemployed people.⁵⁵

According to the EU SILK MRK, as much as 72 % of marginalized Roma between the ages of 18 to 24 left the school earlier without achieving ISCED 2A or ISCED 2C.⁵⁶ This is relevant especially for Roma women whose rate of early leaving school (before achieving ISCED 2A) is higher than the one of men.⁵⁷ People without education have the possibility to participate in the second-chance education to raise their educational level. However, there is not much awareness about this possibility not only amongst the target groups, but also among the educators, and the schools.⁵⁸ According to the Council of Europe, opportunities for vulnerable groups to participate in the second chance education have not been yet well developed in Slovakia.⁵⁹

Regarding the Roma employment in public service and governmental institutions, the country implements national and demand-oriented projects under the Operational Programme Human Resources under which job positions (such as field social workers, community workers, etc.) that consist of duties that should contribute to the Roma inclusion, were created. Each of these projects has to accomplish certain indicators, while one of them aspires to occupy these jobs by mainly Roma (in case they meet other recruiting criteria). While data related to the ethnic origin are in Slovakia generally not collected, microdata for the purpose of indicators' accomplishment exists based on self-declaration. For example,

⁵² The current amount is set here: https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/socialne-veci-a-rodina/socialne-veci/pomoc-v-hmotnej-nudzi-nahradne-vyzivne-statne-socialne-davky-a-dotacie-pre-deti/pomoc-v-hmotnej-nudzi/sumy-davky-a-prispevkov-od-01.01.2022.html?page_id=1145426.

⁵³ Hellebrandt, T. a kol. (2019). Revízia výdavkov na skupiny ohrozené chudobou alebo sociálnym vylúčením. *Priebežná správa*, p. 52. <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/14208.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Mýtna Kureková, Salner, & Farenzenová, (2013). Implementation of Activation Works in Slovakia. Evaluation and Recommendations for Policy Change. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2405808.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Markovič & Plachá, (2022). *EU SILK MRK*. <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie-inkluzivnych-politik-a-ich-dopad-na-marginalizovane-romske-komunity-2016-2022/zber-a-analyza-dat/>.

⁵⁷ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, (2016). *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma – Selected findings*, p.27. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf.

⁵⁸ Rigová, Dráľová & Kováčová, (2021). *Druhošancové vzdelávanie na Slovensku: implementačná prax a jej bariéry*. https://www.governance.sk/gov_publication/druhosancove-vzdelavanie-na-slovensku/.

⁵⁹ COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 13 July 2018 on the 2018 National Reform Programme of Slovakia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2018 Stability Programme of Slovakia (2018/C 320/24).

according to the report on activities of Plenipotentiary for Roma communities in 2019, as of December 2019 the national projects implemented by its Office recruited 1345 people in total. In overall, 299 out of them were Roma.⁶⁰

Currently there have been also other efforts to provide jobs of a different nature for the marginalized Roma, especially through the European structural funds. Ministry of Culture implements the national project aiming for the restoration of castles. This scheme should provide within 2022 – 2023 approximately 480 jobs, while the marginalized Roma should occupy 60% of them.⁶¹

To follow-up on ALMPs, the state provides certain financial incentives to the employers to support vulnerable jobseekers (mostly long-term unemployed), as mentioned earlier. Here are some examples:

- Financial allowance provided to employers to hire disadvantaged jobseekers registered in the unemployment registry of the Labour Office for a minimum of 3 months. It is provided to cover part of the total labour cost of such an employee.
- Transport allowance for employers – financial incentive for employers who provide daily transport of employees to-and-from work (e.g., if the public transport does not demonstrably correspond to the employer's needs).
- Financial allowance to support creation of a job/workplace for the first regularly paid job – provided to the employers who recruit: (1) a jobseeker under the age of 25 registered in the registry of unemployed of the Office of Labour for a minimum of 3 months; (2) a jobseeker under the age of 29 registered in the registry of unemployed for a minimum of 6 months; The criterion for receiving the allowance: only a person without previous experience of working in the regularly paid position must be recruited for such a job/workplace.
- Financial allowance to support development of local and regional employment – provided to the employers who recruit disadvantaged jobseekers registered in the registry of unemployed for a minimum of 3 months and at the same time meets one of these criteria of disadvantage:
 - His/her age is above 50
 - Who gained a lower than a secondary vocational education
 - Has been unemployed and registered in the register of unemployed for more than 12 months
- Financial allowance for the establishment of a sheltered workplace for disabled.
- Financial allowance for employers to maintain a disabled person in employment.

There are also measures providing financial assistance related to employment to the employees (see examples below):

- Financial allowance for the commute to the work – Labour Office provides this contribution on the monthly basis to cover part of the travel expenses for employees registered as

⁶⁰ Office of the plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities, (2019).

Správa o činnosti splnomocnenca vlády SR pre rómske komunity za rok 2019.

⁶¹ Based on information from the Ministry of Culture, available: <https://www.culture.gov.sk/ministerstvo/medialny-servis/aktuality-ministerstva-kultury/uspesny-projekt-obnovy-hradov-pokracuje-ziskali-sme-miliony-navyse/>.

jobseekers for at minimum of 3 months and removed from the register of unemployed due to starting a job.

- Mobility allowance – Labour Office provides contribution to the employees who change their residency to cover part of their housing costs. Criteria: (1) to be previously registered as unemployed jobseekers for the period of 6 months (at minimum) and removed from the register of unemployed jobseekers due to starting a job; (2) to be moved for the job to a different place than the residency address.
- There are also other ALMPs measures supporting the employment such as financial contribution for the re-qualification (REPAS+ programme) and raising competences (KOMPAS+). Financial contribution should cover the course related cost; however, this cost is reimbursed to a participant after the course completion. In addition, the entry criterion for REPAS+ courses often is completion of ISCED 2A, which disqualifies the most vulnerable group in the labour market – people with low education/without education.

There are also other policies and measure with a goal to support Roma employment. For instance, conditions for implementation of social economy and social enterprise are created in Slovakia. Social economy and social enterprise should support creating new opportunities for socially vulnerable job seekers. Based on the Act no. 112/2018 Coll. on the social economy and social enterprises, it offers a regular job and more space for developing skills. It should support the transition from sheltered workshops to the open labour market. Further, the government provided also support to those in seasonal employment in the field of agriculture. This measure was introduced in 2020 and the allowance of 200€ / month was paid to the employers to cover compulsory public health insurance, social security contributions and old-age pension contributions. This support is relevant also in the context of Roma as marginalized Roma are characterised by a frequent occurrence of short-term/seasonal jobs.

To increase employment and tackle barriers of vulnerable groups in the field of employment, it is important to mention amendment to the Act no. 7/2005 Coll. on bankruptcy and restructuring, which is effective since 2017. Marginalized Roma are often subjects to the execution procedures, which is often a burden for them in relation to get and remain hired. Gender equality is not promoted explicitly in the above-mentioned policies, neither is the youth reflected as a vulnerable subgroup of the group in the labour market. Usually the policy/measure that applies to youth is the graduate practice which is the acquisition of professional skills and practical experience with the employer, which correspond to the education achieved by the school graduate. It is an equivalence between work experience and an education diploma.

Increasing employment of the Roma population is framed in the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030. Its adopted action plans (Action Plans of the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030 for 2022-2024) have targeted measures in place to enhance special recruitment of Roma. For instance by:

- Implementing programmes to support the acquisition of basic and digital skills by men and women from the marginalized Roma communities (MRCs) in order to meet better the labour market needs and demands (KOMPAS+)

- Improving services to address the needs of young people from the MRC who are unemployed and inactive - by adapting individualized action plans, aimed at overall development
- Promoting equal access for MRCs to employment in both, the public and private sectors through measures such as affirmative action and support schemes for employers, as well as improving access to employment services, including ALMPs
- Supporting employment of disadvantaged job seekers from the MRCs environment, through the social economy
- Promoting the reduction and elimination of discrimination and raising awareness of non-discriminatory employment and access to the labour market
- Eliminating the effects of multiple discrimination of Roma in the labour market (by supporting programmes for women affected by multiple discrimination, breaking down negative stereotypes in terms of the traditional division of social roles)

These measures are supported by European structural funds under the finalised and approved programmes in accordance with the approved programming period. They also have a direct link to the national employment policies.

How is Roma and Traveller employment addressed by the authorities and by civil society

All jobseekers can use the career counselling of the Office of Labour or services of the NGO's. The NGO's as well as the helping positions working with/in the communities, such as e.g. social workers in the field, often provide their assistance in job-search. No other specific service is provided to the Roma job seekers.

Targeted support is provided directly at Labour Offices. Support is provided also in the localities/communities through crisis intervention services, and so through community centers as well as through assistance of the field social workers.

The help is oriented on the support to find a work during the studies through the dual education system. The help is also provided through a graduate practice. Otherwise, on the national level the job-search is provided by the Office of Labour, which does not work effective in this sense. Roma graduates can also ask for help social workers in the field to assist them with a job-search. Besides these, there are no other measures taken.

There are no bridges between universities or schools of higher studies and governmental human resources departments.

Support services such as field social workers often provide a job-search assistance. Another measure is the provision of second-chance education and re-training/re-qualification that aims at helping low-skilled persons to increase their employability. The NGO sector provides additional help by cooperating with various companies to expand the recruitment of Roma staff. However, at the national level there are no specific measures to assist low-skilled Roma in their job search.

Besides, there is a possibility to participate on the KOMPAS – non-accredited course to build key competences such as communication skills, etc.

Strategies for stimulating governments to employ Roma in governmental institutions and public administration are lacking and the existing policies, measures or strategies have not been particularly fruitful in ensuring sustainable employment.

Inter-related phenomena

Regarding the housing situation, many Roma live in segregation, often without access to the drinking water. Data of EU SILK MRK show that as much as 28 % marginalized Roma live in households without access to a drinking water.⁶² Further, more than 35 % of marginalized Roma live in households without a sanitation facilities (buth or a flush toilet inside the house) and 6 % without electricity. Data from EU SILK MRK also reveals that more than 52 % of marginalized Roma population live in households suffering from material deprivation, comparing to 6 % of the overall population⁶³

The Roma in Slovakia face discrimination in every-day life, including the labour market. As the findings of the Institute of Financial Policy show, Roma jobseekers were invited for the job-interview less often than their counterparts were although their CVs were similar.⁶⁴ The Roma Advocacy Research Centre also argue that the ethnicity plays an important role in the labour market and it creates a space for discrimination.⁶⁵

Roma children face discrimination in the education system. Often, they are enrolled in the special schools, which do not provide them with an opportunity to continue their studies in the regular secondary school, so it keeps them at the low education level. In addition, young Roma are often enrolled in the elocated schools (remote vocational schools) located in the areas with high proportion of Roma. These schools become exclusively or prevalently Roma schools. Such schools often provide the only option to participate on the 2-year programmes that do not provide students after completion of their studies with the diploma, nor with possibility to further their studies. With this kind of education Roma become subject of low-paid jobs as they perform on assisting positions (e.g. assistant to the tailor).

Discrimination in education and labour market keeps the most disadvantaged Roma in marginalization. Even according to the EU SILK MRK, in 2020, as much as 87% of marginalized Roma lived below the poverty, compared to 11% in the general population.⁶⁶

Labour Offices are not always aware of the measures provided such as transport allowances to employers and second-chance schools. A qualification certificate is provided at the end of

⁶² Markovič & Plachá, (2022). *EU SILK MRK*. <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie-inkluzivnych-politik-a-ich-dopad-na-marginalizovane-romske-komunity-2016-2022/zber-a-analyza-dat/>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Institute of Financial Policy. (2014), *Bez práce nie sú koláče*, Komentár, Inštitút finančnej politiky, Bratislava. <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=9887>.

⁶⁵ Lajčáková et al. (2017). *Riešenie nezamestnanosti Rómov. Od mýtu k praxi a späť*. Roma Advocacy Research Centre.

⁶⁶ Markovič & Plachá, (2022). *EU SILK MRK*. <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie-inkluzivnych-politik-a-ich-dopad-na-marginalizovane-romske-komunity-2016-2022/zber-a-analyza-dat/>.

the studies in 2-year programmes but not a diploma unless the student has shifted to the regular system. There is a lack of information for schools on how to implement these measures and in primary school the funding is 150 €/ year / student which is insufficient to hire teachers.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Rigová, Dráľová & Kováčová, (2021). *Druhošancové vzdelávanie na Slovensku: implementačná prax a jej bariéry*. https://www.governance.sk/gov_publication/druhosancove-vzdelavanie-na-slovensku/.