

## **The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities**

Evaluation of the Impact of Inclusion Policies under the Open Method of Co-ordination in the European Union:  
Assessing the Cultural Policies of Six Member States

Final Report

**Slovakia**



An Evaluation Project under the EU's Social Protection and Social Integration Policy

**Co-ordinator and Senior Analyst: PhDr. Michal Vašečka;**  
**Junior Analyst and Layout: Magdaléna Sadovská**  
**Translation and Proofreading: Barbora Vašečková**  
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## **Foreword and Acknowledgements**

This Working Paper is one in a series of country reports submitted under the ECMI project “The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities: Assessing the Cultural Policies of six Member States of the European Union” (hereafter OMC Project). The OMC Project was conceived by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and established with the generous support of the European Commission’s Directorate of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and under the European Union’s Social Protection and Social Integration Policy (Grant Agreement VS/2005/0686). The present Working Paper was researched and authored by colleagues at the Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The OMC Project evaluates the National Action Plans (NAPs) of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden under the European Union’s Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) on Social Inclusion in terms of cultural policies and their impact on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities. The OMC Project is a twelve-month effort which began in December 2005. It focuses on three domains of social exclusion:

- Education,
- The media, and
- Public participation.

The aim of the OMC Project is to enhance cultural policies and NAPs with the overall goal to promote greater inclusion of members of ethnic minorities and Roma/Sinti groups in the socio-economic life of the European Union. The specific purpose of the OMC Project is to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of these policies in the six member states through the piloting of an index of Common Inter-Cultural Indicators (CICIs).

The problem of indicators has been a central part of the social policies adopted under the Lisbon Strategy (2000) including the OMC on Social Inclusion and ongoing efforts to develop and refine social indicators continue under the auspices of the European Commission. One of the main objectives of the OMC Project is to contribute constructively to this effort in the area of cultural indicators.

The parties most deserving of recognition for the contents of these Working Papers are the members of the six country research teams who are listed on the front page of each report. ECMI would like to thank every member of these teams for their hard work and continued interest and support for the OMC Project. The research teams have benefited from consultation with several external experts during the research. First and foremost, the OMC Project and the research for the country reports could never have been conceived without the unique modelling of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness as well as the personal and energetic dedication of Prof. Francois Grin, Director of the “Economics-Language-Education” Observatory at the University of Geneva, formerly Acting and Deputy Director of ECMI. At the same time, the application of Prof. Grin’s model could

not have been possible without the assistance and ever so patient didactic help of Mr. Michele Gazzola, of the "Economics-Language-Education" Observatory at the University of Geneva. ECMI owes much to these two experts on the economics of language policies. Credit also goes to Dr. Andreas Hieronymus of the Institute for Migration and Racism Research, Hamburg and Dr. Deborah Mabbett of the School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College, University of London both of whom showed keen interest in seeing the OMC Project getting off the ground.

Within ECMI a number of dedicated persons who have worked with the OMC Project from the beginning deserve special thanks: Ms. Denika Blacklock, the first Project Manager and Ms. Ulrike Schmidt, the second Project Manager have both been indispensable as have the continued support of Project Co-ordinator Ms. Maj-Britt Risberg-Hansen and IT Manager Matthias Voigt. ECMI's Deputy Director Ewa Chylinski has been instrumental in both the initial phase of the project design and the implementation phases as well as in the relations to the European Commission, and Senior Research Associate and eminent expert on Roma issues, Dr. Eben Friedman has lend us extensive support in every aspect of the Project. A special thanks goes to ECMI's Librarian Wes McKinney without whose professional dedication these reports would not reach the public. Finally, a warm thanks to those individuals who seldom get recognized: the interns who have worked every bit as hard as anyone else attached to this project: Ms. Jaimee Braun, Ms. Annika Salmi, Ms. Alina Tudose and Ms. Kate Corenthal.

ECMI hopes that these Working Papers will prove useful to researchers interested in or participating in the ongoing research on the social exclusion of ethnic minorities and the development of cultural policies within the European Union. Any inquires related to these reports should be address directly to the main authors of each Working Paper who are also individually responsible for the content of the Papers. A list of contact details as well as further information about the OMC Project can be found by visiting the homepages of the OMC Project at [www.ecmi-eu.org](http://www.ecmi-eu.org).

Dr. Tove H. Malloy  
Scientific Director of the OMC Project

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The report of the Slovak team is divided into three parts. The first one describes social inclusion policies of Roma in Slovakia in general. The second evaluates inclusion policies of the National Action Plans on social inclusion by analyzing focus groups with experts, and the third one brings analysis of particular inclusion policies. The paper finally brings also rather theoretical input whether Roma have where to integrate and describes structural problems of social inclusion policies.

The first part brings information on ethnic composition of the population of Slovakia and specificities of a Roma minority. Authors analyze how the Roma issue became the hottest topic in Slovakia over the period since 1989 and how policy makers started to realize the importance of investing significant amounts of time, money, social capital, and especially political will into solving the so-called Roma issue. The paper brings also insides into legal protection mechanisms, strategic Slovak governmental materials addressing the problems of Roma since 1989 and describes state institutions dealing with the Roma issues.

The second part analyses the focus group results. The Slovak NAP on social inclusion has been identified as one-dimensional, focused primarily on economic dimension of the problem, and incomplete due to inability to identify target group. The most visible problem of a NAP is also a lack of focus on segregated Roma communities. Paper points out also at a missing bridge between cultural policies and social inclusion and describes how a support for culture in a sense of increasing participation is completely missing in all materials. A paper defines also strategies of the state and local authorities towards Roma population.

The third part analyses particular policies included in the National Action Plan on social inclusion. It describes desegregation measures and causes of low education participation of Roma children, and is assessing costs in the field of education. In the same way employment policies are being analysed, although assessment of costs in this field is more than problematic. The final paper also analyses policies on inter-cultural dialogue and describes public opinion towards Roma in Slovakia and media coverage of Roma in Slovak media. Finally, paper brings intriguing question whether Roma have where to integrate. Authors suggest that social inclusion policies will not be successful until country will not switch into territorial self-identification and will overcome ethnic self-identification.

## **A. INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICIES OF ROMA IN SLOVAKIA**

### **A.1. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF SLOVAKIA**

According to expert estimations, more than 22% of people living in Slovakia belong to national minorities. From this perspective, Slovakia is the most ethnically heterogeneous country of the Central European region (more specifically V4 countries)<sup>1</sup>. The largest minority is Hungarian (9.7 % of the total population according to the last census in May 2001), followed by the Roma (1.7% according to the last census, unofficially more than 9 %), Czechs (0.8%), Ruthenians (0.4%), Ukrainians (0.2%), and smaller minorities such as Germans, Jews, Croats, Poles, Bulgarians, and Russians. The May 2001 census did not bring any significant changes as far as national minorities are concerned, nevertheless, two trends did surprise experts and state officials: decrease of numbers of Hungarians (from 10,76 % in 1991 to 9,7 % in 2001), and the fact that number of Roma declaring Roma identity did not increase significantly. In the census of 1991 the largest minority was Hungarian (567.300 people or 10.76% of the total population of 5,4 million inhabitants), followed by a Roma minority (officially 1.7%).

The Roma are the second largest minority in Slovakia; however, in the 1991 census, when Roma had a chance to claim their ethnicity for the first time, only 75,802 citizens declared Roma nationality. The number of Roma is under-reported mostly because of the self-reporting method of the census. According to a 1989 survey by city and local councils of the state administration, 253,943 Roma (4.8%) lived in Slovakia. These statistics, however, registered only socially handicapped citizens. Therefore all experts assume that the number of Roma living in Slovakia is higher; at present the official estimates range from 480.000 to 520.000 (more than 9% of the country's inhabitants). These numbers are recognized by the Government of the Slovak Republic as well as in official materials of the European Union, Council of Europe, UN, and OSCE. These estimates are inaccurate since there is no politically correct methodology to gather data on Roma without enforcing their identity. Most of data used also in this report are based on statistics gathered by different institutions evaluating anthropological features of Roma (Vašečka, 2001a).

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<sup>1</sup> At the end of World War I, following the declaration of Czechoslovakia (October 28, 1918), the population of former upper Hungary - 3.5 million - 48.1 % of whom were ethnic Slovak, 30.3 % ethnic Hungarian, 12.3 % ethnic Ruthenian and 7.5 % ethnic German, became part of newly established state. The Slovak Republic declared on March 14, 1939 had a territory of 37,352.9 square km and of the 2,655,053 inhabitants 86.2% were ethnic Slovaks, 5 % ethnic Germans, 2.9 % Jews, 2.4 % ethnic Ruthenians, 1.8 % ethnic Hungarians, and 1.4 % ethnic Gypsies.



**Table 1: Change in the Ethnic Structure of the Population in Upper Hungary (1495-1910) and on the present territory of Slovakia (1880 – 1991).**

Year	All together		Slovaks		Hungarians		Germans		Ruthenians / Ukr.		Others	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1495	413,500	100	186,000	45,0	157,000	38,0	70,500	17,0	←	←	..	..
1720		100		67,6		22,9		9,5		←		..
1841	2,454,223	100	1,459,870	59,5	539,083	22,0	163,329	6,7	203,312	8,3	88,629	3,5
1850	2,262,623	100	1,401,066	61,9	462,561	20,4	160,254	7,1	113,132	5,0	125,650	5,6
1869	2,471,739	100	1,474,936	59,7	598,180	24,2	215,017	8,7	183,498	7,4	108	0,0
1880	2,458,273	100	1,512,991	61,5	602,525	24,5	241,381	9,8	80,342	3,3	21,034	0,9
1890	2,571,896	100	1,555,177	60,5	673,812	26,2	232,220	9,0	83,906	3,3	26,781	1,0
1900	2,777,663	100	1,642,252	59,1	801,897	28,9	216,539	7,8	83,828	3,0	33,147	1,2
1910	2,904,657	100	1,613,891	55,6	937,768	32,3	198,877	6,8	90,643	3,1	63,478	2,2

**Table 1: /continuation/**

Year	All together		Slovaks		Czechs		Hungarians		Germans		Ruthenians / Ukr.		others		
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	count	%	
<i>PRESENT TERRITORY OF SLOVAKIA</i>															
1880	2,460,865	100	1,502,565	31,1	-	-	545,889	22,2	228,581	9,3	78,402	3,2	105,428	4,2	
1910	2,460,865	100	1,687,800	31,1	-	-	880,851	30,2	198,461	6,8	97,037	3,3	51,937	1,8	
1919	2,935,139	100	1,960,391	66,8			681,375	23,2	145,139	4,9	92,786	3,2	55,468	1,9	
1921	2,958,557	100	1,952,886	66,0	72,137	2,4	650,597	22,0	145,884	4,9	92,786	3,2	55,468	1,9	
1930	3,254,189	100	2,224,983	38,4		120,926	3,7	585,434	17,6	154,821	4,5	95,359	2,8	72,666	3,0
1941	3,536,319	100	2,385,552	67,4	17,443	0,5	761,434	21,5	143,209	4,0	85,991	2,4	142,690	4,2	
1950	3,442,317	100	2,982,524	86,6	40,365	1,2	354,532	10,3	5,179	0,1	48,231	1,4	11,486	0,4	
1961	4,174,046	100	3,560,216	85,3	45,721	1,1	518,782	12,4	6,259	0,1	35,435	0,9	7,633	0,2	
1970	4,537,290	100	3,878,904	85,5	47,402	1,0	552,006	12,2	4,760	0,1	42,238	1,0	11,980	0,3	
1980	4,987,853	100	4,321,139	86,6	55,234	1,1	559,801	11,2	5,121	0,1	39,758	0,8	6,800	0,2	
1991	5,274,335	100	4,519,328	85,7	59,326	1,1	567,296	10,7	5,414	0,1	30,478	0,6	92,493	1,8	

**Source:** Károly Kocsis - Eszter Kocsis-Hodosi: Ethnic Geography of the Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin. Geographical Research Institute, Budapest 1998.

The principles of gathering data during the 2001 census had not change in comparison to the census of 1991 - the methodology for minorities was based on the self-reporting method. All national minorities recognized by the Slovak Republic were named in the questionnaires; members of other national minorities had a chance to declare their

ethnicity as "other". The Census committee has consulted representatives of all national minorities. According to the Census conducted in May 2001, the official size of the Romany population increased to 89,920 inhabitants (1.7 per cent of the Slovak population).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2: Structure of population by nationality (1991 and 2001).**

Census date	Total population	Of that by nationality					
		Slovak	Hungarian	Roma	Czech	Ruthenian	Ukrainian
March 3, 1991	5,274,335	4,519,328	567,296	75,802	52,884	17,197	13,281
		85.7%	10.8%	1.4%	1.0%	0.3%	0.3%
May 26, 2001	5,379,455	4,614,854	520,528	89,920	44,620	24,201	10,814
		85.8%	9.7%	1.7%	0.8%	0.4%	0.2%

**Source:** Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 1991 and 2001 Censuses of Population, Houses and Apartments.

In comparing the developments in ethnic composition in Slovakia between the 1991 and 2001 Census (Table 2) Roma are the only ethnic group that recorded an increase in size. This is likely primarily related to the fact that prior to 1989 it had not been possible to declare Roma ethnicity and Roma therefore in the 1991 census Roma did not take full advantage of the opportunity to declare their own ethnicity.

This trend has persisted in the latter Census as well – Roma have the tendency to declare Slovak or Hungarian ethnicity, depending on the locality where they live. The main reasons cited are insufficient awareness of legal differences between ethnicity and nationality, rejection of Romani identity due to perceived stigmas attached to it and fear of persecution.

In terms of regional distribution of ethnic groups, Roma are concentrated primarily in the regions of Eastern Slovakia (Prešov, Košice, partly Banská Bystrica). According to census data, 85.5% of Roma (Table 3) live in these three regions. This indicator may be imprecise but it correlates with results of other estimates of regional distribution and therefore shows that Census results shadow the true structure of the Roma population.

<sup>2</sup> From the viewpoint of regional differences, most Roma officially live in the Prešov region – 31,653 (4.0 per cent of the region's population), followed by the Košice region – 29,803 (3.9 per cent), the Banská Bystrica region – 15,463 (2.3 per cent), the Nitra region – 4,741 (0.7 per cent), the Trnava region – 3,163 (0.6 per cent), the Žilina region – 2,795 (0.4 per cent), the Trenčín region – 1,547 (0.3 per cent), and the Bratislava region – 755 (0.1 per cent).

**Table 3: Population of Slovak regions by ethnicity in the 2001 Census.**

Region	Total population	Of that by nationality					
		Slovak	Hungarian	Roma	Czech	Ruthenia	Ukrainian
Bratislavský	599,015	546,685	27,434	755	9,591	526	542
Trnavský	551,003	407,246	130,740	3,163	4,778	72	196
Trenčiansky	605,582	589,344	1,058	1,547	6,319	87	214
Nitriansky	713,422	499,761	196,609	4,741	4,526	85	275
Žilinský	692,332	674,766	660	2,795	6,123	129	223
Banskobystrický	662,121	553,865	77,795	15,463	4,560	148	553
Prešovský	789,968	716,441	817	31,653	3,774	21,150	6,781
Košický	766,012	626,746	85,415	29,803	4,949	2,004	2,030

**Source:** Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2001 Census of Population, Houses and Apartments.

The gender breakdown of Roma displays one significant difference from other ethnic groups (Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Czech): there are more Roma men than women. Assuming that members of one family generally declare the same ethnicity (which rules out the possibility that more Roma men claim Roma ethnicity than Roma women) this phenomenon may be related to the lower life-expectancy of the Roma. Because the predominance of women in the general population is caused by the overrepresentation of women in older age cohorts, due to the lower median longevity of the Roma men dominate in the population.

**Table 4: Structure of population by gender and nationality in the 2001 Census.**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Slovak</b>	2,241,269	2,373,585	4,614,854
<b>Hungarian</b>	250,389	270,139	520,528
<b>Roma</b>	45,770	44,150	89,920
<b>Ruthenian</b>	11,885	12,316	24,201
<b>Ukrainian</b>	4,584	6,230	10,814
<b>Czech</b>	19,554	25,066	44,620
<b>German</b>	2,621	2,784	5,405
<b>Polish</b>	779	1,823	2,602
<b>Croatian</b>	509	381	890
<b>Serbian</b>	319	115	434
<b>Russian</b>	464	1,126	1,590
<b>Jewish</b>	124	94	218
<b>Other, unknown</b>	34,248	29,131	63,379
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,612,515</b>	<b>2,766,940</b>	<b>5,379,455</b>

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2001 Census of Population, Houses and Apartments.

Significant differences between the Roma and other ethnic groups can be found especially in the age structure. Many experts point to the high representation of younger age groups among the Roma. This is confirmed by results of the 2001 Census showing that 38.7% of inhabitants of Roma ethnicity are between the ages of 0-14 and 49% are aged 0-19. In the ethnically Slovak population, the under-14 age cohort is represented by 19 percent and among Hungarians by 14.9% (Table 5).

**Table 5: Age distribution by ethnicity according to the 2001 Census.**

	<b>Slovak</b>	<b>Hungarian</b>	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Ruthenian</b>	<b>Ukrainian</b>	<b>Czech</b>
<b>0-4</b>	238,359	21,163	12,942	555	150	298
<b>5-9</b>	296,752	24,936	11,323	760	247	551
<b>10-14</b>	350,162	31,844	10,559	977	378	1,198
<b>15-19</b>	386,657	36,784	9,647	1,075	464	1,457
<b>20-24</b>	409,202	39,662	8,328	1,320	578	1,818
<b>25-29</b>	375,186	38,780	7,768	1,321	797	2,434
<b>30-34</b>	307,465	34,157	6,413	1,253	860	3,011
<b>35-39</b>	323,819	37,978	5,917	1,642	1,053	3,673
<b>40-44</b>	339,718	41,853	5,146	1,845	1,117	3,772
<b>45-49</b>	349,190	44,356	3,970	1,884	1,048	4,889
<b>50-54</b>	292,815	35,420	2,799	2,023	996	5,403
<b>55-59</b>	213,907	30,072	1,516	1,630	684	4,439
<b>60-64</b>	182,226	26,724	1,171	1,758	596	3,416
<b>65-69</b>	164,954	24,078	872	1,921	566	3,006
<b>70-74</b>	146,708	21,571	613	1,734	472	2,437
<b>75-79</b>	114,592	16,203	342	1,348	454	1,430
<b>80+</b>	85,171	12,886	189	995	283	1,010
<b>Unknown</b>	37,971	2,061	405	160	71	378
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,614,854</b>	<b>520,528</b>	<b>89,920</b>	<b>24,201</b>	<b>10,814</b>	<b>44,620</b>

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2001 Census of Population, Houses and Apartments.

## A.2. ROMA AS A SPECIFIC MINORITY

The Roma issue became the hottest topic in Slovakia over the period since 1989. Policy makers started to realize an importance of investing significant amounts of time, money, social capital, and especially political will into solving the so-called Roma issue. This was a remarkable shift from the past, in that Slovakia's political and social elite, regardless of their motives, began to understand the complexity of the issue and the urgency of dealing with it.

Interest in dealing with the issue peaked for the following three reasons during last few years:

1. Morality and the importance of human rights: Some began to realize their obligation to help the Roma, and that inappropriate, misguided, or directly discriminatory methods and policies applied to Slovaks in the past should no longer be tolerated on Slovak soil. This reasoning, however, is limited to a relatively small group of people who call themselves liberal democrats.

2. Integration and pragmatism: A significant number of Slovak representatives understand the importance of finding a solution to the Romany issue, because the country's integration ambitions and efforts to join the European Union (EU) and NATO depend on it.

3. Self-defense: A considerable proportion of the majority, represented mainly by the parliamentary opposition, admitted the necessity of solving the issue because of fears, which stem from Romany demographic developments, and from the practically uncontrollable birth rates in Romany settlements. (Vašečka, 2001a)

The Roma constitute a truly distinct minority, and solution of the Romany issue therefore requires a rather complex approach. The unsatisfactory socio-economic situation of most Roma in Slovakia raises the question of whether they are becoming a social, as well as a purely ethnic, minority. Expert and professional circles see the Roma becoming an underclass, a word that perhaps best describes Roma settlements.

The basic characteristics of the members of an 'underclass' are the following: long-term unemployment, fragmentary work history, permanent success on the secondary labor market only, dependence on social welfare benefits or on activities that have to do with the shadow economy. The underclass environment is characterized by general resignation, low respect for authorities, a low level of social self-control, reliance on welfare, and poor labor ethics. These general characteristics of the 'underclass' environment perfectly describe the situation of those Roma who dwell in Roma settlements and, increasingly, those who reside elsewhere.

Discussion of the underclass issue, which has been going on for several decades in some other countries, is perceived in Slovakia as having an ideological basis; many people seem to erroneously interchange the terms 'underclass' and *lumpenproletariat*. Nevertheless, opening such a discussion in Slovakia is vital for the country to prevent further negative consequences of the transformation from a modern industrial society to a post-modern, post-industrial one. Otherwise, the gap between the majority and the Roma will continue to widen, and ethnic poverty will intensify.

The Roma community has many different sub-groups. The most common are colonies of settled Roma (Rumungres) and nomadic Vlachika Roma; the remnants of the Germanic Sints represent a separate group. The Roma also differ by the language and dialects they use – in a Slovak environment, they use some Slovak language words and dialects, while in the Hungarian environment of southern Slovakia, they use Hungarian. Like the majority population, the Slovak Roma can also be distinguished by their place of origin (i.e. whether they are influenced by an urban or rural environment) as well as by their affinity to a particular region of Slovakia.

Regarding such differences, some Roma experts observe that the old caste system continues inside the Romany community, determining in advance a person's role within the social system (in the case of Slovakia, we may speak of clans and groups). The distinctiveness of the Roma minority is also illustrated by questions of whether the Roma are a nation or merely an ethnic group. As recently as 1991, the Slovak Roma ceased to be perceived merely as an ethnic group and were treated by the country's legislation as a full-fledged ethnic minority, equal to other ethnic minorities living on Slovak territory (Vašečka, 2001a).

Since 1989, there is a difference between public perception of the social status of the Roma and strategies for solving the Romany issue in Slovakia and abroad. The international community considers the main reason for the unsatisfactory social status of the Roma in Slovakia to be discrimination stemming from latent and overt racism. On the other hand, in Slovakia the Romany issue is usually viewed as a social problem, without regard to the causes and consequences of marginalization, segregation, and racism.

### **A.3. ROMA DURING THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION AFTER 1989**

#### **A.3.1. Pre-1989 Policies Towards Roma in Slovakia Leading to Their Social Exclusion**

The social, economic and political changes in 1989 brought an unprecedented transformation process to Slovakia. The communist regime deformed the general understanding and observance of civic and political rights, while developing social rights, which have been significantly expanded. In contrast to other totalitarian regimes, this one changed the system that determined the course of economy, making it unable to compete by disregarding the rules of demand and supply. But the most significant intervention into the functioning of the society was the forcible effort to change the organization of the society, changing its natural stratification. Within the frame of these efforts, a systematic favoritism towards lower social stratum of the society, at the expense of the higher ones, while directly discriminates several segments of the pre-communism elite and intelligentsia.

The majority of the Roma belonged to the lower layers of the society and they were the targets of different experiments by the communist regime aimed at the improvement of their social status. The change that came in 1989 has caught the Roma by surprise, with most of the authors writing about these issues agreeing, that no stratum of the Roma population has been prepared for these changes.

The communist regime counted on the assumption, that if there is an equalization of living standard of the Roma and the average living standard, the reason for the differences between them and the majority population will be eliminated. In order to achieve this, different measures have been employed, which could be characterized as acts social engineering, such as (Vašečka, 2005):

1. The diffusion of the Roma (within Slovakia but also from Slovakia to the Czech republic), directed and supported by the state policy,
2. The disintegration of natural Roma communities,
3. The movement of the rural Roma population from Roma settlements to cities and industrial areas,
4. The destruction of natural binding between the Roma community and the majority population,
5. Insensitive and administrative (forcible) allocation of flats to the Roma from socially disadvantaged environment,
6. Forced compliance with the general compulsory labor service, under the threat of imprisonment,
7. Statutory enforced obligation of school attendance by children,
8. Obligatory participation of the Roma on health prevention.

These seemingly positive results have been achieved by forcible means, using measures in relation to the Roma community, which imposed external pressure without their active participation and acceptance. This was reflected among else by the behavior of some Roma towards the property, which was allocated to them.

Why are these measures considered to be forcible without active internal participation of the Roma? Despite of the fact that the government managed to achieve much higher standard of living for most of Roma in comparison to the past decades, many of the forms of behavior typical for a traditional Roma family remained. The process of modernization of the Roma community during the era of communist regime was predominantly one-dimensional, taking place only on the level of material improvement.

The characteristic attributes of a traditional Roma family include the following:

1. Life in a broader family, thus lacking the motion towards the nuclear family,
2. Community oriented life style,
3. An absence of borders between what is private and what is public (privacy is non-existent due to the way of life, but also because of the relationship to property),
4. Considering the present housing as temporary, provisional,
5. A clear division of roles in the Roma family (man as the provider, woman responsible for household maintenance),
6. The demographic characteristic of the Roma families is multiple family members.



The Roma community can be characterized as a non-agrarian society, which is not able to sustain itself from their own resources, thus traditionally entered into relationships with agrarian cultures. Agrarian cultures, with their private ownership relationship to land and through land to the territory, have contributed to the establishment of institutional and customary norms in the non-Roma population. Since the Roma have never been an agrarian culture and their relationship to land has always been rather tepid, they did not establish mechanisms and institutions related to the agrarian type of private ownership relationships. Thus, the Roma never belonged to a territory and never attributed importance to the acquisition of property. On the contrary – their way of craftsmanship found demand thanks to their flexibility in relation to the territory.

A different relationship and responsibility of the Roma towards ownership and their differing cultural pattern of relationship towards premises disjoints into specific social structures of the Roma, based on kinship ties. These specific cultural norms of the Roma can be named as the strategy of permanent provisory. Education in its institutional forms (formal and contextual) puts limits on the Roma strategy of provisory. Educational institutions of the majority population thus lack an equivalent with the institutional structure of the Roma community. This is the cause of conflict between two types of organization and social system functioning. The participation of Roma on two important activities - work and education, is from the Roma point of view a confrontation with a different world. Their incorporation into these two spheres is an asymmetric process, with the Roma entering the rules of the game and regulations, to whose establishment they did not contribute in any way, they are marginal and their only choice is to adjust.

Many of the measures undertaken by the communist regime have undoubtedly contributed to the improvement of the living standard of the Roma population. But on the other hand these measures can be evaluated as being to the disadvantage of the Roma, because of the insensitive placement of a Roma family, adapted on the backward environment of a settlement, among the majority population, often causing unsolvable problems in city housing estates and becoming the source of hate on both sides. This fact is at the roots of present outbursts of violence and racism.

The Roma community became, through the policy of resettling, diffusion and employment, a part of the social provision policy, which helped them to escape the situation of total material need reflected in absolute merit of hunger and malnourishment. The result was, that the Roma got gradually used to the state paternalism, which replaced the traditional family solidarity. This process lead to the establishment of a new culture of dependence on state institutions.

In the pre-industrial era (until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) the most important jobs of the Roma included forging as smiths and the musical production, many also processing raw materials. Since the Roma did not own land, they had to purchase the basic foods from the peasants. The peasant in turn needed cheap labor force in collecting of potatoes, harvesting of grain, taking in of hay, building of homes, sinking of wells or preparation of wood for the winter. The Roma usually demanded pay in food, used clothing, old furniture or household items. The convenience of this system of coexistence for both sides has been reflected also in the relationships between families of the Roma and peasants. With the arrival of industrialization these relationships have been gradually broken and the Roma have been forced to become a resource of labor force for heavy

industry. After 1989 the majority of them became useless for the new economy, mainly due to their qualification, and the former relationships between the Roma and the majority have almost disappeared.

The non-existent relationship to ownership and the strategy of provisory influenced the access of community to opportunities. The gradual process of social closure of Roma communities was taking place, leading to their social exclusion. The process of social closure has been taking place in two ways: one was marginalization and the other incorporation. The result of marginalization was the limitation of choices, often leading to the reproduction of poverty. During the communist regime the government tried to solve the problem of marginalization within the state organized economy by the incorporation of citizens living in rural areas into newly created zones of heavy industry, placing them mainly into working places for unqualified workers. This incorporation had the form of illusionary integration, since it did not lead to the improvement of social status.

The determining influence on the social situation of inhabitants of communist country was carried out by the second economy. Only those who based their living strategies on the participation in both economies had a chance for an improvement in their social status. The second economy required the existence of financial household management and production (own land and own means of production). But this has and still is not being the case of the Roma. Their exclusive dependence on formal economy was the main factor of their deeper fall into poverty, than was observed in the majority population.

The poverty of the Roma during the communist era thus reached more significant forms than the poverty of the majority population with similar degree of education and qualification. The Roma were much more dependent on the income from social assistance, which made up a greater proportion of their income than did the income generated by work. Apart from the second economy, another significant factor contributing to the maintenance of the living standard of the majority population and their incorporation into the society was the participation of both partners in the working process, a so called two-income model of family. The risk factors contributing to the poverty of the Roma included the fact, that many Roma families had only one source of income (with the Roma women staying at home with their children) and a majority of the families having many children.

The income differentiation and living standard in communist Slovakia was not adequate to the achieved degree of education. Certain branches of industry, mainly the manufacturing ones, have been preferred, from the point of view of achievement of a certain social status there was a principal of collective, not individual mobility. Education was not exclusively understood as a means of reaching a certain living standard and social position. The possibility of working in a certain sector, while having the type of education required there was the guaranty of securing a living standard. The overall educational structure in Slovakia has been adjusted to this principal, with the majority of citizens having only primary or secondary education without the certificate of apprenticeship. An orientation on these types of education has become a trap after 1989.

Thus the relationship towards education and the placement on the labor market has been determined by two basic factors. The mechanism of closure of the Roma community, which lead to a life on the edge of society, ultimately leading to the reproduction of behavioral patterns in the area of education and labor market. The new generation of Roma from the closed communities does not perceive or feel the need to choose a different educational strategy, as the one chosen by their fathers and mothers. In this area the behavior of the Roma minority significantly differs from the behavior of other minorities, for example the Jewish minority. The Roma in the given community prefer the reproduction of approved patterns with an overwhelming orientation on the present. But education is adjoined to an orientation on the future. This reproduction of patterns was supported by the behavior of the majority population, who knowingly or unknowingly failed to create the conditions for the improvement of education and qualification of the Roma ethnic group. The communist form of extensive economy required a large unqualified working force and so the Roma did not need to improve their education or qualification.

The historic experience of the Roma resulted in specific types of reactions and behaviors towards the majority population. Their withdrawal onto the borders of society resulted in the Roma behaving as a endangered group - multiplying the cohesiveness of the community, with domineering strategies of escape (provisional escape - readiness to leave) or an offensive, almost aggressive strategy. This broadens the degree of seclusion and marginalization of the Roma.

The family has always played a very significant role in the life of the Roma. The head of the family was always the father. When it came to raising children, the Roma usually paid attention to the older ones, who then took care of the younger children. Roma children are very reluctant to leave their parents, even once they reach adulthood and establish their own families. In general it is possible to conclude, that the Roma family represents the traditional type of multi-generation family. This is also the most important difference between the Roma and majority population family - the traditional Roma household is only beginning to divide into its nuclear forms in the present, while the same phenomenon has taken place in the non-Roma population during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Roma family thus presently represents a different type of family, but the difference is not determined by the ethnicity but rather by a drift in time. This is the reason why it is possible to talk of a phase drift in regard to this area, rather than of ethnic specific behavior of the Roma. The data on demographic behavior of the Roma population in Slovakia strongly resemble data describing the demographic behavior of non-Roma population several decades ago, or are comparable with the data from developing countries. As an example one can mention the data on child mortality that in the Roma population during the 80`s was very similar to the data from the whole of Czecho-Slovakia in the 50`s. The anteceded medium length of life span of the Roma minority between 1970 and 1980 was similar to the situation in the entire Czecho-Slovakia between 1929-1933 (for Roma men) and to the era after the Second World War (for Roma women). It is realistic to assume, that the present Roma population will reach the demographic characteristics of the majority in one generation.

The demographic boom has not occurred among the Roma until 1945 because of high mortality of Roma children and inadequate health care. With a certain degree of simplification it is possible to conclude that the health state of the majority of Roma citizens was and still is worse than that of the non-Roma population in Slovakia (Vašečka, 2005). The communist regime has achieved significant success in the elimination of certain diseases and in the overall improvement of the health state of Roma population - lowering the child mortality, increasing the medium life span and eliminating certain diseases. It was mainly the mandatory health prevention, improved living conditions and quality of food that contributed to the significant growth of the Roma population during the communist regime. It is possible to assume that an important role in the demographic behavior of the Roma was played by the population policy of the communist state (economy of full employment, social policy), which did not cause the people to consider or re-evaluate their own reproductive behavior.

Despite of the fact that health care has been improved during the communist regime, the estimated medium life span of the Roma population has been and still is lagging behind the estimated medium life span of the majority population. This is due mainly to their unhealthy life style, socially disadvantaged environment, high incidence of alcoholism and most important of all low quality and cheap food. The basic ingredient of the Roma diet has traditionally been entrails, prepared in different ways. The food considered to be the most typical Roma dish is called “goja” and it consists of washed pork large intestine, turned with the fat side inside and filled with potatoes, corn meal, grits or rice. Also, traditionally floury pastry dishes dominated the diet in Roma families, with low consumption of vegetables.

### **A.3.2. Changes after 1989 - from Social Exclusion to Social Isolation**

The social, economic and political transformation after 1989 begun in a situation, which in regard to the Roma population can be characterized by the following (*Poverty and Welfare...*, 2001):

1. Relatively tense relationships between the majority population and the Roma, originating from feelings of unjust re-distribution of resources.
2. The Roma have fully adjusted to the conditions introduced by the communist regime and it's rules of the game.
3. The existent differences between some Roma groups have been marked as socially pathological behavior patterns and some Roma communities as socially not adapted. And the state approached them on the basis of these conclusions - the differences characteristic of the Roma have been considered to be manifestations of social pathology. The social policy was targeted on their elimination.
4. The Roma have entered the transformation period with considerably lower qualification in comparison to the majority population and in addition having working habits inadequate to the requirements of the transforming economy.

The gradual reconstruction of economic, political, cultural and social life of the society has taken away all of the securities obtained during the communist regime by the Roma. And the Roma have not been prepared for any of these changes. The liberalization of

constraining rules related to the education, schooling system, placement of children in children's homes, the pursuance of control and law obedience is resulting in an increased number of absences and truancy by the Roma children. During the communist regime these situations have been solved with the assistance of police, by substitution of parents, removal of children into institutional care, reduction of social benefits etc. The Roma children from separated or segregated settlements are handicapped in three ways: for the first time at their arrival in the primary school, the second time at the entrance exams for higher education schools. When considering their chances, if they do decide to continue with further education, they end up choosing mainly apprenticeship schools (whose choice is mainly determined by their availability - distance from home). Later they are trapped in the position of unemployed graduates of apprenticeship schools, without a chance of finding employment, within the official formal economy, in the close surroundings of their home. If they finish their education, they go back to their original environment, where they reproduce the behavior of their parents. They fall into the social safety net and the young generation begins to perceive and consider this to be the normal way to behave. If they do get employed, its mainly informal jobs, illegal work or short-term jobs - opportunities for them diminish with growing segregation.

The change in the area of health care to an insurance system with emphasis on the personal responsibility for health (for example including the cancellation of mandatory health prevention) is beginning to show effects on the worsening health state of the Roma population. This is also related to the orientation of the Roma on the present, neglecting preventive health care. The bad socio-economic situation and the inadequate housing and infrastructure conditions in the place of residency related to it are the reason behind the worsening health status of the Roma in Slovakia after 1989. All available data reflect the worsening health state, mainly in the constantly growing isolated Roma settlements. Since 1989 the incidence of upper respiratory disease has been on the rise, and in some settlements there have been repeated outbreaks of tuberculosis. Because of the above-mentioned fact, the risk of epidemics exists. Typical examples of the most common diseases include skin diseases and venereal diseases, also accidental injuries are common. Among the Roma children infectious and parasitic diseases are being observed, which are not to be found among the majority population anymore. Another big danger is the spreading of the infection of brain membranes. The socially disadvantaged environment is associated with the high incidence of different levels of mental retardation. Despite of the elimination of epidemics of typhoid, typhus and the efforts to gain control over specific diseases such as trachoma, respiratory diseases, intestinal diseases and syphilis on the national level, many of these diseases are still to be found in the Roma settlements. The area of housing policy is a sphere, where there was a total de-etatization. It is related to flats and houses, as well as the real estates adjoined to the given houses and flats. 90% of rental flats have been privatized, the real estates have their new owners. The lands, which were in the so-called private holding, could be given to their tenants free of charge, if the following two basic conditions have been fulfilled:

1. The house standing in the real estate had a valid building permit, or has been awarded the appropriate approval in the term given by law,
2. The real estate has to be registered in the land-register, and no application has been filled for its restitution.

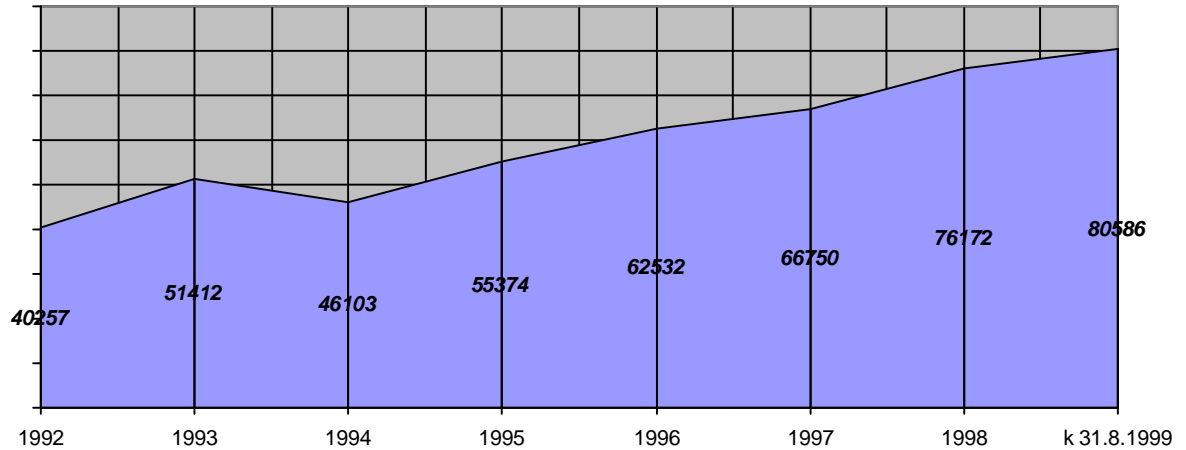
When these conditions have been met, the tenant was free to apply for the transfer on the property on his name. While a majority of the population showed a significant lack of information on these procedures, among the Roma it was even more intense. The issue of legal respectively illegal ownership of land was non-existent during communism. Thus the changes after 1989 uncovered a large group of Roma living illegally on someone else's land. And also, the conditions for the legalization of a property have become very complicated, with increased demands and pre-conditions for the issuance of the building permit (it requires 32 individual permits), as well as the adequate approval. The houses of many Roma do not fulfill the norm given by the law and the Roma lack financial resources for the reconstruction of their houses. If they have them, they often cannot use them, because they do not legally own the real estate.

After 1989 the government system of several types of loans for housing acquisition has been cancelled, as well as the building of new houses by the state, and the issues related to the problem of housing was transferred into the competence of communal municipalities and city councils. They begun to behave just like any other economic unit. The present situation of high demand prevailing the offer lead to an increase in prices of flats and homes, extreme from the point of view of citizens with average income. The chance of gaining and maintaining housing thus became minimal for the Roma, because they are unable to succeed in this competition.

The building of housing estates in Slovakia after 1989 is inadequately low when compared to the demand. Despite of saving programs and limited loans from the state, a system that would allow the citizen with average income to gain a flat in real time is non-existent. Thus the public reacts very sensitively to any form of unfair decisions regarding the housing policy, allocation of flats, provision of profitable loans etc. Social housing as a form of solution to the situation on the market with housing estates by far does not cover the demands and needs of families in social and material need. The Roma are understandably not alone in this situation, but are unquestionably the least successful ones at its solving. The rental price liberalization and privatization of flats, with the relevant significant increase in housing related expenses (rent by 200%, similar to expenses related to water, gas, garbage etc) pushes the Roma to cheaper flats or lodging-houses. The lack or absence of a realistic policy of social housing is dealt with by the Roma by withdrawal strategies - they go back to the settlements, revitalizing them. The reason for this is simple - housing in settlements has minimal or no expenses related to it.

The unemployment rate among the Roma rose to extremes, reaching 100% in some of Roma settlements. Exact statistics for Romany unemployment do not exist, and one can only make estimates on the basis of assessing the overall situation in Slovakia's more troubled regions. Districts with the highest share of Roma are also those districts that are most severely hit by unemployment.

**Graph 1:** Numbers of unemployed Roma in Slovakia (as for 31-st December of each year)

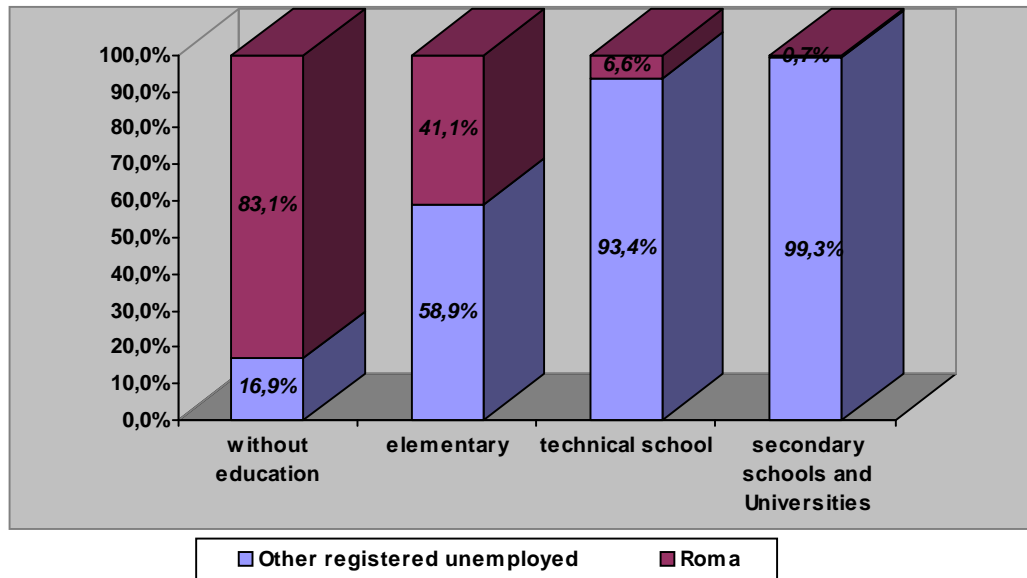


**Source:** Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic, 1999.

The only data available on Romany unemployment, which still cannot be considered fully representative, are the unofficial data of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, which were recorded by district labor bureau officers who wrote the letter “R” in the dossiers of Romany job applicants. Since this practice was illegal and discriminatory, it was discontinued after 1998 elections. Unfortunately, one negative effect of the decision is that Slovakia now lacks a database on Roma unemployment. Nevertheless, unofficial data from the previous period show that the number of unemployed Roma in Slovakia is permanently increasing, and that the Roma represent a significant majority of the long-term unemployed in Slovakia. The main factors influencing the high unemployment rate among the Roma are the following: their low level of qualifications, the lack of interest among employers in hiring Roma due to the high supply of workers on the labor market, the poor work ethic of some Roma, the lack of interest among some Roma to find a job on public benefit work projects, and the general scarcity of job opportunities, especially in regions with a large Roma population.

According to expert estimates, approximately 10% of Slovak citizens are dependent on social security benefits, a significant proportion of who are the Roma. The disbursement of social security benefits to the Roma has become one of the main causes for the growing tension between the minority and the majority population. The majority argues that in doing nothing, the Roma receive large sums of money, which they blow on alcohol. The Government’s inability to better plan the disbursement of welfare benefits, and widespread usury among the Roma, argue for the development of a supervisory mechanism through which the government could control the Roma’s spending of their social benefits. The most serious objection to the two approaches was that they were implemented across the board, without applying individual criteria. The scheme was tested during the first half of 1999, and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family is not now considering a broader application.

**Graph 2:** Percentage of Roma out of all registered unemployed according to structure of education (1999).

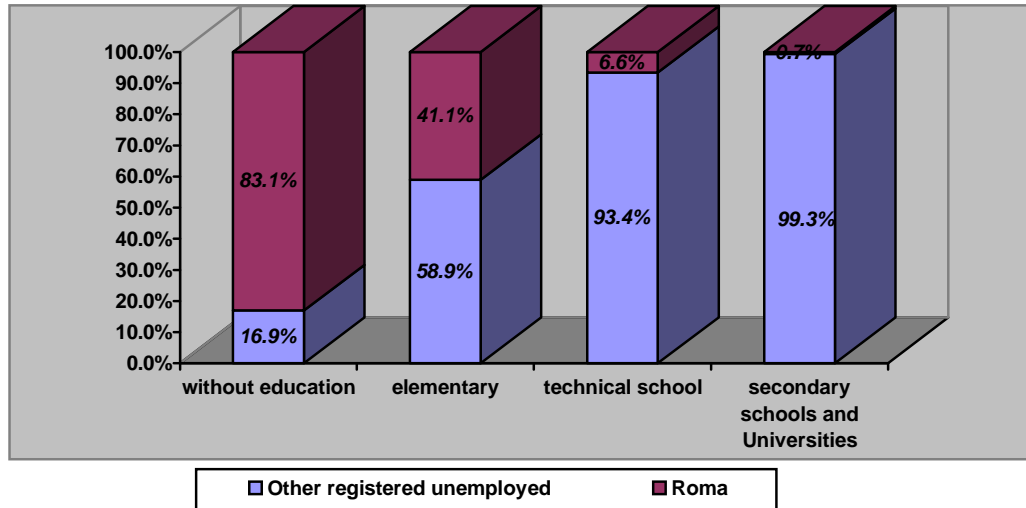


**Source:** Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic, 1999.

Unemployment, especially the long-term and permanent unemployment so common among the Roma, perpetuates the cycle of poverty and the unemployment trap. The Roma become dependent on social security benefits, resulting in a high rate of long-term unemployment. The situation is then passed from one generation to the next. Consequently, the number of families in which both parents and children are permanently unemployed is also increasing; moreover, children have no experience of stable and permanent employment. Hence, all current conditions support a subculture of unemployed Romany youth.

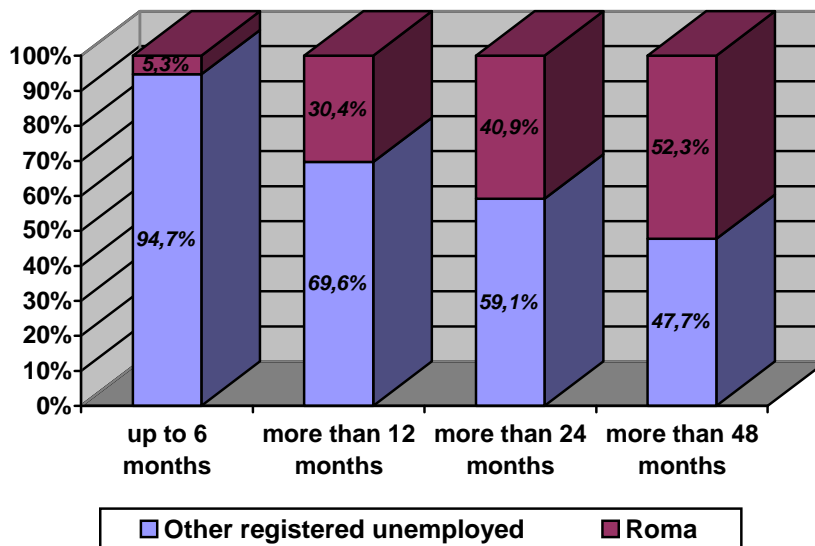


**Graph 3:** Percentage of Roma out of all registered unemployed according to structure of education (1999).



Source: Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic, 1999.

**Graph 4:** Percentage of Roma out of the numbers of unemployed according to the period of registration (1999).



Source: Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic, 1999.

**Table 6: The structure of unemployed according to the period of registration (1999).**

Period of registration	Registered unemployed together (RU)	Roma	Percentage of Roma out of RU
up to 6 months	194 737	10 380	5,33 %
more than 12 months	194 657	59 176	30,40 %
more than 24 months	100 020	40 922	40,91 %
more than 48 months	42 861	22 399	52,26 %

**Source:** Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic, 1999.

### **A.3.3. Strategies to Cope with the Poverty by Roma and by the Majority Population**

*The mentioned changes are the phenomenon of the new type of social stratification defined by new types of relationships in the society. The beat boards of this new stratification were two stratification pyramids, formed during communism: the pyramid of establishment (social capital) and the pyramid of second economy (private capital). These pyramids have been merging, with the social capital creating opportunities for the creation and access to material capital. The Roma did not belong to either of the pyramids providing potential for the integration into a higher class of society. They did not have the chance nor did they manage to fulfill, with the help of the double life strategy (relational - social and material capital), the requirements for the integration into the new market relationships and successfully master the new rules of the game on the labor market and the market with privatized property (Vašečka, 2005).*

Poverty was existent during the communist regime and it was a problem concerning the Roma as well, with having an above standard representation in the category of poor citizens. After 1989 the term poverty gained a new content, based on the inequality between individuals on one hand and whole social categories on the other. The individual criteria involve the old demographic poverty, where the basic factor of poverty is the number of children. This type of poverty can be escaped by individual strategies, mainly changes in reproductive behavior (this strategy was implemented by the majority population in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century). The communist regime implemented the same concept of poverty as demographic, which means poverty pushed into families and its connection to certain living situation. Thus it transformed the poverty from a public issue to a personal problem, which meant that poverty lost its dimension of a social status. Poverty was understood as personal failure. The state regulated this poverty with means based on strong re-distribution, subventions into the infrastructure, prices of basic foods and incomes.

The group characteristic is being described as the new vertical poverty, which, through the changes in the structure of employment, moves a whole social category into social dependence. The main factor is not the number of children but low degree of education in fields that are vanishing - whole disappearing branches of industry result in long-term unemployment. The specific characteristic of the Roma minority is the combination of old demographical poverty with the new vertical poverty. In the case of group vertical

poverty, individual living strategies are an unavoidable prerequisite of successful solution of the life situation, but in itself it is not enough. The chances are determined by the system of social provisions and rights. The state of vertical poverty is the result of systemic changes and not of individual failures. The degree and scale of poverty of the Roma is at large the result of the degree of their disintegration, the income and property inequality is the direct result of this disintegration.

From the point of view of the economic structure, the Roma in Slovakia are to a large degree a homogenous group when it comes to social class and qualification. A majority of them belongs from the point of view of the socio-professional status into the category of non-qualified workers, which is the reason why they have such high representation among the low-income groups of the Slovak population. From the point of view of employment, a certain "monotype" of the Roma family could be observed already during the communist regime: Roma families were those of unqualified building or agrarian workers, without professional or general higher education, low average income per family member, with a prevailing majority of men working away from the place of their residence. Since 1989 the unemployment of Roma men has been on the rise, as well as the number of Roma families with both partners unemployed.

The state reacted after 1989 by creating system of social assistance, a social safety net. But it narrowed the comprehension of poverty to a state of the so-called material and social need. The state does not create nor reflect the poverty as a social status, thus narrowing its comprehension to the procurement - granges necessary for the maintenance of life (excluding entitlements for those, who respect the norms regulating behavior of the status bearers). The absence of entitlements and emphasis on procurement reflect the comprehension of poverty as individual responsibility, individual failure and predetermines the provision of social assistance by testing, measuring, monitoring of individual behavior and strategies. This reproduces and strengthens the culture of dependence with all the signs of reproduced poverty: feelings of marginality, being in danger, of fatalism, desperation, passivity, aggression, communal closure, impulsiveness, absence of planning and saving, distrust towards the authorities.

The basic strategy for solving life situation in the majority, as well as in the Roma population, is family cooperation, mutual help within families, broader family appurtenance. Differences are in the type of help provided by the family, and whether it is actually able to provide any help at all. Family strategies are determined mainly by the cultural and historical background and living conditions of individual families. Which type of family strategy becomes prevalent in a settlement or village is dependent much more on its socio-cultural character and the micro-climate in the settlement, then on demographic characteristics of the families. The socio-cultural character of separated but mainly segregated settlements is a type of collective marginalization and social exclusion without a potential for mutual help. The living strategy oriented on family networks is ineffective in these circumstances. The more homogenic a settlement is, the smaller are the chances for the effectiveness of supporting family networks. In segregated settlement these living strategies have zero effectiveness. Some NGOs are trying to replace the absence of support family networks and mutual help with their own activities (creating community centers).

In the new social conditions, it is mainly old, well known and time proven family strategies that are being implemented as coping mechanisms. The traditional majority family revitalizes apart from family networks the strategy of in-house consumption (self-catering) and the departure with the goal of finding work abroad. But the method of self-catering has never been used by segregated Roma communities in the past nor in the present (so there is nothing to revitalize). The non-acceptance of this strategy by the Roma is considered by the majority not to be a result of traditional and typical behavior patterns for the Roma, but as the proof of the laziness and affiliation towards stealing - choosing the easy way, unwillingness to actively change their living situation. The more open a Roma community is, the more heterogeneous the environment is, the greater is the chance of reproduction of the self-catering strategy.

The revitalization of strategies with long-term effects, typical for the rural areas in the pre-communist era, like the development of agrarian small-scale production, the animal farming, or retail handicraft is rather sporadic and uncommon. Apart from lack of experience, there is also a lack of government support. For many villages, after the disappearance of the "Collective Farming Cooperatives" and State farms, which employed an overwhelming part of the population, majority and Roma in agriculture, the above mentioned activities are the only possibilities of job creation. The extinction of agricultural production thus lead to the departure of majority population - either happening through shuttle migration to working places or the abandonment of rural homes. The typical Roma handicraft, being mainly supplementary production or services adjoined to these types of productions, thus lost demand in these villages. Some NGOs are trying to supplement the absent government support, running several projects for the support of revitalization of "classical" handicraft, several of them successfully.

In the cases of some Roma settlements or in the case of a socio-spatial marginality of an area, there are specific social circumstances with up to 100% unemployment in some places. Thus a situation is created, which within the Slovak circumstances has been given the title "valley of hunger", being areas with visible "islands of poverty". The "hunger valley" is endangered by total social disorganization and the creation of the culture of poverty as the only possible form of adaptation on the situation. Its results include the formation of the so-called underclass, rural and urban. Besides the structural dimension, the transformation after 1989 also had a territorial, regional and micro-regional dimension. Some territories have been shifted to the margin of the socio-economic development, becoming socio-economically marginalized territories. Marginalization has its roots in the previous period of the so-called socialist industrialization and industrial urbanization of Slovakia. After 1989 the socio-economic marginality of the inherited regions has been deepened, continually spreading to other territories. The marginalization, that has taken place within the economic transformation, has created larger compact entities within marginal territories in borderland regions of the northern, eastern and southern Slovakia. These territories are inhabited by minorities and that is why the issue has also an ethnic dimension.

Generally, the regions have several dispositions in common. They have increasing or "stabilized" levels of unemployment as well as other problematic qualities. These dispositions refer especially to the human potential as well as to the infrastructure, spatial position of the region and the persistence of imbalance inherited from the past. They also

share spatial, civilization and other marginal positions. There are concentrations of old demographic and new vertical types of poverty, low entrepreneurial spirit, and small influx of capital. Marginal regions are characterized by a decline of civilization and cultural standard of its settlements and life conditions. Problems with access to education, social and cultural activities have been observed, adjoined to the limited potential for social and civilization development. These regions have problems adapting to the current transformation, also lacking social subjects able and willing to take over the initiative and responsibility for the activation of the region, finding ways out of the marginal existence. Marginal regions are seldom entirely marginal. Marginality is a problem especially in some villages. These regions are ethnically mixed, which adds political meaning to this feature of marginal territories.

The Roma living in segregated settlements of marginalized regions thus find themselves in a situation of double marginalization. Weakened and very limited possibilities of a marginalized region in combination with the absence of potential for self-help, self-organization and activation require specific approaches, support and developmental social programs targeting the marginalized regions and the marginalized segregated settlements of the regions. Any concrete program cannot achieve long-term success without systemic changes especially in the area of employment policy and housing policy (social housing). It is not possible to overcome double marginalization with an individual living strategy (unless it means moving). The multiplied effects of disintegration and marginalization are reflected among the Roma in long-term lack of material security and the life in absolute poverty. Material security means the availability of food, drinks, clothing, housing and warmth, enabling biological survival and the fulfillment of primary needs and the orientation of activities of the fulfillment of the need to "have" this necessary security. But this is orientation on survival, not on life. The orientation on material security is the bridge, a pre-condition to the achievement of social security and the fulfillment of secondary needs - mainly of self-identity and self-affirmation, education, culture etc.

The most basic requirements for the achievement of social security are social contacts, being the only possibility of incorporation into the social organization of the society. The segregated Roma live under the pressure of trying to reach material security, leaving them without the potential for other activities, for the benefit of themselves or others. So they themselves cannot ensure their participation in informal social networks. Their creation for the Roma and with the Roma is the most basic task for all social activists. The strategies of segregated Roma oriented on the survival make them dependent. This dependency is of material character, because their survival depends on the state social assistance benefits and other institutions. The same risk of dependency hangs over the creation of social dependency on other people. The double marginalization of the Roma is accompanied by a double dependency effect - material and social dependency. Double dependency means the inability of any kind of activation, participation, bringing upon a loss of self-confidence and self-respect.

## **A.4. LEGAL PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN SLOVAKIA**

### **A.4.1. Ratification of International Documents**

From the historical point of view, the legal protection of national minorities is a relatively new problem on the international scene. International law recognizes the term "national" or "ethnic" minority usually from bilateral or multilateral agreements between states that are trying to solve questions of "their" common national minorities. Vast majority of UN documents were accepted by the National Council of the Slovak Republic and have become part of the Slovak legal system. Most of documents of the Council of Europe are in fact only recommendations in nature. Documents accepted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe create the political framework for internal legal systems of the member states of the Council of Europe. *Recommendation No. 1201* defines national minority rights and brings the definition of a national minority that is key for definitions in all member states.

According to the Article 11 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic human rights agreements ratified by the Slovak Republic have precedence over national law, if they secure broader range of basic rights and freedoms. However, the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages is cultural, not a human rights document.

*The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* has been ratified by Slovakia on September 14, 1995. *The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* from 1950 has been used as a building stone for all European international and internal norms. *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995) is historically the first document that is primarily focused on the protection of ethnic and national minorities.

*The European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages* has been signed by Slovak government at the beginning of the 2001. The ratification became a hot issue for the government of Prime Minister Dzurinda since members of the government have significantly different opinions on the issue. It is unclear whether charter will be ratified also by the Slovak parliament - with a certain degree of simplification the current situation is a process of intra-governmental coalition negotiations about which paragraphs is Slovakia ready to sign. The situation is, however, bizarre in the sense that Slovakia implemented 48 paragraphs out of 95 into its legal system already and therefore it should not be a problem to sign the Charter (the charter is considered to be ratified after accepting at least 35 out of 95 paragraphs).

The most important documents addressing racial and ethnic discrimination, indirectly reflecting the status of Roma in Slovakia and ratified by the Slovak Republic are following:

*International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* ratified by Czechoslovakia on December 29, 1966 and re-ratified by Slovakia on May 28, 1993 with reservation to articles 17 and 22.

*First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* ratified by Czechoslovakia on March 12, 1991 and re-ratified on May 28, 1993.

*International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* ratified by Czechoslovakia on December 23, 1975 and re-ratified by Slovakia on May 28, 1993.

*International Labor Organization Convention No. 111* ratified by Czechoslovakia on June 15, 1960 and re-ratified by Slovakia on January 1, 1993.

*UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.*

On June 26, 2000 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Protocol No.12 to the European Convention on Human Rights and at the end of October the Protocol was signed by the Vice Prime-minister for human rights, national minorities and regional development Pál Csáky. The protocol 12 is broadening the scope of Article 14 on non-discrimination and its implementation is precondition for adoption of the first non-discriminatory law in Slovakia. As for the moment, the Slovak legal system does not cover the discrimination in the sphere of the private law, only in the sphere of the public law.

**Adoption of important UN documents by Slovakia:**

<b>Name of the Document (Date of adoption by the UN General Assembly)</b>	<b>Signature - Czechoslovakia</b>	<b>Ratification - Czechoslovakia (Slovak Republic)</b>
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (December 12, 1965)	October 7, 1966	December 29, 1966 (May 28, 1993)
Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity (November 26, 1968)	May 5, 1969	August 13, 1970 (May 28, 1993)
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (December 19, 1966)	October 7, 1968	December 23, 1975 (May 28, 1993)
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (December 10, 1984)	September 8, 1986	July 7, 1987 (May 28, 1993)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (November 20, 1989)	September 30, 1990	January 7, 1991 (May 28, 1993)
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (December 12, 1966)	no	March 12, 1991 (May 28, 1993)
Convention relating to the	no	November 26, 1991

Status of Refugees (July 28, 1951)		(February 2, 1993)
Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (January 31, 1967)	no	November 26, 1991 (February 2, 1993)

**Adoption of important treaties by the Council of Europe by Slovakia:**

<b>Name of the Treaty</b>	<b>Accepted by the Council of Europe</b>	<b>Slovak Republic</b>
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	November 4, 1950	Ratification - March 3, 1992
European Social Charter including 3 Additional Protocols	October 18, 1961 (revised May 3, 1996)	Ratification - June 6, 1998
European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	November 26, 1987	Ratification - May 11, 1994
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities	February 1, 1995	Ratification - September 14, 1995
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages	November 5, 1992	not signed

Set of important documents of the Council of Europe (Committee of Ministers) accepted by Slovakia:

<b>Documents (Committee of Ministers)</b>	<b>Date of Acceptation</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Recommendation No. 563/69	1969	
Resolution No. 13/75	May 22, 1975	
Recommendation No. 1/83	February 22, 1983	on stateless nomads and nomads of undetermined nationality
Recommendation No. 10/92	May 21, 1992	on the implementation of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities
Recommendation No. 20/97	October 30, 1997	on "Hate Speech"
Recommendation No. 14/97	September 30, 1997	on the establishment of independent national



		institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights
Act No. 10/97	September 17, 1997	
Decision on signature of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages	November 5, 1992	
Acceptation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities	February 1, 1995	
Declaration on continuing of the European Youth Campaign against Racism, Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Intolerance	May 3, 1996	

Important documents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe accepted by Slovakia:

<b>Documents (Parliamentary Assembly)</b>	<b>Date of Acceptation</b>
Recommendation No. 1134 on the Rights of Minorities	1990
Recommendation No. 1201 on Additional Protocol on the Rights of Minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights	February 1, 1993
Recommendation No. 1203 on Gypsies in Europe	February 2, 1993
Recommendation No. 1275 on fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance	June 28, 1995

#### **A.4.2. Constitutional Rights of Minorities in Slovakia**

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic is the supreme legal act in Slovakia's body of laws. The special position that the Constitution occupies is of great importance to our exploration of the approach of the Roma minority to the Slovak body of laws. The most important provisions in this regard are those in the Constitution's second chapter, which deals with fundamental rights and freedoms, and those governing the relationship between Slovak and international law.

There seems to be certain ambivalence in these provisions of the Constitution: on the one hand, members of the Roma community are guaranteed equality, while on the other hand they are granted some rights and freedoms that apply only to national minorities and ethnic groups, not to the majority population. We will deal first with the principle of equality and the ban on discrimination anchored in the Constitution, then with the rights

of national minorities and ethnic groups, and finally with the relationship between international and Slovak law as anchored in the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic adopted by the Slovak parliament on September 1, 1992, unconditionally stipulated the equality of all citizens regardless of their nationality, religion, worship, and social status (Article 12, Paragraph 2). At the same time, it was enacted that members of all ethnic minorities were to be granted the right to master the state language, the right to establish and maintain their own educational and cultural institutions, the right to receive information in their native language, the right to use that language in official contacts with state administration authorities, and the right to participate in administering issues concerning national and ethnic minorities (Articles 34 and 35). The Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees members of ethnic minorities an equal right to receive an education at elementary and secondary schools in Slovak language and in their native language for the purpose of fulfilling their national development (Law n.350/ 1994). Amendments to the educational law in 1999 prepared by the Slovak government stopped the erosion in minority right standards that were caused by the regressive policies of the previous Mečiar's government.

The Constitution anchors the principle of equality in Article 12, Paragraphs 1 and 2 as follows:

(1) All human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. Their fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable, irrevocable, and absolutely perpetual. (2) Fundamental rights shall be guaranteed in the Slovak Republic to every person regardless of sex, race, color, language, faith, religion, political affiliation or conviction, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, property, birth or any other status, and no person shall be denied their legal rights, discriminated against or favored on any of these grounds.

Article 12 relates to the use of rights that the Constitution calls “fundamental rights and freedoms”, and which include the rights listed in the second chapter of the Constitution – fundamental human rights and freedoms, political rights and the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, economic, social and cultural rights, the right to protect the environment and cultural heritage, and the right to judicial and other legal protection.

Since the Constitution does not define discrimination, when Article 12 is applied the complete wording of the Constitution must be taken into account, as well as the texts of international legal norms. The cited Constitutional provision clearly states that fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed to everyone regardless of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin (see below for more on the Roma minority as a racial or national minority). However, it remains unclear which acts can be classified as discrimination, and who can commit it, i.e. who can violate Article 12, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution.

The Convention thus defines discriminatory acts very broadly, saying discrimination can be a matter of both the aims and consequences of such acts. As for who can violate the equality principle, the Convention says that the equality principle is usually implemented in public life, meaning that the most likely violator of the principle is the state. The state, however, is not just obliged to act in a non-discriminatory way, but it also has to ensure (primarily through legislation) that nobody acts in this manner.

Similar limits also apply to provisions on discrimination in the *European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights* – the ban on discrimination relates only to the public sphere, with certain exceptions concerning private relationships when such relationships

have a public dimension, for example employment. In this regard, the most important article of the European Convention is Article 14, on which the judicature of the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg is based.

Besides the general provisions on equality in Article 12, the Constitution emphasizes the equality principle in relation to other rights as well, such as the right to own property (Art. 20, Paragraph 1), the right to vote (Art. 30, Paragraph 3), and the equal rights of children born to married parents and those born out of wedlock (Art. 41, Paragraph 3).

Affirmative action is dealt with as a separate issue in the Constitution. Such action usually involves the introduction of legislative or government measures favoring certain (e.g. ethnic) groups of inhabitants by giving them preferential and unequal access to education or job opportunities; the aim is usually to help the group integrate better into mainstream society. Article 12, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution suggests that this kind of positive discrimination is prohibited: “no person shall be denied their legal rights, discriminated against or favored on any of these grounds”, the document says, with “these” grounds including race, color, nationality or ethnic origin. On the other hand, the Constitution also allows some exceptions to this rule, such as in Article 38, Paragraph 1, according to which “women, minors, and disabled people shall enjoy more extensive health protection and special working conditions”, or Article 41, Paragraph 2, according to which “pregnant women shall be entitled to special treatment, terms of employment, and working conditions”. The present wording of the Constitution, however, indicates that any affirmative action beyond these specific limits defined by the Constitution would be contrary to Article 12, Paragraph 2, which bans positive discrimination.

The preamble of the Constitution has become the focus of a political struggle since the Constitution has been adopted. The crux of the matter is an introductory phrase, which reads “We, the Slovak nation...,” thus making the Slovak Republic a national state of the Slovaks as defined by ethnicity. This wording is advocated not only by the entire political opposition but also by a decisive majority of political parties in Slovakia, except the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK). This party demands that the introductory phrase be replaced by another phrase that would express instead the civic principle of the state (for instance, “We, citizens of the Slovak Republic...”) or that the preamble be restructured in such a way that it would better accommodate that principle.

European institutions had closely watched the preparation of the Law on the Use of the Languages of Ethnic Minorities, which was adopted by the Parliament on July 10, 1999. Although the passage of such a law had been envisaged by the Slovak Constitution since its creation in 1992, Mečiar’s administration kept promising and postponing its adoption, arousing international criticism. The final version of this law was a compromise, although it was welcomed by foreign observers as a step forward; however, MPs for the SMK party voted against the government draft that was eventually approved, arguing that it did not take into account the fundamental requirements of Slovakia’s ethnic minorities. On 25 August 1999, the Slovak Government adopted Regulation No. 221 of 1999 that provides a list of 656 villages where minorities amount to at least 20 percent of local population. This list also contains 57 villages where the Roma minority meets the above-mentioned limit. Another important law concerning the right to information, which is guaranteed in Article No. 26 of the Constitution, was the Law on Free Access to Information, passed by Parliament on May 17, 2000. It will take effect on January 1,

2001. In passing this law, Slovakia fulfilled its international obligations arising from a 1970 resolution passed by the Advisory Assembly of the Council of Europe, which laid down the right to receive information on the activities of public servants, as well as the duty of civil service organs to enable access to such information.

The Constitution itself does not define the terms “national minority” or “ethnic group”; nor does it provide any list of “state acknowledged” national minorities, as was provided by a 1968 law. According to Article 12, Paragraph 3 of the Constitution, “every person has the right to freely decide which national group he or she belongs to. Any influence or coercion that could affect or lead to a denial of a person's original nationality is prohibited”. Thus, in theory there is no limit to the number of national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia.

The Roma minority has been *de facto* recognized as a national minority for some time now, with Slovak citizens claiming this nationality in regular population censuses (1970, 1980, 1991 and 2001). The Slovak government in 1991 acknowledged the Roma minority as a national minority, and the Romany tongue is explicitly mentioned among those regional or minority languages acknowledged by Slovakia for the purposes of the *European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages*. These facts suggest that in principle, a Roma national minority exists in Slovakia, enjoying all the rights guaranteed to national minorities by the Constitution.

The rights of national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia are governed by Articles 33 and 34 of the Constitution, as follows:

Article 33: Membership in any national minority or ethnic group may not be used to the detriment of any individual.

Article 34: (1) Citizens who belong to national minorities or ethnic groups in Slovakia shall be guaranteed their full [right of] development, particularly the right to promote their cultural heritage with other citizens of the same national minority or ethnic group, the right to receive and disseminate information in their mother tongues, the right to form associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. (2) In addition to the right to learn the official [state] language, citizens who belong to national minorities or ethnic groups shall, under conditions defined by law, also be guaranteed: a) the right to be educated in a minority language; b) the right to use a minority language in communication with official bodies; c) the right to help make decisions in matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups. (3) The exercise of rights by citizens who belong to a national minority, as guaranteed by this Constitution, may not threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Slovakia, or discriminate against other citizens.

Article 33 of the Constitution follows Article 12 in banning discrimination based on membership in a national minority or ethnic group. It does not differentiate between these two minority categories, implying that “national minority” and “ethnic group” are synonymous from the legal viewpoint. Article 33 does not introduce any special rights for members of national minorities and ethnic groups.

A major overhaul of Slovakia’s original 1992 Constitution (the amendments took effect on July 1, 2001) expanded Article 1 of the Constitution with the following wording: “Slovakia acknowledges and adheres to general rules of international law, international

treaties by which [the country] is bound, and its other international obligations". This is the cornerstone of the entire constitutional approach to the relationship between international and Slovak law. However, neither the text of the Constitution, nor the explanatory report that accompanies it, says whether unwritten sources of international law such as "customary international law" or "rules of courtesy" should be considered part of "the general rules of international law" and "other international obligations" that the document cites.

Article 1, Paragraph 2 does not contain any concrete information on the position of the international treaties by which Slovakia is bound, nor does it offer any classification of these treaties. For this we have to turn to Article 7, Paragraph 5 of the Constitution, which was added in the 2001 amendment, and according to which: "International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international treaties for whose application a special law is not necessary, as well as international treaties which directly confer rights or impose duties on physical or legal entities and which were ratified and promulgated according to the law, have precedence over other laws". This means that all treaties that the Constitution identifies as international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms have precedence over other laws (as well as over regulations such as statutory orders, decrees and by-laws); they do not, however, supersede either the Constitution or laws passed by a three-fifths majority in parliament.

Article 7, Paragraph 5 anchors the precedence of international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms over Slovakia's regular (i.e. non-constitutional) body of law. However, the only treaties to enjoy such a position are those that were ratified and promulgated after July 1, 2001, i.e. after the amendment to the Constitution took effect. Treaties ratified before this date are governed by Article 154c, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution, according to which: "International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms which Slovakia ratified and promulgated according to law before this constitutional act took effect shall be a part of its legal order, and shall have precedence over other laws as long as they provide a greater scope of constitutional rights and freedoms".

The Constitution's regulation of human rights, which takes precedence even over international standards, is characterized by general formulations that do not allow precise conclusions on certain rights to be drawn. Furthermore, Article 51 of the Constitution envisages the use of some of the rights it grants only within the framework of laws that will later be adopted to precisely define these rights. These two facts – the Constitution's general wording and its reliance on other laws to define and enact its provisions – greatly increase the importance of lower laws and other legal regulations in implementing various articles of the Constitution.

The legal regulation of human rights that are especially important to the Roma has several characteristics. First, these laws enlarge on the principle of equality and the ban on discrimination mentioned in the Constitution. Second, laws on national minority and ethnic group rights grant these rights also to the Roma as a national minority. Finally, several provisions of the Penal Code also pertain to the Roma, namely those specifying criminal sanctions for attacks on racial minorities. From the viewpoint of Slovak legislation, the Roma are treated as citizens with the right to equal treatment, as members of a national minority having language and cultural rights pertaining to national minorities and ethnic groups, and as members of a racial minority enjoying special protection under the body of criminal law.

### **A.4.3. Rights pertaining to Roma as members of a national minority**

At present there are more than 100 legal regulations in Slovakia dealing with the protection of national minorities. It is impossible to deal here with all of these regulations, so we will focus only on those that apply the rights of national minorities as stated in Article 34 of the Constitution (the content of Article 33, the main provision on the prevention of discrimination, has been dealt with above).

Article 34, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution guarantees all national minority and ethnic group members “their full development”, which includes the rights to promote their cultural heritage with other citizens of the same national minority or ethnic group, to receive and disseminate information in their mother tongues, to form associations, and to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. The Constitution says that the details of these rights will be set by other laws, meaning that their application in practice is limited until the laws executing these rights have been adopted.<sup>2</sup> However, it is important to note that the individual rights of national minority members may also be governed by laws not dealing exclusively with national minorities: for example, the right to receive and disseminate information in one’s mother tongue is granted by the Press Law, the Law on Slovak Television, the Law on Slovak Radio, and the Law on Broadcasting and Retransmission, without the need for a special a law for national minority members.

The right to form associations is basically a special form of the more general right of free association granted to all citizens of Slovakia by a 1990 law. The creation and maintenance of educational and cultural institutions largely falls under the right to associate, or the right to establish non-profit organizations (such as foundations, non-investment funds, not-for-profit organizations carrying out community services, etc.). On the other hand, even if the state took a neutral approach to the development of national minorities through general laws, the State Budget Law still allocates certain public money for the development of national minorities.

Article 34, Paragraph 2 governs the language rights of national minorities as well as the right to participate in decision-making on matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups. Language rights include the right to learn the official state language and the right to be educated in a minority language within the school system. A separate law – the 1999 Law on the Use of Minority Languages – introduced a rule according to which members of a national minority that in the most recent population census represented more than 20% of a given municipality’s inhabitants, have the right to use their mother tongue in that municipality. The right to use one’s mother tongue in communications with official bodies includes the right to submit written documents in the language of a national minority, and the right to receive an answer from a state body in both the official state language and the language of a national minority (except for public documents); national minority members are also entitled to receive the rulings of administrative bodies in their own languages. In municipalities where a given national minority represents more than 20% of inhabitants, street signs may be erected in the language of that minority, and the local council may hold proceedings in the language of the national minority if all people present agree. The Law on the Use of Minority Languages, however, does not cover the use of national minority languages under all circumstances, only in

communications with official bodies. New procedures are being prepared governing language rights in communications with courts.

Article 34, Paragraph 2, Section c), grants national minority members the right to participate in decision-making on matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups. Again, the legislation does not specify how this right is to be applied, and does not define which “matters” pertaining to national minorities should involve their participation. The right to help make decisions thus usually involves the right to vote in elections to municipal councils, regional parliaments and the national parliament. Another important form of participation in the administration of public affairs is the right of petition. There is no law regulating the right to minority culture, however the state budget allocates financial resources for the culture activities of minorities through the Section of Minority Cultures of the Ministry of Culture. There are no restrictions in national laws on citizenship, property rights, language, education, housing, health care, and employment. Such restrictions would be in severe contradiction with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.

The rights of national minorities are being secured by different laws, the most important are:

- Ústavný zákon č.23/ 1991 Zb.;
- Zákon č. 83/ 1990 Zb. o združovaní občanov;
- Zákon č. 84/ 1990 Zb. o zhromažďovacom práve;
- Zákon č. 85/ 1990 Zb. o petičnom práve;
- Zákon č. 256/ 1992 Zb. o ochrane osobných údajov;
- Zákon NR SR č. 300/ 1993 Z.z. o mene a priezvisku;
- Zákon NR SR č. 154/ 1994 Z.z. o matrikách;
- Zákon NR SR č. 191/ 1994 Z.z. o označovaní obcí v jazyku národnostných menšín;
- Zákon č. 184/ 1999 Z.z. o používaní jazykov národnostných menšín;
- Zákon č. 29/ 1994 Zb. o sústave základných a stredných škôl;
- Nariadenie vlády SR č. 282/ 1994 Z.z. o používaní učebníc a učebných textov;
- Zákon o č. 469/ 1991 o prevádzkovaní rozhlasového a televízneho vysielania;
- Zákon č.335/ 1998 Zb. o Slovenskej televízii (doplnenie zákona č. 254/ 1991 Zb.);
- Zákon č. 225/ 1991 Zb. o Slovenskom rozhlase;
- Zákon č. 384 /1997 Zb. o divadelnej činnosti;
- Zákon NR SR č. 115/ 1998 o múzeách a galériách;
- Občiansky súdny poriadok zákon č. 99/ 1963 Zb.;
- Zákon č. 161/ 1996 – Branný zákon;
- Zákon č. 335/ 1991 Zb. o súdoch a sudcoch;
- Občiansky zákonník zákon č. 40/ 1964 Zb.;
- Trestný poriadok zákon č. 141/ 1961 Zb.;
- Zákonník práce zákon č. 65/ 1965 Zb.;
- Zákon NR SR č. 38/ 1993 Z.z. o organizácii Ústavného súdu SR, o konaní pred ním a postavení sudcov.

## **A.5. STRATEGIC SLOVAK GOVERNMENT MATERIALS ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS OF THE ROMA AFTER 1989**

Besides through legislation, the position of the Roma has also been addressed in the conceptual materials of various governments. Post-1989 approaches to the “Roma issue” began to accept the situation of the Roma as an ethical, economic, political, and social problem (Vašečka, 2000: 197)

The first strategic concept adopted by a Slovak government on the Roma issue was a 1991 document called *The Principles of the Government’s Roma Policy*. This document included some general ideas on how to approach the Roma issue in terms of culture, education, economy, social security, and ethnic matters. However, it failed to specify concrete measures, or to say how the plan would be subsidized.

In terms of ethnic matters, the document said that the basic task was to acknowledge the independence of the Roma in the legislative and legal system, thereby putting the rights of the Roma and other minorities living in Slovakia on an equal footing. The aim was to acknowledge the Roma as a nation, and thus to ensure their political and legal equality.

In the field of social and economic security, the document’s basic philosophy was not to give the Roma special treatment or state funds just because they were members of a minority. Instead, the document proposed to solve the problems of Roma in need of special social or other care through a wide-ranging social policy available to all people regardless of their ethnic origin. This concept was not adopted until the 1992 parliamentary elections, and the incoming cabinet led by PM Vladimír Mečiar did not take it further (Vašečka, 2001b: 13).

In 1996, the third Mečiar government passed a document called *Proposal of Tasks and Measures for Solving the Problems of Citizens Requiring Special Help*. Besides briefly defining individual problems such as schooling for children, unemployment, housing, upbringing and education, hygiene and health, and negative social behavior, the concept included measures to help people in need of special help. However, neither the measures nor the funding needed to put them into effect were sufficiently spelled out. Although the title of the document suggested it wanted to address “citizens requiring special help” without regard for their ethnic origin, the tasks it set suggested that the target group was the Roma.

The implementation of the concept was supervised by the Office of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of People Requiring Special Help, which was established in 1995 as a special department at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family. Branislav Baláž was appointed the government’s representative to lead the Office, with the job of coordinating, regulating and supervising the Office’s employment, social, housing, educational, health and sanitary activities.

Office employees worked on a new government approach to the Roma for the next two years. They analyzed the problems of the Roma and possible ways of solving them, as well as the approach other countries took to the issue. Finally, in November 1997, the cabinet adopted the *Concept of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma in the Current Socio-Economic Conditions* (Vašečka, 2000: 198).



The basic principles of the plan were as follows:

- The civic principle – respecting the values and way of life of the target group.
- The solidarity principle – removing prejudices and eliminating displays of extremism in society.
- The principle of allowing citizens to participate in solving their own problems.
- The principle of personal responsibility – solving the problems of the Roma not merely by declaring their rights, but by supplying aid provided the Roma themselves take personal responsibility.
- The principle of positive encouragement of people who, for various reasons, are unable to solve their own problems.
- The principle of solving the problem where it arises – in the natural social environment of the people the concept aims to assist (*Conceptual Plan...*, 1997: 6 – 7).

Money for solving social, housing and unemployment problems was not allocated to the Roma on the basis of their ethnicity, but was channeled into concrete projects to help people in need. This was meant to preserve continuity with the 1991 plan, which had also rested on the civic principle. The document briefly defined problems in individual areas, and proposed measures to solve them, the deadline being the year 2002. The measures were to be funded from the budgets of individual ministries and regional authorities.

After coming to power, the Dzurinda administration in 1999 scrapped the 1997 *Conceptual Plan of the Slovak Government* and adopted a new document, called *Strategy of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma and the Set of Implementation Measures – 1<sup>st</sup> Stage*. This was the first concept that attempted to find a long-term solution to the Roma issue. Action was to be taken in areas where the situation was critical – unemployment, housing, health, the social network and the school system – as well as in areas requiring improvement, such as human rights, the rights of national minorities, cooperation with NGOs, and regional development. In its introduction, the 1999 Strategy described the state of society, taking into account the position of the Roma minority, and proposed measures to solve individual problems. Some measures (especially those concerning housing, unemployment and the social system) were insufficient, even though they had been classified as the most important. On the other hand, the Strategy was well prepared in the fields of culture and education, and in naming areas of discrimination against the Roma and proposing solutions (Vašečka, 2000). The measures defined by the strategy were to be funded from the budgets of individual ministries and regional authorities, which receive funds from the state budget on the basis of their annual requirements and concrete proposed measures.

Besides adopting measures the strategy also intended to support projects funded from the General Cash Administration category of the state budget. These projects are submitted to the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities (the former Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority) by bodies dealing with the Roma issue, and are reviewed by the Committee for the Selection, Approval and Evaluation of Projects Solving the Issues of the Roma Community, which was formed as an advisory body to the government

representative in 2000. The projects selected for funding are submitted for cabinet approval by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development. In this way, the problems of the Roma minority are addressed not only by state institutions but also NGOs and other bodies dealing with the issue.

The Strategy requires individual ministries and regional authorities to draw up a set of measures and concrete tasks, including funding for them from their own budgets. The measures and tasks that were scripted were adopted by the cabinet under the name of *The Detailed Strategy of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma and a Set of Concrete Measures for 2000 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage*.

This “detailed strategy” included 282 concrete activities. The regional authorities and ministries allocated 165 million Slovak crowns (\$4 million) to fund their programs. The tasks and measures were prepared in more detail, and just as with the first stage of the Strategy, were built on the civic principle emphasizing positive stimulation of the Roma. This detailed strategy was the most in-depth concept adopted since 1989; it included precise definitions of problems and tasks, and focused on remote regions and sub-regions and areas affected by economic transformation. When it came to the implementation of individual measures, however, the biggest problem was lack of money, because, as the detailed strategy stated, funding for individual measures proposed by the detailed strategy could be assigned only in the *Preliminary Draft of the 2000 State Budget*. This meant that it was not possible to increase state budget funding, and that funding for the tasks adopted was limited by individual budget sections.

Besides the concepts mentioned above, on April 12, 2002 the cabinet approved a document called *Priorities of the Slovak Government in Relation to Roma Communities in 2002*, based on the foregoing strategy and the detailed strategy. The document envisaged the following priorities: education, support for the construction of municipal housing and services, influencing public opinion, the establishment of a Roma House, research, a complex program to develop Roma settlements, and a program of social fieldworkers. These individual programs aimed to help Roma communities develop in socially and economically troubled areas with education, housing and health problems. Bearing in mind that in 2002 the state budget didn't allocate any money for independent programs to improve the position of the Roma, the 2002 programs were to be funded from the *General Cash Administration – Reserve for Projects Addressing the Problems of the Roma Community* and the *Social and Cultural Needs of the Roma Community* chapters of the state budget, and partly from the budgets of various ministries (*Priorities of the Slovak Government...*, 2002). In terms of detail and the involvement of all players, the 2002 priorities were the first document to take an integrated approach to improving the situation of the Roma in Slovakia.

As can be seen in this brief summary of government concepts, Slovakia's post-1989 governments showed varying levels of interest in solving the Roma issue. Scrapping old plans and adopting new concepts every time the government changed proved ineffective, however, as given the depth of the problems the Roma face, the measures proposed by individual concepts could not be prepared and implemented during a single electoral term.

During 2004, various laws and legislative rules were prepared to address the situation of the Roma. These materials, above all those prepared by individual ministries, were

expected to further develop the *Basic Theses of the Slovak Government's Policy to Integrate the Roma Community*, which the cabinet approved in 2003 (Resolution No. 278 on April 23, 2003). This document set the basic framework for all activity by the state administration and other public bodies. The goals outlined in the document were not completely met since various representatives of ruling coalition parties cast doubts regarding the introduction of temporary equalization measures (mentioned in the *Basic Theses*), whose implementation was allowed by the Anti-Discrimination Act (Vašečka, 2001b).

The cabinet, in Resolution No. 397 of April 28, 2004 approved a document called *An Evaluation of the Basic Concepts of the Policy of the Slovak Government Regarding the Integration of the Roma Community for 2003*, and also set priorities for 2004. In addition, the cabinet approved the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2004–2006* (Resolution No. 744 of July 14, 2004) and the *National Employment Action Plan for 2004–2006* (Resolution No. 906 of September 22, 2004). In the area of education for Roma children and youth, the Education Ministry tabled its long-awaited *Concept for Integrated Education of Roma Children and Youth, Including Development of Secondary School and University Education*.

The Slovak government's priorities regarding the integration of Roma communities stem from its evaluation of the situation that arose following the launch of social reforms. The priorities are divided into three groups (*Priorities...*, 2004):

1. The economic situation of neglected groups of citizens and their abilities to find work on the labor market – the government material states that the launch of social reforms led to a radical drop in the income of people on social support, while not everyone who was interested in doing so was able to increase their benefits with bonuses for actively looking for work. For this reason it is necessary to use all possibilities to increase active job-search approaches, as well as the range of educational, re-qualification, and preparatory programs available. The priority aims to concentrate these activities in areas where unemployment in Roma settlements is almost 100%.
2. The housing issue – in the area of accommodation the priority is to solve the problem of failure to pay rental fees and accommodation-related services as well as the issue of housing upkeep and repair funds in Roma settlements. While the latter issue is being targeted by the *Program of Support for the Construction of Municipal Rental Housing for Citizens in Need, and for the Construction of Technical Equipment in Roma Settlements* (approved by the cabinet in Resolution No. 335 from April 11, 2001), the first problem, i.e. the failure to pay rental dues and accommodation-related services, is yet unresolved. Following the launch of social reforms this problem even worsened, as stated by the government publications (*Priorities...*, 2004).
3. Further priorities include social fieldwork, education, shaping public opinion, and the Fund for Supporting the Integration of Romany Communities (*Priorities...*, 2004).

The priorities of the Slovak government in the integration of Romany communities are being fulfilled very slowly. Through its resolutions in 2003 the government assigned 34 priorities in 2003 and eight recommended tasks, but by 2004 there were eight tasks with assigned deadlines and one recommended task, most of which were not completed on deadline. Apart from these, the cabinet did not propose any new priorities for integrating

Romany communities in 2004. It proposed the continuation of long-term activities and the completion of tasks that were still incomplete at the end of 2003.

A conference took place in Budapest in June 2003 called *The Roma in Enlarging Europe: Challenges for the Future*, which was organized by the Open Society Institute (OSI) in cooperation with the World Bank. One of the most important results of the conference was the declaration of the *Decade of Roma Inclusion*. This conference was attended by the top representatives of the nine countries (Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania and Slovakia) participating in the *Decade*. The Slovak government's lack of commitment to approach the Roma issue was made apparent when at the conference Slovakia was represented by its Culture Minister, Rudolf Chmel, and its Deputy Labor Minister, Miroslav Beblavý, while most other countries were represented by their respective heads of government. The *Decade* assumed that the Roma themselves would be actively involved in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of all measures aimed at reducing poverty and eliminating the social exclusion of the Roma population. In this way the Roma were to become not merely a target group of various measures, but also direct players in any change.

The year 2004 was one of planning for the *Decade*. The Hungarian government under its prime minister, Péter Medgyessy, formed a Secretariat for the *Decade* that was assigned to manage international coordination. Planning for the *Decade* is carried out by international executive committees made up of government and Roma representatives from every country, international donors, and other international organizations (Decade..., 2004). The four basic priorities set during individual meetings in Budapest were: education, employment, housing, and health (Decade, 2004). On the basis of these priorities, working groups were formed in Slovakia to help prepare the *National Action Plan for the Decade of Inclusion*. This action plan was submitted in November 2004 at a meeting of the national coordinators of the *Decade* in Budapest. The *Decade* is closely connected with two ongoing initiatives: the *Millennium Development Goals* (UNDP) and the *European Union Policy for Social Inclusion*.

Various problems already arose in the *Decade*'s preparatory year that could reduce its effectiveness. For example, it is stated in the report accompanying the *Proposed Information Regarding the Decade of Inclusion of the Roma Population from 2005 – 2015* that “the material in its draft form does not increase demands on the state budget, nor does it have a direct impact on employment, the economy, or the environment” (*Proposed Information...*, 2004). This material does in fact contain many proposed measures that will inevitably place increased financing demands on the state budget. If the project does not request finances during the preparation phase it is likely that some positive measures may not be realized due to a lack of funding.

In November 2004 the Czech government's plenipotentiary for human rights, Jan Jařab, and the Slovak government's plenipotentiary for the Roma community, Klára Orgovánová, sent other national coordinators a joint statement that warned that the *Decade* was beginning to assume a form that differed from its original aims. This statement expressed fear that the originally envisioned international platform for exchanging experiences was gradually becoming an international organization that the participating countries would be accountable to (Jařab, 2004). Even at the conclusion of

the preparatory phase it was still unclear the extent to which countries were bound to the individual national action plans. It is also unclear what real effects the *Decade of Roma Inclusion* will have on the position of the Roma in Slovak society. One clear advantage is the founding of the Roma Education Fund, which will bring together funding for the support of education programs co-financed by Slovakia.

During its tenure, the second Dzurinda administration was unable to resolve the schizophrenic provision of financial support to the Roma, with aid being earmarked for the Roma but unable to be officially defined as such. As a result, the government continued to come up with euphemisms such as “assistance to marginalized population groups”, etc. At the same time, the *Government’s Program Manifesto* and other official documents spoke directly of the Roma as the principal target of certain measures and aid.

On October 18, 2005, the Constitutional Court proclaimed that the affirmative action provisions of the Antidiscrimination Act calling for “temporary equalization measures” for members of racial and ethnic minorities were unconstitutional (Constitutional Court Ruling No. ÚS 8/04-202). As a result, all similar formulations in various government measures aimed at the Roma will be regarded as problematic. The Court ruled that Article 8, Paragraph 8 of the Act was inconsistent with Article 1, Paragraph 1 and Article 12, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Slovak constitution. So far, legal experts have been silent on the issue.

#### **A.6. STATE INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH THE ROMA ISSUE**

After the 1998 elections, the first Mikuláš Dzurinda cabinet established the post of Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development, which coordinated all issues related to national minorities and human rights. The office also administered sustainable development, regional development, drug control, personal data protection, and the third sector through the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations. Tasks related to national minorities, human rights, regional development and coordination of the EU’s Phare project controlled by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development were coordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister’s office and the Section of Human Rights and Minorities of the Slovak Government Office. The Deputy Prime Minister coordinated the preparation and review of projects dealing with the Roma issue, funded from the state budget on the basis of the government’s 1999 strategy, and submitted them for the government’s deliberation.

The aforementioned Section of Human Rights and Minorities was established in 1998 in accordance with the Slovak government’s program declaration, and was integrated into the structure of the Government Office. In the first half of 2002 it had 17 employees in three departments: the Department of Human Rights and Minorities, the Department of Project Coordination, and the Department of Regional Development. As for Roma issues, the Section coordinated the implementation of the *Action Plan for Preventing All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Displays of Intolerance* adopted by the government for the 2000 to 2001 and 2002 to 2003 periods. The Section was also responsible for implementing and monitoring Phare projects and the improvement of the position of national minorities in cooperation with other state bodies.

The Slovak government's national policy advisory, initiating and coordination body for 1998 - 2002 was the Government Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups. The Council recommended solutions to the Slovak government for the problems of national minorities in Slovakia. It also prepared, discussed and submitted to the government reports on the position and living conditions of national minorities and ethnic groups. Its head office was at the Section of Human Rights and Minorities of the Government Office, and it was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development. Members of the Council included representatives of Slovak national minorities.

The Slovak parliament's Committee for Human Rights and Nationalities is entitled to submit bills and other recommendations on matters falling into its jurisdiction, to supervise the observance and implementation of laws, and to submit proposals and standpoints to the parliament and the government. The Committee has 10 members, all of whom are MPs.

At the end of 1998, the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities was established. The cabinet appointed Vincent Danihel to the post of Government Representative in February 1999. One of Danihel's first tasks was to develop the Office and draw up a two-stage strategy for the Slovak government to solve the problems of the Roma national minority, as well as to coordinate the activities envisaged by the strategy. The Office was integrated into the Government Office. In the second half of 2000 it had 10 full-time and 2 part-time employees. It was funded by the Government Office, while from May 2000 to November 2002 the World Bank provided a grant of \$278,300. Danihel was removed from his post in May 2001 on the basis of a human resources audit (*Information on Strengthening...*, 2002). The Government Office then held a public competition for the vacant post, with the participation of Council of Europe and EU observers, based on which the cabinet on June 1, 2001 selected Klára Orgovánová as the new Government Representative (*Evaluation of the Activities of the Slovak Government...*, 2001).

The Slovak government, at a meeting on September 19, 2001, approved a modified *Statute of the Government Representative for Roma Communities*, a change in the Office's name, and a new organizational structure for the Office. In accordance with its new structure, the Office opened a new branch in eastern Slovakia's Prešov to help collect field information and study the effectiveness of individual measures pertaining to Roma communities in eastern Slovakia. The Government Representative's main task was to coordinate the work of different state institutions in keeping with the cabinet's 1999 strategy and detailed strategy. However, the activities and the way the funds were spent remained largely uncoordinated and lacking in concept. To improve the coordination function of the Government Representative, the cabinet established a Joint Committee for the Affairs of Roma Communities (*Evaluation of the Activities of the Slovak Government...*, 2001, p. 2, *Statute of the Joint Committee...*, 2001).

At the beginning of 2002, the Representative's Office established an Advisory Committee to the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities, which helped prepare programs to solve the problems of Roma communities. The Advisory Committee employed mostly Roma representatives.

Other bodies that administer the field of national minorities and ethnic groups include the Culture Ministry (Section of Minority Cultures), the Education Ministry (Department of National Schools, State Pedagogical Institute, methodical centers), the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (Department of Family Policy, Health Care Section), the National Labor Bureau, the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Human Rights), the Ministry of Health (State Health Institute) and regional and district authorities.

**Supplement - Table 7: Population according to a nationality permanently living in Slovakia (by regions and districts). Percentage of relevant ethnic groups. Census 2001.**

	Slovak	Hungarian	Roma	Czech	Ruthenian	Ukrainian
<b>SLOVAKIA</b>	<b>85,8</b>	<b>9,7</b>	<b>1,7</b>	<b>0,8</b>	<b>0,4</b>	<b>0,2</b>
<b>Bratislava region</b>	<b>91,3</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>0,1</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>0,1</b>	<b>0,1</b>
Bratislava I	90,0	2,9	0,1	2,4	0,1	0,2
Bratislava II	89,3	5,9	0,1	1,8	0,1	0,1
Bratislava III	92,7	2,5	0,1	2,0	0,1	0,1
Bratislava IV	92,9	2,5	0,0	1,9	0,1	0,1
Bratislava V	91,9	4,0	0,1	1,5	0,1	0,1
Malacky	97,0	0,3	0,4	1,1	0,0	0,0
Pezinok	97,4	0,4	0,1	0,9	0,0	0,1
Senec	76,8	20,4	0,1	0,8	0,0	0,1
<b>Trnava kraj</b>	<b>73,9</b>	<b>23,7</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>0,9</b>	<b>0,0</b>	<b>0,0</b>
Dunajská Streda	14,0	83,3	1,0	0,5	0,0	0,0
Galanta	59,5	38,6	0,7	0,5	0,0	0,0
Hlohovec	98,3	0,2	0,4	0,6	0,0	0,0
Piešťany	97,6	0,2	0,1	1,1	0,0	0,0
Senica	97,2	0,1	0,9	1,1	0,0	0,0
Skalica	95,7	0,1	0,7	2,6	0,0	0,1
Trnava	97,8	0,2	0,2	0,6	0,0	0,0
<b>Trenčín region</b>	<b>97,3</b>	<b>0,2</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>1,0</b>	<b>0,0</b>	<b>0,0</b>
Bánovce nad Bebravou	97,9	0,1	0,8	0,6	0,0	0,1
Ilava	97,0	0,1	0,2	1,2	0,0	0,0
Myjava	96,6	0,1	0,4	1,3	0,0	0,1

Nové Mesto n. Váhom	96,8	0,1	0,6	1,3	0,0	0,0
Partizánske	98,2	0,2	0,2	0,6	0,0	0,0
Považská Bystrica	98,2	0,1	0,1	0,8	0,0	0,0
Prievidza	97,2	0,4	0,3	0,7	0,0	0,0
Púchov	98,2	0,0	0,1	1,0	0,0	0,0
Trenčín	96,7	0,2	0,1	1,7	0,0	0,0
<b>Nitra region</b>	<b>70,1</b>	<b>27,6</b>	<b>0,7</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>0,0</b>	<b>0,0</b>
Komárno	27,7	69,1	1,1	0,6	0,0	0,0
Levice	69,1	27,9	1,0	0,7	0,0	0,0
Nitra	91,1	6,7	0,4	0,7	0,0	0,1
Nové Zámky	59,5	38,3	0,6	0,6	0,0	0,0
Šaľa	61,9	35,7	1,0	0,5	0,0	0,1
Topoľčany	98,3	0,2	0,2	0,6	0,0	0,1
Zlaté Moravce	97,0	1,1	0,2	0,5	0,0	0,1
<b>Žilina region</b>	<b>97,5</b>	<b>0,1</b>	<b>0,4</b>	<b>0,9</b>	<b>0,0</b>	<b>0,0</b>
Bytča	98,8	0,0	0,0	0,5	0,0	0,0
Čadca	97,6	0,0	0,1	0,8	0,0	0,0
Dolný Kubín	98,2	0,1	0,1	0,7	0,0	0,0
Kysucké Nové Mesto	96,7	0,0	0,4	0,7	0,0	0,0
Liptovský Mikuláš	95,4	0,2	2,0	1,4	0,0	0,0
Martin	96,1	0,2	0,4	1,3	0,0	0,0
Námestovo	99,3	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,0	0,0
Ružomberok	97,9	0,1	0,5	0,6	0,0	0,1
Turčianske Teplice	96,8	0,1	0,1	0,5	0,0	0,0
Tvrdošín	98,9	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,0	0,0
Žilina	97,9	0,1	0,1	1,1	0,0	0,0
<b>Banská Bystrica region</b>	<b>83,7</b>	<b>11,7</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>0,7</b>	<b>0,0</b>	<b>0,1</b>
Banská Bystrica	95,4	0,4	0,6	1,2	0,0	0,0
Banská Štiavnica	95,0	0,3	1,8	0,5	0,0	0,0
Brezno	94,7	0,2	3,6	0,6	0,0	0,1



Detva	97,4	0,1	1,0	0,5	0,0	0,1
Krupina	96,5	0,5	1,8	0,3	0,0	0,2
Lučenec	67,6	27,6	2,8	0,5	0,0	0,1
Poltár	96,1	1,2	1,5	0,4	0,0	0,0
Revúca	69,4	22,0	6,8	0,6	0,0	0,2
Rimavská Sobota	52,3	41,3	4,7	0,5	0,0	0,0
Veľký Krtíš	68,0	27,4	1,8	0,5	0,0	0,2
Zvolen	96,1	0,4	1,0	1,1	0,0	0,0
Žarnovica	97,1	0,1	0,9	0,5	0,0	0,2
Žiar nad Hronom	95,6	0,4	1,2	0,7	0,0	0,0
<b>Prešov region</b>	<b>90,7</b>	<b>0,1</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>0,9</b>
Bardejov	91,4	0,1	3,0	0,3	2,9	1,3
Humenné	91,3	0,1	2,1	0,5	3,6	1,4
Kežmarok	89,1	0,1	8,8	0,4	0,1	0,1
Levoča	91,2	0,1	7,1	0,2	0,2	0,0
Medzilaborce	50,4	0,1	1,6	0,6	40,4	5,0
Poprad	93,6	0,2	3,2	0,9	0,1	0,1
Prešov	94,2	0,1	2,6	0,6	0,7	0,7
Sabinov	92,0	0,0	6,2	0,3	0,4	0,2
Snina	84,7	0,1	1,3	0,5	8,8	2,8
Stará Ľubovňa	90,2	0,1	3,7	0,3	3,3	1,2
Stropkov	90,1	0,0	2,3	0,4	5,3	0,8
Svidník	83,3	0,1	2,6	0,3	10,5	2,5
Vranov nad Topľou	91,7	0,1	6,9	0,3	0,2	0,1
<b>Košice region</b>	<b>81,8</b>	<b>11,2</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>0,3</b>
Gelnica	90,3	0,1	6,8	0,4	0,2	0,2
Košice I	88,0	4,3	1,7	1,3	0,5	0,6
Košice II	88,5	3,2	3,2	1,3	0,6	0,4
Košice III	91,3	3,1	1,7	0,8	0,5	0,5
Košice IV	90,0	4,3	1,4	1,1	0,5	0,4
Košice-okolie	79,3	13,2	5,0	0,3	0,1	0,1

Michalovce	81,7	11,7	4,0	0,5	0,2	0,4
Rožňava	63,0	30,6	4,7	0,5	0,0	0,1
Sobrance	96,4	0,1	0,9	0,5	0,4	0,5
Spišská Nová Ves	91,4	0,1	5,5	0,4	0,2	0,1
Trebišov	64,8	29,3	4,4	0,3	0,1	0,1

**Source:** Slovak Statistical Office ([www.statistics.sk](http://www.statistics.sk)).

## **B. EVALUATION OF INCLUSION POLICIES IN THE NAP – FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH**

### **B.1. EUROPEAN DISCOURSE ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

The issue of inequalities, the struggle to identify its reasons and consequences, its differentiated manifestations in the social reality, becomes currently one of the most discussed issues in both Slovakia and Europe. As Room (1990) states, interest in social exclusion issues gradually resulted from the renewed interest in the issue of poverty as well as in human rights or citizenship in the Western European countries in the 70s and 80s. Thus the idea and concept of social exclusion gradually gains currency in the European social discourse and becomes a dominant paradigm in discussions on poverty in the EU countries.

The gradual preference of the social exclusion concept is in fact an effort to capture the change of character and new features of poverty in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These undoubtedly include the following: persistence of poverty in time, its spatial concentration accompanied by marginalization, pathological behavior and reluctance towards the standards of the main stream of society, as well as the dependence on the social state and disintegration of the traditional social institutions (Room et al., 1990).

The social exclusion concept is thus much more complex and broad in the first line. The advantage of using it is the fact that poverty is not being reduced to the most frequently used monetary (insufficient income) or consumption dimension (insufficient consumption). It means shift of focus from the financial handicap to its multidimensional character, i.e. identifying the different consequences caused by poverty. According to Abrahamson (1995: 124 - 125) and Atkinson (2000: 57) the social exclusion involves: transition from statistic to dynamic analysis of processes which cause individuals becoming or staying poor. Also, it shows the consequences of the situation, conveys the multidimensional character of mechanisms which exclude individuals and groups from the social exchange, from pursuance of and right to social integration and from creation of identity. The above-mentioned facts are covered in Table 8.

**Table 8: Conceptual matrix of poverty and social exclusion**

	<b>Statistical status (result)</b>	<b>Dynamic process</b>
<b>Income</b>	Poverty	Impoverishment
<b>Multidimensional</b>	Deprivation	Social exclusion

**Source:** Berghman, 1995, p. 21.

It even goes beyond the participation in the professional life and shows itself also in the sphere of living, education, health and access to services. The social exclusion concept is better contextualized into a broader understanding of society and its profile processes, such as integration, participation and solidarity, than the poverty concept. For the involved, social exclusion means not just material deprivation or diminution of living opportunities (Dahrendorf, 1991) common in the majority society, but after all also the limitation of their influence and possibilities to participate in decision-making or in influencing the decision-making process. One can agree with Strobel (1996) that social exclusion is being perceived as a systematic process of marginalization, isolation and weakening of social links, which can be felt both on the individual and social groups level. It means exclusion from participation in the common way of social life.

Berghman also draws attention to a significant fact (1995: 19 - 20) stating that social exclusion is currently being perceived rather as a consequence of failure of society rather than failure of an individual. The most endangered are those individuals or groups having a weakened link to at least one of the four integration levels (elements), through which individuals and groups are integrated into society: to democracy and law (support the civil integration), to the labor market (supports economical integration), to social state (supports social integration) and to family and community (support interpersonal integration). Exclusion from one integration element usually means exclusion from other elements as well. For example, having lost their position in the labor market, individuals often face the problem of material poverty. As Atkinson observes (2000), they are excluded from consumption activities or have a restricted possibility of consumption choice, and according to Bauman (1996), they gradually lose the possibility, on a standard level, to participate in the social or political life of their community. This weakens their social links to the community (often even to the family) and in many cases leads to impairment of identity.

Apparently, social exclusion involves diversified set of social facts. The core of the matter is that the excluded individuals as well as complete social collectivities do not participate equally in different resources (both material and immaterial) of the society and in its distribution or re-distribution. In the end, this causes significant separation from the common life style available to the general population at the given time and in the given region (Mareš, 1999). These individuals or collectivities remain poor, in social and cultural isolation which is often emphasized and “conserved” by the spatial isolation. In this process the individual, or social collectivity, is excluded from organizations or entire communities that compose the society.

This is the reason why European countries are increasingly interested in the prevention and/or reduction of the consequences of social exclusion, i.e. the marginalized position of significant part of population. This exclusion is namely an unwanted process on both sides as it creates unequal opportunities to assert ones civil, political and social rights, and also leads to social tension, which on its part results in social risks. This could cause

a collapse of social solidarity and cohesion and it is therefore essential to strive for the integration of the excluded individuals and groups (Atkinson, 2000).

Everybody who differs from the mainstream “standards” of society is subject of social exclusion (Mareš, 1999). In the narrower sense discussed here, this concerns the ethnic minority members – the Roma. It is a long lasting historical process. It results in a relationship where on one side there are the established and on the other the outsiders. The inequalities of this relationship are visible in the economic, social, cultural, political, symbolic as well as spatial exclusion.

## **B.2. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Focus Group session on NAP on Social Inclusion in Slovakia took place in hotel Thermal, Štúrovo, April 14, 2006, with experts from NGOs, academic institutions, and state administration. The focus group has been led by Dr. Michal Vašečka and it took 3 hours. The primary goal of the focus group has been to discuss 5 issues:

- 1. Goals that government of Slovakia wants to achieve by particular arrangements;**
- 2. Evaluate the complexity and multidimensionality of the NAP on social inclusion;**
- 3. Evaluate the focus on segregated Roma as the most vulnerable minority;**
- 4. Evaluate the understanding of the term culture;**
- 5. Discuss both positive and negative outcomes of support for cultural activities of the minority.**

### **B.2.1. NAP on Social Inclusion and NAP Regarding the Decade of Roma Inclusion**

**The group of experts during the focus group session agreed that:**

- 1. The Roma issue represents a combination of ethnic and social problems, which must both be taken into account when preparing public policies;**
- 2. The approach of Roma in Slovakia should be based on desegregation of the Roma;**
- 3. The Roma population is significantly heterogeneous and it has to be approached as such;**
- 4. The coordination and mutual awareness are a necessary prerequisite when public policies are prepared,**

**5. All solutions of the Roma issue must focus on two target groups: the Roma and the majority population;**

**6. Considering the growing self-consciousness of Roma, we need to start speaking about a Roma nation, not just a Roma ethnic.**

In connection to previous thoughts, group of experts agreed that National Action Plan on Social Inclusion is not focused primarily on Roma communities and as a whole is insufficient and one-dimensional. They reached the agreement that more usable, although also very limited material, is National Action Plan of the Slovak Republic Regarding the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015, that has been approved by the government of Slovakia. This document approaches issues of social inclusion in more complex way, although it is worth to note that this document has been initiated from outside of Slovakia – by the World Bank and Open Society Institute.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion was officially launched on February 2, 2005 in Sofia, Bulgaria. The initiative was adopted by eight countries in Central and Southeast Europe, including Slovakia. As part of the initiative, the cabinet approved the *National Action Plan of the Slovak Republic Regarding the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015* by means of Government Resolution No. 28/2005 from January 12, 2005.

Group of experts primarily discussed one of the initiative's top priorities is education. Slovakia's *National Action Plan* reads as follows: "The integration of the Roma to a great extent requires that the negative attitudes of the majority population be changed, perhaps by systematically altering the content of education. In the field of education, human development with special emphasis on marginalized Romany communities is implemented on three basic levels: 1. training teachers and assistant teachers; 2. creating textbooks and manuals for teachers and parents; 3. transforming the curriculum" (*Národný akčný plan...*, 2005).

The document sets some basic goals and identifies indicators to help monitor the impact of measures to improve the access of Romany children to education as well as the quality of their education. Group of experts agreed that the document is extremely vague in formulating these goals, and fails to explain exactly how they will be achieved. Furthermore, meeting these goals will require substantial funding from the state budget, but the document earmarks the necessary funding only for 2005, and there is no political guarantee that funds will be provided after that. Nevertheless, the Decade of Roma Inclusion provides a political framework for the governments of the participating countries to declare their will to help their Romany citizens integrate and overcome their social exclusion. Given that the program will span a decade, whether its goals are achieved or not depends largely on future administrations in the different countries and their level of commitment.

### **B.2.2. Issue 1: Social Inclusion defined only in its economic dimension.**

The Slovak NAP on social inclusion has been identified by the group of experts as one-dimensional, focused primarily on economic dimension of the problem. Experts in the course of discussion defined also other social exclusion mechanisms. According to them, the social exclusion concept is more complex and broad in the first line. The advantage of using more complex approach is the fact that social exclusion is not being reduced to the most frequently used monetary (insufficient income) or consumption dimension (insufficient consumption). It means shift of emphasis from the financial handicap to its multidimensional character, i.e. identifying the different consequences caused by social exclusion.

Group of experts perceived social exclusion as a systematic process of marginalization, isolation and weakening of social links, which can be felt both on the level of an individual and the social group level. It means exclusion from participation in the common way of social life. A social exclusion is currently being perceived as a consequence of failure of society rather than failure of an individual. The most endangered are those individuals or groups having a weakened link to at least one of the four integration levels (elements), through which individuals and groups are integrated into society: to democracy and law (support the civil integration), to the labor market (supports economical integration), to social state (supports social integration) and to family and community (support interpersonal integration). Exclusion from one integration element usually means exclusion from the other elements as well. Group of experts identified the following forms and mechanisms of social exclusion:

- **Economic exclusion** is an exclusion from the living standard and chances usual in the society. The way out of this situation could be for example the individual's position on the labor market, the consumption level, amount of income, property, the living standard and similar.
- **Cultural exclusion** is the denial of individual's or group's right to participate in the society's culture and to share its cultural capital, education and culture. This means, that there is a possibility to identify cultural exclusion on the basis of the achieved education level and approach to education.
- **Symbolic exclusion.** Social and cultural identities are, to a large extent, symbolic identities. Group membership is symbolically confirmed or refused. Symbolic exclusion is associated with stigmatization of individuals and social groups which are being perceived as different, deviant or strange. It can be identified for example on the basis of level of social distance, existence of prejudices or stereotypes.
- **Spatial exclusion** means increased concentration of excluded persons in certain geographical areas. Within Roma communities we can identify the so-called segregated Romany residential quarters (settlements, urban quarters), as well as double marginalization.
- These forms and mechanisms of social exclusion often manifest themselves in **exclusion from the access to social service, health care and social welfare.**
- **Political exclusion** means denial of civic, political and all fundamental human rights.

- **Exclusion from mobility** in physical space and in **the hierarchy of social positions**.
- **Social exclusion** in the narrower sense prevents to share certain social status or social institutions.
- **Exclusion from the safety** and exposure to increased risk.
- Social exclusion mechanisms according to group of experts can be **psychological** as well. In the end this can impair the integrity of the individuals subjected to exclusion (accompanied by feelings of shame, diffidence and individual failure, as well as overall uncertainty and vulnerability).

The most relevant forms and mechanisms of social exclusion in the Slovak context are:

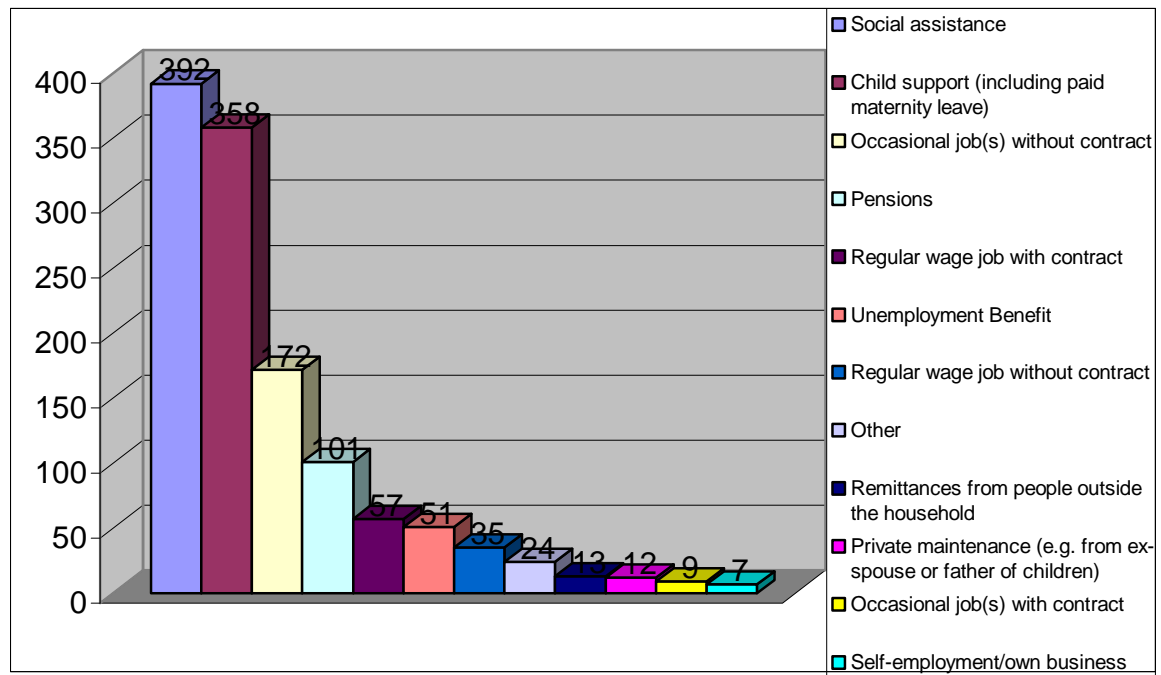
1. Economic Exclusion;
2. Spatial Exclusion;
3. Cultural Exclusion;
4. Symbolic Exclusion.

#### *B.2.2.1. Economic Exclusion*

Economic exclusion is closely related to exclusion from or on the labor market. This type of exclusion is often the primary source of poverty and in the end causes exclusion from the living standard and chances usual in certain society. Disintegration of the system requiring everyone to work and administratively regulating the working integration have caused the marginalized position of the Roma to deepen even more due to the market competition. Bearing in mind that most of the Roma worked in employment positions requiring no or low qualification, the first stage of employment position reduction in factories hit them much harder than the other social categories. In some Roma communities unemployment reaches the 100 per cent level. These are the so-called Slovak “valleys of hunger”, i.e. territories with “visible isles of poverty” (Vašečka – Džambazovič, 2000).

Unemployment of the Roma is usually long-term unemployment. Hand in hand with the unemployment comes dependency on help from the state. The high rate of welfare benefit dependency was confirmed also by a qualitative research by the S.P.A.C.E. foundation and the World Bank. Also the qualitative research conducted by UNDP has shown a significant share of welfare benefits in the overall income of families:

**Graph 5: The most important sources of income in households.**



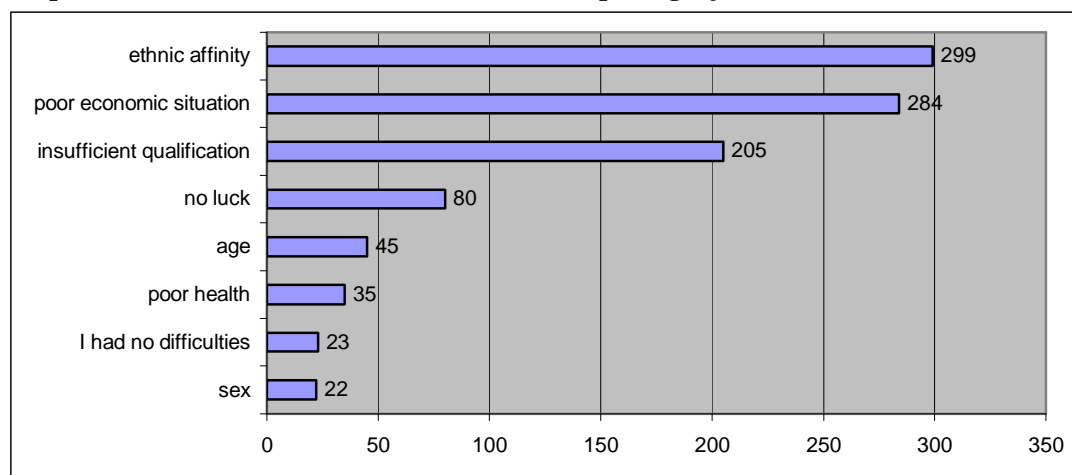
Source: UNDP, 2001.

Results of a public opinion poll suggest that the Roma are perceived by the majority as a social category responsible for the loss of their jobs through their negative characteristics, such as laziness, lack of will, low working moral, lack of interest in acquiring higher education, etc. Their poverty is successively perceived as “undeserved”.

On the other hand, results of both qualitative and quantitative research focusing specifically on the Roma show that the proclaimed endeavour of Roma to acquire satisfactory employment is very intense. Radičová (2001: 129), for example, based on talks with Roma points to their willingness to work: “if one has a job, it is easier for him to live, he is healthier, and has more energy - the entire life is better”; “when I had a job it had a good influence on the family, as there was at least some certainty”; “we were glad to be able to do something meaningful throughout the day, after two - three years you become unaccustomed to work and then it is really hard”. Numerous Roma have labelled their permanent unemployment and uncertainty as the most demoralizing aspect of their lives and they expressed sadness over the lack of job opportunities. The Roma themselves consider the following aspects to be the most important in their inability to acquire a job: ethnic affinity (discrimination by the non-Roma) and the generally poor economic situation of the country, which they use to explain the lack of job opportunities for people with low qualification.



**Graph 6: Three main reasons of difficulties in acquiring a job.**



Source: UNDP, 2001.

#### *B.2.2.2. Spatial Exclusion*

At present, social exclusion and poverty are accompanied also by spatial exclusion. This type of exclusion manifests in concentration of excluded individuals and social collectivities in certain, usually disadvantaged geographical areas. Slovakia is a country with lingering regional disparities. We can speak about the so-called marginalized territories (Falt'an – Gajdoš – Pašiak, 1995) which compared to the rest of Slovakia are significantly disadvantaged. Equally also dislocation of Roma within Slovakia is very uneven. Majority (approximately two thirds) of Roma are gathered in these marginalized regions. Another specific of spatial distribution of Roma, unlike with the majority population, is prevalence of settlements as the most frequent type of dwellings. While most of Slovaks live in urban environment (in the beginning of the 1990s it was 58 per cent), majority of the Roma still live in rural environment (Vašečka, M. - Džambazovič, 2000).

A frequent phenomenon in Roma communities is segregation (not just geographical, but social as well) of Romany settlements, some of which came into being naturally, others are the consequence of the state's policy of segregation both from the period of socialism and from the present. As a consequence of segregation several types of Roma dwellings were formed, which differ in the degree of isolation and geographical position (urban/rural). Approximately one quarter of all Roma live in segregated rural settlements, many of which are situated in the marginalized regions of the Southern and Eastern Slovakia. The actual number of Roma settlements is hard to estimate due to methodological problems in head-counting the Roma population and defining what a settlement actually is. At present, the number of Roma settlements and villages where the Roma represent more than half of the population keeps growing due to different factors, such as migration of Roma from towns to the country where the overall cost of living is lower, and the Roma moving into originally non-Roma villages.

No access to utilities and public services is another typical sign of Roma settlements in marginalized regions. In the geographically isolated settlements, there are frequently no public services, or the access to the same is limited (shops, schools and pre-school

establishments, health care, post and similar) there is no electricity, tap water, sewerage, waste disposal or suitable access road. The poor and excluded inhabitants must overcome many obstacles in accessing the social services, especially due to increasing cost and decreasing efficiency of these services (*Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002). In many cases not just the availability of services but also their quality is limited. The causes are geographic segregation, communication problems between the providers and users of service, social isolation, mutual mistrust or lack of information.

By living in marginalized regions and at the same time in segregated and isolated settlements within such regions, the Roma experience what we call double marginalization. This means worse existence conditions in accordance with the economic and social indicators. The weakened and limited possibilities of the marginalized region in combination with lower potential of self-help, self-organization and activation (still intensified by self-exclusion) require specific approach, support and social development programs focusing on both the marginalized regions and the marginalized, segregated settlements within the regions. Double marginalization cannot be overcome by individual living strategy, it is accompanied by the effect of multiple dependency both material and social (Radičová, 2001).

Isolated and segregated areas inhabited by Roma can be found both in rural (Roma settlements) and urban environment. These are the so-called town ghettos which can be an entire town district or quarter, or a certain street, etc. These segregated areas located on the outskirts or in centers of towns are treated as pathological by the majority population which fears and avoids them. This environment of the poor (the segregated and isolated settlements and town parts at the same time suffer from economic and social isolation) becomes a place which the society does not control and does not want to control, a place which the “orderly” citizens (often not even the police) never visit. These are the so-called no go areas: no go in for the luckier ones living outside it, and no go out for its inhabitants (Bauman, 1995). This is why we can state, that besides the spatial segregation there is also social segregation. Those living in the segregated settlements or town ghettos find themselves in a state of social isolation and the effect of concentration further emphasizes and strengthens the barrier between them and the others (Dahrendorf, 1991). To be constricted to a certain area with no chance of escaping causes considerable limitation of opportunities in the present global and mobile world.

The most frequent characteristics of segregated Roma locations are high (long-term) unemployment rate, dependency on welfare, inadequate housing, hygiene, insufficient nutrition, inferior living environment (ecologically contaminated), excessive consumption of alcohol, tobacco and similar. In the end, all these factors contribute to the worsening health of its inhabitants (decreased average life span, higher rate of infant mortality, prevalence of infectious diseases, etc.). Another problem that cannot be disregarded is the growing number of dwellings within the settlements, as often neither the houses nor the land on which they are built are owned by their inhabitants (Vašečka, M. - Džambazovič, 2000).

Considering the high degree of Roma segregation, their poverty is not scattered; it is concentrated in one area, and thus very well visible. The spatial segregation is closely related with minimal (or rather symbolic) contact with the external environment. The more homogenous and endogenous the community, the more it is fenced from the outside. On the other hand, individual families are more open to influence of the

community. The community becomes a control mechanism. It specifies the preferred living and working strategies, everyday behavior patterns and determines for example the reproductive behavior. The place and location of abode also influence the education (or rather perception of its importance), as well as the socio-economic and socio-occupational status (Vašečka, M. - Džambazovič, 2000).

The homogeneity of the cultural, social and economic level has also some other negative consequences. One of the most serious is absence of positive role-models and certain “destigmatization” of the marginalized status. Poverty, (long-term) unemployment, reliance on help from state often becomes a norm and contributes to formation of culture of poverty. Concentration of poverty together with segregation cause social isolation, existence of minimal direct links with the majority society and further strengthening of barriers between the Roma and the majority. As Radičová (2001) wrote, the bases for achieving social securities are social contacts which are the only possibility of incorporation into the social order of society. However, the segregated Roma are not capable to ensure participation in informal social networks outside their community. Inability to participate in informal networks limits, to a large extent, their access to the basic resources. It makes them dependent, reliant on the society. This dependency is of material nature in the first place, as their survival depends on the welfare benefits and other institutions. However, there is an equal threat of formation of social dependency - dependency from others. Double and multiplied dependency causes inability of any activation and participation, and loss of self-confidence and self-esteem. These facts are exponentiated and confirmed through everyday interaction with members of (largely homogeneous) community on one hand, and impossibility of interaction (“surroundings refuse the Roma”) or self-exclusion from interaction (“the Roma refuse their surroundings”).

### B.2.2.3. Cultural Exclusion

Cultural exclusion can be described as the denial of individual's or group's right to participate in the society's culture and to share its cultural capital, education and culture. The basic manifestation of the cultural exclusion can be for example the non-acknowledgement of or impossibility to use own language in education, attempts to culturally assimilate the Roma, absence of multicultural approach or ethnocentric view of the group's culture. One of the main indicators of cultural exclusion is the exclusion from access to education, which in the end influences the low overall level of achieved education.

The education level of Roma in comparison with other social segments of Slovak society is below the standard. As for the achieved education level, significant portion of Roma didn't even finish the elementary school. Despite the fact that during the socialist regime the Roma education level was slowly increasing, a survey conducted in 1990 showed, that as much as 56 per cent of men and 59 per cent of women among the Roma did not finish elementary school. This negatively influences their chances on the labor market. Results of research show that the level of integration or segregation plays an important role in this case.

Inclusion of Roma into the cultural (education) system is limited by the existence of several barriers. One of the most serious is the language barrier. Roma from segregated communities usually speak some of the versions of Romany in combination with certain

Slovak dialect. The difference in use and degree of command of Slovak are influenced by the level of community's integration or segregation, i.e. the frequency of contact with the majority. Ignorance or insufficient command of the teaching language, so frequent in the segregated communities, handicaps Roma children as soon as they enroll at school.

The frequent failures of Roma children in the first grade cause repulsion for education provided through the Slovak school system. Besides that, the Roma children originating from settlements coming to school enter an unknown, strange and highly formalized and institutionalized environment, which they are not accustomed to. Moreover, this system lays great demands on them, requiring preparation at home and help from the parents. The parents, however, usually are not able (they only have minimal education and lack of funds) and not willing (they don't realize the direct relationship between education and possibility to find a job) to help their children and motivate them to achieve the highest possible education. Their cultural exclusion grows even deeper as the Roma children as often labeled as incapable, incorrigible, below the average by their teachers, non-Roma classmates and the entire majority population.

Yet another barrier which the children from segregated settlements have to overcome, is the low quality and ethnic homogeneity of schools they attend. Ethnically homogeneous schools usually form naturally. If the proportion of Roma in the given location (i.e. also in the school) is high, the majority parents tend to send their children to more distant schools attended mostly by non-Roma children. This makes the schools in locations with large numbers of Roma homogenous, frequent contact with the majority and positive social role-models are absent. Equipment of such school is often below the standard and objectionable.

Besides that, the Roma children are increasingly placed to special schools often without justification. Children from the segregated Roma settlements are being handicapped a number of times: by the absolute poverty, poor equipment of their households and low standard of housing, minimal preparedness for school (missing elementary skills, knowledge, hygienic habits, communication skills), low support (both material and spiritual) from their surroundings and family. At the same time they come into an environment perceiving them a negative way, and we know that children express their dislike very directly and candidly. Without being backed up by someone they enter an environment where no one helps them accustom to the new conditions, where they are often excluded and refused. In the survival and material certainties oriented world education is seen as an obligation towards the state they live in and not as an obligation towards their children. Especially in the segregated settlements where most of the population are long-term unemployed regardless of their education, there is little proof that education does pay.

Good education is quite expensive nowadays and it is an cost item that pays many years later. Due to different reasons, the Roma don't seem to grasp the relationship between this investment and the profit (finding a good job) it can bring. Failure to achieve the minimal required level of education locks out the possibility of being successful on the labor market. The lower the education, the smaller the chance of finding a job on the labor market. Numerous Roma don't realize the direct relationship between education and employment because they see many individuals around them who were unable to find a job despite having completed secondary or higher education. Most of the Roma from segregated communities only completed elementary education or failed to complete

the secondary education. These educational categories of people represent the highest proportion of unemployed in Slovakia (see Table 1 for details). For unqualified workers it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a job, partially because the demand for low-qualification work force drops and partially because employing an unqualified person is more expensive than employing someone with higher qualification, mainly due to the high income tax and different non-wage labor costs, and especially the different productivity (Poverty and Welfare..., 2002: 36).

#### B.2.2.4. Symbolic Exclusion

The symbolic exclusion is an expression of marginalization and stigmatization of some social groups by the public, however, not on the level of real and active exclusion, but verbal exclusion and exclusion through different degrees of refusal and repulsion. Basically any group perceived by others as different may become undesirable and verbally refused. An example of symbolic exclusion having practical consequences is differentiation between the deserving and undeserving poor in different historical epochs. This symbolic designation expresses:

- 1) level of solidarity with the excluded;
- 2) an opinion on where to look for the causes of their exclusion. It expresses whether the exclusion is a matter of the nature of society (inequality, injustice, structure of ownership or power, etc.) or dysfunctions of its functioning (failures in the redistribution, decline of solidarity) or whether it lies with the victims (immorality, laziness, irresponsibility).

Different cultural background and generally different way of life of the Roma and non-Roma create social tension between these two groups. Everyday life of numerous Roma (especially in the traditional segregated settlements) in Slovakia is still driven by the traditional Romany habits and standards which in some areas of life interfere with standards of the majority society. Problems related to coexistence of the Roma and the non-Roma result mainly from the specific position of the Roma as an ethnic minority, which visibly differs from that of the majority population and other minorities in the living standard, lifestyle, thinking and culture. The difference of the Roma is perceived in a negative way by others. A social distance emphasized on both sides by the deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudices forms between the Roma and the rest of the population. The prevailing opinion among the majority population is that a large portion of Roma do not or cannot accept the social norms and they became resistant towards the majority's attempts to integrate them. Set of these factors leads to social exclusion and consequently to social isolation of Roma (Vašečka, M., 2001).

Public opinion polls focusing on the majority's attitude towards the Roma were started as late as after 1989. All of them revealed an equally high level of social distance in relation to members of the Roma minority which seems to remain constant in time. Different researches also constantly point out that the social distance towards the Roma is widespread among all classes of people regardless of age, education, sex, type of economic activity, religion and economic or political orientation (see chapter *Relationship of the Majority Population to the Roma* for details). The research suggests that the society evaluates the Roma in the light of prejudices, stereotypes and simplified categorization formed mainly through the media; personal experience with Roma is

second-placed only. This is a vital fact. It works the same way like the self-fulfilling prophecy – i.e. a false prediction which self-fulfills by being spoken, as it correspondingly influences behavior of its surroundings. This relation of the non-Roma towards the Roma is one of the obstacles of their integration into society (Vašečka, M., 2001).

Latent forms of discrimination against the Roma from the part of employers, as well as stereotypes and prejudices of the majority society are yet another factor increasing the risk of unemployment among the Roma and deepening their marginalization on the labor market. The anti-Roma mood in the society is backed also by behavior of the majority representatives - state administration or municipal self-government employees, policemen and employees of medical establishments. The existing prejudices and negative attitudes are often abused by major Slovak politicians in their populist statements perceived by the public as justification of their own opinions. In the end, this increases repulsion of the majority population towards the Roma. Latent racism showing in indifference to or silent approval of open forms of racism is socially much more dangerous. Absence of positive role-models is not real, rather artificially created. In municipalities where the social difference between the two groups is not so large, the mutual acceptance and communication is much better. As there are no conflicts in these locations, neither the mayors, nor the Roma are interested in making the issue public. On the contrary, they consider it success if the so-called Roma issue is not mentioned in relation with their village and so the problems remain hidden. The public, on the other hand, perceives the Roma mainly as problematic and socially dependent individuals, who are becoming a sort of prototype on the basis of which they form their opinions and stances (Mann, 2000: 20).

### **B.2.3. Issue 2: NAP on social inclusion cannot be complex in relation to a Roma population because of inability to identify target group.**

#### ***B.2.3.1. Lack of data on Roma***

Problems with statistics arise from the incongruity between data on ethnicity (gathered before 1989 on the basis of people's anthropological characteristic, affinity towards a certain type of settlement, and even an evaluation of preferred lifestyle) and data on nationality (gathered on the basis of self-declaration in population censuses after 1989). Throughout the transformation period, statistics on the number of Roma has originated from three sources, all of which are inaccurate and potentially misleading:

1. Statistical data from the 1991 and 2001 population censuses. In these official counts, only a small percentage of Roma living in Slovakia declared Romany nationality; consequently, all analyses of the Romany population based on these data speak of only a small part (probably less than a quarter) of the Romany population.
2. Statistical data from various head counts of Roma done for the needs of state administration organs. These data are inherently incomplete and inaccurate because they are based on arbitrary decisions about how ethnicity is reflected in life style and settlement. These data include all statistics on Roma from before 1989.

3. Statistical data from academic experts, Romany leaders and politicians. The inaccuracy and methodological flaws are usually apparent at first glance.

Before the 2001 population census, there were various views on whether the data on the official number of Roma living in Slovakia would be accurate, and if they would express the extent of their identification with the Romany ethnicity. The Cabinet's Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups before the census launched an information campaign under the slogan "Declare Your Identity" that was organized by Romany NGOs. Representatives of the Romany Parliament, in co-operation with the Slovak Statistical Office, called on Slovak Roma to apply for positions as census scrutineers to remove the psychological barrier preventing Roma from declaring their identity. However, this plan did not work. According to the estimates of the Romany Parliament, of 22,000 census scrutineers only 0.5 per cent were Roma. The reluctance of the Roma to declare their nationality is attributed mostly to their fear of being persecuted, and to the integration of many Roma into majority society. Many experts think the most important factor preventing the Roma from declaring their nationality is a serious crisis in Romany ethnic identity caused by decades of often forced assimilation, and the perception that being a Roma carries the stigma of inferiority.

However, without knowing the structure of the given population any policy aimed at social inclusion runs into many problems stemming from the inability to quantify relevant needs.

Group of experts during the focus group identified two major problems in connection with lack of data:

1. There is no consensus in Slovakia as to whether various measures aimed at improving the socio-economic situation of the Roma are to be aimed at the Roma population as a whole or only at its segments in a state of social dependence. In this context, questions arise whether the Roma can be viewed through an ethnic definition - as an ethnic minority suffering discrimination compared with the rest of the population - or through a social definition - as the poorest group within the population.
2. Various assessments that give Roma population estimates mean different things. It is therefore methodologically flawed to combine them - while some will give estimates of all ethnic Roma regardless of socio-economic status and degree of integration, others present Roma population figures covering mainly the socio-economically marginalized portions of the community.

Most of the problems and misunderstandings arise from the distinction between the notions "ethnic" and "nation". We must always bear in mind that the ethnic and national affinity are two different categories which differ in the content and the way of determining. In some cases the ethnic and national structure of population can be similar, in other cases they can be very different. It is necessary to determine the category of every piece of data and to consider it in the interpretation. These categories must be handled very carefully, particularly when it comes to the Roma. While the members of other ethnic groups in Slovakia usually claim nationality according to their ethnic affinity, most Roma do not claim Roma nationality and choose a different one. The Roma count differs significantly from the number of Slovak citizens of Roma nationality.

Therefore, the data on citizens of Romany nationality do not provide a true image of the Roma ethnic.

#### B.2.3.2. Estimations as an important and dangerous source of information

Striving to solve the task to fill the gap in the data on Roma, both researchers and policy-makers in Slovakia often encounter objections that imply discrimination fears. Gathering data about a particular group of people does not necessarily question the equality of all citizens or imply discrimination. The demographic, socio-economic and frequently also human position of many Roma is significantly different from that of the rest of population today. The situation in some cases is so complicated that the Roma themselves can hardly change their situation without help of others. However, the help cannot be sufficiently effective without the necessary information. Acquiring demographic and statistical data is thus not aimed at discrimination of the Roma. On the contrary, it is supposed to benefit them. The second reason, why we need as exact data on the Roma count as possible, is the struggle to prevent unprofessional or telic estimates from being created. Therefore, this chapter also contains the estimated number of Roma living in Slovakia at present and in the next twenty years.

Demographic estimates based on trends recorded over the past 20 years serve as an alternative to official data. Prior to 1989 data on ethnicity of the Roma were collected. The ethnicity was decided by the census officer on the basis of lifestyle, level of housing, mother tongue, living standard, anthropological features, etc. It is estimated that not more than 15% of the Roma were missed by these statistics (Vaňo, 2002). Current demographic estimates of the number of Roma in Slovakia are based on the reproductive rates of the Roma population in the given period. These trends show that the Roma population is growing faster than total population of Slovakia. Vaňo (2002) states that while in 1970-1980 the number of Roma increased by about 25%, the total number of inhabitants in Slovakia grew only by 10%. Based on trends in natural rates of population growth, demographers have calculated an estimate of the number of Roma in Slovakia between 1989 and 2000 (Table 9). The estimate of number and age-gender structure of Roma living in Slovakia as of December 31, 2001 was prepared as an ex post demographic forecast. The basis used was the year 1980, for which sufficiently reliable and detailed required data are available. The end point was the year 2001 and the result is an estimate of the present number and age-gender structure of Roma living in Slovakia (Infostat, 2002).



**Table 9: Estimate of the Number of Roma in 1980 to 2000.**

Year	Number of Roma			Annual Increase (%)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>1981</b>	119,622	115,948	<b>235,570</b>			
<b>1982</b>	123,086	119,492	<b>242,578</b>	2.90	3.06	<b>2.97</b>
<b>1983</b>	126,743	123,221	<b>249,964</b>	2.97	3.12	<b>3.04</b>
<b>1984</b>	130,598	127,152	<b>257,750</b>	3.04	3.19	<b>3.11</b>
<b>1985</b>	134,588	131,217	<b>265,805</b>	3.06	3.2	<b>3.13</b>
<b>1986</b>	138,698	135,401	<b>274,099</b>	3.05	3.19	<b>3.12</b>
<b>1987</b>	142,782	139,573	<b>282,355</b>	2.94	3.08	<b>3.01</b>
<b>1988</b>	146,884	143,754	<b>290,638</b>	2.87	3.00	<b>2.93</b>
<b>1989</b>	151,079	148,024	<b>299,103</b>	2.86	2.97	<b>2.91</b>
<b>1990</b>	155,206	152,239	<b>307,445</b>	2.73	2.85	<b>2.79</b>
<b>1991</b>	159,401	156,522	<b>315,923</b>	2.70	2.81	<b>2.76</b>
<b>1992</b>	163,723	160,939	<b>324,662</b>	2.71	2.82	<b>2.77</b>
<b>1993</b>	168,011	165,329	<b>333,340</b>	2.62	2.73	<b>2.67</b>
<b>1994</b>	172,189	169,626	<b>341,815</b>	2.49	2.6	<b>2.54</b>
<b>1995</b>	175,658	173,252	<b>348,910</b>	2.01	2.14	<b>2.08</b>
<b>1996</b>	178,754	176,521	<b>355,275</b>	1.76	1.89	<b>1.82</b>
<b>1997</b>	181,754	179,698	<b>361,452</b>	1.68	1.8	<b>1.74</b>
<b>1998</b>	184,676	182,808	<b>367,484</b>	1.61	1.73	<b>1.67</b>
<b>1999</b>	187,480	185,811	<b>373,291</b>	1.52	1.64	<b>1.58</b>
<b>2000</b>	190,310	188,890	<b>379,200</b>	1.51	1.66	<b>1.58</b>

**Source:** Vaňo (2001).

However, these data are not fully reliable since it is impossible to observe the current reproductive behavior of the Roma (which undoubtedly changed after 1989 compared to the previous period due to changes in the socio-economic situation). At any rate, these estimates are likely much closer to the real figures than the official statistics from the Census.

**Table 10: Structure of Roma population by age in 2001.**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0-4</b>	20,552	19,695	40,247
<b>5-9</b>	25,650	24,597	50,247
<b>10-14</b>	25,282	24,278	49,560
<b>15-19</b>	22,826	21,896	44,722
<b>20-24</b>	18,210	17,617	35,827
<b>25-29</b>	16,504	16,409	32,913
<b>30-34</b>	14,687	14,178	28,865
<b>35-39</b>	13,812	13,279	27,091
<b>40-44</b>	11,609	10,872	22,481
<b>45-49</b>	8,516	8,395	16,911
<b>50-54</b>	5,360	5,616	10,976
<b>55-59</b>	2,768	3,531	6,299
<b>60-64</b>	2,003	3,007	5,010
<b>65-69</b>	1,342	2,529	3,871
<b>70-74</b>	710	1,728	2,438
<b>75-79</b>	296	879	1,175
<b>80-84</b>	61	204	265
<b>85+</b>	12	40	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>190,200</b>	<b>188,750</b>	<b>378,950</b>

**Source:** Infostat - VDC (2002).

Forecasts by the Center for Demographic Research (Infostat, 2002) expect the number of Roma in Slovakia to increase, albeit at a gradually decreasing rate. The number of Roma in Slovakia in 2025 is forecast to reach 520,000, which represents an increase of about 140,000 persons (37%) over current (forecast) figures. The growth of the Roma population in Slovakia is expected to cease only after 2035. At this time, the share of the Roma on overall population should be about 11%. It is natural that this kind of information is being abused by different politicians and they can play very negative role in the media discourse.

**Table 11: Roma Population Forecast.**

Year	Number in 000s	Share in %	Annual increase in %
2005	402.9	7.5	1.5
2010	435.3	8.1	1.6
2015	468.9	8.7	1.4
2020	499.2	9.2	1.1
2025	524.0	9.7	0.8

Source: Vaňo (2002).

### **B.2.4. Issue 3: NAP on social inclusion are not focused on segregated Roma**

#### B.2.4.1. A fear to identify Roma “settlements”

The group of experts identified as the most visible problem of a NAP lack of focus on segregated Roma communities that may be deemed to be those which live in separated or segregated settlements. The last statistics on Roma settlements were collected during the former communist regime and date back to the end of 1988 when there were 278 settlements in Slovakia, from this number 230 were located in the then designated Eastern Slovak Region. The statistical data, which were part of a document to be discussed by the *Committee of the Government of the Slovak Socialist Republic on Gypsy Population Issues*, were quite extensive. They mentioned numbers of inhabitants living in shacks (however, a definition of a shack was lacking), numbers of family houses under construction, the age structure of children, numbers of citizens organized in the trade union movement (ROH), in the Slovak Women’s Union and similar organisations, number of first-time mothers under the age of 13 and even the number of sterilized women. After 1989 such information had stopped to be collected, the public administration was even afraid to ask about what it really needed to know.

During the regime of a real socialism no systematic definition of a Roma encampment existed. From the period texts it is evident that the concept of a Roma or “gypsy” encampment was equivalent to the concept of a “gypsy residential district, colony, camp”. In relation to governmental documents it is, however, questionable whether all those cases really concerned Roma settlements in which the people lived concentrated and isolated from the local non-Roma population, meaning the more developed area of the given village or town. After the transition in 1989, it wasn’t until 1997 that the statistical surveys regarding Roma settlements and their inhabitants, although not to such an extent, were “renewed”. Bearing in mind the fact that relevant information about Roma living in marginalized settlements was missing the *Annual Reports on Residential Units at a Low Social-Cultural Level (Roma Settlements)* was drawn up in the offices of the *Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Dealing with Problems of Citizens in Need of Special Aid* of that time. This Report was registered by the

Statistical Bureau of the Slovak Republic within the State Statistical Surveys Programme and, by virtue of its nature, it is evident that the condition of the individual settlements was emphasized to a greater extent in the surveys than the exact determination of the degree of integration of the individual Roma communities or precise definition of the individual types of settlements. Based on a localisation criterion the settlements were divided into those which: a) were part of the village or town, b) were located on the margin of the village or town and c) were further away from the village or town. The dwellings were divided only into brick houses and non-standard shacks. Except for in the title, the Report did not mention the word “Roma” or “Romany” anywhere; therefore the questionnaire determined the degree of social marginalization of a group of people who were not even named, nor defined. In the mid 1990s, that was quite typical for government policy. An example is the name of the Plenipotentiary of the Government who was competent for tackling the issues of Roma communities as the Plenipotentiary for Citizens in Need of Special Aid.

The 1997 to 2000 Annual Reports were distributed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (in the year 2000 already by the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Tackling Issues of the Roma National Minority) through regional authorities to district authorities where they were filled out by the authorities’ staff based on instructions on how to process the Report. However, the instructions did not include basic definitions of the required data.

Also, due to the absence of precise definitions, the survey results differed markedly from the 1988 results. According to the 1997 Annual Report there were 516 Roma settlements in Slovakia, whereby in 216 cases these settlements constituted part of the village or town, in 203 cases they were located on the margin of the village or town and the rest of the settlements were further away from the village or town. A year later the total number of settlements had increased to 591 (349 in villages and towns, 175 on the margin thereof and 67 further away). Any type of settlement with Roma population (residential district, street on the boundary of the village or town, concentration of several “Roma” houses in the middle of the village or town and so on) started being considered an encampment. Even those Roma settlements which were part of the municipality, with a full infrastructure, with ownership deeds for the family houses on plots owned by the owners of these houses, without shacks, etc. were also included in the list of Roma settlements. That means settlements which were almost completely integrated in the municipality in terms of space and infrastructure.

By the end of 2000, based on a new collection of data from Annual Reports, there were already 620 Roma settlements of the rural and urban type registered in Slovakia, whereby 466 of them were situated directly in the municipality or on its margin. 127,429 people lived in the given number of settlements, which means 23,781 families living in 14,534 dwellings. That means that on the average 8.8 persons lived in one dwelling in such a settlement. From the total number of 127,429 people living in Roma settlements, 50,082 were children under the age of 15 years. 6,366 citizens were employed and 1,512 citizens were studying for their future profession.

In 2001, the Secretariat of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Tackling Issues of the Roma National Minority of that time distributed the Annual Report to the municipalities via regional and district authorities. This activity was based on the

assumption that the individual mayors or staff of the municipal/local authorities, knowing the situation in their village/town very well, would provide more relevant information for the report than the staff of district authorities in the previous years. However, the collected data displayed a high error rate and hence these reports have not been processed for entire districts, regions or even the whole Slovak Republic at all. Based on the aforementioned fact we may state that the data on Roma communities acquired in this period had very low informational value combined with the fact that they also lacked any methodology and rules for the selection of settlements which were to be included in the said Report. The choice of the individual settlements depended on the random decision of the district authorities' staff or municipal/local authorities' staff in 2001. Since definitions and a data collection methodology were lacking, these data did not reflect the real situation and they were confusing.

#### *B.2.4.2. A need of a Sociographic Mapping of Roma Settlements*

The need to comprehensively map the situation of Roma in Slovakia has been articulated for many years by various state, non-governmental organisations, as well as by international institutions which provide funds for the solution of the unfavourable socio-economic situation of the Roma in Slovakia. Naturally, this is not just a problem for Slovakia; all countries with a significant share of Roma living in unsuitable conditions encounter a shortcoming in relevant data. Without the knowledge of the overall situation it is very complicated, maybe even impossible to implement any policy aimed at improving this situation.

One of the serious reasons why in the past in Slovakia there were no relevant data about the number of Roma and their socio-economic position in society as a whole were the doubts about the legitimacy of data collection on the basis of ethnic origin. These doubts are based on the possible misuse of data and possible discrimination practices which are connected with such misuse. The attributed ethnic origin may really, in some cases, lead to a stigmatisation of a certain ethnic group, even to discrimination based on this attributed ethnic origin. In this context a very serious question emerges, i.e. whether such data collection is inadmissible even in the event that it is performed only and solely for the purpose of improving the situation of the given ethnic group.

Many Slovak and foreign experts have been dealing with this issue for quite a long time, however, no high-quality public discussion has been held to date. Currently, many experts, even experts from organisations advocating for the rights of the Roma, are in favour of the proposition that the collection of quantitative data based on ethnic origin is very important for, among other things, helping to reveal the extent of the practiced discrimination (Petrova, 2004). A simple example of such a need may be the problem of sending Roma children to schools for children with special needs. If there are data on the total number of Roma children who are of compulsory school age, then it is possible to more precisely point out the increased share of these children in special schools compared with children from the majority population. Without exact data all the expertise about the above-average representation of Roma children in special schools rings hollow. If we assume that a certain group of people are disadvantaged and discriminated based on their ethnic affiliation and if we want to describe this situation in more detail in quantitative terms, we cannot base our work on the ethnic identity of this group on the

basis of how or why they identify themselves with a certain ethnic group. The truth is that this group of people experiences discrimination due to the fact that someone else perceives this group of people as being different and not because this group of people perceive themselves as different in ethnic terms (Farkas, 2004).

The sociographic mapping of the Roma communities may be characterised as basic research with the objective of acquiring data on all Roma settlements which are found in Slovakia. This means that settlements in which the Roma live dispersed among the majority population were also included in the research. One may object contending that this group of people should not be subject to a similar type of survey because their situation is completely different than the situation in settlements where the Roma live in much more concentrated numbers. Settlements in which the Roma live dispersed among the majority population have been included in the mapping for two basic reasons:

1. Even though the situation of these people with regard to their socio-economic position can be deemed comparable with the situation of the majority population, this group of people also frequently face various discrimination practices, which means that they need a little bit different form of assistance than the Roma living in more concentrated numbers;
2. Knowledge of the share of Roma who live dispersed among the majority population helps destroy the myth about the impossibility to resolve the problems of the Roma and about the general perception that any effort to integrate the Roma into the majority population is doomed to failure.

#### B.2.4.3. Results of the Sociographic Mapping

Expert demographic analyses estimate the number of Roma living in Slovakia to be 320,000. The *Sociographic Mapping of Roma Communities* in Slovakia came to a similar conclusion. One of the main findings of this research is that one half of them live integrated and dispersed among the majority population. The other half live in urban or municipal concentrations, settlements localized on the margin of the village/town or in settlements which are further away from the village/town or separated by a natural or artificial barrier (Graph 7).

Thus, all Roma settlements can be divided into four basic groups in the *Sociographic Mapping of the Roma Communities* as follows:

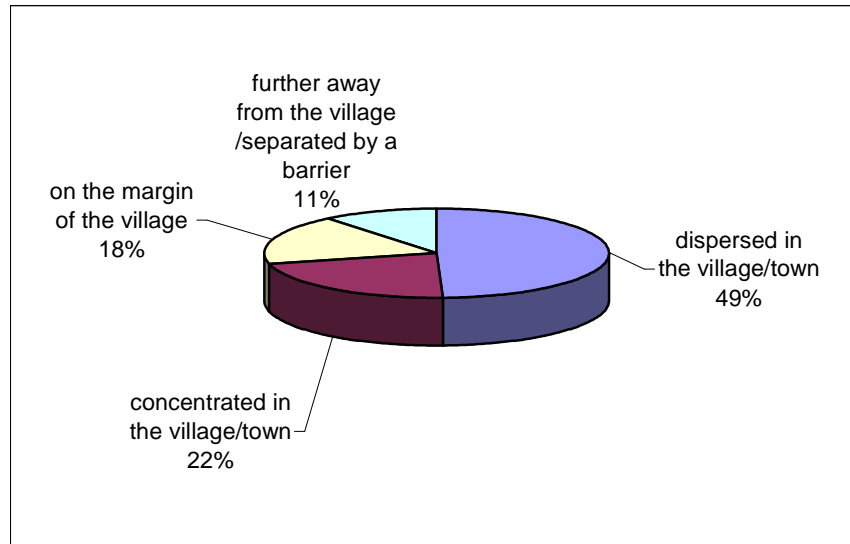
1. a settlement in which the Roma are dispersed among the majority population;
2. village and town concentrations;
3. settlements localized on the margin of the village/town;
4. settlements beyond the village/town.

These categories combine two characteristics: the distance of the settlement from the majority population and the density of the Roma population. These categories are not a consistent typology, they were rather chosen with respect to the practical utilization of the survey. At the same time these categories may, but do not have to, reflect the degree of integration of the Roma communities.

The *Sociographic Mapping of the Roma Communities* was carried out in 1,087 administrative units (villages, towns, and city quarters). 1,575 settlements were identified within these units and these were also the settlements that were defined by the majority population as being Roma. There are also cases where several settlements may be found

in one village or town. In 772 villages or towns the Roma live integrated and dispersed among the majority population.

**Graph 7: Localisation of Roma settlements.**

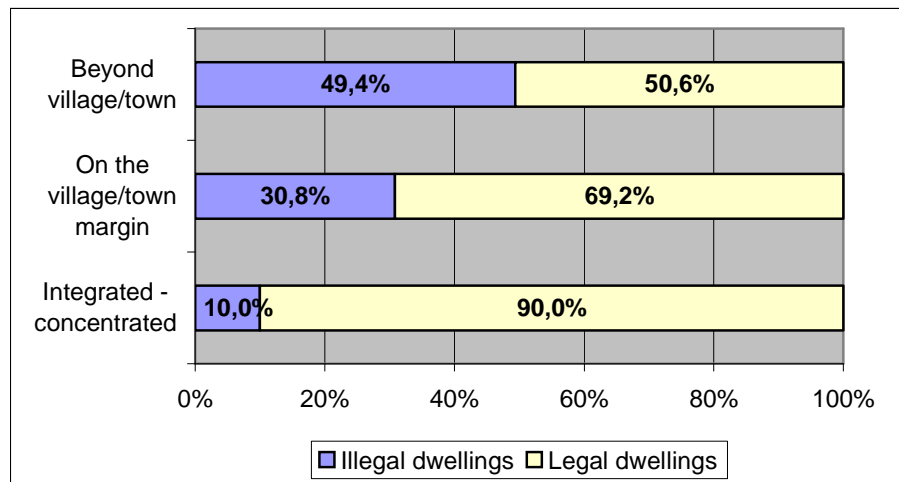


**Source:** *Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2004*. Bratislava, Office of the Government 2004.

Dispersed settlements have been excluded from the next analysis as they do not represent the target group on which the individual programmes and projects should be focused or their situation is specific and therefore, the nature of measures aimed at these settlements should correspond to their specific situation. If one focuses on the individual types of dwellings in which the Roma live, approximately one fourth of these dwellings are apartments in apartment houses which is typical especially for town settlements, but smaller apartment houses can also be found on the margin of villages. Almost half of all dwellings are legal brick houses, mostly in rural settlements. With regard to the housing issue, the type and legitimacy of housing are important indicators for all public policies. The results of the sociographic mapping point to the fact that one third of dwellings in Roma settlements are illegal (these are mainly shacks, construction site huts, non-residential buildings but also houses). The largest share of illegal dwellings (49%) can be found in settlements which are located beyond the village/town (Graph 8). The most frequent type of illegal dwellings are shacks which constitute almost 16% of all dwellings and 14% of the Roma settlement population live in them. The highest proportion of inhabitants living in shacks can also be found in settlements which are beyond the village/town. Those living in shacks in these settlements constitute 21% of the total population of these settlements.

In villages where the Roma are integrated or concentrated – up to 90% of the dwellings are legal.

**Graph 8: Legality of dwellings based on the localisation of the settlement.**



**Source:** *Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2004*. Bratislava, Office of the Government 2004.

The break down of the number of citizens living in the various types of dwellings approximately mirrors the break down of the dwellings themselves. Over half of the people live in brick houses (legal or illegal), approximately one quarter in apartment houses and 14 % live in shacks. If we look at the share of people per one dwelling the overall average is 7.46 persons per dwelling. The highest share is found in non-residential premises and other dwellings, followed by brick houses. The lowest share is found in construction site huts and apartments. Of all the citizens living beyond the village up to 21% live in shacks. On the margin of the village this share is only 9.2 % and in the case of integrated Roma living in concentrated numbers directly in the village only 1.9 %.

With regard to the infrastructure, two basic characteristics in the surveyed settlements can be monitored. The first characteristic was the utilities in the settlement, i.e. whether the population of these settlements have access to them, second how many dwellings are actually connected to these utilities. In addition to the basic utilities, such as the water main, sewer, power and gas, the type of access road to the settlement and if there were public lighting fixtures in the settlement were also determined. In almost 63.3 % of the total number of the aforementioned Roma settlements the Roma have the possibility to be connected to the public water main whereby 39.4 % of the dwellings actually do have water piping in the household. In almost 81 % of Roma settlements the inhabitants do not have the possibility to be connected to the sewage network. The sewage network is found only in 13.9 % of settlements, and only 5.5 % of the settlements have a partial sewage network. Almost 13 % of dwellings are connected to the sewage network. Of all utilities, electric power is the most widely available one in the Roma settlements. Over 91 % of the Roma settlements have power, 4.6 % of settlements have partial power and 4.2 % of settlements do not have power at all. Almost 89 % of dwellings are connected to power, however, a huge portion of the dwellings are connected illegally. The inhabitants of 28.7 % of Roma settlements have the possibility to be connected to gas whereby 12 % of them have only partial possibility. 59.3 % of settlements do not have such a possibility at all.



The mentioned data, of course, vary depending on how far away the Roma settlement is from the village/town. In the case of all utilities, inhabitants of settlements further away from villages/towns have lesser access to them than the inhabitants of settlements that are located in the village/town or on their margin.

With regard to the infrastructure, 46 Roma settlements located beyond the village/town were identified in the survey as not having almost any infrastructure at all. Specifically this means that there is no asphalt road leading to the settlements, that they have no water main, no possibility to be connected to a sewage system, nor gas. In 12 of these 46 settlements there is not even power. The average distance of these settlements from the village/town is about 1 km. 6,355 inhabitants have permanent residence in these settlements however their real number is a bit higher. The number of Roma settlements with infrastructure at a below-standard level is, of course, higher; the mentioned 46 settlements are the extreme cases of insufficient infrastructure.

#### *B.2.4.4. Usage of the Sociographic Mapping*

Although the Sociographic mapping provides information about the overall situation - number, regional distribution of the Roma population and typologies of the individual settlements, the mapping results provide detailed information about every Roma settlement separately. In December 2004, the Office of the Government issued the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia, which in a chart and graph form includes information about every Roma settlement identified in the course of the survey. In this respect it is important that the data on the individual Roma settlements are compared with the data on the majority population which will help to identify whether the given case can be considered to be a case of social exclusion of the Roma or a generally unfavourable situation in the given region (in such a case the information about the Roma settlements does not differ in any way from the information about the majority population). Such data can assist in the formulation of public policies in various areas. But despite the fact that these data are not in a clash with a Constitution of the Slovak republic, Slovak governmental bodies do not use the data, with the exception of the Ministry for Construction and Regional Development, that was the first institution in Slovakia which utilized the results of sociographic mapping for the preparation of a new housing concept. Although usage of data can be seen in most of policies concerning Roma, these data are not used as they can be. The group of experts during the focus group session identified as the greatest obstacle to use the data unwillingness to tackle extremely complicated situation within segregated Roma settlements.

#### **B.2.5. Issue 4: Factor of culture almost non-existent within NAP on social exclusion**

The most striking for the group of experts has been a fact of missing bridge between cultural policies and social inclusion. Factor of culture is understood in a very narrow sense of supporting Roma culture in the same way as a culture of other national minorities is being supported. Usually therefore, different folklore groups are being supported what only confirm prejudices and stereotypes of Roma. What is completely

missing in the NAP on social inclusion is a support for culture in a sense of increasing participation.

Roma are being viewed especially through the presence of Roma culture - especially of their musical, creative and performing phenomenon - in three lines:

- 1) music performers, providing for the music at social events,
- 2) holders and preservers of Slovak folklore traditions,
- 3) holders and preservers of their own folklore traditions.

After the political changes in 1989 numerous minority organizations were established and every year organizations representing Roma minority in Slovakia were recipients of funds from the Culture Ministry. In 1993 the Government's Council for Minorities and Ethnic Groups was established (Kollár – Mrvová, 2002). Since 1996 the minority culture in Slovakia has been funded in three ways:

1. Through specific transfer from the budget chapter of the Culture Ministry for projects supporting development of national minority culture: cultural activities, publishing of periodical and non-periodical press.
2. Through funding of cultural organizations of minorities as state subsidized organizations on the level of regional authorities.
3. Through funding of activities aimed at development of minority culture within the framework of activities carried out by subsidized organizations falling into the competence of regional authorities (museums, galleries, libraries, centers for further education).

A committee of experts at the Department for Minority Culture, appointed by the Culture Minister, assesses allocation of the Culture Ministry's state budget funds for special purposes. Members of this committee which also acts as a counselling body of the Culture Minister are representatives of all national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia. Each minority has one valid vote in the committee. One of the committee's competences is to establish subcommittees. Subcommittees that have been established on the national principle propose the amount of funds to be allocated for the selected projects and evaluate the projects developing minority culture from the following viewpoints: quality, importance and significance of culture development for the minority members and for maintaining of their identity. The summary funding proposal is prepared by the Culture Ministry and approved by the Culture Minister (Kollár - Mrvová, 2002).

Minority culture in Slovakia develops through publishing of periodical and non-periodical press for the minority members (in 2000, 40 magazines were published), state theatres with programs in minority languages (four theatres), state museums focusing on minorities (eight museums and departments in regional museums), civic associations developing culture of all 11 minorities, activities of two semi-professional folklore ensembles, activities of the regional centers for further education, regional and district libraries and broadcasting of programs in languages of the minorities in the public media.

The Slovak Radio broadcasts 45 hours a week special programs for the Hungarian minority. The other minorities were allocated less time within the national-ethnic

broadcasting: Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German, Czech, Polish and Romany. Within the national magazines the Slovak Television broadcasts for Hungarian, Romany, Czech, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Polish, Jewish, German and Bulgarian minorities and also a multi-national magazine. Besides supporting projects submitted by the minority members, the Culture Ministry through the Department for Minority Culture subsidizes also those civic associations representing handicapped people and multiethnic projects (Kollár – Mrvová, 2002).

**Table 12: Funding of Roma culture development projects in Slovakia by the Culture Ministry according to the type of activities compared to the Hungarian and Ukrainian minority.**

Year	Roma	Hungarian	Ukrainian
<b>Cultural activities</b>			
1999	2 787 750	7 848 135	1 119 990
2000	2 728 980	9 631 000	715 000
2001	2 890 000	10 751 000	887 000
2002	5 313 900	14 743 300	965 000
<b>Periodical press:</b>			
1999	4 908 800	9 770 000	1 136 000
2000	2 843 000	6 543 000	1 540 000
2001	2 150 000	7 486 000	1 460 000
2002	1 750 000	11 650 000	1 445 000
<b>Non-periodical press:</b>			
1999	150 000	6 195 800	34 000
2000	483 000	6 840 000	243 000
2001	358 000	5 181 000	213 000
2002	240 000	12 749 000	585 000

**Source:** Culture Ministry of the SR.

**Table 13: Funding of Roma culture development projects in Slovakia by the Culture Ministry according to the type of activities with respect to the total number of applicants and projects and the number of subsidized applicants and projects.**

Year	Applicants		Projects		Amount (SKK)	
	Total	Subsidies	Total	Subsidies	Required	Granted
<b>Cultural activities</b>						
1999	24	18	82	43	30 273 353	2 787 750
2000	38	27	73	42	13 281 320	2 728 980
2001	48	23	107	34	24 454 691	2 890 000
2002	0	37	88	57	11 241 428	5 313 900
<b>Periodical press</b>						
1999	4	4	6	6	11 781 080	4 908 800
2000	4	4	5	5	10 451 700	2 843 000
2001	7	3	9	3	18 127 536	2 150 000
2002	4	4	6	4	6 725 980	1 750 000
<b>Non-periodical press</b>						
1999	4	2	4	2	1 646 000	150 000
2000	11	5	13	5	3 348 700	483 000
2001	10	2	18	2	6 606 384	290 000
2002	1	1	1	1	240 000	240 000

**Source:** Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities.

Until 1996 most of the cultural institutions were managed directly by the Culture Ministry, since 1996 (pursuant to the *Act No. 222/96 Coll. on Local Administration*) most of them have been managed directly by regional administrations. 38 regional cultural centers were established and 162 subsidized organizations were integrated within them. These changes didn't influence funding of minority culture and the culture transformation process continued. At the same time, within the special purposes transfer, the Culture Ministry also supported several activities that fell flat or activities that didn't correspond with the needs of the minorities (Kollár - Mrvová, 2002).

After 1999 the subsidized organizations under the regional cultural centers (and thus the institutions developing minority cultures except for the minority museums remaining under the administration of the Slovak National Museum) obtained legal personality under the direct management of the regional authorities' culture departments. After the 1998 parliamentary elections a separate Minority Culture Department was established at the Culture Ministry and started to cooperate systematically with the National Council Committees and the Department of Intellectual and Social Development of the Government Office by supporting the minority culture. The process of minority representatives' participation in the decision-making on funding of minority culture partially changes within the process of decentralization and establishment of regional governments. Within the symmetric model of regional administrative structure of Slovakia prepared by the Culture Ministry, a system of guarantees and realizations of minority politics is being prepared that prevents ambiguities in the process of competence

shift from the state administration to the higher self-governing regions (Kollár – Mrvová, 2002).

The NAP on social inclusion also plans to support activities on informing the general population about social exclusion issues. It is visible, on one side that social exclusion is not being understood in Slovakia, usually it is understood in a way typical for former communist countries, or recently in a libertarian sense. It is questionable whether this is an activity for state institutions at all, or it should be leave rather for NGOs.

#### **B.2.6.: Issue 5: Support for Roma cultural activities important, but dubious as well**

A support for cultural activities is a very important for the social cohesion of the society and increase of the dignity of socially excluded persons. The group of experts, however, discussed also possible negative outcomes of this support in case of Roma minority and that is institutional support for Roma nationalism. The Roma nation is the only sizable European nation that has not undergone an emancipation process or the process of national revival, which every larger European nation has gone through and has carried with it some positive, but prevailingly negative consequences. Through the prism of a constructivist paradigm of the rise of nationhood, the Roma nation did not have enough possibilities, time and strength to construct its basic characteristics. In a world where the nation-state plays an important role in the formation of economic and political conditions on the geographic area it occupies, as well as in the process of formation of the identity of its inhabitants - the nation represents the only realistic societal and cultural framework for the modern world order (despite its capabilities to generate terror and destruction). In light of these developments, the Roma are significantly disadvantaged in comparison to other European nations. At the same time, it is important to mention the fact that the majority of European nations have in the past 200 years expended great energy and effort to assimilate the Roma and this effort was successful in the majority cases. Some could voice the opinion, however, that the process of assimilation of the Roma has not been completed in Slovakia, and they would be correct - the assimilation was successful in the way that it has caused cultural uprooting of the Roma minority, as opposed to its integration or accommodation.

However, what remains is that the majority of the Roma, not only in Slovakia, but also across the whole of European continent subconsciously and without being aware of it are heading toward the completion of this process of assimilation in their drive to converge with the majority population. They continue to preserve and uphold their Roma identity only within the close family circle. At the same time, a small group of Roma intelligentsia including that in Slovakia - similar to the intelligentsia of other European nations in the past - is initiating the process of national revival of the Roma. To this purpose they are employing the Roma political representation, which is strongly rejected by the Roma population and paradoxically is perceived positively by the intelligentsia of the majority population. The clash of these two differing concepts-driven by emancipation of the Roma nation pushed by the Roma intelligentsia and assimilation pushed by the majority in the Roma population creates a seemingly unsolvable situation, which only leads to the confirmation of the prejudices of the majority population toward the Roma minority. From the point of view of the majority population, the Roma are putting forth their proposals to the solution of the issue in a way that lacks consistency. In effect, the

majority population cannot define their approach to the Roma and the result is a series of misunderstandings and long-standing stream of frustrating experiences on the both sides.

The group of experts discussed also the question why the Roma have not brought their process of national awareness to a successful end. Several causes have been identified:

1- The Roma, before coming to Europe, did not represent a homogenous ethnic group. These differences in the ethnicity are complicating mutual communication of European Roma up until now.

2- The Roma were not in the past an agrarian community. The nations are usually bound together by the land, which they farm. Their connectedness with the geographical area forms the ethnic characteristics of nations.

3- The surviving caste system can be understood as a specific form of pre-capitalist relations, which have created barriers to the creation of a common identity of different social groups. In such an environment, different types of identities have naturally formed and have given rise to “ethnically indifferent communities.”

4- In the past, the Roma belonged to the lowest social classes in the society—and were equal in their poverty. Majority of the Roma were escaping their ethnicity and refused to be identified with their roots.

5- The Roma specifics, which are the building blocks of national emancipation, were created without the majority population.

6- Considering the propensity and adaptability of the Roma to changing conditions, they have never formed stable cultural institutions—the permanent “transitory state” in which the Roma have lived was not suitable for the creation of a stronger national identity.

7- The focus of the Roma to tasks of daily life and the “presence” did not benefit the process of building of national awareness—the process of national emancipation requires thinking of the future.

8- The identity of the Roma is often the identity of primary groups; the collective memory or conscience is often tied with that of the family. Nation is by definition a secondary group and so in the past, the formation of a Roma nation was out of a question.

We can also ask a question that could prove to be highly provocative if it was put to Roma leaders. Is it really necessary to bring the process of building national awareness to a completion if the majority of the Roma are already strongly assimilated? Is it necessary to complete the process building a nation and ethnicity in the 21st century, when the experiences of other nations from past centuries are a testament to the controversy of this process? A theoretician of nationalism Arnošt Gellner (Gellner, 1993) questions the legitimacy of attempts, which were aimed at achieving ethnic identification. Gellner suggest that the creation of new nations does not make sense from the economic point of view. According to Gellner, the economic and social power remains in the control of the elites, not in the control of all the members of the nation—what’s more, the attempts at a creation of a Roma nation-state would be problematic on several accounts, and any such attempt would be bound to fail even in the initial phases. But why should the Roma be denied what other nations have gone through, even if it has meant a degree of suffering?

The ethos of liberalism, on the other hand, proposes that it would allow through the creation of national community the chance at “leveling the playing field” with other nations for its members. For the Roma, this could represent a significant moment—for a population that is very much oriented towards traditional communities, is endogenous with a surviving quasi-caste system, is characterized by strong social disparities between individual members and strong sub-ethnic differences - the birth of the nation would mean emancipation.

These questions have not been answered - and not only in Slovakia - by the Roma population, or the majority population. Despite all the obstacles, the goal of a building of a Roma nation is becoming a reality. Systematic attempts at building an intra-Roma cohesion and an awareness of belonging to a nation are indispensable elements of this discussion.

### **B.3.: Definiton of Strategies of the State and Local Authorities towards Roma population - outcome of the focus group discussion**

When the regime of a real socialism collapsed in 1989, Roma started to backslide from previous positions in a very dramatic manner. The first to confront the Roma issue were the local governments of villages and towns. Their potential proved to be insufficient. On the state level the issue was not tackled as a complex social problem, rather as a set of partial tasks of individual state institutions. Individual post-1989 governments were permanently adopting measures only after a problem already occurred. The faith in the self-regulatory capacity of the society to deal with the issue proved to be premature. Equally premature proved to be also the trust in the potential of the Roma community to ensure development of the community by themselves.

If we divide the help provided by the local governments and central government according to type, we will get five groups of strategies: a wall against the Roma, inactivity and noninterference, normalization of a problematic situation, provision of external help and provision of internal help.

#### B.3.1. Strategy of Wall

This strategy is based on building frontiers and obstacles between the Roma and the non-Roma. Its individual forms have only one thing in common – they avoid solution of the issue and they only react when the problem cannot be postponed anymore and requires immediate action. The main methods used within this approach are administrative measures accompanied by long-term academic welfare work. In the better case they just postpone the integration for later, when the Roma allegedly should change, in the worse case they rely on disposal of the Roma – by removing them from or not letting them into the municipality.

This strategy takes several different forms at present:

*Application of discriminatory measures which cannot be challenged by the law.* Usually the local government is trying to prevent the so-called *strange* Roma, i.e. those not having permanent residence in the municipality, to settle in the municipality, usually using methods which are difficult to prove. In extreme cases they simply ban the Roma from entering the municipality.

*Endeavor to ban the Roma from certain areas* attributed high importance by the majority population. There are following forms of this approach:

1. Solving the issue of Roma who don't pay the rent by moving them into the so-called social flats or by privatizing the municipal houses and subsequent eviction of Roma. The result of this approach is that historical town centers and other lucrative town locations with no Roma inhabitants and no presence of Roma. On the other hand, there are streets and quarters inhabited mostly by poor and unemployed Roma suffering spatial, social and aesthetical isolation.

2. Protecting certain area from thefts and devastation by the Roma by moving the Roma away. 3. Non-prevention of activity of those who are trying to displace the Roma, harm them and get rid of them. In the beginning of transformation process the public administration bodies did not intervene into these displays or their interventions were very hesitant.

### B.3.2. Strategy of inactivity against people abusing the situation of Roma

Those who abuse the Roma to enrich themselves take no concern in improving their situation, their only concern is to make profit. The public administration bodies should thus act against them and arrange for a remedy. If, however, the public administration and particularly the local governments do not act, they basically encourage and strengthen this behavior.

Abuse of Roma not opposed by the state administration has most frequently the following forms:

1. *Illegal employment of Roma* under inferior conditions.
2. *Usury among the Roma* especially in the problematic groupings of Roma. The issue of usury in local Roma communities cannot be resolved by simply saying that without plaintiff there is no defendant.
3. *Application of measures* the aim of which is to prevent abuse of welfare benefits. In some cases the municipalities have the right to provide welfare benefits in form of foodstuffs vouchers, by providing food for children at schools and similar. Unfortunately, some municipalities were not able to use this tool properly in the initial stages and the means provided ended up with the usurers anyway.

### B.3.3. Strategy of normalization of a Problematic Situation

**The strategy of normalization of a problematic situation means that the public administration doesn't consider a particular situation to be as serious as it in reality is and uses thus simplified solutions and measures. Considering the seriousness of the issue, these are just provisional solutions.**

Normalization of a problematic situation means that the people perceive how reality differs from what they consider normal, but they don't consider this deviation to be a problem that needs to be solved and so they, in the end, consider the situation to be "normal", or they refuse to see the deviation as a serious problem, they play it down and



use provisional, simplified and necessarily ineffective solutions. This often happens because the people are sure that there is nothing that could be done about the problem, or they have experienced a similar situation and know that it is risky to engage in such an issue because the worth of the achieved result is not going to correspond with the endeavor invested. If the significance of a certain issue is played down the pressure to solve it and devote increased attention to it decreases.

**The reasons for playing the issue down and using provisional solutions can be different, but they are of no significance, because what is important is the result, and the result is that the situation of the economically dependant Roma is being solved but not resolved. Instead of efficient and inevitably demanding solutions, often provisional and administrative solutions are used, which are backed by the law but don't resolve the problem.**

**The strategy can have different forms, such as:**

- Illegal employment of Roma is being tackled using an inefficient system of administrative control.
- In some housing estates with prevalence of Roma families, cases of illegal destruction of property in the devastated “houses of horror” and therewith related issues of housing of economically dependent families are being solved by administrative measures only.
- **All who don't pay the rent are being moved from the center of town to its outskirts where ethnic ghettos are formed. The important thing is to adhere to the law so that this generally applied measure cannot be contested from the legal viewpoint.**
- Negligence of social work as the key to real help and its replacement by welfare benefits, even though it is clear in advance that the benefits will be misused.

The common feature in all these strategies is that they postpone resolution of the issue by inadequate approach. An adequate approach would mean to adopt demanding solutions which would have to be accepted by the public – which again, is very time consuming and politically and academically demanding. This may be the reason why the public administration is trying to find less complicated and provisional solutions. Moreover, the society thus far does not call for the demanding solutions (and it is questionable whether the society could “afford” them at present). Yet the Roma issue has its relentless dynamics and the inadequate solutions at present will only increase the tension and cost of a quick, expensive and demanding solution in the future.

#### *B.3.4. Strategy of External Help*

The aim of social measures which the communist regime imposed particularly on the Roma was to eradicate their poverty and backwardness. The tool used to accomplish this was special welfare benefits and advantages which were to level the results and not to

achieve equality of opportunities. This external economic help limited the poverty of Roma on one hand, but taught them inactivity on the other. They have acquired a new philosophy according to which the state is obliged to look after the standard of living of its inhabitants. This philosophy can be found also among the non-Roma, however there is one major difference. It was adopted only by the low-income non-Roma families, while among the Roma by almost all families. Thanks to the traditional stigmatization of Roma these attitudes and behavior patterns are then attributed to the entire Roma ethnic. The majority population then perceives this behavior as typical for the Roma and not for all low-income households dependant on welfare benefits regardless of their ethnicity. The result is ethnization of the social environment of people dependent on welfare.

At present, the Roma community as a whole is unable to emancipate from its unfavorable situation without help from the majority population. What they need, in the first place, is a help allowing them to restore their social sovereignty. The majority is not always capable of providing this type of help in sufficient quantity and extent. It rather tends to solve the partial problems – which helps to alleviate the unfavorable material situation (shipments of clothes and similar) and financial situation (welfare benefits). This kind of help is necessary as well, but it cannot represent its main part, because it deepens the dependency of Roma on material and financial help from others. Moreover, provision of this type of help is complicated as it is perceived as social injustice by the majority. This may be the reason why in some locations it is hard to muster support for helping the Roma living in Romany settlements and urban Roma enclaves.

#### B.3.5. Strategy of Internal Help

The Roma minority at present depends on the external help from the majority. This means that the minority as a whole is not capable of solving its own problems by itself. The basic precondition of an efficient internal help is that the majority must perceive the help as its obligation and repayment of debt to the minority, and the minority must be able to accept the offered help without suspicion and with trust. Internal help should thus focus especially on strengthening of the Roma community's ability to emancipate by itself. This calls for projects the aim of which is to increase the human potential of individuals and the social potential of the minority as a whole. The minority must be able to solve their problems independently. Under particular conditions of individual locations this means to increase the ability of local Roma community members to identify and define the problems they encounter in their location, find solutions and create conditions (social, demographic, cultural, organizational, institutional, informational and economic) for implementing them.

Only the NGOs were able to provide this type of help so far. The public administration and especially the local governments play the role of supporter of such activities, or, in the worst case, they at least were not against them. The common feature of such approaches is their scarceness and the fact that they are not implemented by the state but by the NGOs and partially also by the local governments. If they are successful they will become a positive example for others and they will corroborate the known principle that a crisis does not necessarily represent a threat, on the contrary, it may become a chance for a change.

#### **B.4.: Recommendations of the Pre-Dissemination Seminar on verification indicators**

The group of experts was invited also for the dissemination seminar where Dr. Michal Vašečka presented preliminary thoughts derived from the focus group. Experts, at the same time, were asked to evaluate main principles of tackling issues connected with a status of Roma population in Slovakia. These principles should be used for the purpose of assessing the success of governmental policies toward socially excluded Roma. The group of experts agreed that following these three principles can secure full integration and accommodation of Roma into the “core” part of society.

##### Principle of de-stigmatization

This principle allows to overcome the social dependency trap on benefits. It requires individual assessment of each individual case of social exclusion and social dependency. It therefore does not allow confirmation of stereotypes of Roma being a potential parasite. The tool to achieve this goal is obtaining a qualification and finding the way how to be successful on a legal labor market. However, two conditions must be fulfilled in order to achieve this goal - there must be jobs available (usually subsidies in different ways) and at the same time qualified social work must be available as well in order to secure contact with a majority population. Successful usage of these tools depends mostly on a will of majority.

##### Principle of de-segregation

This principle allows to removes spatial segregation of Roma families and settlements. It requires usage of adequate standards of social housing in relation to particular excluded families and adequate standards of infrastructure quality for the whole excluded community. The first step is building and connecting the infrastructure in the locality. The help for a community should be secured, however, both on a level of family unit and community level. Principle of de-getoization

This principle allows to increases social cohesion in a locality. It means predominantly to remove, in continuity with principles of de-stigmatization and de-segregation, social isolation of Roma who live in Roma settlements. In order to achieve this goal it is necessary to build and use services and facilities together and to cooperate in the course of social problems solving.

## **C. INCLUSION POLICIES TOWARDS ROMA**

### **C.1. EDUCATION POLICIES**

#### **C.1.1. Education system of Slovakia and education handicap of Roma**

In the 1991 population census 76.68 % of Roma reported elementary education as the highest completed level of education. 8.07 % reported vocational education without the school leaving exam. Only 0.60 % of the Roma claimed to have secondary technical education and only 0.84 % of them completed secondary A-level education. Among all ethnics in Slovakia it was the Roma minority that had the fewest members with university education. The low education level of the Roma minority shows in all spheres of life. It affects very negatively the possibility to find a job and is one of the most serious causes of high Roma unemployment. To increase the education level, suitable conditions have to be created within the education system in order to accommodate the Roma specifics in its contents, forms and methods. It is a long-term process that cannot be implemented without participation of the Roma and their families. The education handicap of the Roma has its roots in the past, in the different nature of Roma culture, in which the cultural and spiritual wealth and heritage had been passed from generation to generation through direct communication in word only. Not even during several decades in Europe did the members of this community as a whole reach a higher level of ethnic and cultural development. The poor education level of the Roma is also a consequence of the subjective evaluation and reflection of the value and the need of education when searching for and defending one's position in the society (Jurová, 1994: 479).

The Roma child from its childhood encounters intolerance, scorn, deprecation and contempt because of its complexion, different perception of the world, different understanding of truth and justice – at school, in the street, in social life, when looking for a job. The language education of Roma children is also different. Many of them speak only the Romany language which, although it is enough for the life in the community, does not suffice for school education. The school as an institution imposing education and the education as perceived by the majority population are not necessary and not desirable for the life of the Roma. They represent fear of everything strange. All the school reforms, education programs, projects and measures, declaratively passed for the benefit of the Roma, are evaluated and accepted without inner involvement by the Roma. The Roma play a game with rules and regulations they neither created nor helped to create. They have only one possibility: to become accustomed to them. Otherwise they exclude themselves to the outskirts of the society.

Many school failures do not issue from the primary mental incapability of the pupils but from the fact that these children do not have the basic social and working habits necessary for successful schooling (for instance the basic general knowledge and skills, command of language and vocabulary, experience with graphic creations, but also the basic hygienic habits and similar). Under appropriate conditions most children stand the chance of coming close to the normal level of mental development. The backwardness that occurs with the long-term absence of developing stimuli, especially in the early childhood, cannot be fully compensated for, as can be seen in the problems the Roma children have when coping with the school, labor and other living conditions.

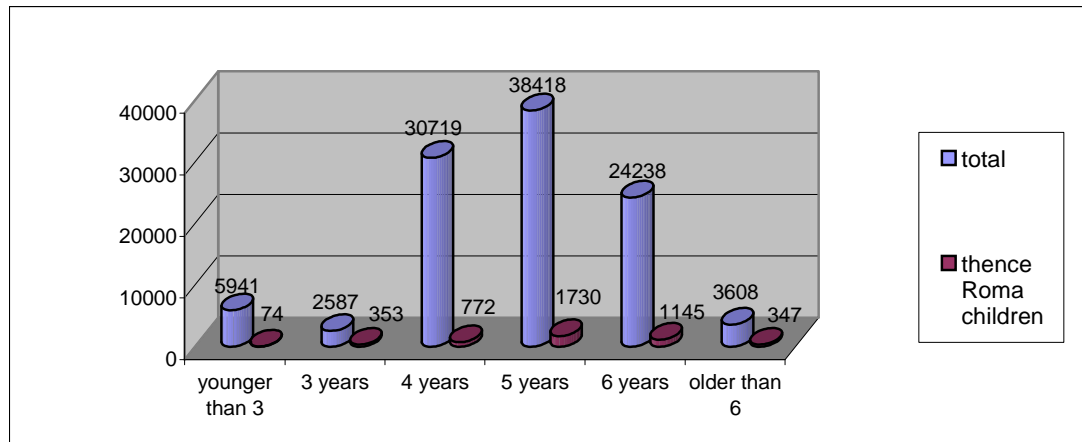
For the school education, the general intelligence and ability to comprehend are important. This, however, is not inborn, only the preconditions for its development are. From the childhood on, the Roma children are often stimulated in another way than the majority population children, therefore their intelligence develops in another direction which is less useful for the education in a traditional school, even if it may be more appropriate for developing emotions, relationship to nature etc. At the beginning of school attendance the Roma children are flexible, willing and they like to learn in the appropriate school conditions. In higher grades their results often significantly change for the worse, they start to be wilful and lose their interest for school. This can be partially explained by the starting puberty, the more demanding learning and also by the fact that in the Roma family the child is rather involved in the activities of the adults which contrasts with the role of pupil at school. The older Roma pupils are often frustrated by their failures, humiliated by the fact that they have to repeat the grades, they get bored at school, behave aggressively towards the teachers and schoolmates. From the school as it exists at present the Roma often carry away an inferiority complex, frustration and hatred (Maczejková - Rigová, 2002).

Particularly problematic with these children is their social development that is in general conditioned through habits, customs, taboos and upbringing. The upbringing is little stimulating, of low quality, from the part of both the parents and the environment. Because a neglected child with poor upbringing is hardly adaptable, social negligence can easily grow into difficult educability or even delinquency. We must also be aware of the fact that in the field of social inclusion the Roma children are disadvantaged against the others. At the school age, the position of the pupil is made even more difficult by the discredit of the family. The pupil is seldom an equal partner in communication with the other pupils, and this is not only due to the language handicap. The pupil lacks the usual social routine, he cannot orientate in communication with the collective and similar. On the other hand, he has a good intuitive social intelligence that helps him meet his basic needs and he intuitively orientates in the human relations. We must be aware of the fact that the children from the little stimulating environment live in the cluster of various variables and factors of external and inner personal nature and this situation is to be issued from when working with them and their families.

### **C.1.2. Roma children in the system of the Pre-school preparation**

The pre-school age is an important period of intensive development of the child. According to the findings of the 2000 resort survey, conducted by the Methodical Centre in Prešov, the percentage of Roma pupils who had attended a kindergarten before they started their compulsory education is very low – 5.35 % (as compared with the percentage of Roma pupils attending the first grade of compulsory education in elementary school is - 11.12 %). This disproportion results also from the fact that in most Roma locations there is only an elementary or a special elementary school for handicapped children. (Szigeti, 2002) Out of the 72 kindergartens, 56 % are located in rural areas, 38 % in the housing estates in towns and 6 % in settlements. Representation of kindergartens in the settlements is very low.

**Graph 9: Age structure of children attending kindergartens in SR in during the 2000/2001 school year.**



Source: The Ministry of Education of the SR

The education process in the kindergartens is provided for by women teachers and the kindergarten mistresses. Roma mothers or Roma assistants almost do not occur in the pre-school education. This sphere still hasn't been adequately dealt with, the absence of the appropriate school legislation is obvious as well.

The low number of Roma children in pre-schools is a frequently cited factor in their poor education attainment. While before 1989 pre-school attendance in the last year was mandatory for all children, after 1989 the number of Roma children in pre-school has continually declined. At present, according to official statistics from the Institute of Information and Forecasting in Education, Roma children represent only 0.79% of children attending pre-school. Assuming the high share of children on the Roma population in comparison with other ethnic groups, the 0.79% share in pre-school implies very low attendance shares compared to other ethnic groups.

**Table 14: Romani Children in Pre-schools (based on self-reported ethnicity)**

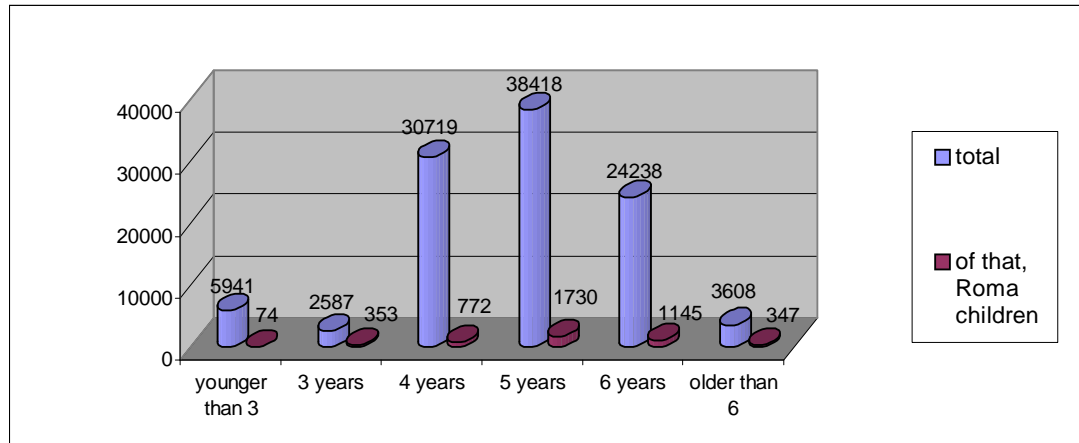
Pre-schools	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of children	Number of teachers	Number of Roma children	% share of Roma children
<b>State</b>	3,180	7,438	149,728	14,862	1,124	0.75%
<b>Private</b>	11	19	318	37	16	5.03%
<b>Church</b>	19	31	672	64	52	7.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>7,488</b>	<b>150,718</b>	<b>14,963</b>	<b>1,192</b>	<b>0.79%</b>

Source: UIPS (2003)

According to the findings of the 2000 survey conducted by the Methodical Center in Prešov, only 5.35% of students who attended either nursery school or kindergarten before they started their compulsory education were Roma, compared with the 11.12% of

students attending first grade of compulsory education in elementary school who were Roma. This disproportion is due in part to the fact that in most Roma locations there is only an elementary or a special elementary school for handicapped children (Szigeti, 2002). The age structure of Roma children attending pre-school shows that the vast majority of them are 5-6 years old. This is likely in part a result of initiatives and projects aimed at preparing Roma children to begin school or the awareness of parents of the need for pre-school education to successfully enter school.

**Graph 10: Age structure of children attending pre-school, 2000/2001.**



**Source:** Maczejková, M. and Rigová, S., Education System and the Roma, in: Vašečka, M., Čačipen pal o Roma, Bratislava, IVO 2003.

### *C.1.3. Roma children in a Primary Schools*

Compulsory education in Slovakia usually lasts 10 years until the child turns 14, unless the beginning of compulsory education is postponed for the child. In the 2000/2001 school year, 576,331 students, 47,701 of which were Roma, attended elementary schools managed by the school departments of the district authorities in Slovakia (Maczejková - Rigová, 2003). According to official data, the share of Roma children in primary schools is therefore very low. These data are again based on self-reported ethnicity. Official data thus do not correspond to the real situation and are of little use for further analysis.

**Table 15: Primary schools - as of September 30, 2003.**

Primary schools	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of children	Average children per class	Number of teachers	Number of Roma pupils	Percentage share of Roma pupils
<b>State</b>	2,272	25,881	553,249	21.3	35,880	3,048	1.3%
<b>Private</b>	11	42	503	11.9	60	2	0.39%
<b>Church</b>	104	1,194	25,259	21.15	1,754	22	0.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,387</b>	<b>27,117</b>	<b>579,011</b>	<b>21.35</b>	<b>37,694</b>	<b>3,072</b>	<b>0.53%</b>

**Source:** UIPŠ (2003)

Looking at the data from district school departments and individual schools in Slovakia, it is clear that the overall number of students is falling every year, although the number of Roma children starting their compulsory education is growing. The 62.44% representation of Roma students in the tenth year of compulsory education shows that Roma students more often have to repeat some elementary school grades. Based on the figures, the year-on-year increase in the number of Roma students attending compulsory education has averaged about 6% over the past four years (Maczejková - Rigová, 2003)

**Table 16: Share of Roma Pupils by Grade in the 2000/ 2001 school year.**

Year of compulsory school education	Total number of students	Of that, Roma	%
1 <sup>st</sup>	54,834	6,095	11.12
2 <sup>nd</sup>	56,814	5,614	9.88
3 <sup>rd</sup>	57,118	5,343	9.35
4 <sup>th</sup>	60,435	4,955	8.20
5 <sup>th</sup>	55,152	4,636	8.41
6 <sup>th</sup>	56,397	4,625	8.20
7 <sup>th</sup>	57,500	4,618	8.03
8 <sup>th</sup>	59,029	4,489	7.60
9 <sup>th</sup>	60,174	4,108	6.83
10 <sup>th</sup>	3,086	1,927	62.44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>576,331</b>	<b>47,701</b>	<b>8.28</b>

**Source:** Methodical Centre Prešov (2002).

No data are available allowing establishing the proportion of Roma children who are not enrolled in compulsory education. There is significant anecdotal evidence of cases of Roma pupils who are not enrolled in primary school until the age of 7 or 8, as their parents do not present them at the time of primary school sign-up. This evidence is corroborated by data from the 2001 Census, which show that 4.3% of Roma Women and 3.1% of Roma men have not attended school at all as compared with 0.3% and 0.3%. Indirectly, these data also point to the relatively worse situation of Roma women compared to Roma men than non-Roma women in society. Other children who are not enrolled are ones whose families move mid-year. These generally do not stay at home but continue to accumulate unexcused absences at their original school. A survey of 548 teachers at primary schools and special schools carried out by the State School Inspection showed that almost a half of special school teachers surveyed and a third of primary school teachers believed that there were some Roma children not enrolled in primary education at all (Maczejková - Rigová, 2003).



### C.1.4. Roma children in a Special Schools

One of the most disturbing segregation trends for Roma pupils is their massive overrepresentation in special schools for the mentally handicapped. Although the official education statistics suffer from the same problems in identifying ethnicity as the general Census data, nonetheless they give a clear indication of this pattern. Of all pupils in the Slovak primary school system who self-identified as Roma, 39% attended schools for the mentally handicapped in the school year 2003/2004. Additional information on the presence of Roma children in special schools can be derived from the UNDP Roma Human Development Project research in 2001. Researchers found that in segregated Roma settlements as many as 30% of families had one or more children in special school. In integrated Roma communities, this share was only about 5%. The evidence that the share of Roma pupils in Special Schools for pupils with a light mental handicap is massive and many are placed there without a real mental handicap is mounting. It has been recognized in a number of government documents.

*Table 17: Pupils in special schools according to nationality (school year 2002/2003)*

Nationality	Absolute numbers	Share in percentage
Slovak	27,770	85.48
Roma	2,475	7.62
Hungarian	2,165	6.66
Czech	51	0.16
Other	27	0.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,488</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic.

**Table 18: Regional Statistics on Special Schools.**

Region	All children	Roma children	Share of Roma in %	Classes in special schools	Number of special integrated classes
Bratislavský	970	4	0.4%	126	7
Trnavský	1,590	111	6.98%	198	4
Trenčiansky	982	0	0%	134	0
Nitriansky	1,632	80	4.9%	181	5
Žilinský	1,359	0	0%	155	5
Banskobystrický	2,557	124	4.8%	260	40
Prešovský	4,767	1,336	28%	331	146
Košický	4,782	319	6.6%	394	111
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>18,639</b>	<b>1,974</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>1,779</b>	<b>318</b>

**Source:** Statistical Yearbook of the Institute of Information and Forecasting in Education, data as of September 30, 2003.

Official statistics show significant variations in the regional distribution of children in special schools. The average share of Roma children in special schools for the mentally handicapped is 10.5%. In the Prešov region (with the highest share of Roma population), the share of Roma children in special schools reaches 28%. Some education experts estimate the share of Roma children in special schools for the mentally handicapped at as much as 80%.

### ***C.1.5. Secondary and Higher Education***

Roma in Slovakia have a very poor record in transition to secondary education. Common patterns include children failing at least once in primary school or attending 0<sup>th</sup> year classes and thus completing the school attendance requirement at the time of or even before primary school completion. According to statistics and anecdotal accounts, Roma students are extremely underrepresented especially in secondary grammar schools (academic track). If they do attend secondary schools, it is mainly vocational ones not offering the final state leaving exam offering limited employment prospects. A survey by the State School Inspection in 2002/2003 among schools with pupils from socially disadvantaged background found that fewer than 20% of such pupils in primary schools went on to study in vocational schools and no students at all proceeded to secondary schools leading to the final state leaving exam. In special schools, the share of students continuing their education was found to be about half.

In higher education, official statistics indicate miniscule numbers of Roma students, although again, the reliability of the statistics is limited. The figures for Roma presence in secondary and higher education are so dismal that they seem to indicate a reduced propensity to declare Roma nationality with rising education attainment. Nonetheless, the under-representation seems massive.

**Table 19: Ethnic Composition of Secondary and Higher Education Institutions.**

	Slovak	Hungarian	Czech	Roma
Vocational schools	69,721	4,935	138	53
Joint Secondary Schools	287	461	1	0
Secondary Specialized Schools	81,149	5,797	190	113
Secondary Grammar Schools	75,978	6,318	242	4
Higher Education	92,949	4,182	198	15

(public)				
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Source: UIPS (2004)

### *C.1.6. Education Attainment Rates*

The Roma in Slovakia have traditionally obtained lower education attainment than the majority population. A 1955 literacy survey revealed 80% illiteracy among the Roma in six districts of Eastern Slovakia. Although the literacy levels gradually increased in post war cohorts, the 1970 educational statistics show that only 1.7% of the Roma had secondary education. Only 15% of those attending primary schools were actually completing it, the rest dropped out before completing. After the reform introduced in 1976, raising educational standards and expectations, numbers of Romani children being placed in schools for the mentally handicapped, already disproportionately high prior to reform, also rose as they were unable to cope with new demands.

At present, education attainment of the Roma minority continues to differ significantly from the majority population. According to Census data, 48% of those who declared themselves as Roma had no education, or only attended primary school (count also include those who did not finish it, although the number is not specified). Among citizens with Slovak nationality, this category only constituted 20%. Conversely, 8% of the Slovaks had completed a degree (first, second and doctorate) at institutions of higher education, whereas among the Roma, those who had completed some form of higher education only accounted for 0.2%. Only 9 percent of the Roma have completed secondary education, among which only 1% were those attending academic stream of secondary education. 50% of Slovaks completed some form of secondary education, 24% of which attended academic types of schools.

**Table 20: Education Attainment in the 2001 Census.**

Education Attainment	Women		Men	
	2001		2001	
	Roma	Slovak	Roma	Slovak
<b>Primary</b>	79.5	30	74.1	18.9
<b>Vocational</b>	8.2	18.3	14	32.1
<b>Secondary vocational</b>	1.4	4.5	2.4	5.5
<b>Secondary comprehensive</b>	1.9	36.4	2.2	30.2
<b>Higher</b>	0.2	9.2	0.4	11.6
<b>Without school education</b>	4.3	0.3	3.1	0.3
<b>Missing education data</b>	4.5	1.3	3.8	1.4
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2001 Census of Population, Houses and Apartments

### ***C.1.7. Completion Rates***

Roma pupils frequently fail and repeat grades during mandatory school attendance and thus complete the attendance requirement before reaching 9th grade. Effectively, this means that they do not have complete primary education and in many cases cannot apply to study in secondary school. The following table shows, in which grades children complete the 10-year school attendance requirement. Many pupils leave primary school already in 4th or 5th grade and these are mostly Roma children. Of all children completing the attendance requirement before reaching 9th grade, 78% are Roma.

**Table 21: Grade of completion of school attendance requirement in 2001/2002.**

Number of schools	Grade	Classes	Pupils	Of that Roma	10 <sup>th</sup> year of MSA total	10 <sup>th</sup> year of MSA Roma
63	0	87	1,047	985	0	0
1,373	1	1,982	40,069	7,429	0	0
1,367	2	1,902	40,038	5,870	0	0
1,356	3	1,879	40,250	5,565	3	3
1,292	4	1,937	42,303	5,348	27	27
833	5	1,738	39,320	5,399	181	168
832	6	1,725	39,431	4,884	293	275
825	7	1,728	39,469	4,050	454	402
815	8	1,696	39,082	3,153	593	467
818	9	1,700	39,013	2,002	1,214	575

**Source:** Súčasný stav vo výchove a vzdelávaní rómskych detí a žiakov, MŠ SR, 2003

Note: based on self-reported ethnicity

A survey by the State School Inspection in 2002/2003 among schools educating children from socially disadvantaged background found that about 22% of primary school pupils in the sample and 8% of special schools pupils were repeating a grade at the time.

This is frequently a result of the unpreparedness of teachers to educate Roma children, the lack of preparedness of Roma children for the education process in primary school. Educators agree that the curricula are very demanding for all children. Teachers therefore let children sometimes repeat grades, effectively preventing them from completing primary education. Children are then motivated to leave school as soon as they complete their mandatory school requirement in order to contribute to the family budget by receiving social assistance.

### ***C.1.8. Causes of Low Education Participation and School Performance of Roma***

In identifying the causes of lower participation and poor performance of Roma children in education, available assessments point to a number of key factors.

#### ***C.1.8.1. Socio-Economic Deprivation***

General poverty of marginalized Roma communities is a major contributing cause of problems in the education system. There are frequent anecdotes about Roma children attending school hungry, without adequate clothing and especially school aids. Among other factors, reproductive behavior in marginalized communities results in a low age of childbirth with some women dropping out of school at ages as low as 13 years. The socio-economic deprivation likely contributes also to attitudes towards education. In marginalized communities, educated role models are completely absent and in communities with total (or near total) unemployment of all inhabitants regardless of education attainment, education is seen as an extra cost yielding no benefits.

#### ***C.1.8.2. Language Barriers***

Insufficient knowledge of the Slovak language and lack of availability of education in Romani are cited as a significant cause of poor performance of Roma children, especially those from isolated settlements. According to findings of the State School Inspection, in 99% of schools with pupils from socially disadvantage backgrounds (mainly Roma) surveyed the Roma language was not used in the teaching process in the school year 2002/2003. The 1% was composed of a few cases of use of Romani by Roma Teaching Assistants. While there is no specific information on the share of Roma children who do not speak Slovak, general data show that some 60% of Roma have Romani as their mother tongue. Language barrier issues are frequently cited as the cause for the need for Roma assistants, one of whose key roles is seen as translating to children.

#### ***C.1.8.3. Cultural Barriers***

A number of available reports argue that cultural barriers are a key cause of poor performance of Roma children in the education system. Children from segregated settlements often enter the system unadjusted to cultural habits of the majority and also lacking hygienic habits. Children of unemployed parents who are not seeking employment often lack time-management skills, sense of responsibility. Children are also adjusted to a less hierarchic environment and lack respect for authority. The issue of responsibility is often also highlighted by authors - children are not used to taking care of themselves. Traditional education among the Roma has been home education geared towards community survival with less emphasis on individual performance.

#### **C.1.8.4 Discrimination in the Education System**

Data outlined above has shown that there are biases and patterns of discrimination in some parts of the education system. Roma children in some regions are automatically or near-automatically placed in special schools for the mentally handicapped without receiving necessary individual attention. Many of the discriminatory practices represent discrimination not necessarily on an ethnic basis but rather on the basis of social deprivation. Overall, the school system, as discussed below, is not geared to serving children with special needs including handicapped and talented children.

#### ***C.1.9. Desegregation Measures***

A number of mechanisms exist that allow the school system to segregate problematic pupils. In general, Roma children are some of the largest population affected, but similar effects can be observed with regards to other children with special educational needs. Standard primary schools in Slovakia are heavily focused on encyclopedic knowledge. The workload is quite heavy, especially from 5<sup>th</sup> grade onwards. By law and practice, the child is expected to perform homework, implicitly requiring parental assistance. Many Roma children from weaker social backgrounds perform poorly especially in later grades due to a family environment and domestic situation not conducive to home study. There is also the problem of insufficient parental support – long-term unemployed parents often fail to provide an appropriate daily regiment for children. On the other hand, schools lack functioning mechanisms to support pupils who lag behind.

Roma children unable to keep up with the workload and the environment are moved out of the system at various points. Roma children from segregated communities suffering from various forms of marginalization and social exclusion (rural settlements, urban ghettos) are sometimes placed in special schools automatically. The placement is performed either by schools themselves at the registration or enrolment stage and later legalized by psychologists or special pedagogues. Alternatively, the placement is made after psychological testing, sometimes using inappropriate testing instruments. These children are diagnosed usually as lightly mentally handicapped (low IQ, speech and other impediments).

These children can either be immediately placed in separate special schools (often predominantly Roma and located in the vicinity of segregated communities), in special classes of regular schools (either detached in separate buildings or integrated with other classes) or even in separate regular classes (again sometimes placed in separate buildings close to Roma communities). In the latter case the children need not be diagnosed as mentally handicapped. While formally parental consent is always required to transfer a child into special school, there is significant evidence that this consent is not always well informed. In the UNDP Roma Human Development Project research in 2001 some 12% of parents of children attending special schools believed their child had been placed there automatically.

Some Roma children are transferred into special schools or classes with a mental handicap diagnosis after or during attending 0<sup>th</sup> year or years 1-4 of primary school. While formally this requires a complex procedure including a diagnostic stay, assessment

by a team of experts (psychologist, special pedagogue, head of school, medical doctor, etc.) and parental consent these procedures are often carried out only formally or bypassed in practice. Although the placement should be accompanied by the formulation of an individual learning plan, continued treatment by psychologists and special pedagogues, in practice many children receive little special attention. Special schools and special classes for the mentally handicapped are considered inferior to regular primary school education. Successful completion does not allow attendance of secondary school, with the exception of special vocational schools. Although formally, repeated diagnostics is possible and mandatory, cases of children transferring from special schools to regular schools are extremely rare. Diagnostics are often not carried out at all. Roma children in special schools therefore can sometimes pass their primary education without learning even basic literacy and numeracy skills. Similarly, segregated children in regular schools often fail and repeat classes and frequently do not complete more than six or seven grades without completing primary education.

In some areas, due to demographic differences between the Roma and non-Roma, certain schools gradually increase shares of Roma pupils. This often results in “white flight” to more distant primary schools or private and parochial schools, which can practice greater selectivity. Another pattern of segregation, albeit not necessarily seen as harmful, is the formation of “Gandhi-type” schools. Separate Roma schools or schools focusing on Roma children exist and new ones are being formed.

Broadly speaking, desegregation interventions can be philosophically divided into forced and incentive-driven integration. Forced integration measures aim at banning segregation and enforcing the bans. They can draw on human rights law, constitutional law, international obligations, criminal law and specific education legislation. Possibilities include court challenges (strategic litigation), criminal proceedings against individuals or municipalities. These, however, require the cooperation with Roma parents who often have limited access to justice due to low legal awareness, mistrust in the criminal system, general mistrust in the public sector. In theory, these can be overcome by activists through education and information measures, although practical experience is limited and accomplishments in this area are rare. Incentive-driven integration measures have also not been successfully implemented. As stated above, room exists in the area of financing – both normative and various forms of state and non-governmental grant financing.

Possibility exists for both mandatory and incentive-driven placement testing and re-testing: given the government-acknowledged population of children erroneously placed in special schools such a program could either be mandatory or combined with financial incentives for both parents and schools to aid in the transfer into regular education. This type of measures, however, must be accompanied by intervention to allow reintegration into regular schools including teacher training, capacity building, family support, curricula adjustments, etc.

A widely mooted idea in the international context calls for simply abolishing Slovakia’s special schools (or more precisely, abolishing the stream of special schools for children with light mental handicaps). There is agreement among educators that the present situation in regular schools simply does not allow the en bloc transfer of all special needs children, because the schools are unable to cope with their educational needs. Realistically, this would require a more gradual approach although a clear trade-off with

respect to the rights of older children already wrongly placed in special schools. A less radical approach may consist of redefining the status of special schools so as to allow special school pupils and graduates a simple and effective way of gaining primary school equivalency.

### **C.1.9.1 Roma Language**

Several experts raised the issue of whether the Roma are interested in learning the Roma language or learning other subjects in Roma language. The only relevant opinion survey on the subject stems from 1994. The Statistical Office found on a sample of 682 respondents who claimed Roma nationality that only at primary school level were there more people interested in having all subjects or some subjects taught in Roma than people who believed no subjects should be taught in Roma. The likelihood is that among Roma who do not claim Roma nationality the interest would be even lower.

**Table 22: Interest of Roma in Using Romany Language in Schools.**

	All subjects	Some subjects	No subjects	Don't know
<b>Primary school</b>	11%	33%	45%	11%
<b>Secondary school</b>	6%	23%	54%	17%
<b>Higher education</b>	5%	17%	54%	24%

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, May 1994.

Nonetheless, the European Charter of Regional and Minority Rights signed by the Slovak Republic stipulates that the option should be available and take-up would depend probably also on how the possibility would be marketed to the Roma. Besides the constitutional right to use Romany in the process of education, use of Romany in schools is encouraged also by the positive results achieved especially by the very young children having the possibility to study in two languages. However, at present, the school system is not prepared to use Romany in the process of education, and the experts dispute over the expedience of such a step

### **C.1.9.2. Multicultural and Intercultural Activities**

Multicultural education is presently not a significant part of school curricula or of teacher training. It is partially addressed within Civic Education in secondary schools and also in the teaching of optional ethics courses in primary schools (alternative to religion). The introduction of multicultural approaches to the teaching of subjects in general is a potentially beneficial measure for the Roma. It is, however, so broad that its costing is virtually impossible to carry out. The State Pedagogical Institute is charged with preparing a National Plan of Human Rights Education, which would define activities to implement multicultural education and their cost. Since such plans can take various levels of complexity and comprehensiveness it is beyond the scope of this study to arrive at an



alternative costing. Further possible interventions in this domain include a variety of excursions, public cultural activities such as those implemented by NGOs and the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, activities aimed at teachers and activities aimed at children in the majority population.

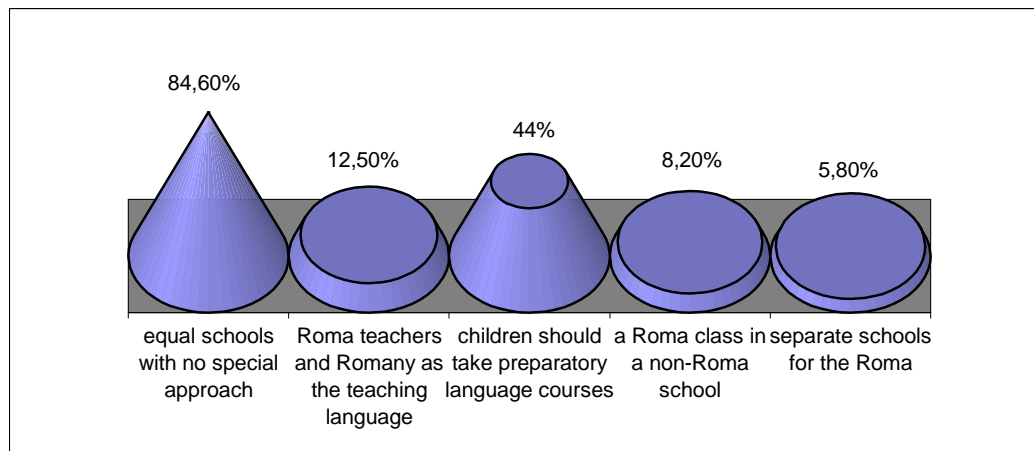
#### ***C.1.10. Attitudes of Roma to Education***

During socialism the education level was not the primary factor influencing the standard of living, especially with the Roma who were perceived on the labor market as individuals with no or low qualification. At the same time, education was not the mobility channel, Roma could not step up to a higher rank within the stratification pyramid thanks to their education. After 1989 most of Slovak citizens realized the importance of education when looking for a job. However, the process took longer in case of Roma, which is connected with many of the above stated circumstances.

In general it can be stated that the well-educated Roma are more often aware of the importance of their children's education. At the same time we can speak of model reproduction in Roma communities as the parents frequently expect their children to reach at least the same education level as they did. This could be seen especially with those Roma who finished vocational education, where the parents expect 64.35 % of the boys 63.5 % of the girls to acquire at least a vocational certificate. The situation is the same also with respondents having secondary education, more than a half of whom expect their children to achieve this education level (UNDP, November 2001). If the parents consider education to be one of the three important prerequisites of success in life, they expect their children to achieve a higher education than they did. Their answers are greatly consistent at this point as it can be equally applied to boys and girls that more than half of those who expect of their children to reach at least vocational education, ranked education among the three basic prerequisites of success in life. On the other hand, up to 80 percent of those who think elementary education is enough did not rank this prerequisite among the three most important ones (UNDP, November 2001).

The Roma children, particularly those from the segregated settlements where they only speak Romany in the families, come to schools without any knowledge of the Slovak language. Consequently, immediately after beginning of the compulsory education they lag behind the non-Roma children, which often leads to transfer of the children into special schools. The most frequent special schools transfers are the children from segregated settlements. In the UNDP research from November 2001 as much as 30% of Roma from the segregated environment stated that at least one of their children attends a special school, whereas it is only 5.3 % with the integrated Roma. Today, the results of Roma children often improve after being transferred to a special school, the parents feel an increased interest in their children from the part of the teachers, so they automatically initiate transfer of their younger children to this type of school.

**Graph 11: How to ensure the same access to education for both Roma and non-Roma children?**



**Source:** UNDP, November 2001. **Note:** The sum of the percentage values exceeds 100, as the respondents were allowed to choose several options.

## **C.2. NAP REGARDING THE DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION. ASSESSMENT OF COSTING IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION**

### **Goal 1: Improving the educational results of Roma**

**Target:** All Roma boys and girls finish elementary school

**Indicator:** The share of registered children and children, who finished all classes of elementary school

Reducing the percentage of pupils with poor results

Improving the results of pupils

Reducing the percentage of missed, non-justified hours

**Costing:** Depending on measures incorporated in action plan.

Roma Assistants: If one assistant were to be hired for every year of every school with a share of Roma students over 50%, some 1,602 assistants would be required at 178 schools, leading to a total annual cost of 233,485,092 Sk and an initial training cost of about 9 million Sk. Over the course of the upcoming 10 years, this cost could be pushed upwards by the increasing numbers of Roma children in the school system. Costs would also increase with the use of assistants for extracurricular activities or some forms of full-day education. Progressing integration could act in the opposite direction. 0<sup>th</sup> Year: To achieve a lower limit estimate, we use the figure derived from the ROCEPO survey of about 5,500 Roma children in every year. Here, assuming the class size of 15, the full requirement would be for 367 0<sup>th</sup> years or an additional 60 classes. The cost for staffing would reach 20,890,260 Sk per year. If we assume as above that there are some 7,000 children of age 6 from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and all these require 0<sup>th</sup> year education, assuming class size of 15, the full requirement would be for 467 0<sup>th</sup> years or an additional 160 classes. The cost for staffing only would reach 55,707,360 Sk per year. Total cost over decade at about 210-560 million Sk.

**Goal 2: Improving the training and preparation of Roma children**

**Target: All Roma boys and girls finish the preparation for the elementary school in the pre-school institution**

Indicator: Increased share of children, who finished preschool preparation (improving the level of readiness of Roma children for school)

Costing: The total cost over a decade of increasing Roma pre-school enrollment to majority levels or to nearly full levels respectively will cost about 1.7 - 2.9 billion Sk.

**Goal 3: Increasing the percentage of Roma pupils attending high schools**

Target: An increase of 15% of Roma pupils, who finish elementary education, attend the gymnasium

An increase of 50% Roma children finishing elementary school

Indicator: Increased share of Roma pupils registered and accepted to study on gymnasia, vocational and technical schools

Costing: Consisting of increased cost of extra number of students and cost of compensatory measures, which depend on the action plan.

**Goal 4: Reducing the percentage of Roma children attending special elementary schools (SES) and special educational institutions (SEI)**

Target: To 0% of Roma pupils incorrectly put a diagnosis in SES and SEI  
15% reduction of Roma pupils classified into SES and SEI

Indicator: Reduced share of Roma pupils in special elementary schools and special educational institutions

Costing: Short-term costs largely offset by difference between cost per special school pupil and primary school pupil.

**Goal 5: Increasing the percentage of Roma pupils attending university education (increasing the percentage of pupils preparing for teaching profession)**

Target: An increase of 20% of pupils finishing high school

Indicator: Increased share of Roma pupils registered and accepted on universities

Costing: Cost of extra students attending university (gradually increasing over time) and costs of compensatory measures.

**Goal 6: Improving the level of material equipment of schools and school institutions**

Target: Fulfilling the normative

Indicator: Logically – fulfilled or unfulfilled normative

Costing: Depends on target levels.

**Goal 7: Global implementation of multicultural education**

Target: Ensuring the multicultural education of pupils, students and professional preparation of pedagogical workers and teacher assistants on multicultural education

Indicator: Adjusted school curricula, standards  
The level of achieved competencies

Costing: Cost in tens of millions of crowns based on current estimates.

**Goal 8: Improve the preventive, educational and supporting system for the prevention of negative behavior of Roma pupils**

Target: Reducing negative behavior and increasing participation in positive leisure time activities

Indicator: Increased share of Roma pupils on positive leisure time activities

Reduced number of occurrence of Roma children and youth criminal behavior

Reduced occurrence of drug addicted behavior

Costing: In a maximum scenario of providing an extra full-time advisor at a half of all schools with Roma pupils (some 500 schools according to research by ROCEPO), annual cost would run at around 100 million Sk. or about 1 billion Sk for the decade.

**Goal 9: Invigorate the self-identity of Roma in the process of Roma transformation perceived as social group to national minority**

Target: Inclusion of Roma ethnic also through the Roma language and Roma history and culture in school curriculum

Indicator: Teaching curricula, teaching syllabus and teaching texts for elementary schools, high schools and universities

The number of citizens in the Slovak Republic joining to Roma nationality

Costing: Cost in tens of millions of Sk based on present estimates and additional cost of teacher training, already included in other items.

**Goal 10: Establish study department of Roma language and literature in universities**

Target: Preparation of 200 teachers of Roma language and literature

Indicator: The number of teachers registered for the study, finished the study and took up pedagogic praxis

The number of pupils, who chose Roma language in school

Costing: Total cost of study at about 20 million Sk with additional cost of program development in millions of Sk.

**Goal 11: Support the lifetime education of Roma with unfinished education from the aspect of applying on the labor market (including carrier advisory)**

Target: Reducing of 50% the ratio of Roma with unfinished education

Target: Establishing the system of offer (legislative and educational conditions) for finishing the educational level

Indicator: The share of Roma with unfinished education and who started the education

Costing: Depending on methods chosen, total cost to the tune of several billion Slovak crowns with ample opportunity to use EU Structure Funds for financing.

### **C.3. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

#### **C.3.1. Barriers that Roma encounter searching for jobs**

Position on the labor market together with the occupational status and education level are the most important factors determining incorporation of an individual into the social structure. Position of the Roma on the Slovak labor market can be characterized as marginalized or excluded. As a consequence of that the Roma increasingly suffer from poverty and social exclusion and rank among the socially and economically less strong social classes. In addition to that, the socio-economic status of Roma is often inherited from generation to generation. The economic situation of the Roma family got even worse after the transformation process which led to growing unemployment and dependency on the welfare state. The Roma were definitely not the winners in the process of transformation, rather the losers:

1. The permanently dropping level of education and qualification seems to be the major handicap causing the Roma to lose jobs and source of income. It is also a legitimate reason for discharging the Roma from work and for refusing them if any vacant positions are free.
2. Unreliability - since a long time the Roma had a reputation of unreliable workers lacking working moral, discipline and motivation. Even though this reputation is partially based on the experience of employers, it is largely just a part of a stereotype and most of the Roma suffer from it.
3. Presence of latent discrimination against the Roma from the part of the majority or employers - as in the queue theory (see Fligstein - Fernandes, 1988) the Roma will always be the last in the imaginary queue of persons interested in employment with a certain employer who follows the market principles.
4. Permanently high ratio of (long-term) unemployment and therewith related devastation of human capital and loss of working habits.
5. Low quality of housing, poor living conditions and health status - the Roma dwellings besides being overcrowded are often absolutely inadequate in terms of hygiene and their

sanitary equipment is equally insufficient. This impairs, to a large extent, the health of the people living in these dwellings and their ability to work.

Besides the said factors, the marginalized position of Roma on the labor market is influenced also by several macro-structural factors which pertain the country as a whole:

6. During the previous regime majority of Roma worked in heavy industry which faces radical reduction right now;
7. Disintegration of agricultural cooperatives, which too employed a lot of Roma;
8. Decreasing demand for unqualified workforce on the labor market (for example in 1998 only 11 % of all vacant job positions reported by employers to the National Labor Bureau were positions that could be filled by unqualified workforce) (Hanzelová, 2000);
9. Growing competition in form of cheap workforce from abroad – research shows that employers prefer foreigners from the former Russia when filling employment positions requiring low qualification. The reasons are clear – low wage requirements, higher qualification, better working discipline (Hanzelová, 2000);
10. Partial breakdown of economy in some regions of Slovakia;
11. Demotivating system of social welfare.

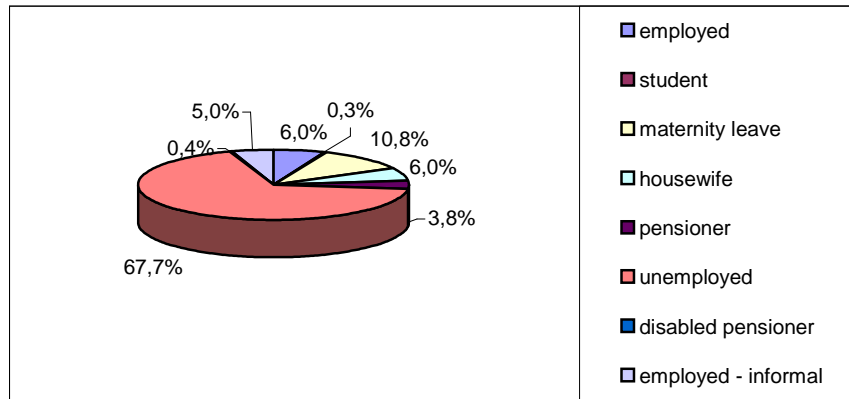
In majority of Roma the said handicaps cumulate and their position is influenced also by several factors contributing to creation of marginalized position. If the low qualification, discrimination by employers, poor health and long-term unemployment are coupled with living in a marginalized region where even the majority population members struggle to find a job, it is beyond the individual's abilities to emancipate from this unfavorable position.

### **C.3.2. Position of the Roma on the Labor Market**

After the system requiring everyone to work disintegrated after 1989, the society had to face a new, before unknown phenomenon of unemployment. This phenomenon affected most those categories of people which during the previous regime occupied a marginalized position. The Roma, despite strong assimilation pressures, clearly ranked among these categories. There is no exact statistics on Roma unemployment. The only data on Roma unemployment, which nevertheless cannot be considered complete and representative, are the unofficial data provided by the National Labor Bureau (NLB) and the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family (MWSAF), which were produced by the labor bureaus by writing down on all files of Roma job applicants the letter "R". However, this procedure was not backed by any law and it disadvantaged the Roma on the labor market. Collecting of data was stopped in 1998, and the labor bureau does not follow the ethnic affinity of job applicants any more (the privacy protection legislation forbids collection of most of ethnicity related data). The Dzurinda administration thus ordered to end this illegal practice. As a consequence of this decision, data on Roma unemployment are completely absent now. Based on the unofficial data on Roma unemployment from the earlier period it is clear that the number of unemployed Roma in Slovakia systematically grows.

High level of Roma unemployment show also the data from a representative sociologic research concluded in November 2001 initiated by UNDP. The main goal of this research was to unveil the degree of human development among the Roma (Graph 11):

**Graph 12: Socio-economic status.**



Source: UNDP, 2001.

Neither the unemployment of the majority population nor the Roma unemployment are evenly distributed throughout the country. The huge regional differences within the country play an important part here. The unemployment rate is the highest in the so-called marginalized regions, which are at the same time characteristic for higher proportion of Roma than the more developed regions. The difference between the degree of unemployment and the number of registered unemployed which is the most notable between the western and the eastern part of Slovakia is the consequence of influence of several factors:

1. geographic position with respect to the centers of economic growth;
2. proportion of unemployment in individual sectors of national economy;
3. educational structure of the local population;
4. ethnic structure of the local population;
5. regional entrepreneurial activity and its diversity;
6. standard of infrastructure.

### C.3.3. Long-term Unemployment

The Roma unemployment is specific for its duration – it is usually long-term unemployment, i.e. continuous and uninterrupted unemployment lasting longer than a year. Typical for long-term unemployment is the high proportion of long-term unemployed from among the Roma and the long average duration of registration of Roma with the labor bureau (roughly 2.5 years). Long-term unemployment besides presenting a burdensome social and political problem has also many negative consequences. Generally speaking, the longer the people are jobless, the lower their chance to find a job again. It has been discovered that people who were unemployed for more than 15 months had a three times lower chance of finding a job than those who were unemployed only for 3 months. There are several reasons for this. Long-term unemployment breaks the working ethics and the unemployed loses motivation to look for a new job, which finally completely excludes him/her from the labor market. It

devastates the human capital of the unemployed. People lose their working skills, their daily routine and schedule, as well as the social networks related to employment. They become socially isolated and experience feelings of psychic deprivation and stigmatization.

In some segregated, geographically and socially isolated Roma communities, especially in the marginalized regions of the Eastern Slovakia, unemployment reaches as much as 100 %. These are the so-called Slovak “valleys of hunger”, i.e. territories with “visible isles of poverty” (*Sociálno-ekonomická situácia Rómov...*, 2000). In such a community there is a threat of total social disorganization and formation of culture of poverty as the only way of effective adaptation to the situation. As a consequence, so-called “underclass”, both rural and urban, may form, which in the post-socialist countries has a vivid ethnic character.

Inhabitants of segregated settlements are disadvantaged very harshly, as their chances of acquiring an employment are generally limited to seasonal and casual labor in the neighboring villages or towns in the informal sector. The Roma from geographically isolated and segregated territories have generally less opportunities to find a job, as their communities are fenced from the outside world to a large extent. Inhabitants of these communities maintain limited social contact outside their settlements, which could help them find a job (*Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002: 31 - 34) or acquire information on possibilities to find a job. Social networks and links are very strong in the segregated community, however, locally homogenous which limits the information available.

#### **C.3.4. Secondary and Informal Labor Markets**

Even when the Roma do participate on the official labor market, they are still often employed only on the secondary labor market, which is typical for the instability of employment positions, i.e. constant threat of unemployment, inferior working conditions, lower wages, etc. There are different barriers between the primary and secondary labor market preventing to a large extent interchange of workers between them. Such barriers are for example: differences in required qualification and therewith related differences in cultural and social capital of workers, discrimination due to racial prejudices or social stereotypes and similar.

Insufficient education of Roma causes the Roma to be locked out from the primary labor market, which again influences their overall socio-economic status and social potential. In comparison with the past, the Roma began to cumulate more on the secondary labor market, as the demand for cheap workforce has dropped as well as the employment in branches of industry which previously employed most of the Roma population. Roma job applicants are among the other job applicants always at the end of the “queue” (*Sociálno-ekonomická situácia Rómov...*, 2000).

Due to limited work opportunities on the formal labor market numerous Roma strive to find jobs in the informal sector. Through the informal employment they try to improve their living standard. Many different activities can be classified as informal labor market activities. To name just a few we can mention self-help, collecting of scrap materials, or activities belonging into the gray and black economy. As for self-help the Roma never were an agrarian culture, that is why this activity has no tradition and popularity among them. Nevertheless at present there seems to be a slight increase of popularity with this form of income upgrade.



Roma's activities on the informal labor market usually go either the way of gray and black economy or the way of short-term seasonal jobs in agriculture and building industry. Different studies (World Bank/S.P.A.C.E., 2000-2001; UNDP, 2001) have shown that numerous Roma, especially those from segregated locations, improve their situation by collecting scrap materials (mainly iron), forest crops and work on the side. The studies mentioned also several illegal activities, such as theft of potatoes, wood, metals, building materials, illegal work and poaching. Very frequent is also (especially with the women) help with the local non-Roma. The compensation is usually not monetary, it is rather clothes or food. Most of the activities performed on the informal labor market are performed by men.

Subsistence activities outside the official labor market are usually more intense than the official market oriented activities. Of course, it depends on what informal work the Roma are offered. Considering the absence of tax obligation and levying of allowances, the illegal work is more attractive than formal employment for both the employees and the employers (see Radičová, 2001: 131). However, the Roma from geographically isolated and segregated territories have generally less opportunities to find a job in the informal sector, as their communities are fenced from the outside world to a large extent. Besides that these people maintain only limited contacts outside their settlement, which could help them find a job. (*Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002: 31-34) Activities on the secondary labor market (if we disregard considerable amounts originating from some illegal activity) can hardly compensate for a real job, they can only multiply the advantages of being on the formal labor market. If we assume that majority of the Roma don't participate on the formal labor market, the advantages of being on the informal labor market are minimal.

### **C.3.5. Strategies of Lowering the Roma Unemployment**

**The basic objectives of the Slovak government strategies on lowering the Roma unemployment are following ones:**

1. To increase the proportion of retraining as one of the tools of active policy of the labor market for the Roma and for branches of industry where there is lack of workforce.
2. To support community work in districts with high Roma unemployment and no other opportunities of acquiring a job.
3. To provide suitable support to Roma entrepreneurs in establishing and operation of small and middle-sized companies (*Stratégia vlády SR...*, 1999).

The employment strategy defines the following objectives:

1. To expand programs of labor market active policy, increase the proportion of retraining of Roma for branches of industry where there is lack of workforce,
2. To continue the project of community work in districts with high Roma unemployment and no other opportunities of acquiring a job. These are especially the districts of Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica.
3. To use the existing credit and loan programs for small and medium entrepreneurs, the provider of which is the National Agency for Development of Small and Medium

Businesses and at the same time provide for the promotion of the same, so that potential Roma entrepreneurs have information about the programs,

4. To prepare temporary measures ensuring advantages to entrepreneurs employing long-term unemployed Roma (tax relieves and similar),
5. To devote special attention to creation of job opportunities for Roma women (e.g. by retraining them, by providing entrepreneurial guidance connected with granting of micro-credits),
6. To increase the proportion of Roma working in labor bureaus in order to remove one of the barriers,
7. To establish regional agencies of Roma entrepreneurs and offices for mediation of employment in cooperation with the Agency for Support of Small and Medium Business,
8. To involve young Roma in social and voluntary activities (*Základné tézy koncepcie...*, 2003).

### **C.3.6. Stereotypical views on Roma Present on a Labor Market**

Even despite the fact that the unemployment has stabilized in the recent years and started to decrease, it has not been significantly reflected on the development of long-term unemployment. Moreover it can be assumed that in the situation of high unemployment of majority population in some regions, Roma still do not have the chance to find job as, due to objective reasons (low level of education, insufficient qualification a experience) and subjective (discrimination on the labor market) they are the last in the row of unemployed waiting for their job opportunities. Moreover, the factors that cause their handicap on the labor market (low level of education, no or only short-term job experience, stereotypical attitudes of the general public and employers towards Roma) disappear only very slowly.

In 2005 the Institute for Public Affairs carried out a representative public opinion survey. Respondents should have expressed to what extent people were handicapped on the labor market, for various reasons:

**Table 24: Handicap on the labor market.**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>due to age</b>	64.9	27.7	4.3	1.6	0.1	1.3
<b>due to pregnancy or maternity</b>	36.7	40.1	13.2	3.6	0.5	5.9
<b>due to health condition, physical handicap</b>	48.9	38.7	7.7	2.0	0.2	2.6
<b>due to racial or ethnic origin</b>	32.3	35.2	18.4	7.0	2.0	5.0
<b>due to gender</b>	17.9	34.2	28.1	11.9	3.4	4.5
<b>due to commitments towards other family members (e.g. care of children)</b>	22.1	41.8	21.1	7.3	2.2	5.6

**Source:** Institute for Public Affairs, September 2005. **Note:** 1 = very frequently handicapped, 2 = relatively frequently handicapped, 3 = relatively rarely handicapped, 4 = rather exceptionally handicapped, 5 = absolutely never handicapped, 9 = cannot say

According to opinions of Slovak public, people are more frequently handicapped due to age, health condition and physical handicap followed by pregnancy and maternity. Only after such reasons there is handicap due to ethnic or racial origin of applicants for job. People are less handicapped due to gender and care of other family members. In the above survey respondents were asked to comment on the issue of gradual shortage of labor force in Slovakia:

**Table 25: Methods of solution of shortage of labor force in the future.**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Give more job opportunities to women over 45</b>	58.2	34.2	4.7	0.6	2.4
<b>Give more job opportunities to the physically handicapped.</b>	39.1	47.8	7.9	2.3	2.9
<b>Introduce longer working hours or reduce vacation.</b>	2.0	3.7	19.9	70.7	3.6
<b>Give more job opportunities to Roma.</b>	24.5	36.8	20.6	13.0	5.2
<b>Increase retirement age of men.</b>	1.5	6.3	23.0	65.8	3.5
<b>Increase retirement age of women.</b>	1.2	2.9	16.5	75.7	3.7
<b>Give more job opportunities to immigrants from other countries.</b>	4.3	18.1	32.9	36.4	8.3

**Source:** Institute for Public Affairs, September 2005. **Note:** 1 = definitely support, 2 = rather support, 3 = rather do not support, 4 = do not support at all, 9 = cannot say

#### **C.4. NAP ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION. ASSESSMENT OF COSTING IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT.**

##### **Goal 1: To increase the creation of jobs and employment of disadvantaged groups of the population**

Target: All disadvantaged groups

Indicator: Jobs newly create by employers

Costing: 890 million Sk (24 million Euro)

##### **Goal 2: To support the maintenance and creation of working habits**

Target: All excluded groups

Indicator: Maintaining working habits and Dropping the prices of a labor cost.

Costing: 613 million Sk (16,5 million Euro)

**Goal 3: To increase employability of young people through labor market training and retraining**

Target: Young people  
Indicator: Number of jobs for young people.  
Costing: 160 million Sk (4,3 million Euro)

**Goal 4: To increase the degree of education and qualification of the unemployed according to needs of the labor market**

Target: All long-term unemployed  
Indicator: Number of retrained people.  
Number of employed after being retrained.  
Costing: 420 million Sk (11,3 million Euro)

**Goal 5: To create conditions for the development of life-long learning**

Target: All unemployed  
Indicator: Number of employed low qualified people  
Costing: 90 million Sk (2,4 million Euro)

**Goal 6: To increase the labor mobility**

Target: All unemployed  
Indicator: Number of employed people due to internal, international, and near-frontier mobility  
Costing: 140 million Sk (3,8 million Euro)

**Goal 7: To improve the environment and social conditions in segregated settlements**

Target: Marginalized and segregated Roma communities  
Indicator: Number of personal hygiene centers and laundries.  
Number of the field social workers.  
Costing: 1,650 billion Sk (44,6 million Euro)

**Goal 8: To improve the access of the Roma living in segregated settlements to the provision of healthcare services**

Target: Marginalized and segregated Roma communities

Indicator: Number of the field health centers.

Number of health assistants.

Costing: 135 million Sk (3,6 million Euro)

**Goal 9: To increase support for labor market training and job creation**

Target: Marginalized and segregated Roma communities

Indicator: Number of inhabitants of Roma settlements placed in the labor market.

Costing: 190 million Sk (5,1 million Euro)

**Goal 10: To increase the motivation and support of educating Roma children and youth at primary, secondary schools and universities**

Target: Marginalized and segregated Roma communities

Indicator: Number of students who successfully graduate from secondary school, or university.

Costing: 420 million Sk (11,3 million Euro)

**Goal 11: To ensure adequate housing of communities experiencing social exclusion**

Target: Marginalized and segregated Roma communities

Indicator: Number of newly-built, reconstructed apartments or otherwise ensured housing.

Costing: 270 million Sk (7,3 million Euro)

**Goal 12: To use in maximum the resources from the structural funds and the Social Development Fund in favor of integration of Roma communities**

Target: Marginalized and segregated Roma communities

Indicator: Share of funds drawn for the solution of the exclusion of marginalized Roma communities in the total financial resources of the state fund and SDF.

Costing: 650 million Sk (17,5 million Euro)

## **C.5. POLICIES ON INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE**

### **C.5.1. Relationship of Majority Population towards Roma**

The different culture of the Roma and the different way of life are perceived in a negative way by the majority population, where the prevailing opinion is that most of the Roma do not want or do not know how to adapt to the general social standards. This kind of perception of Roma differentness leads to formation of a social gap between the majority population and the Roma. According to all sociological opinion polls pertaining the relationship of the majority population to the minorities the social gap or “social distance” is the largest between the majority and the Roma. In the long term the relationship and attitudes of the majority population to the Roma are significantly worse than the relationship to the other groups of inhabitants. On the scales of social distance the Roma usually rank first, even if the respondents can choose also other rejected groups, such as the homosexuals, drunkards or drug addicts in case of which the degree of rejection is very high (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

Every opinion poll dealing with this issue since 1990 confirmed that the social gulf in Slovakia is equally big among all classes of people regardless of age, sex, education, nationality, political inclinations or size of the municipality, and its degree remains basically constant in time. Large part of the majority population perceive presence of the Roma in Slovakia as a burden, and this feeling is even more intense when they think of Roma being in their proximity. The proportion of people refusing the Roma as their neighbors remained basically constant over the 1990s – throughout the examined period it was more than three quarters of respondents (Vašečka, M., 2001b).

Large part of the majority population form their attitude to the Roma under the influence of prejudices and stereotypes originating in ethnocentrism. The high degree of refusal and wide-spread prejudices directly influence behavior of the Roma who often just fulfill the idea of the majority population about them. The tension between the Roma and the majority population keeps building up and it poses a real threat for the future of the liberal-democratic regime in Slovakia.

#### **C.5.1.1. Relationship between the Roma and the rest of population**

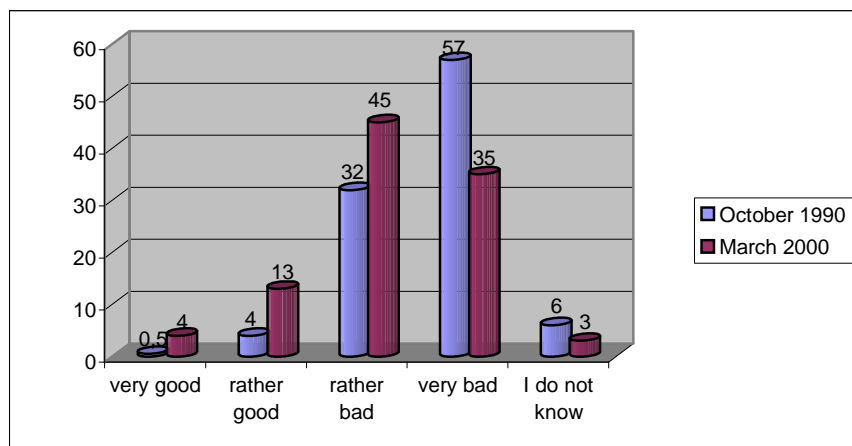
Is the refusal of Roma in Slovakia the result of prejudices and stereotypes? Is it the result of the vicious circle described in the Thomas theorem? Or is it being formed through the negative experience of respondents with the Roma? Clearly the answer is a mixture of all these factors: experience affects formation of prejudices which then reflect in reproduction of stereotypes; 50 % of respondents from the 1995 GfK opinion poll conducted in Slovakia had no negative experience with Roma. The percentage of people having negative experience with Roma in Slovakia has not changed much since 1995 – according to an opinion poll conducted by IPA in March 2000, 42 % of respondents have had bad or rather bad experience with Roma, while only 17 % have had good or rather good experience. 27.4 % of respondents have had both good and bad experience and almost 13 % have had no personal experience with Roma (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

The negative relationship to the Roma and the social gap between the majority and the Roma is not the result of civilization and cultural differentness of the Roma in our

modern society – the attitude towards the Roma was equally negative in the past. During the initial stages of socialism representatives of the majority population generally thought that the Roma can only overcome their backwardness if they give up their way of living and adapt to the majority population as much as possible. The Roma were perceived by the majority society as a socially underdeveloped group of people without sufficient working habits. There are no reliable data on the social gap between the majority and the Roma before 1989, however, we can assume that Roma were quite strongly refused. This has fully shown in the results of the first opinion polls after 1989 (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

The declared relationships between the majority population and the Roma minority have not changed much during the 1990s. The opinion poll conducted in November 1990 confirms that the relationship between the Roma and the rest of population is very tense – more than 90 % of respondents assessed it as bad (rather bad or very bad). (*Aktuálne problémy...*, 1990). Further opinion polls confirmed that perception of the relationship between the Roma and the rest of population has not changed and the respondents keep assessing them in a very negative way. According to an opinion poll conducted by IPA in March 2000 only 17 % of respondents assessed the relationship between the Roma and the majority population as good or rather good, but as many as 80 % as bad or rather bad. Only 4 % of respondents had relatives among the Roma; 13 % of them had Roma colleagues at work; 21 % of them had Roma friends and 23 % had some Roma in the neighborhood.

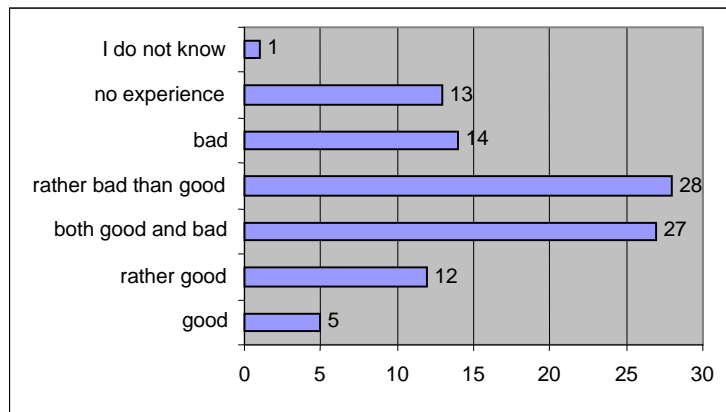
**Graph 13: Evaluation of the relationship between the Roma and the rest of population**



**Source:** The Center for Research of Social Problems, October 1990; IPA, March 2000.

As for the casual forms of contact with the Roma, 61 % of respondents know some Roma with whom they greet and occasionally also speak and 93 % of them at least meet a Roma on the street, in the shops or on the bus. Despite most of the people assessing the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma as bad, only 43 % of respondents indicated to have had a bad or rather bad experience with a Roma; 27 % have had both good and bad experience; 17 % have had good or rather good personal experience and 13 % have had no personal experience (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

**Graph 14: “What is your personal experience with the Roma?” (in %)**



Source: IPA, March 2000.

People living in close contact with the Roma usually have less negative experience with them than the people not having this kind of contact. For example, among the respondents living next to a Roma family, 27 % indicated positive experience, 32 % mixed and 39 % negative experience. On the contrary, among the respondents not living in proximity of a Roma family, only 14 % indicated positive experience, 26 % mixed and 43 % negative experience. Among the people working with Roma, 29 % have had positive personal experience with Roma, 36 % mixed experience and 33 % negative experience. The relationship between the Roma and non-Roma population is assessed as bad not only by people who have had negative personal experience with the Roma (91 % of them state that the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma is bad), but also by majority of those having had positive personal experience with the Roma (78 %) (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

#### **C.5.1.2. Social gap between the majority and the Roma**

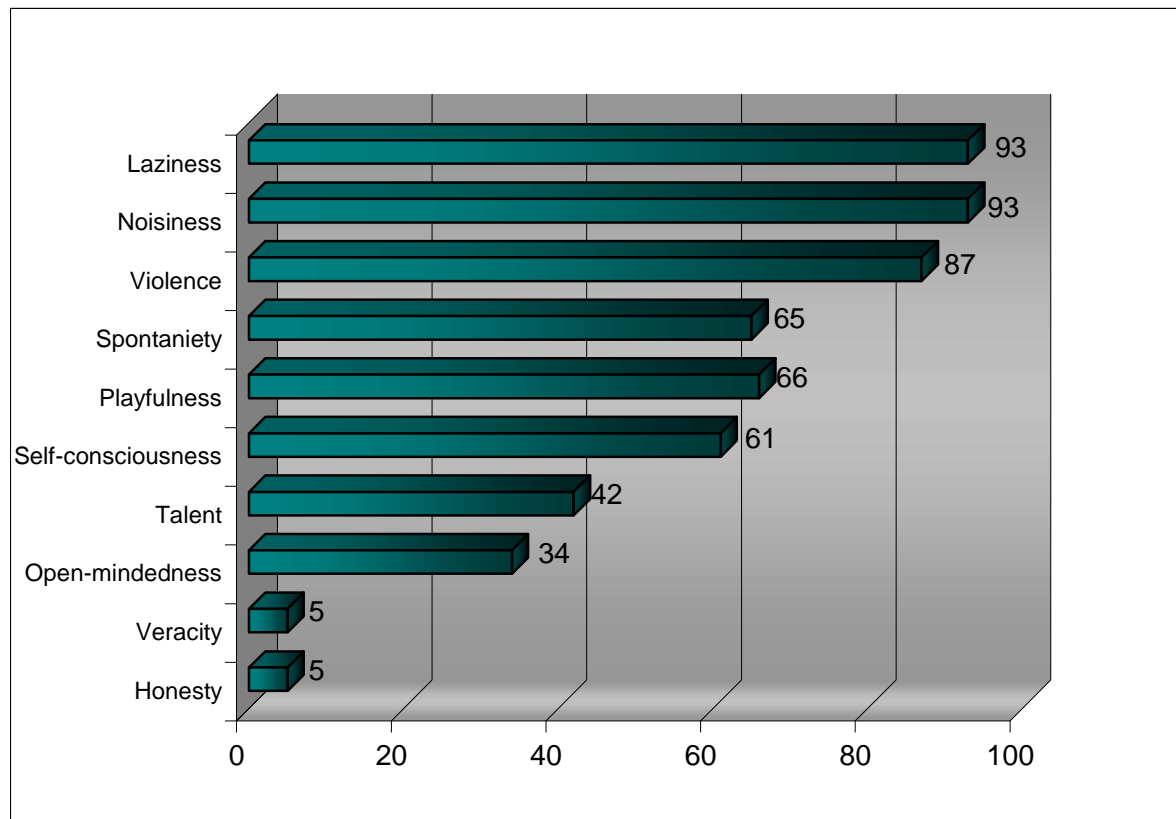
All opinion polls examining the social gap between the majority population and the Roma since 1990 notice, that the social distance in Slovakia is equally wide-spread in all classes of population, and its degree is constant in time. The proportion of people refusing the Roma as their neighbors remained basically constant over the 1990s - over the examined period it was more than three quarters of Slovak respondents. According to the repeated opinion polls conducted by the FOCUS agency over the past decade the degree of social distance (measured by the percentage of people refusing to live next to a Roma) developed as follows: 80 % in October 1990, 80 % in May 1991, 82 % in January 1992, 94 % in March 1993, 79 % in October 1993, 78 % in May 1994, 76 % in December 1994, 80 % in October 1997, 76 % in January 1999 and 78 % in March 2000 (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

The opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Research of Public Opinion (IRPO; 1995) focused on analysis of prejudices and stereotypes in relation to the Roma through analysis of properties attributed to the Roma by the respondents. Among the positive properties were the following: musical talent (53 %), talent for trade (19 %), carelessness (16 %) and a sense of children and family (10 %). As many as 32 % of respondents in the IRPO research could not think of any positive quality. Among the negative properties



were the following: criminal activity, avoiding of work, poor hygiene, alcoholism, noisiness and cunningness. Different negative characteristics attributed to the Roma by the public are articulated much more strongly in comparison with the positive ones. The IRPO researchers state that this kind of idea about the Roma prevails among all inhabitants of Slovakia, and it is very homogenous too, as in none of the examined socio-demographic groups any significant differences were discovered. Which properties are typical for the Roma from the viewpoint of the Slovak respondents? According to the 1995 GfK Praha opinion poll the negative properties clearly prevail:

**Graph 15: “Which properties are typical for the Roma?” (in %)**



**Source:** GfK Praha, 1995.

Most of the Slovak respondents mentioned displays of antisocial behavior, abuse of welfare benefits (84 %) and criminality (89 %) as the things they don't like about the Roma the most. Different opinion polls constantly point out that the social distance between the Roma and the majority is widespread among all classes of people regardless of age, education, sex, type of economic activity, religion and economic or political orientation. The social gap is closely related to the perception of the relationship between the majority and the minority: the gap is smaller with people who emphasize the need to respect minority rights. The people showing higher degree of mistrust towards the “others” experience social frustration and injustice and expect the state to apply stronger paternalistic approach, they often refuse democratic principles, tend to use the strong hand principle and agree that the majority should be taking-decisions even at the expense

of the minority and they are more lenient towards the racial and national hatred (Bútorová - Gyárfášová - Velšic, 2000). A below-standard social distance between the majority and the Roma was discovered among the inhabitants of the smallest municipalities and respondents claiming Hungarian nationality (FOCUS, December 1994).

The opinion polls confirm that the opportunity to have personal contact with members of the minority decreases the social distance. For example, among the people working with the Roma, as many as 65 % have no objections against the presence of Roma in Slovakia, 44 % against their presence in their village or town quarter and 28 % against their presence in the closer neighborhood. On the contrary, the greatest social gap is between the majority and the Roma is among the people having no close personal contact with the Roma. For example, among the respondents who don't meet the Roma at all only 34 % accept their presence in Slovakia, only 23 % would accept them in their municipality and only 12 % would not mind to have a Roma neighbor (IPA, March 2000). According to the quoted opinion poll as many as 80 % of respondents consider the relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma to be bad, however only 43 % of them stated to have had a bad experience with them (28 % rather bad than good and 14 % bad); 27 % have had both good and bad experience; 17 % have had good experience (5% good, 12% rather good); and 13 % have had no personal experience with the Roma. The data on intensity of contacts between the majority population and the Roma show that most of the Slovak people have had some experience from contacts with Roma and so when evaluating the Roma both the prejudices and the practical experience play an important role. 4 % of the respondents have relatives among the Roma, 21 % friends, 13 % colleagues, 23 % close neighbors, 61 % personally know some Roma and 93 % regularly meet Roma on the street, in shops, on the bus or elsewhere. (Bútorová - Gyárfášová - Velšic, 2000).

### **C.5.1.3. Majority's Opinion on how to Tackle the Roma Issue**

After 1989 the Slovak population slowly began to realize that the so-called Roma issue is slowly becoming one of the greatest challenges Slovakia has to cope with. According to a research entitled "Slovakia before the Elections" conducted by the Center for Research of Social Problems established by the Coordination Center of Public Against Violence (CRSP CC PAV) in May 1990, 3.2% of respondents answered the question "What is the greatest problem of Slovakia" with "the Roma issue", placing the Roma issue in the 10<sup>th</sup> position at that time. The issue's "rating" slowly increased and according to the CRSP opinion poll from November 1990 the Roma issue ranked 7<sup>th</sup> (4.5 % of respondents). The mentioned opinion poll warned, that the intensity of the discussion on coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks does not correspond with the actual state of relationships between these two nations, and that much more serious issues are lurking in the background, which the irresponsible social forces may abuse in their favor - especially the tense relationship between the Roma and the rest of Slovakia's inhabitants (CRSP CC PAV, May 1990) According to a research by the CRSP from May 1990, the political engagement and representation of Roma (in 1990 it was the Roma Civic Initiative – ROI) was perceived rather negatively by the respondents. The respondents assessed ROI as the political party with the lowest intellectual potential, as a party not trying to resolve

problems, and an utilitarian party (ranked immediately behind the Communist Party) bringing economic decline should it win in the elections (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

The huge social gap between the majority and the Roma in Slovakia combines with support of anti-Roma legislation and wide-spread refusal of positive solutions. The issue of discriminatory measures against the Roma has been dealt with in an opinion poll conducted by IRPO in 1995. According to its results as many as 52 % of respondents agree that more strict legislation and regulations should be applied for the Roma than for the majority population, and as many as 66 % of respondents agree that the Roma should live isolated from the other inhabitants, i.e. in separate settlements.

Prevalence of repressive measures as possible solutions of the so-called Roma issue among the Slovak people confirmed also the 1995 GfK Praha opinion poll. As many as 74 % of the respondents think that it is necessary to limit the payment of welfare benefits, 46 % would support limitation of the high Roma natality, 50 % support a more strict legislation for the Roma, 25 % their isolation from the rest of the population, 25 % support banishment of the Roma from the country and 21 % would not hesitate to take the law into their own hands. On the other hand only a small part of the population realizes the need of solving the problems which have been cumulating over the past decades - only 25 % of respondents realize the need of increasing the tolerance of the society and 21 % proposed to allocate more funds for education of Roma. As for the cultural tolerance of the Slovak society, it is quite encouraging that as many as 50 % of respondents support a more strict punishment for displays of racism.

Large portion of the non-Roma population realizes the need of measures improving education of the Roma and allowing formation of their own intellectual elite. According to an opinion poll conducted by IPA in March 2000 as many as 65 % of respondents agree that "the state should ensure that more Roma acquire higher education and work as teachers, lawyers, doctors and priests". It is encouraging that in comparison with the previous year the proportion of people realizing this need grew by 9 %. Numerous people in Slovakia perceive the insufficient preparedness of Roma youth to join the labor process as a handicap. In 1999 as many as 76 % of respondents held the view that the "state should ensure that much more Roma children acquire vocational education". The possibility for Roma children to study in their mother tongue had lower support among the majority population: 39 % supported it and 53 % refused it. Even less people think that it could be useful for the educational and cultural emancipation of Roma if some TV and radio programs were broadcast in Romany: 34 % of respondents supported this idea, 53 % were against it (Bútorová - Gyárfášová - Velšic, 2000).

In the opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Public Affairs in January 1999, as many as 89 % of respondents agreed that the state must ensure that the Roma stop avoiding work and abusing the welfare benefits. One of the key ways is to reduce the Roma unemployment, and many people realize this. In the same research 58 % of respondents agreed that greater effort should be made to lower the Roma unemployment. A lot of people accusing the Roma of abusing the welfare benefits see the solution in application of an undefined individual approach of the Roma. The discriminatory opinion that "other principles of welfare benefit payment should be applied for the Roma than for the others" was in March 2000 supported by 50 % of respondents and refused by 44 % of them (Bútorová - Gyárfášová - Velšic, 2000).

The lower engagement in the labor process is only one of several reservations of the non-Roma against the Roma. Another, even stronger component of the negative stereotype of Roma in Slovakia is their “thievery and criminal activity” which according to the mentioned IRPO opinion poll is attributed to the Roma by three quarters of the majority population (74 %). Here lays one of the key causes - even though not an apology - of the fact that the proportion of majority population members who agree with the clearly discriminatory opinion that “special, more strict laws should be applied to the Roma” was in March 2000 higher than the proportion of those who refuse it (53 % to 42 %). We should note that this trend was present in Slovakia already at the beginning of the 1990s. For example in October 1993 in the FOCUS agency’s opinion poll 48 % of respondents agreed and 49 % disagreed that “the Roma are a different group to which special, more strict laws should apply”. It is thus easy to understand that majority of Slovak political parties keep presenting different repressive solutions of the so-called Roma issue. Accommodating and positive solutions would require a better social atmosphere and the Slovak politicians know it very well (Bútorová - Gyárfášová - Velšic, 2000).

#### **C.5.1.4. Majority anti-discriminatory attitudes and Empathy towards the Roma**

Most of the people in Slovakia don’t approve displays of racial and national hatred the target of which are most frequently Roma. As many as 65 % of respondents from a research conducted in March 2000 demanded, that displays of racial hatred be punished more strictly than in the past. The opinion poll of IPA from January 1999 also showed that majority of people condemn displays of racism from the part of the skinheads the target of which are usually Roma – as many as 70 % of people agreed that skinheads are dangerous (I agree entirely – 40 %, I rather agree – 30 %), and only 14 % thought that the skinheads “do the right thing” (I disagree entirely – 4 %, I rather disagree – 10 %) (Bútorová - Gyárfášová - Velšic, 2000).

It would be inaccurate to state that the culture of tolerance is absent in the Slovak society, on the basis of the data on refusal of Roma only. According to the 1995 GfK opinion poll, respondents would be willing to support a protest against displays of racial hatred in the following ways: 11 % would take part in a protest march, 43 % would be willing to participate on a permitted demonstration and 70 % would sign a petition. The majority population does not think that the racial conflicts and violence between the skinheads and the Roma can be stopped or limited within a reasonable time period - only 16 % think it is possible; 65 % of respondents think the opposite. The 1995 GfK Praha opinion poll also brought some interesting opinions on what should be tolerated. It is clear that inhabitants of Slovakia are not willing to tolerate any behavior of the Roma reflecting the level of their integration into the society (Vašečka, M., 2001a).

#### **C.5.2. Depiction of the Roma in the Media**

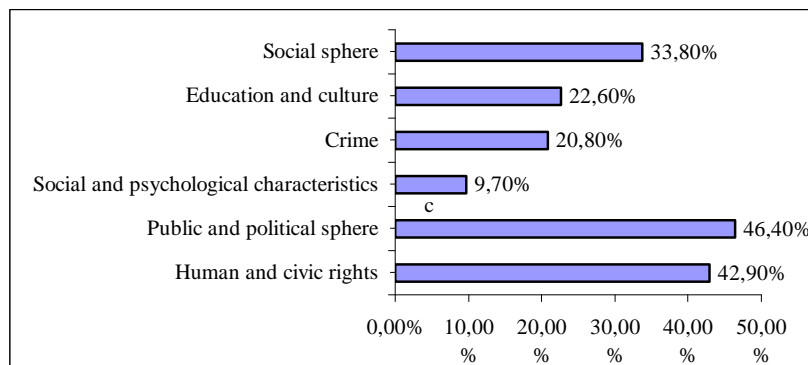
The relationship between majority population and Roma is not improving, it is more like the other way around. To what extent are the media responsible for this, or is one of the causes of this ethnic-social crisis depiction of the Roma in the media? Several researches, polls and analyses were conducted showing how the media shape or misshape the public

image of Roma, how certain ways of presentation are relevant or irrelevant for forming or breaking of majority population's stereotypes about the Roma.

The media image of Roma was exactly the same as was their public image. This holds true both for the period of the communist regime and for the period after 1989 when people gained free access to information and freedom of speech. The social consciousness, the overall atmosphere and the political thinking - plainly speaking "the state of democracy in people's heads", delimited also the media consciousness. After 1989 the Roma issue is being dealt with more frequently and from different aspects. Researches had confirmed that the so-called neutrality is often perceived by viewers and listeners as a version of racism and xenophobia, i.e. when the news are presented as independent, people may understand them as an approval. The broadcasting also often marginalizes racial and national minorities. Information about Roma can be found in the news only when something is going on, when informing about issues and problems. The Roma in particular are depicted as part of some problem or as a specific problem. The people start to associate the Roma with crime, drugs and terrorism, and they are perceived as a problem social group. Regional national broadcasting, if any, is usually broadcast at unattractive times and it does not fulfill the criteria of multiculturalism. Numerous programs show characteristics of exoticism.

The Slovak Helsinki Committee (SHC) has carried out different projects attempting to map the media image of the Slovak Roma. Using the contents analysis method, the two projects aimed to unveil how the major print and electronic media present the Roma nation and its problems, which aspects and characteristics of Roma are emphasized and which marginalized:

**Graph 16: Content orientation of information about Roma.**



Source: SHC, 2001.

Different analysis of media depiction of Roma suggests the following:

1. The media, perhaps even unconsciously - by presentation, content and ordering of headlines, create the negative perception of information. Based on fractional information the individual's or group's activity is often attributed to the entire ethnic.
2. The headlines often suggest something, which the content of the news cannot prove.

3. Read news form conclusions in which the visa issue pertaining one country is applied to the entire European continent.
4. Choice of negative words - “there was a mass attack” (evokes violence), “they have complicated the lives of” (overstatement – problems pertain traveling only, and not the other fields of life), “other European countries” (generalization to all European countries).
5. The reporter’s questions are suggestive, they evoke threat and negative answer.
6. Broadcasting of irrelevant information which should not have been included in the news in the first place. Manipulation of conversation by the reporters, use of unverified information and facts that cannot be proven. This is a clear and conscious misleading and manipulation of viewers.
7. Unfounded suggesting of negative consequences (in a headline) for all Slovak citizens through measures applied by all EU countries for the offences committed by the Roma. This can be characterized as an absurd case of collective guilt based on national principle.
8. Undiplomatic and questionable stances of major state officials, including the president, when commenting some issues, especially the Roma immigration. As the hitherto developments show the EU countries’ policy was provident and able to resolve the migration issue using different measures than blocking the Slovakia’s EU accession. The made up information in the major news programs may thus evoke negative attitudes and reactions of viewers towards the people accused by the news.
9. Broadcasting of information presented as the so-called “breaking news” included in the broadcasting at the last moment, out of order, introduced in a dramatized form. The way in which the information are presented, formulated and ordered evoke conscious viewer manipulation.

### ***C.5.3. THE ROMA IN THE ELECTION PLATFORMS OF POLITICAL PARTIES***

The analysis of the election platforms of individual political parties and movements presented in this chapter deals only with major political parties, i.e. those with over the 5% voter support needed to get seats in parliament.

#### **C.5.3.1. 1990 Parliamentary elections**

Candidates in the 1990 parliamentary elections paid little or no attention to the Roma issue. The Roma were mentioned most often in places where political parties declared the equality of Slovaks and members of ethnic groups and minorities living in Slovakia. This was the case of the Slovak Communist Party (KSS), the Democratic Party (DS), the Slovak Green Party (SZS), and the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (MKDH). The election platform of the KSS, for example, stated: “We support the coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks with the Hungarians, the Roma, the Ruthenians, the Polish, and the Germans in a state guaranteeing their national and ethnic independence, and providing guarantees of their real political, economic and cultural equality.” Similarly, the DS, in part of its election platform entitled *Nation, Motherland and State*, demanded a legal

guarantee of full equality for all nations and ethnic minorities living in Slovakia. The Christian Democrats (KDH) criticized the fiction of the “Czechoslovak nation” and the “Czechoslovak people”, and called them an offence to both the Czechs and the Slovaks, as well as to the Hungarians, the Ukrainians, the Germans, the Polish, and the Roma. The KDH also declared its intention to create the political and economic conditions for the self-development of all nations living in Slovakia.

The most comprehensive election platform statement on the Roma was that of the Public Against Violence (VPN) party, which contested the 1990 elections in coalition with the Hungarian Independent Initiative (MNI). In a chapter called *The National and Ethnic Pillar*, the VPN “welcom[ed] the healthy efforts of the Roma to improve their cultural and living standards and contribute to a dignified life for the Roma in Slovakia”. There was no mention of the Roma in the SNS election platform.

### **C.5.3.2. 1992 Parliamentary Elections**

Among the key political parties and movements, only the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS – a VPN splinter faction) and the Democratic Left Party (SDĽ – a KSS splinter) included ethnic policies in their election platforms. The relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks was the main issue discussed in the HZDS election platform chapter *National and Ethnic Program*. As for the remaining ethnic minorities, the HZDS expressed interest in guaranteeing full development to ethnic minorities and groups in compliance with international conventions. The SDĽ declared it would respect the right of minorities to be educated in their native languages, and support bilingualism in regions with significant ethnic minority populations. However, the Roma minority was never explicitly mentioned in the HZDS and SDĽ platforms, and the declarations in the SDĽ platform were mainly in response to the political and cultural demands of the Hungarian minority. The only political party to directly mention the Roma in its 1992 election platform was the MKDH. This coalition of political parties expressed support for the establishment of Roma schools. It also promised to support a review of the system of kindergartens, elementary, secondary and vocational schools to ensure they met the needs of ethnic minorities. No mention of ethnic minorities or the Roma was found in the election platforms of the KDH and SNS. Before the 1992 elections, just as before the 1990 elections, political parties tended to focus on the relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks (the 1992 elections were key from the viewpoint of the future of the common state) and the Hungarian minority issue.

### **C.5.3.3. 1994 Parliamentary Elections**

Most of the programs of major political parties competing in the 1994 elections included statements on ethnic policy, with the exception of the KDH and the Union of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS). The Roma issue was mentioned specifically only in the election platform of the SDĽ, which in its *Rights of Ethnic Minority Members* section undertook to address social, economic, and other problems in ethnically mixed areas. The SDĽ also declared support for improving the unfavorable position of the Roma by “creating new job opportunities and improving their education”. The SDĽ was thus the first Slovak political party after 1990 to have included the Roma issue in its election platform and to have outlined possible solutions, for all that they were very general in wording.

Some political parties, such as the HZDS and the Democratic Union (DU), confined themselves to declaring a general obligation to address the problems of ethnic minorities in accordance with the Slovak Constitution and relevant international treaties. Both parties at the same time rejected autonomy and the concept of collective rights, proving that their view of ethnic policy was confined to the problems of the Hungarian minority. A similar concept was presented by the SNS, whose election platform was largely nationalist when it came to minorities, and focused mainly on protecting Slovaks living in ethnically mixed areas. The most complete concept of ethnic policy was presented by the political parties competing within the MKDH coalition. Unfortunately, this was restricted to the Hungarian minority.

#### **C.5.3.4. 1998 Parliamentary Elections**

Of the major political parties, only the SDL, HZDS and the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) paid special attention to the Roma issue in the 1998 parliamentary elections. The closest attention to the Roma issue was again paid by the SDL, which is interesting given that the SDL is a left-wing political party that views the Roma issue as “an internal problem of the Roma minority in the search for their own ethnic identity and ways to implant it in education, culture, language, and the improvement of the social situation”. According to the SDL, the basic solution to the Roma issue was “greater activity, effort and willingness to improve the situation on the part of the Roma”. According to Miroslav Kusý, the wording of the SDL election platform suggested that the party “supports the anti-Roma prejudices of part of its voter base” (Kusý, 1998).

The 1998 HZDS election platform was written in the form of demands by “virtual” citizens to whom the individual planks in the platform were addressed. The platform contained no separate part devoted to ethnic policy, although two points pertained directly to the Roma minority. In the first point, where the virtual citizens demanded “the preservation and support of minority cultures”, the HZDS undertook “to increase the ethnic awareness of the Roma, so they can freely claim their own nationality in population censuses”. This wording has an apparent anti-Hungarian undertone, as many citizens who claimed Hungarian nationality in the 1991 population census were Roma. In the second point, the citizens demanded that “the relationship between the state and the church be resolved and developed in favor of the citizens”; the HZDS undertook “to create conditions for the establishment of pastoral centers for evangelizing to and guiding the Roma”. The following point was also indirectly related to the Roma: “in cases where groups of citizens are unable to adapt [to society], we demand that the provision of welfare benefits be tightened.” Here, the HZDS undertook, albeit indirectly, to take restrictive measures against the Roma, promising “to replace the payment of welfare in monetary form with supplies of material” (i.e. food, clothes, etc.).

The SMK election platform focused on the Hungarian minority before the 1998 elections. The Roma were mentioned in only one paragraph of the social policy chapter, where the SMK emphasized the need for “the reasonable involvement of Roma communities in solving the Roma issue”, stressing the principle of “suitable forms of integration instead of assimilation”. The election platform of the Civic Understanding Party (SOP) also contained a chapter on ethnic policy, although it only contained some general statements



that omitted to specify the problems of individual minorities and how these would be solved.

Discussion of the ethnic minority issue was completely absent from the election platforms of the SNS and the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK). The SNS presented a concept of a nation state based on the principle of “extensive rights for Slovaks”. As for the SDK, even though its election platform was one of the most comprehensive of all parties, and included parts on the position of women and youth, there was no mention of ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, party platforms before 1998 elections showed signs of positive change in terms of the Roma issue compared to previous elections. Half of the political parties that received seats in parliament in 1998 (the SDL, HZDS, and SMK) had included the Roma issue in their election platforms. Although they still lacked a more complex view of the issue, compared to previous elections they represented a clear shift from general declarations towards naming the problems and possible solutions.

#### **C.5.3.5. 2002 Parliamentary Elections**

Among the major political parties, the non-parliamentary Alliance of the New Citizen (ANO) paid the greatest attention to the Roma issue. Its election platform included an independent section devoted exclusively to the Roma issue. The ANO election platform was built around the premise that if the country as a whole did not tackle the Roma issue, it would become a threat to all Slovak citizens. ANO promised to take a new approach to the issue based on the following steps:

- centralizing money for tackling the Roma issue;
- creating a center for tackling the Roma issue situated in eastern Slovakia;
- establishing a program of so-called “missionary work” as defined by law and carried out by university graduates (including psychology, social work, etc.).

In comparison with other political parties, the SMK also paid close attention to the Roma issue in its election platform. The party vowed to support programs based on the active participation of the Roma, such as training Roma assistants. After undergoing a training course, the task of these assistants would be “to help the Roma organize by themselves”. The election platforms of some political parties, such as the HZDS, SNS, and SDKU, contained no mention of the Roma or the Roma issue. Nevertheless, proposals that could have a significant impact on the Roma were found in chapters on social policy. The HZDS, for example, proposed to provide welfare benefits to “groups of citizens who are unable to adapt [to society]” in the form of material benefits. Similarly, the SNS supported providing material benefits to people unable or unwilling to use the monetary payments reasonably. The SDKU in its election platform promised to fight the abuse of child allowance, such as by the payment of allowances in kind, at shorter intervals, or by making payments conditional on the fulfillment of certain obligations (e.g. children attending school regularly, etc.).

The most repressive solutions to the Roma issue were proposed Smer. In the section of its platform called *Order in Unemployment and the Social Sphere*, the party wrote: “through its economic and social policy, and through special health education and welfare work, Smer is prepared to influence the uncontrolled growth of the Roma population, which has

been caused by the irrational state policy of supporting families with many children in which parents are not held responsible for the quality of upbringing and standard of living of their children.”

Solutions to the problems of the Roma were only a fringe topic in the election platforms of parties that won over 5% support in elections, and thus qualified for seats in parliament. However, the positive trend started in the 1998 elections continued, and political parties gradually abandoned their general declarations on the need to solve the problems of the Roma in favor of more concrete measures. Based on how the political parties approached the topic in their election platforms, they can be divided into two groups. The first consisted of ANO and the SMK, who proposed and supported innovative approaches to the Roma issue (Roma assistants, state missionary work). The second consisted of political parties that advocated restrictive social policy measures, especially in the provision of welfare benefits. This group included the HZDS, SNS, SDKÚ, and above all Smer. There was no mention of the problems of the Roma in the KDH election platform.

#### **C.5.3.6. How the Major Political Parties Address Roma Voters**

Since the 1989 revolution, the major political parties have used no special strategies to address Roma voters. There have been no special campaigns focusing on the Roma as a target group, such as TV or radio spots, advertisements or promotional material in the Roma language. Apart from the HZDS, no major political party has organized personal meetings of their candidates with Roma voters. Roma candidates on the HZDS ticket visited Roma voters directly in Roma settlements even before the 1998 elections.

The most common way of addressing the Roma voter has been for the major political parties to enter into coalition with a Roma political party, or to offer positions on their lists of election candidates to Roma leaders. In the 1990 elections, the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI) ran in coalition with the Civic Forum in the Czech Republic, and with the Public Against Violence in Slovakia. As a member of these coalitions, ROI obtained four seats in the Federal Assembly and one in the Slovak National Council, which was taken by Anna Koptová. Roma were also present on the list of candidates for the Communist Party. In 1994, Roma were nominated to the candidates' list of the Democratic Union (DÚ). In the 1998 elections, two ROI members were nominated to the HZDS list, while the SDK also sought cooperation with Roma minority representatives. This latter effort culminated in the signing of a contract on pre-election and post-election cooperation between the SDK and the Roma Intelligentsia for Coexistence (RIS) (see also *The Roma Political Scene* chapter in this book).

Before the 2002 parliamentary elections, the HZDS offered three positions on its list of candidates to representatives of Roma organizations. ROI Chairman Alexander Patkoló was offered the 75<sup>th</sup> position on the list of candidates, even though under the original agreement he had been offered a position among the top 30 candidates, thus giving him a reasonable chance of being elected to parliament. Three Roma candidates were on the candidates' list of the Democratic Party – Democratic Union (DS – DÚ). One Roma candidate stood for Smer.

On the basis of the results of the 2002 elections, none of the Roma candidates captured a seat in parliament. In comparison with other candidates, the Roma candidates also obtained few preferential votes, by which citizens could indicate their preference that a certain candidate be given a seat. For example, Alexander Patkoló, a HZDS nominee, obtained 365 preferential votes, while Smer nominee Jozef Bastyr got 118, compared to hundreds of thousands of preferential votes for the most popular Slovak politicians. Clearly, the Roma nominated to the lists of candidates of major political parties were unable to address even a significant number of Roma voters.

## **C.6. DONORS AND THE ROMA ISSUE**

Considering the money that comes from individual ministries and funds, the most important Slovak donor is the government. The importance of this fact lies not just in the amount of funds spent, but also in what the government does or does not do in this field. The government's activities strongly influence the way other donors set up their programs. The disinterest or failure of the Slovak public sector to make efficient use of public resources to improve the position of the Roma in Slovakia has led to a situation in which foreign donors are active in areas that normally should be under the jurisdiction of the public sector. This situation was caused by incompetence among the bureaucrats responsible for the use of budget money, as well as by rigidity in the rules governing the use of such funds, and political reluctance to discuss this important issue. These charges may be increasingly less deserved, but they still largely hold true.

After the Slovak government, the next most important donor from the viewpoint of the volume of funds invested is the EU with its Phare program, which in 2001, together with the Slovak Government Office, allocated 10 million euros in co-financing Roma minority support, education and infrastructure programs. At the moment, the most important foundation is the Foundation for the Support of Civil Activities (NPOA), which administers EU funds within the framework of the National Minority Development Program. In 2001, the NPOA provided over 48 million Sk in funding for 109 projects focusing on the Roma.

The Slovak Open Society Fund (Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti, NOS – OSF) is a significant long-term donor of Roma programs, drawing funds from the American philanthropist George Soros. Soros also provides funds for Slovak Roma development programs through the Open Society Institute in Budapest and New York. In 2001, the NOS – OSF provided 2.6 million Sk for 88 projects. In case of the NOS – OSF fund, the most important issue is the form and strategy according to which the money is distributed, not the amount spent. For a long time, this has been the only significant foundation to systematically support Roma organizations, Roma leaders, and changing the educational system to make it more accessible to the Roma. It was an initiative of this fund that helped introduce Roma assistants, and encouraged the state educational system to adopt procedures tested in pilot programs by the Open Society Fund.

The Roma issue has become a focal point for foreign countries due especially to the recent migration of Slovak Roma to EU countries and Slovakia's efforts to become a member of the EU, thus naturally attracting more and more foreign donors. Slovak society, on the other hand, does not consider this issue to be as urgent as it should, and

thus is not spending more domestic private resources on this area, even though the amount of Slovak public money spent on Roma programs is increasing from one year to the next.<sup>1</sup> The World Bank and the UNDP are the most important fund providers cooperating with the Slovak government.

**Table 25:** Volume of funds from selected institutions allocated to solving the Roma issue in 2001

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Grant volume in Sk</b>
<i>Foundations</i>	
NPOA	48,750,156 Sk
NOS – OSF	2,250,900 Sk
C. S. Mott Foundation	1,207,680 Sk
Environmental Training Program (ETP)	1,018,829 Sk
European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)	626,000 Sk
<i>Total</i>	53,853,565 Sk
<i>International Organizations</i>	
EU – Phare	420,000,000 Sk
The World Bank	32,552,100 Sk
International Organization for Migration	1,606,000 Sk
<i>Total</i>	454,158,100 Sk
<i>Slovak Government</i>	
Slovak Government Office (in cooperation with Phare)	381,150,000 Sk
Office of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary	30,000,000 Sk
<i>Total</i>	411,150,000 Sk
<i>Overall Total</i>	919,161,665 Sk

**Source:** Internal document of a thematic group dealing with the Roma issue at the Donor Forum, 2002.

Donors dealing with the Roma issue in Slovakia face several dilemmas (these problems are related to their level of autonomy in creating grant programs, which again is determined by the will of the donor of the funds; with donors operating in Slovakia, the level of autonomy varies and is always individually defined). One of these dilemmas is whether to create a special program for Roma projects, or whether to leave them to compete for grants in other, non-ethnic categories such as justice and education.

The approach taken by independent programs focused on the Roma is an example of positive discrimination towards this minority in the grant policy of individual donors, and creates equal conditions for all applicants. The disadvantage of this approach is that the competing projects address vastly different problems, which makes it harder to compare them. Roma projects may also be simply lumped together and expected to apply for money only from Roma programs, meaning that other programs that could significantly benefit the Roma community are not open to projects from this community

We must note, however, that the actual success ratio of projects submitted by the Roma in grant competitions is quite low, which is due mainly to the poor quality of the projects.

This is apparent especially in their unrealistic budget and activity estimates. However, the reason may be a simple lack of resources; there are several quickly developing Roma organizations that are capable not just of writing but also implementing quality programs. Thus, the optimal way seems to be to support the original Roma organizations.

There are several types of donor approach of the Roma issue. A simplified classification might look as follows:

- a) Programs directly for the Roma.
- b) Programs for the Roma and for other minorities or for the majority to which the Roma belong.
- c) Programs focusing on the minority issue that attempt to increase tolerance and change the attitude of the majority towards the minority.
- d) Programs whose target group is not ethnically specified (oriented towards education etc.).
- e)

The Slovak donor environment would certainly benefit from the integration of Roma projects into donation programs, and from reflection on the merits each project has for the Roma community, not just in the short or medium term, but also in the long term. Concrete policies (such as the length of the grant cycle) will always depend on the individual donors. If we forget about Slovak public resources, the ability of the remaining donors to resolve the social problems of the Roma community are limited, even though expectations remain high. What is the optimum role for private and foreign donors regarding the Roma issue?

First of all, we must realize that foundations must follow the instructions of their donors. No Slovak foundation decides autonomously on the way its funds are used; instead, as it was mentioned above, the vast majority of Slovak foundations simply administer the funds provided by their actual donors, regardless of whether they originate from abroad, from foreign governments, or from private persons. Foundations with their own property (endowments) are more the exception in Slovakia, and only a fraction use the income from their assets to carry out grant activities. The ones that do so obtain only very small amounts in this way, ranging into the hundreds of dollars.

The administration of grant programs contains one very important indicator, namely the indirect costs to grants awarded ratio. Every donor strives to increase the ratio of grants to administrative costs. The Roma issue is a quite a challenge in this regard, because based on the need that exists, donors should invest much more into visiting the organizations they support, and into consultation and advice. In another words, donor activity should not be limited to providing money, but should be preceded by intense communication allowing the transfer of the know-how, procedures and skills needed for the long-term success of projects.

Nowadays, Slovak foundations are more successful in raising and distributing funds through grants, including grants focused on solving the problems of the Roma. In comparison with public resources, foundations will never have enough money to implement nationwide programs such as housing and infrastructure reconstruction. Part of the programs of foundations is thus consciously and wisely focused on pilot model solutions to selected problems, thereby narrowing the foundation's scope of activities. This is essential, as donors want to see how their donations are helping, and if donation

programs are designed to be too general – the “everything to everyone” type of program – the impact of these grants will be impossible to see.

The focus on solving general problems through pilot projects is a practical and rational approach in situations where the problem exceeds all current financial and human resources. Subjective factors, such as courage, leadership, the ability to see things differently, technical solutions, perseverance, ingenuity and enthusiasm are also of great significance for donation programs.

The present trend is a steady narrowing in grant programs to specific topics and specific target groups. The Roma community naturally does not seem very grateful for such a narrowed orientation. Given the current situation of the Roma in Slovakia, Roma-oriented grant programs should have a firm structure and focus, but in order to narrow the difference between the Roma elite and the Roma majority, at least several grant programs should be general in nature, supporting projects that affect a broad part of the community, not just priority projects. Hopefully, civil society among the Roma will be built in the same way it developed in the majority society, in other words gradually, and through natural selection. In this process, general-purpose grants<sup>2</sup> by foreign donors played an important role. These grants were awarded to Slovak NGOs, which gradually acquired the confidence of their donors and started implementing their visions irrespective of the short-term project cycle of most of the other foundations. Many of these organizations play an important role in their respective fields, and form the backbone of the NGO sector in Slovakia.

Yet another factor influencing the quality of donation programs is the short-term nature of the financial donation cycle. A much longer period is needed to test, prepare, implement and evaluate new solutions, and develop the abilities of individuals and organizations, than it takes to spend the funds on miscellaneous activities. The interest of donors in seeing quick results usually has a devastating effect, and leads to the opposite result. Foundations that only administer funds and focus on spending them on different activities, like the beneficiaries that receive the funds, focus on producing reports on training courses, activities and events, while not bothering to answer the most important question: “Are we doing the right thing?” If their efforts are to have meaning, building the potential of Roma leaders and organizations is one of the key roles they have to perform. “Building potential” is a phrase one hears frequently, whose practical use often ends in the seminar room or the training course class. However, it is the responsibility of donors to build the potential of the Roma community in a sensitive manner. The short-term nature of the grant cycle is not suited to this goal.

Of course, there are risks on the other side as well. People who work for foundations certainly know the term “donor fatigue”, or the weariness that arises on long-term projects. It refers to a sort of “bad mood” that descends when the benefit of the grant for the target group seems to be diminishing and donors start looking for new targets that have not yet been addressed by the state or the private sector.

The possibilities of cooperation between the public and private sectors are far from exhausted. The Slovak foundations administering funds from foreign public sources have the necessary experience and are ready to administer the funds provided by the Slovak

government. The Roma third sector is also attempting to administer funds. These efforts are justified, but they fail due to the limitations of the real world of finance, and due to a lack of trust. One might ask whether it is possible to build institutional and human capacity without letting these organizations solve problems and challenges on their own, which in turn improve their quality. It seems that this is the basic dilemma faced by all people working in the donation business: first of all, it is a question of trust and knowing your partner.

### **C.7. STRUCTURAL PROBLEM OF SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICIES OF ROMA MINORITY IN SLOVAKIA. DO ROMA HAVE WHERE TO INTEGRATE?**

After defined desirable D-principles that point out at level of success of inclusion policies, the provocative question still remains. Does Slovak society forms suitable conditions for tackling the issue of social inclusion of Roma and whether it can and wants to tackle it? The answer is, following anti-primordial arguments, rather simple - not yet. The Roma issue cannot be resolved in a long-term perspective in an ethnically defined state which the Slovak Republic is, and despite the endeavor of part of the social and political elite, further remains. However, this is a structural problem present also in most of EU-25 countries - paraphrasing A. D. Smith (1995) we can confirm that the nation and nationalism represent the only real socio-cultural framework of the modern world order, despite their ability to bring about general destruction. This general statement naturally does not mean that all majority populations of ethnically defined states have predisposition to extremism – the problem is existence of the so-called “trivial nationalism”, i.e. as M. Billig says - in the wide-spread nationalistic practices the roots of which grew deep into our everyday rituals and activities (Schlesinger, 2000).

The Slovak society should prepare for processes of reconfiguration of the collective identities related to the processes of globalization. Nobody is a member of just one collectivity – in reality we are a storehouse of identities from which we choose the one that is required or the most appropriate for a particular situation. This anthropologically documented ability to “switch” between individual components of human personality may, under favorable conditions, facilitate coexistence of national and other collective identities, both the more universal (global) ones and the more particular (local) ones. In this kind of “switch-over” world, numerous Roma issue related problems would be much easier and less painful to solve, from the viewpoint of both the majority and the Roma.

Social solidarity is an inevitable precondition of conflict prevention, anomy reduction, and social cohesion increase. If we paraphrase the Hobbes paradigm, it will not be clear, whether the cohesion is a product of the economic development of society and the inevitable prosperity, or whether the modern social state is a product of cohesion of society based on mutually shared value systems. No matter how we verify the hypothesis, increase of social cohesion which was heavily damaged in the post-communist Slovakia, is a precondition of social development, qualitative changes and solutions to problems requiring universal consensus. The Roma issue, undoubtedly, ranks among such problems. The problem must be looked at also from the other side - without solving the minority problems, the members of which usually occupy the bottom steps of the social ladder, the social cohesion of the Slovak society cannot be increased.

The most important issue to be tackled is a coexistence of the Roma and the majority population. Coexistence in general is the way of life of different populations and groups which can differ in nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, values or lifestyle, whereby the rise and existence of social interactions and relationships is the basic manifestation of their common life. There are four different forms of interaction: competition, conflict, accommodation and assimilation. As for the coexistence of the Roma and the majority population in Slovakia, for more than two hundred years the Roma were assimilated and in many cases also successfully accommodated. The post-1989 democratic process gave room also to the two remaining and until then not occurring processes – competition and conflict. Slovakia stands on the doorstep of these processes which were in many western countries initiated by the “open ghetto” effect.

It is not difficult to define the dimensions of Roma’s and majority’s coexistence in Slovakia. Non-institutional and informal segregation becomes a reality especially for the Roma living in Romany settlements, however, despite the overall democratization of society the process of desegregation has not started yet. To a large extent, most of the Roma living in Slovakia have been culturally assimilated, however, the next stages of assimilation have not been reached. We could assume that at the moment when the process of assimilation of Roma was under way, the majority yielded to a “racist paradox”. This paradox occurs when the minority fulfills the original demand, is nevertheless refused afterwards as an element endangering the majority. The majority originally demanded that the Roma adapt in full, however when several of them failed to do so, the majority refused and excluded them. The consequence of this majority’s stance is a deepening social, cultural, symbolic and spatial exclusion and growing segregation of the Roma community.

The “racist paradox”, first described by political scientist Rainer Bauböck (Bauböck, 1994), is after all not a new phenomenon in Central Europe - the same “racist paradox” caused slaughtering of European Jews during WWII. The German and other Central European communities demanded full assimilation from Jews as a precondition of possible integration into society, however, when this – especially in Germany – failed, the majority felt menaced by them and produced a new conspiracy theory explaining the processes taking place within the Jewish community.

However, the German post-war history is worthy of following in many respects. In Slovakia, which belongs into the same cultural and geographical area, the process of national self-identification is more on the ethnic and cultural side than on the civic and territorial one. The Slovak reality, similarly as the German, can be characterized by the notion “Staatsnation” (self-determining political nation), rather than “Kulturnation” (broad cultural community). In Slovakia the following holds true: the more the nation identifies with the proximity of blood and particular aspects of culture, the less room the state allows for cultural diversity. And on the contrary - the more it identifies with the area and the liberal-democratic principles, the more room it potentially offers for the cultural diversity. To put it in another words: the more universal the definition of society’s identity, the more particular contents and groups it is capable of including. From this viewpoint, when introducing multiculturalism, the starting position of countries with prevalence of ethnic and cultural self-identification is more problematic than of those where civic and territorial self-identification prevails. This determines also the



possibility of Roma minority integration in Slovakia and prevention of the latent conflict in the society.

Similarly as Germany, Slovakia too has room for overcoming the historical determinism and everything will depend on how and whether it is going to take advantage of it. The shift from cultural definition of the own nation towards the voluntaristic one is not necessarily a sign of giving up one's identity. The point is - the nation should profess universal values. According to the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (Barša, 1999) such values are for example the rule of law and democracy. Habermas' "constitutional patriotism" as the basis of loyalty to nation and state, provides for the first time to countries such as Slovakia the opportunity to bind their appurtenance primarily not to an ethnic and cultural homeland, but to a legal and political one defined by the universalistic principles of freedom and equality. Slovakia too should choose an Renanian "elective" (Gellner, 1993) notion of nation allowing to differentiate the political and legal identity from the ethnic and cultural one, if it wants to succeed in integrating the Roma into the society.

Applying Habermas to Slovakia, the country needs a new partnership agreement. The assertion that the Roma will remain the most significant civilization challenge to Slovakia would cease to have such serious social and economic consequences after formation of a political Slovak nation. If the present situation does not change, we can expect that during the next two decades part of the Roma political scene becomes radical, establishing so a new quality of internal and external relationships. Considering the deepening social exclusion and marginalization of Roma one can even expect that regardless of the ongoing globalization, European integration and improvement of economical situation in Slovakia, the "scissors" between the majority and the Roma will further open. Negative trends pertaining the Roma can be changed or vice-versa deepened through the process of Roma national emancipation promoted by both the majority elites, also the foreign Roma elites which will grow increasingly radical. This process will bear a great significance for the future development and relationships within the Roma community. Already now, a new generation of young Roma leaders is growing up whose stances and opinions are bound to clash with those of the older - pre- and post-November generation, and it is rather unclear in which direction this new emancipated Roma elite will go. It stands a chance of speeding up the process of Roma integration, or vice-versa, polarizing the society and making the Roma's stance toward the majority even more radical.

The majority, of course, can intervene this process. The reasons for intervention should not be hard to find, regardless of ideology of political entities currently in charge. One part of the political spectrum based on liberal concept of state as a neutral guarantor of rights may use pragmatic instead of moral arguments to give a positive answer to the demands of minorities. On the contrary, critics of cultural neutrality of the orthodox liberalism may maintain, that if the state wants to ensure equality and dignity of its citizens, including minority members, it is bound to ensure public acknowledgement of and safety to minority cultures. Regardless of the reasoning, a direction must be set.

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