



*Understanding employment and decent work  
challenges in Turkey,  
the situation of Roma in Turkey*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Social Exclusion of Roma in Turkey*

The diversity of Roma groups in Turkey stems from the presence of Rom, Dom and Lom groups. The majority of Roma live in Western Anatolia and Thrace while the Dom and Lom groups mostly live in South Eastern and Eastern Turkey. In the absence of accurate data, estimates range from there being half a million to 5 million Roma in all.

A large percentage of Roma in Turkey are afflicted by a number of inter-related issues, creating a vicious circle of social exclusion and extreme poverty.

Many Roma in Turkey live in sub-standard accommodation. Unhealthy environments and lack of security of tenure were the chief problems identified in the study.

The education situation of Roma in Turkey is alarming. Low school attendance and attainment levels and early school leaving are key concerns. Although there is no concept of segregated school classes in Turkey Romani children are concentrated in schools where they constitute a significant proportion of the school population.

Roma do not generally have access to formal employment or social security. The reasons for this exclusion are low educational level, lack of job skills demanded by the labour market, decline of traditional occupations, and prejudice and discrimination. Roma are involved in a variety of occupations in the informal economy, usually of a temporary nature.

The health situation of the Roma is generally poor and this is related to the substandard conditions of their accommodation. Furthermore, access to services such as health services is limited for Roma with no personal identification, the real extent of this problem being unknown.

Roma suffer from prejudice and a stereotyped image in Turkish society, leading to rejection and discrimination when it comes to access to jobs, rental housing and education.

### *Policy Framework*

General policy frameworks in Turkey set goals which are fully relevant to the situation of the Roma, although Roma are not explicitly referred to in any public policy document. The Ninth Development Plan of Turkey lists a series of objectives for improving the situation of disadvantaged groups. Recent key policy documents in crucial areas for social inclusion, such as the Ministry of National Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014, the Emergency Action Plan in the field of housing, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health, as well as the package of Active Employment Policies, all have objectives pertinent to the situation of many Roma.

Furthermore, the Ministry of National Education is currently implementing new projects in relation to the detection and monitoring of irregular school attendance, for preventing

school drop-out and for strengthening pre-school education. The framework of active employment policies is also being enhanced, although in the context of high unemployment in the country. The health system is undergoing reforms for improving service delivery; and new social housing plans are in preparation. Social solidarity schemes are also under reform with a view to improving coverage for vulnerable people.

In addition, Roma, as vulnerable persons, are part of the target group of the European Union Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The Human Resources Development Operational Programme under IPA component IV foresees promotion of the inclusion of disadvantaged persons into the labour market by facilitating their access to the labour market and to social protection, and by eliminating the barriers to accessing the labour market. Thus, it provides good opportunities for the Roma to benefit from this programme and to promote their social inclusion.

It is envisaged that the legal framework for protection against discrimination will soon be enhanced in Turkey with new anti-discrimination legislation and with the establishment of a specialised body for promoting equality. In addition, potentially discriminatory legal provisions have been abolished in recent years, the last of them being article 21 of the Law regarding the Residence and Travel of Foreigners in Turkey.

The social exclusion situation of large proportions of Roma in Turkey poses a series of policy challenges to these sectoral policies, making impact on the Roma groups a priority. There are new favourable conditions for this since Roma issues gained momentum in Turkey in Autumn 2009 after the Prime Minister announced that measures for improving the conditions of Roma were to be put in place, including a solution to the problem of lack of ID cards and new housing plans for the Roma, within the framework of the so-called “Roma Opening”. Various events since then have fostered discussion between representatives of Roma organizations and high ranking political representatives, in which the former have presented a series of demands to the Government in the fields of education, vocational training, health, housing, and discrimination in a workshop organised in December 2009. One of these demands was also the accession of Turkey to the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

### *Key Policy Challenges*

The problems experienced by Roma in Turkey are interlinked. Poor housing affects health conditions and educational attainment, which then impacts on employment opportunities. Confronting this multi-dimensional social exclusion calls for an integrated response which tackles the different dimensions of social exclusion simultaneously. This approach also demands greater cooperation between Government departments and Roma representatives, posing the challenge of empowering Roma to participate meaningfully in the design and implementation of measures for improving their condition. Furthermore, the gender dimension needs to be considered in all challenges within each policy field.

Key policy challenges in the field of education will be, inter alia, ensuring the enrolment of unregistered Romani children in the school system, early childhood development,

prevention of early school drop-out, improving school attainment, and promoting the transition to secondary education with a particular emphasis on Romani girls.

In the field of employment it is necessary to increase the employability of Roma through enhanced skills training and guidance. Partnerships between institutions, social partners and Roma organizations are essential for achieving success in this area.

Ensuring free access to health care for people lacking economic means, improving the health education of Roma groups, improving knowledge about the health situation of Roma with a view to tackling structural determinants of health, and ensuring medical checkups for pregnant women and children are seen as key priorities.

Improving the standard of Roma accommodation and preventing insecurity of tenure in the context of urban renewal plans are key challenges for housing policy. There is an ongoing initiative in Turkey aimed at building social housing for Roma. Consistent with the integrated approach proposed, this initiative should be combined with multi-dimensional social interventions addressing all other areas such as education, health and employment.

As horizontal themes, preventing discriminatory practices, promoting equal treatment, raising awareness about their rights among the Roma themselves and challenging stereotypes are all key challenges for the Equality body which will be established in the context of the upcoming adoption of new anti-discrimination legislation in Turkey.

### *Position of Stakeholders*

The position and expectations of the key stakeholders consulted generally coincide in a number of aspects. It is acknowledged that Roma groups are marginalised and that their situation should be addressed with new impetus. It is generally considered that these fresh efforts should be framed in generic policies and programmes for disadvantaged groups. There is declared readiness to contribute with enhanced efforts and to cooperate with other institutions to put in place more effective measures to tackle the social exclusion of Roma citizens.

Roma organisations have only recently entered the Turkish civil society scene. The Roma civil society movement is perceived now as generally inexperienced and fragmented and only a limited number of Roma organisations are considered really active and effective. Furthermore, a large number of new Roma organisations have been established in recent months after the Government announcement of the new measures. Strengthening the capacity of these organisations is stressed as an urgent need by many stakeholders, as well as the need to create Roma umbrella structures which could act as an effective counterpart for the Government.

The Roma Opening is perceived as a window of opportunity for improving the situation of Roma although there are concerns about this being translated into sustainable progress.

## *EU Lessons Learned*

Roma issues have gained attention at EU level in the last decade. As a result, the EU has strengthened protection against discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin, and has increased efforts on cooperation for setting a vision in which approaches are more efficient for the socio-economic advancement of Roma. Specifically, the 10 Basic Principles for Roma inclusion have been a cornerstone in the process of adopting a coherent shared approach at EU level. Some of these principles represent the policy approach currently widely acknowledged: aiming for the mainstream, explicit but not exclusive targeting and Roma participation.

The EU has a growing body of experience which allows for recognition of what works and what does not. Practices show a series of recommendations on how to successfully approach the social integration of excluded Roma.

Key lessons learned from past experience show which approaches have proved to be more effective. Some of these are actions that require a long-term and an integrated approach in which all factors underlying social exclusion are tackled. These include the combination of mainstreaming with targeted actions in policies and programmes; the need to establish vertical and horizontal coordination through building strong partnerships; support at local level through a national policy framework; the benefits of de-segregation strategies; the need to produce more accurate data on the situation of Roma groups in order to inform policy-making; ensuring the participation of the Roma in all stages together with non-Roma, and the need to monitor and evaluate actions and demonstrate the benefits.

## *The Way Ahead*

The Roma Opening process has created the momentum towards Roma inclusion in Turkey and a new scenario of opportunity to design and start action to confront the policy challenges posed by the disadvantaged situation of Roma citizens.

Stakeholders in Turkey should be encouraged to participate in a mutual learning process and to consider how much of the EU experience and best practices would be applicable in the Turkish context. The following important conditions for giving consideration to EU experience in Turkey are fulfilled: a manifest political will which also needs to reach the policy drivers in the public administration who have been hesitant up until now; a policy framework in key areas which sets objectives for the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups; the position of various key stakeholders favourable for starting some kind of action or, at least, for making policies and programmes more inclusive for the Roma; sectoral policies crucially related to social inclusion undergoing reforms and being strengthened, and financial instruments and funding schemes which can be used to support actions in favour of the socio-economic advancement of Roma. On the other hand, some factors that may hinder the process are the high unemployment rate in Turkey, the lack of data about the situation of Roma in Turkey, the lack of experience of human resources to implement Roma-focused interventions and the fragmentation of Roma civil society.

Social inclusion of Roma is a matter of guaranteeing their civic rights as Turkish citizens, ensuring access to goods and services on an equal footing with other citizens and preventing discriminatory practices they may confront. It is also a matter of strengthening social protection to compensate for the disadvantages as well as correcting inequalities. Finally, social inclusion of Roma should be seen as an issue of economic opportunity. Yet it is important to underline that significant results will not take place in the short term and that strategies should have long-term vision and set feasible objectives. Multi-annual interventions are thus required to produce change.

Setting the institutional framework for new policies and measures requires the development of a strategy shaped as a policy concept, setting vision, principles, approaches and key actors. Approaches should first be based on how to increase access to programmes and measures of a general nature. Once this is considered, special programmes oriented specifically for Roma for improving the effectiveness of general policies can be developed.

Given that interventions must be multi-dimensional and integrated, it is necessary to establish coordination mechanisms between relevant Government departments. Examples in the EU show different model practices. It is proposed that Turkey establishes a committee with representation of relevant ministries and Government bodies which could establish thematic working groups in conjunction with Roma representatives, NGOs and experts.

Furthermore, some priority measures proposed are: (i) making reference to the situation of Roma in key policy documents (i.e. education, employment, housing, health) and setting targets for Roma in operational programming; (ii) supporting functional partnerships at the local level; (iii) improving information, knowledge and data about the situation of Roma in Turkey; (iv) empowering Roma to act as mediators and fostering mediation structures in different fields with a view to incorporating these mediators in projects and initiatives; (v) establishing an outreach information strategy for providing identity cards to Roma still lacking them; (vi) establishing as a requisite the social dimension for any re-habilitation of re-housing plan for Roma; (vii) stimulating pilot actions to experiment with approaches and interventions using existing financial instruments, including IPA pre-accession assistance; (viii) promoting community resource centres where different activities can take place within the framework of integrated community development plans; (ix) fostering *know-how* development by promoting communication and exchange of knowledge and experiences; (x) making the anti-discrimination legislation and the Equality body effective for Roma when these are established.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to provide background and expert information on the situation of Roma in Turkey and to underline the policy options for ensuring better social inclusion, as well as fighting against de facto discrimination.

The tasks carried out have been:

- (i) to provide a concise literature review on the situation of Roma in Turkey; this review focused on academic works and reports related to the social exclusion situation of Roma in Turkey;
- (ii) to gather quantitative and qualitative information on the Roma in Turkey; a qualitative research was carried out in three selected localities which sought to identify the barriers experienced by Roma in access to public services and economic opportunities, and the inequalities they suffer in different fields;
- (iii) to identify and summarise the related key policy challenges;
- (iv) to provide an overview of related policy discussions and identify best practices that could be implemented in the Turkish context. EU lessons learned and good practices constitute the basis of the recommendations drawn up for Turkey in this report;
- (v) to provide an overview of relevant actors and stakeholders and their positions and expectations with regard to supporting the social inclusion of Roma; The study identified a number of institutions and organizations having a major stake in the implementation of policies and programmes related to the Roma social inclusion and carried out consultations in the period February-June 2010;
- (vi) to summarise and evaluate the main policy options;
- (vii) to ensure dissemination of the results

The report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 contains an overview of the situation of Roma in Turkey in relation to key sectors for social inclusion. This part is based mainly on the findings of the three community studies carried out in the period December 2009-March 2010,<sup>1</sup> and completed with the findings of the literature review and also information gathered from experts during the consultation exercise. Chapter 3 gives an overview of the policy framework in Turkey in relation to the key sectors for social inclusion, and it also provides a list of key policy challenges for the social inclusion of Roma in Turkey. Furthermore, the views, positions and expectations of Turkish stakeholders as regards social inclusion in Turkey, as well as the situation of the Turkish Roma civil society, are discussed. Chapter 4 examines the developments in the European Union in relation to Roma social inclusion and analyses some lessons learned from previous practice which are considered relevant for inspiring further efforts to address the challenge of Roma inclusion in Turkey. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents policy options for Turkey and suggests a series of priority actions for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> The three localities researched were Antakya, Bartın and Çorlu, representing different situations in the country.

## 2. SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF ROMA IN TURKEY

### 2.1. A diverse group

Little academic research has been conducted on the different Roma groups in Turkey. Kolukirik and Marsh are pioneering researchers and their works are the primary resource. They have stated that the Rom, Lom<sup>2</sup> and Dom<sup>3</sup> groups make up the Roma population in Turkey. While the Rom communities, who mainly live in the western parts of Turkey, have been subject to more research, especially in the last decade, the data on the Lom (who mostly inhabit North Eastern Turkey) and the Dom (who mostly live in South Eastern Turkey) is very limited.

The term “Roman” (Roma in Turkish) is generally preferred over “Çingene” by various groups and individuals, due to the negative connotations associated with the latter.<sup>4</sup>

There is no official data on the number of Roma in Turkey. Thus, all the figures are based on estimations and change depending on the resource. Most sources give a number in the range of 500,000 – 600,000. Marsh indicates that this data originated from the 1831 Ottoman census.<sup>5</sup> Some scholars calculate the current number according to demographic projections. However Marsh contests this because “the Ottoman statistics frequently under-counted women, young men and boys under 15 years old and men over 65 years old (...) Therefore, the original numbers upon which these contemporary calculations are based are unreliable”.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, \_ncirlio\_lu emphasizes that the official census figures in Turkey do not include the ethnic composition of the population, and underlines that figures given by various researchers are inconsistent. She states that, “Moreover, as all Gypsies in Turkey do not live in segregated quarters, even population estimates on the basis of neighbourhoods would not be reliable”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lom are a distinct linguistic group originating from India and linked linguistically to Roma. Nowadays, Lom (or known by the pejorative term “Bosha” or “Po\_a”) are found in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus.

<sup>3</sup> Dom are a distinct linguistic group originating from India and linked linguistically to Roma. Dom groups are to be found mainly in the Middle East and North Africa. According to some sources, they may have arrived in the Turkish lands sometime in the early 11th century AD, in the south east (Diyarbakır, Antakya, and Mardin). Today most of the Dom communities in Turkey live in south eastern and eastern parts of Turkey, the region mostly inhabited by Kurdish people. Besides Turkish, the overwhelming majority of the Dom in Antakya speak their own language, Domari (or Domca in Turkish) in the private sphere and at home.

<sup>4</sup> In Turkey various Gypsy groups are named, regardless of linguo-social differences among them, such as the *Çingene*. However, there are also several local terms used to identify these groups in different regions of the country: Arabacı, Sepetçi, Abdal, Beyzade, Cano/Cono, Elekci, Esmer vatanda\_, Gurbet/Gurbeti, Karaci, Karao\_lan, Kipti, Lulu, Mango, Mutrib/Mutrip, Pırpır, Posa/Bosa/Pasa, Teber, Todi.

<sup>5</sup> Marsh, A. (2008) “Ethnicity and Identity: Who are the Gypsies?” in Upzeder, E, Danova, S., Özçelik, S., Gökçen, S. [eds.] *We Are Here! Discriminatory Exclusion & Struggle for Rights of Roma in Turkey*, Istanbul: p.24

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p.24

<sup>7</sup> \_ncirlio\_lu, E.O. “Gypsy (Dis)Organisation In Turkey: From Social Exclusion to Struggle for Human Rights”, paper presented at the CMR/iRSN Romani Studies seminar at Istanbul Bilgi University, 3 November 2005. Quoted in Marsh, A. & Strand, E. (2005) “Reaching the Romanlar”; a report on the feasibility studies

A variety of estimates are considered by others. Rather than providing their own calculation, Gültekin and Güzey prefer to cite the range of estimates and note “according to the official data, 500 thousand, and according to the unofficial data 1.5 million Roma live in Turkey”.<sup>8</sup>

Marsh notes that in recent years, researchers as well as activists from Roma and other civil society organisations have suggested numbers ranging between 2-5 million persons across the country.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Marsh writes that based on the findings of research conducted within the framework of the project “Promoting Roma Rights in Turkey”; the figure should be 4.5 - 5 million. The percentage of Roma in the Thrakian provinces of Turkey has been estimated at 6-7 per cent of the total population, and Roma, Dom and Lom, with small groups of Travellers in Anatolia, at about 2 per cent of the population.<sup>10</sup>

Kolukırık avoids giving any figure. In most of his work, he emphasizes that there are no reliable figures for the number of Roma in Turkey and the data given by various studies is not consistent. Kolukırık acknowledges the debate around the validity of the data available and the groups included: “the discussions on the population estimates continue further on, because of the lack of comprehensive research on Rom, Dom and Lom groups living in Turkey, the geography and also because some members of these groups live among non-Gypsies”.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2. *A socially disadvantaged group*

Social exclusion is understood “as a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from jobs, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feeling powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives”.<sup>12</sup>

According to the 2006 Poverty Study, the rate of poverty in Turkey at that time was 17.81 per cent. Although there is no ethnic disaggregated data, it is known that large

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“mapping” a number of Roman (Gypsy) communities in Istanbul”, International Romani Studies Network, Istanbul, 2005. p. 14-15. Available at: <http://goc.bilgi.edu.tr/documents/rapor.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Gültekin, N. and Güzey, Ö. “Divided Cities- Social and Residential Segregation: A Gypsy Neighbourhood in Menzilahir, Edirne”, (Ankara: Gazi University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture). Paper based on the research “Evaluation of Social Solidarity Networks in Urban Regeneration-Menzilahir/Edirne” supported by Gazi University Scientific Research Projects Unit, 2009. p.6.

<sup>9</sup> Marsh, A. “Ethnicity and Identity: Who are the Gypsies?” in Savelina Danova [ed.] *We Are Here! Discriminatory Exclusion & Struggle for Rights of Roma in Turkey*, Istanbul: ERRRC/hCa/EDROM, April 2008. p.24.

<sup>10</sup> Marsh, op cit, p. 24 footnote 12.

<sup>11</sup> Kolukırık, S. (2008) “Türkiye’de Rom, Dom Ve Lom Gruplarının Görünümü” [General Overview of Rom, Dom and Lom Groups in Turkey], *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Ara\_tırmaları Dergisi*, [Hacettepe University Journal of Turcology Studies] Year:5 Volume:8, p.145.

<sup>12</sup> European Commission *Joint Report on Social Inclusion*, Brussels, 2004.

proportions of Roma in Turkey are afflicted by severe poverty<sup>13</sup> and a number of other inter-related issues, including failure to attend school or leaving early and poor achievement when there; poor health conditions and consequently lower life expectancy than the average; high unemployment, a lack of vocational training, insecure housing, and discrimination, all of which is described as a vicious circle of social exclusion. An unknown number of Roma do not possess ID Cards in Turkey. This is generally associated with the nomadic groups in Eastern Anatolia, but some experts point out that the problem is larger and also affects significant numbers of Roma who migrated within the country itself. Experts cite the reasons for lacking ID cards as being a deficit of information or fear of being fined. The Ministry of Interior sent an Order to the Governorships in May 2010 with instructions to remove the penalties and fees for Roma citizens seeking to obtain an ID card.

In the context of the field research in Corlu, it was reported that many Roma, particularly women and children, do not possess identity documents. The lack of personal documents impedes their access to basic services and rights such as those related to education, health care and employment.

### *2.3. Educational failure*

The education situation of Roma is perceived as alarming. Although the situation is reported to vary between locations, widespread problems are the existence of Roma children who have never been enrolled in the school system, the high incidence of schools drop-out and/or sporadic attendance in primary education. The rate of early school drop-out is highest with Roma girls, partially related to the early age of marriage. The enrollment rate in pre-school education is perceived as minimal, as is the number of Roma children transitioning to secondary education. The barriers for continuous attendance are multiple and are linked to other social exclusion situations many Roma families face, such as lack of sufficient financial means to maintain children at school or the need for children to contribute to the family income. Roma adults generally have low levels of formal education and a high proportion of illiteracy, and they lack the important skills for accessing jobs in the formal labour market. It appears that few Roma access mainstream adult education programmes.

Although there is no concept of segregated school classes in the Turkish education system, high concentration of Roma students in certain schools is frequent and this usually tends to lower the quality of education. It was reported by consulted informants that in some cases there is a positive attitude in schools towards Roma, but it is also sometimes the case that teachers give insufficient attention to the Roma students due to low expectation of their performance. Another factor that hinders Roma children is that they usually lack a room at home where they can study. Furthermore, when they do attend mixed classes their style of dressing in school can sometimes be the cause of bullying by their peers. According to reports, when Roma families have moved, due to

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<sup>13</sup> Amongst others, Kolukırcık identifies poverty as the major problem that Roma groups face. He states that the poverty within the Rom, Dom and Lom groups is very obvious, adding that, “[i]t can be said that the poverty take the character of ‘deep poverty’ particularly within the Dom groups”. Kolukırcık, S. (2008) “Türkiye’de Rom, Dom Ve Lom Gruplarının Görünümü” (General Overview of Rom, Dom and Lom Groups in Turkey), *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Ara\_tırmaları Dergisi*, (Hacettepe University Journal of Turcology Studies) Year: 5 Volume: 8, p.152.

forced evictions or to voluntary migration, it is common that the children are not sent to school in their new locations.

During fieldwork conducted in three locations, the main problems registered as concerns the education of Romani children were: low attendance and school attainment levels, early school leaving and discriminatory practices.

In all three locations, Romani children were concentrated in one or two primary schools where they constitute a significant share of the school population. In these schools they reportedly attend mixed classes. In Antakya and Bartin school officials reported resistance by non-Romani parents to the placement of their children in classes with Romani children due to prejudice and negative attitudes towards Roma; in some cases, these parents have removed their children and enrolled them in other schools.

There is evidence of discriminatory attitudes and treatment of Romani children in schools. In Antakya and Corlu, Romani children are reportedly bullied and harassed by their non-Romani peers because of their ethnicity. In Corlu, teachers reportedly do not defend Romani children in these instances. Some parents are also subjected to discriminatory attitudes when registering their children for class.

In the locations visited, Romani children appear to enrol in school at the primary level. In Bartin and Antakya most Romani children were noted to complete primary school (while this was not the case 10 years ago); however, there are still cases of drop-out and absenteeism. In Corlu a significant level of primary school drop-out was registered. This was reportedly the result of the financial problems that Romani families face and which mean that Romani children have to work and contribute into the family income. The illiteracy rate among Roma in Corlu is reportedly very high (90 per cent), especially among the older generations. In the other two locations the illiteracy rate among Roma was noted to be low and to be comparable to that of non-Roma. In Antakya, poorer academic results were reported among Romani children compared to non-Romani children.

The number of Romani children who continue with their education after primary school in all three locations was reported to be very low. There are very few Romani children enrolled in secondary school and the number of Romani university students in the three locations combined was less than 10.

Several respondents in Antakya and Corlu stated that while in the past Romani girls were less represented in schools, the situation has been improving in recent years and more Romani girls are now enrolled in school.

Poverty was reported to be the biggest barrier to school at all levels in all three locations. Romani families are not able to afford the cost of materials and other education-related costs. The lack of successful “role models” in their surroundings was also noted to be a problem.

Specific policies and programmes to improve the educational outcomes of Romani children do not exist in Antakya, Bartin or Corlu. In Corlu there are three general programmes designed to increase attendance and reduce school drop-out; however, there is a lack of outreach efforts targeting Romani families and children by the school

authorities. Similarly, in Bartın adult literacy courses are available but the participation of Roma is very low and there did not appear to be any real effort by the authorities to bring Roma into these courses.

#### **2.4. Housing problems and residential segregation**

Large proportions of Roma in Turkey live in sub-standard, crowded accommodation. Many of them live in *gegecondu* while others live in temporary shelters and tents. They normally live concentrated in Roma neighborhoods, *Mahalle*,<sup>14</sup> and they often do not have legal ownership of the houses they live in. In recent years there has been an increase of urban renewal projects in Turkey, some of which have led to the demolition of houses and forced evictions of Roma from the quarters they lived in. This has affected, amongst others, the Çinçin district in Ankara, the districts of Ku\_tepe, Kucukbakkalkoy, Gültepe Yahya Kemal, and Sulukule in \_stanbul, the Cebeci Quarter in Gaziosmanpa\_a in Istanbul, the Müftü Quarter in Zonguldak, and the Kamberler Quarter in Bursa. Sometimes alternative accommodation was not provided and when it was provided, the difficulty of paying the monthly installments forced Roma to leave the houses and return to the area of the demolished district to live in barracks.

The residential segregation of Roma communities in Turkey is common, although this is not necessarily the result of deliberate government intervention in some cases. In many towns and cities there is a settlement called “Çingene mahallesi” (Gypsy neighbourhood). In most cases, the majority of the settlement’s population is Romani. Roma living in segregated neighbourhoods are generally socially excluded from mainstream society. Residential segregation, discrimination and poverty contribute to social exclusion. On the basis of this research it can be said that Romani individuals and communities do not fully participate in the social life of the cities in which they reside.

The housing situation of Roma in Antakya, Bartın and Çorlu was problematic. During research the following housing rights problems were registered: segregated housing, substandard living conditions, lack of security of tenure and discrimination.

Segregated housing was typical of all three locations visited during the research. In Antakya, Bartın and Çorlu most Roma lived concentrated in one or two main neighbourhoods (known as Çingene mahallesi), with smaller numbers of Roma scattered among non-Roma in other locations in the city.

Security of tenure was problematic for a significant number of Roma: many lived in houses built on public land without formal permission. The lack of housing or property ownership makes the residents vulnerable to forced eviction or displacement, particularly in the context of urban regeneration schemes which are being implemented around the country (though no such projects have been announced in any of the research locations to date). In Antakya and Corlu the Roma neighbourhoods were located not far from the centre. In Bartın, the Roma neighbourhoods were located at the top of a hill but were also accessible from the centre.

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<sup>14</sup> Neighbourhood in Turkish. Although the term refers to a settlement zone, especially among the excluded groups such as Roma, *mahalle* is the main social structure where people interact. Furthermore, *mahalle* carries with it the idea of solidarity.

In Antakya and Corlu a significant number of Roma live in substandard conditions. Most Roma were living in houses with solid structures (as opposed to makeshift shacks), but in some cases the houses were in a serious state of disrepair. Some houses had only a dirt floor and no proper roof: the families residing in these houses are not protected from the elements and during rain and snow the floors become muddy.

In Antakya, most Dom live in two to three room houses which host the same number of families. Many Dom live in seriously overcrowded conditions which are worsening: as children grow up and marry they often remain in their parents' house with their new family because they cannot afford their own home. Most houses were reported to have access to basic services such as water and electricity, though in some cases the connections were not legal.

In Corlu most houses in the Roma neighbourhood were in substandard condition and overcrowded. There is no drainage system for rainwater in the settlement which poses significant public health risks. Here the research registered around eight families living in makeshift shacks without basic services.

Discrimination against Roma was reported in accessing the private rental market. This did not appear to be widespread because most Roma cannot afford to rent housing and are therefore not in situations in which they might be subjected to such treatment.

The housing situation of Roma in Bartın appeared to be better than in Antakya and Corlu. In the communities visited the housing appeared to be in decent condition and municipal authorities had improved infrastructure somewhat in recent years. However, there were also a considerable number of Roma families who did not possess their own houses and were living in substandard conditions in dwellings not adequate for the size of the family: an estimated 15-20 families lived in these conditions.

There were no specific policies or programmes in Antakya, Bartın or Çorlu to improve the housing situation of Roma. In Bartın the municipal authorities had undertaken some infrastructure development in two of the neighbourhoods visited (roads, etc); they also reportedly started a project to help the families in greatest need to improve their housing situation but this was abandoned due to oversubscription.

## ***2.5. Poor health situation linked to precarious living conditions***

The health status of Roma is generally poor and some problems in this area were reported. Most Roma in the research locations possessed a green card, which provides for free access to public health services.<sup>15</sup>

In all three research locations health clinics were located close to the Romani neighbourhoods, that residents could easily access. The medical professionals at these local clinics appeared to be knowledgeable about the health problems that Romani

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<sup>15</sup> This system, established in 1992 and directly funded by the Government, entitles poor people earning less than a minimum level of income to access outpatient and inpatient care as well as medication at state hospitals and some university hospitals. In the beginning all services, including access to medication, were free for green card holders. However, since September 2009 card holders are required to pay a "contribution fee" of between 2 and 15 Turkish Lira (approximately 1 to 7 Euros) depending on the medical institution visited: this may be a problem for Roma considering the poverty level of this community.

individuals experience. Discriminatory treatment was not reported with regard to the local clinics. However, in Antakya and Çorlu Romani respondents reported discrimination in state hospitals: in most cases, respondents noted that they were made to wait while non-Romani patients were treated ahead of them.

In Çorlu and Antakya the houses inhabited by Roma were regarded as having a negative impact on health due to their substandard conditions and doctors raised concerns about the spread of disease. The most common illnesses reported among Roma are chronic respiratory infections, rheumatism, asthma, bronchitis, enteritis, anaemia and diarrhoea.

There were no specific policies or programmes in Antakya, Bartın or Çorlu to improve the health situation of Roma.

## 2.6. Major barriers to decent work

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, as of July 2010 the official unemployment rate in Turkey was 10.6 per cent, and the unemployment rate of young population was 19.5 per cent.<sup>16</sup> These rates are already high, indicating an overall unemployment problem in the country. There is no official data regarding the level of employment and unemployment of Roma in Turkey because disaggregated data is not collected.

Nonetheless, previous research has suggested that regular employment is rare amongst Roma in Turkey. Kolukırık presents unemployment as the “fundamental” problem for a great majority of Roma in Turkey and points to their low level of education as the key obstacle for them in entering the formal job market.<sup>17</sup> Marsh/Strand also suggest that regular employment is rare amongst the Roma, “most often as a result of poor educational achievement”.<sup>18</sup> Employment in Romani communities is “low-paid, generally low or unskilled manual labour often of a temporary nature”.<sup>19</sup> Gültekin/Güzey note that the reasons for the high unemployment rate are: low educational level; lower prices for hand-crafts as a result of industrialization; decreasing employment opportunities due to the shut-down of the textile factories at Edirne; decrease in the demand for an agricultural labour force, and the prejudice towards the Romani people.<sup>20</sup> In *We Are Here!* a research in various parts of Turkey among Roma groups firmly establishes employment as a fundamental problem. “The research showed that Roma are almost entirely excluded from permanent employment and social security. Employment is almost always temporary, non-registered, unskilled labour and is often carried out without any regard for health and safety considerations”.<sup>21</sup> According to the research, racial discrimination is also key: “Gypsies face specific disadvantages and prejudices in employment related to their ethnicity, where access to

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<sup>16</sup> See: <https://www.tuik.gov.tr/Gosterge.do?metod=IlgiliGosterge&sayfa=giris&id=3536>.

<sup>17</sup> Kolukırık, S. “Aramızaki Yabancı: Çingeneler” (Alien among Us: Gypsies). PhD thesis presented to Ege University. İzmir, 2004. p. 102

<sup>18</sup> Marsh, A. & Strand, E. (2005) *Op.cit.* p. 29

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22

<sup>20</sup> Gültekin, N. and Güzey, Ö. *Op. cit.* p.10

<sup>21</sup> .Upzeder, E, Danova, S., Özçelik, S., Gökçen, S. [eds.] (2008), *Op. cit.* p 91.

jobs is denied on this basis, or only menial tasks are open to Gypsies outside of the limited range of 'traditional' occupations, frequently themselves seen as low-skilled".<sup>22</sup>

All this does not affect the whole Roma population in Turkey, and there is a small number of Roma professionals and Roma working for public institutions, but the majority have casual occupations in the informal economy or have no access to any income.

Overall data on informal employment shows that the rate is above 90 per cent rate in the case of casual workers and unpaid family workers. The consequence of this situation is the economic and social vulnerability of the informally employed. Informal workers are also disproportionately affected in times of economic crises.<sup>23</sup> The current economic crisis was mentioned in all three locations of the research as causing general employment problems.

Despite the low participation of women in the labour market, it was reported that Roma women are the sole breadwinners in some settings. In Bartın it was noted that Romani women must secure permission from their husbands, fathers or brothers if they want to work outside the home which may pose an additional barrier to accessing employment.

Low levels of formal education for a vast majority of Roma prevent them participating in many job training courses which require a certain level of formal education. There appears to be very low participation of Roma in active employment policies and programmes. When job courses are followed, it is reported that participants receive certificates which are seen as useless for getting a job due to widespread prejudice against Roma, who are generally perceived as distinctly talented for music and entertaining on the one hand, but non-reliable workers on the other. It is reported that many Roma searching for employment tend to hide their Roma background, but the social stigma remains associated with the neighborhoods they live in. This finding invites thought regarding the negative effects of residential segregation.

The Romani communities visited in Turkey face significant barriers in access to employment. In all three localities, Antakya, Çorlu and Bartın, almost all Romani respondents stated that unemployment was the most serious problem affecting their community. In all three locations the overwhelming majority of Roma are reported to be formally unemployed: the unemployment rate among the Dom community of Antakya and the Romani community in Çorlu was estimated to be over 90 per cent. The research findings in Bartın established that the vast majority of the community is formally unemployed.

Research in Antakya, Çorlu and Bartın pointed to several reasons for the high unemployment rate of Roma. Romani individuals face discrimination in access to employment. In most cases, Roma reported that employers reject their job applications when learning of their address in a known Romani neighbourhood. As a result, numerous respondents reported that Roma try to register their residence elsewhere to increase their chances in finding work. Some Roma lost their jobs when their ethnic identity became public. There are also indications that Roma in formal employment are

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92

<sup>23</sup> *Turkey Country Economic Memorandum. Informality: Causes, Consequences, Policies.* World Bank, March 2010.

discriminated against with regard to their conditions of employment compared to non-Roma: this relates to the permanency of the contract and the types of work they are offered compared to non-Roma.

It was also widely reported that Roma lack the necessary qualifications and skills to be competitive in the labour market. Finally, Romani respondents noted that the decline of demand for the traditional forms of Roma employment due to technological developments and changing lifestyles had negatively impacted on their employment situation.

As a result, many Roma work informally, performing temporary day jobs which do not provide social security. The income level of Romani families is very low; many families are also dependent on social assistance for survival. Still, many Romani families live in extremely impoverished conditions.

There were no specific policies or programmes in Antakya, Bartın or Çorlu to address the barriers experienced by Roma in accessing employment or their exceedingly high unemployment levels. Roma did not appear to be accessing general employment programmes and adult vocational training; there were no apparent attempts by relevant authorities to ensure Roma were aware of and had access to such programmes.

## *2.7. Prejudices and the experience of discrimination*

As in other countries, stereotypes and prejudices against Roma are widespread in Turkish society and play a dominant role in the reactions of many individuals towards them. Roma are thus at risk of suffering discriminatory treatment in all areas of social life, which severely limits the possibilities of improving their impoverished situation.

Various previous works have pointed out that the Roma in Turkey face discrimination and are subject to negative prejudices. *We Are Here!* argues that: “Despite the fact that social deprivation does not affect solely Gypsy communities in Turkey, the prevalence of anti-Gypsy prejudices, manifest in the daily experiences of individuals belonging to these communities in their interactions with non-Gypsies, reveals a high degree of unequal treatment on an ethnic basis. In numerous cases from all over the country, Gypsies in Turkey experience discrimination on the basis of their identity, over and above the experiences of other poor groups in Turkish society”.<sup>24</sup> Kolukırık accepts that there are various negative prejudices against Roma in Turkey and analyses the Gypsy image and definitions in several literary works published since 1870, as well as negative images found in dictionaries, legends and phrases.<sup>25</sup> Adaman/Keyder refer to prejudice as the chief reason for the social exclusion of Roma in Turkey. They conducted a survey in six cities in which they asked the respondents to complete the sentence, “I would prevent my child from becoming friends with the child of a(n) [...]” with one of the following categories: gay, sex worker, AIDS patient, Gypsy, alcoholic, nerve patient, ex-convict, person with a different ethnicity, a person from a different religion. “Gypsy”

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<sup>24</sup> Upzeder, E, Danova, S., Özçelik, S., Gökçen, S. [eds.] (2008), *Op. cit.* p. 55

<sup>25</sup> Kolukırık, S. (2005) “Türk Toplumunda Çingene \_mgesi ve Önyargısı” [Gypsy Image and Prejudice in Turkish Society], *Sosyoloji Ara\_tırmaları Dergisi* [Journal of Sociology Reserach} Volume. 8, No: 2, s.52-71.

was picked by 76 per cent of respondents, putting this category into the fourth place in exclusion after gay, sex worker and AIDS patient.<sup>26</sup>

Discrimination appeared to be a factor influencing the lives of Roma in all three locations of this study. Romani respondents reported having experienced unlawful discrimination in Corlu and Antakya. In Bartin, Romani respondents did not report having experienced discrimination but descriptions of particular personal experiences indicated discriminatory treatment. For instance, in Bartin numerous Romani respondents reported that some employers prefer to hire Turkish musicians over Romani musicians but did not recognise this as a potential form of discrimination.

Most experiences of discrimination were reported in the area of employment, followed by reports of discriminatory treatment of Romani children in education, then discrimination in the areas of housing and health care. In Antakya and Corlu, non-Roma living in Romani neighbourhoods are reportedly subjected to similar treatment due to their residence in known “*Çingene mahallesi*”.

In Antakya and Çorlu almost all of the respondents told the researchers that they are discriminated against in access to employment because they are Roma and they live in Roma neighbourhoods. The stigma and negative prejudice attached to Romani neighbourhoods was the main trigger for discriminatory treatment mentioned during research and the address appeared to be the signal confirming the ethnicity of the person in question.

Romani women appear to be in a particularly vulnerable situation and may face multiple forms of discrimination on account of their ethnicity and gender. It was reported in Corlu and Antakya that Romani women experience domestic violence. Many Romani women interviewed admitted that they are subject to violence by their husbands but added that they do not report this to the police. However, they also underlined that there has been a decline in domestic violence in recent years.

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<sup>26</sup> Adaman, F. ve Keyder, Ç. (2006) *Türkiye’de Büyük Kentlerde Gecekondu ve Çöküntü Mahallelerinde Ya\_anan Yoksulluk ve Sosyal Dı\_lanma*, European Commission, p. 109. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/docs/2006/study\\_turkey\\_tr.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2006/study_turkey_tr.pdf)

### 3. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND KEY POLICY CHALLENGES

The Ninth Development Plan of the Republic of Turkey includes as a development axis, “Improving Income Distribution, Social Inclusion and Fight Against Poverty” Under this axis it is stated that “Collaboration of all segments, including primarily the central administration, local administrations and non-governmental organizations, will be ensured in the implementation of policies targeting the prevention of poverty and social exclusion as well as in the provision of services such as education, accommodation and employment for those at risk of poverty and social exclusion”.<sup>27</sup>

Since mid-November 2009 some important developments have taken place in Turkey in relation to the Roma within the context of the “Democratic Initiative” of the Government. The Government of Turkey has officially included Roma issues in its agenda for the first time in the history of the Republic. On 22 November Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a speech in which he stated that the government would develop plans to address the problems of Roma in Turkey. On 10 December 2009 the First Roma Workshop took place in Istanbul including 120 participants from the Rom, Dom and Lom associations to discuss the situation of these groups and to formulate demands to the Government. The gathering was hosted by State Minister Faruk Çelik; MPs Ali Koyuncu and Nursuna Memecan also attended. A working committee of 11 representatives of Roma organisations was selected by participants to follow up the workshop.<sup>28</sup> A report on this workshop was published by the Ministry of State containing the demands expressed by the Roma participants. As a corollary, the Prime Minister held a “Roma meeting” in Istanbul on 14 March 2010 at which he announced measures to improve the situation of Roma. This meeting was attended by around 12,000 Roma and also by Ministers and other top-ranking officials. Prime Minister Erdoğan declared a willingness to solve the problems of Roma in Turkey and “finish with poverty and lack of education”. Furthermore, he announced a housing project to provide low-priced houses to Roma, tailored to their needs and life style.

As presented in the preceding section, the problems experienced by Roma citizens in Turkey are interlinked, and tackling them calls for integrated responses which deal with the different dimensions of social exclusion simultaneously. Social inclusion is thus a dynamic process, not tied to only one particular policy measure or area, but rather to interrelated measures over time. However, it is important to highlight the challenges that each key social policy area (i.e. education, housing, health and employment) confronts as regards the inequalities Roma experience in relation to those areas. As horizontal themes, combating discrimination and the consideration of gender must be fundamental concerns of any policy to address those challenges.

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<sup>27</sup> Ninth Development Plan 2007-2013, Prime Minister – State Planning Organisation. (Approved by Turkish Grand National Assembly in 28.06.2006).

<sup>28</sup> Edirne Roma Associations Federation, Mediterranean Roma Associations Federation, Aegean Roma Associations Federation, İzmir Contemporary Roma Social Assistance and Solidarity Association, Samsun Roma Turks Culture and Assistance Association, Bursa Roma Culture Association, Akhisar Roma Culture Development and Solidarity Association, Zero Discrimination Association, Roma Social Assistance and Solidarity Association of Söke, İzmir Roma Fire and Folk Dances Association

### 3.1. Improving education

#### Policy framework in Turkey

The Ninth Development Plan of Turkey sets as a development axis “Enhancing the Educational System”. In this axis the following objectives, inter alia, are envisaged: “With the aim of expanding pre-school education, teacher and physical infrastructure requirements will be met, education services will be diversified, the public awareness level will be raised, and training towards early childhood and parenting skills will be increased”. “Necessary measures, which primarily target the rural areas and girls in particular, will be taken in order to reduce the number of school drop-outs and rates of transition to secondary education will be increased”.<sup>29</sup>

The Ministry of National Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014,<sup>30</sup> sets as strategic objectives the enhancement of pre-school education, which includes both an increase in the number of classes and teachers as well as public awareness activities. It also aims at increasing the participation rate of disadvantaged children. As to Primary Education, the Strategic Plan seeks to achieve 100 per cent net enrollment rate for 2014 (98.20 per cent as of February 2009), as well as improving teacher-student rates and tackling school absenteeism. In addition, increased in-service training activities for teachers and better interaction between school centres and parents are envisaged. The needs of students without sufficient financial means for school uniforms, books, etc. are also considered in the Plan.

Some of the on-going programmes promoted by the Ministry of Education to meet part of those objectives are outlined as follows:

- The campaign “Girls, let’s Go to School!” (*Havdi Kizlar Okula!*) implemented jointly with UNICEF since 2003 and aimed at enrolling and retaining girls in primary education. This programme also includes economic incentives for low-income families to send their children to school.
- Another programme for tackling early drop-out in education is the “Catch-up Education Programme”, implemented since the 2008-2009 academic year and targeting children in the age group 10-14 who were never enrolled in school, did not attend regularly or abandoned school early. As of May 2009, these classes have been opened for 10,000 children and it is envisaged that they will be made available for 140,000 children.
- A new electronic data recording system for monitoring registration and attendance is at present being implemented in some pilot schools. The use of this system is expected to increase effectiveness in preventing school absenteeism and early drop-out, involving the cooperation of other actors at the local level together with the education centres.

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<sup>29</sup> Ninth Development Plan 2007-2013, Prime Minister – State Planning Organisation. (Approved by Turkish Grand National Assembly in 28.06.2006), p.100.

<sup>30</sup> Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010-2014 Stratejik Planı, Ankara 2009; Available at: [http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/Str\\_yon\\_planlama\\_V2/MEBStratejikPlan.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/Str_yon_planlama_V2/MEBStratejikPlan.pdf)

- Another important policy goal is the extension of early education in Turkey. The rate of Turkish children enrolled in pre-school education has dramatically increased in recent years, up to 39 per cent for children aged 4-5. The Ministry is currently implementing the “Strengthening Pre-school Education Project” with the financial support of the European Union, which aims at increasing enrollment of disadvantaged children in pre-school education and improving community-based child care and pre-school education services.
- In March 2010, the Campaign “Parenting Education” was launched to encourage parents to participate in a Parenting Education Programme coordinated by the Non-Formal Education and Apprenticeship General Directorate of the Ministry of National Education with the assistance of the EU and UNICEF. The goal of this campaign is to reach 75,000 disadvantaged families in 12 priority provinces.
- Under the General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-Formal Education, there is a network of 996 Public Education Centres (*Halk Egitim Merkezi*) which provide education for adults. In the year 2008-2009 176,110 courses were delivered to a total of 3,409,058 trainees.<sup>31</sup> The courses are grouped in three categories: vocational, socio-cultural and literacy. It was reported by other informants that in some locations there are groups of Roma women attending these courses, e.g. in Van there is a group of Roma women attending a skills course, in Istanbul there is a literacy course for 55 Roma women, and in Edirne women attend a course on child care.
- In the field of Adult Education, the project “Lifelong Learning Development Project” aims at enhancing the basic skills and basic vocational skills of adults (especially women) in 12 NUTS II regions, tailoring strategies to different age groups and different levels of education.
- The Ministry of National Education has a Project Coordination Center developing, coordinating and implementing projects funded by donors. The Project Coordinator Center has submitted several projects to IPA components I and IV, addressing problems which are relevant to the situation of Roma children as regards gender equality and also to the prevention of early school drop-out.

#### Key policy challenges in the area of Education

- ✓ Ensuring access to education for Roma children and enrollment of unregistered children into the school system despite the absence of appropriate identity documents, paying special attention to Roma girls by targeted efforts to outreach their parents.
- ✓ Preventing and tackling school absenteeism and early drop-out in primary education, with a special focus on Roma girls, involving all institutional actors concerned at the local level, and removing barriers, such as lack of economic means, difficulties in reaching distant school centres, inappropriate clothing, etc. by means of ad hoc support, with special emphasis on Roma girls.

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<sup>31</sup> Data from the Ministry of National Education.

- ✓ Raising awareness of the importance of education among Roma parents, with a special emphasis on the importance of education for Roma girls, and improving communication between Roma parents and school centres. Encouraging the education institutions to strengthen relations with Roma parents and involve them in regular activities.
- ✓ Investing efforts to increase quality standards in education in those schools with a high proportion of Roma students. Attracting and retaining highly competent teachers in schools from areas with a low socio-economic level where Roma live.
- ✓ Avoiding to the greatest possible extent high concentrations of Roma children in school centers and considering de-concentration approaches of Roma children from these schools to other schools.
- ✓ Establishing methodologies for providing additional support for pupils with low level of acquisition.
- ✓ Actively promoting the transition to secondary education of Roma students, with a particular emphasis on Roma girls, by providing necessary public awareness and support measures (e.g. tutoring, transportation, after-school support).
- ✓ Increasing the rate of enrollment of Roma children in pre-school education.
- ✓ Establishing criteria for equal treatment of Roma children in the school system.
- ✓ Raising awareness among education professionals about aspects of the Roma situation and culture by organising training and workshops.
- ✓ Facilitating discussion, exchange of knowledge and mutual learning between professionals and Roma themselves.
- ✓ Improving data about the situation of Roma in relation to education - paying special attention to the situation of Roma girls - by stimulating research and monitoring.
- ✓ Improving basic education and literacy among Roma adults - with special attention to Roma women - by outreaching information on adult education provision and adapting it to specific circumstances or demands.

### ***3.2. Improving housing conditions***

#### **Policy framework**

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey states that:"The State shall take measures to meet the needs of housing within the framework of a plan which takes into account the characteristics of cities and environmental conditions and shall support mass housing projects" (article 57).

In the Emergency Action Plan of the Government under its Social Policies Heading article SP 45 urges that low-income groups will be provided with adequate housing units within a short period of time and with low repayments.<sup>32</sup>

In 2005 the Law on the Protection of Deteriorated Historic and Cultural Heritage through Renewal and Re-use (Act 5366) was enacted. This law gave local authorities powers to transform dilapidated historic areas by declaring sites as “renewal areas”. The implementation of the law has been criticised by different groups due to some shortcomings: renewal projects only refer to physical structure without regard to social dimension; participation of local residents in decision-making is not envisaged; the law gives power to local authorities to expropriate property and sell it to third parties.<sup>33</sup>

In relation to the housing needs of Roma, the Prime Minister of Turkey has announced a plan to improve the housing conditions of Roma, to be implemented by the Housing Development Administration (TOKI)<sup>34</sup> in cooperation with local authorities. This plan aims to build some 10,000 housing units for Roma for small monthly installments. At the time of writing this report, it is expected that during the summer of 2010 projects will be launched for some 2,500 housing units for Roma people in Edirne-Ke\_an, Tekirda\_, Düzce, Ankara, Balıkesir, Edirne , Kütahya and Manisa.

In relation to Roma groups, four pilot projects have at present been started: two in Edirne, one in Sakarya and one in Bursa. These pilot projects are based on tailoring houses to Roma needs and involve the building of social facilities such as social centers or schools, as well as commercial centers. For this, some exploratory analysis on Roma lifestyle was carried out, although it was recognised that Roma themselves did not participate. Another issue is the need for suitable land, which is addressed together with the municipalities.

#### Key policy challenges in the area of Housing

- ✓ Improving accommodation of Roma, fostering an integrated community development approach.
- ✓ Carrying out inclusive urban regeneration policies avoiding spatial segregation of Roma, allowing them to access social infrastructure and fostering their participation in overall society.
- ✓ Designing and implementing comprehensive social inclusion programmes integrated with re-habilitation or re-housing plans.

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<sup>32</sup> See <http://www.toki.gov.tr/english/recent.asp>

<sup>33</sup> Dinçer, I.; Enlil, Z.; Islam, T. (2008) Regeneration in a New Context: A New Act on Renewal and its Implications on the Planning Processes in Istanbul. Bridging the Divide: Celebrating the City. ACESP-AESOP Fourth Joint Congress, July 6-11 2009 Chicago Illinois.

<sup>34</sup> TOKI works under the auspices of the Prime Minister dealing with the construction of public housing, social infrastructure, and with urban renewal and transformation of slum areas. TOKI does not deal with social support; it only focuses on building infrastructure. Social support is to be provided by other actors.

- ✓ Ensuring consultation and participation of Roma in the framework of urban renewal plans, as well as in the planning and implementation of socially accompanying measures.
- ✓ Preventing insecure tenure in the context of urban renewal plans.
- ✓ Raising awareness among Roma about existing legal protection in this area.
- ✓ Preventing loss of housing due to lack of payments, reinforcing social protection and social transfers.
- ✓ Mapping and assessing the housing situation and the housing needs of the Roma population.

### 3.3. *Improving health*

#### Policy framework

The Medium Term Programme of the State Planning Organisation (SPO) for the period 2010-2012 includes, under the Developing Axis “Strengthening Human Development and Social Solidarity”, the objective of “Improving Health System”. It says: “The main objective of health policy is to ensure that all citizens will take part in economic and social life as healthy individuals and to raise their quality of life. Within this framework, i) Implementation of family medicine will be made widespread, ii) Accessibility to health services will be increased, iii) Preventive health services will be strengthened and made widespread”.<sup>35</sup>

The health system in Turkey guarantees access to low-income citizens not covered by the social security scheme through the green card system introduced in 1992, by the Law on the issue of Green Cards to citizens incapable of paying for Health Care Services No. 3816 (18/6/1992).

A “Health Transformation Programme” was put into implementation in 2003 for, inter alia, facilitating access to health services and improving service provision. As a result, numbers of primary health centres and professionals have increased significantly (from 5,050 in 2003 to 7,122 as of January 2009) and public expenditure on health has also increased.

The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health for the period 2009-2013 identifies as one of its goals “To improve health and to ensure that all citizens have access to healthy life programmes”. Specific objectives are improving maternal and child health, strengthening primary health care services and generalizing the implementation of family medicine throughout the country up until 2010.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Republic of Turkey Medium Term Programme (2010-2012)*, Undersecretariat of State Planning Organisation, September 2009. (Cabinet Decree No. 2009/15430, 14.07.2009, published in Official Gazette No.27351, 16.09.2009).

<sup>36</sup> *Health Transformation Programme in Turkey*, Progress Report, January 2009, Prof. Recep Akdag, Ministry of Health Publication No: 749

The Health System in Turkey has introduced a performance-based remuneration system for medical professionals. Performance criteria include preventive health care services such as regular checkups of children aged 0-6, a number of different vaccinations, monitoring of pregnant women and family planning.

#### Key Policy Challenges in the field of Health

- Improving health situation of Roma in Turkey by tackling the structural determinants of health by designing and implementing multidimensional integrated interventions.
- Ensuring access to health care free of charge to all Roma in Turkey outside the social security scheme and without economic means.
- Ensuring medical checkups for pregnant women as well as vaccination and periodical checkups of children aged 0-6.
- Enhancing health education among Roma groups, including health education on hygiene, nutrition, healthy habits, family planning, diseases, etc.
- Attracting Roma parents to parental education training programmes.
- Outreaching Roma groups with information campaigns on, amongst other things, health promotion, mental health and drug abuse.
- Improving communication, interaction and mutual trust between Roma and primary health care services by increasing the knowledge of sanitary professionals about the socio-economic situation and cultural background of Roma groups.
- Improving knowledge about the health situation of Roma by gathering and analysing data.

### *3.4. Improving employment opportunities*

#### Policy Framework

The Ninth Development Plan of Turkey sets as a development axis “Developing Active Labour Policies”. Within this axis, the following objectives, inter alia, are envisaged:

“Qualifications and skill levels of the unemployed, disadvantaged groups vis-à-vis the labor market and labor force leaving the agricultural sector will be improved through active labor programs based on the needs of the labor market and resources appropriated to these programs will be increased.”

“Employment services will be provided for a larger number of people and their quality will be raised. Active labor market policies will be spread through labor force training and vocational training courses, primarily entrepreneurship and employment guaranteed programs, professional consultancy and guidance services, and training seminars in the industry. Active labor programs will be organized in line with the analyses of labor market requirements”.

“Micro scaled projects aimed at creating employment will be provided with financial support”.<sup>37</sup>

The Government of Turkey has increased efforts to confront the high unemployment rate in the country. Relevant for disadvantaged groups is the introduction of a social security premium incentive for job contracts of young people (aged 18-29) and women. There are widely differing employment rates of men and women in Turkey. According to the last Labour Force Survey, labour force participation rate of persons having education below high school was 70.8 per cent for male while it was 25.4 per cent for female.<sup>38</sup>

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has the responsibility to elaborate a National Employment Policy, currently underway. This ministry also has a central role in drafting the Joint Inclusion Memorandum.

Active employment policies have also been enhanced, especially by the Turkish Employment Agency \_\_KUR.<sup>39</sup> There has been an increase in promotion of vocational training activities and on-the-job training programmes in recent years. In 2009, “public workfare programmes” were introduced, specifically targeting unskilled workers. These programmes provide minimum wage and social security premiums to citizens above 18 years old registered as unemployed with \_\_KUR, in exchange for public-related work such as renovation of social infrastructure, refurbishing parks, etc.

#### Key Policy challenges in the field of Employment

- ✓ Increasing the employability of Roma men and women, especially young Roma, ensuring that they benefit from active employment policies for disadvantaged groups, that information outreaches them, that they receive counseling services according to individual needs and potential, and that they are supported during the whole job integration pathway, including on-the-job support.
- ✓ Increasing job training adapted to the individual circumstances of Roma, with special consideration to Roma women, which also respond to the real demands of the labour market.
- ✓ Involving a wide range of institutions in partnership, including employers and trade unions, for designing strategies to find job opportunities for Roma, ensuring the participation of Roma themselves.
- ✓ Improving the public image of Roma which is generally marked by prejudice, particularly targeting potential employers.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ninth Development Plan 2007-2013*, Prime Minister – State Planning Organisation. Approved by Turkish Grand National Assembly in 28.06.2006), p.99.

<sup>38</sup> See [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?tb\\_id=25&ust\\_id=8&tk\\_id=6340](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?tb_id=25&ust_id=8&tk_id=6340)

<sup>39</sup> \_\_KUR is an autonomous public organization affiliated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Its main duties are, amongst others, contributing to the national employment policy, managing the unemployment insurance system and developing active labour market programmes. \_\_KUR is organized throughout the country and provides services through a network of local offices.

- ✓ Combating discrimination practices Roma individuals may suffer, especially in access to the job market and in the work place.
- ✓ Improving knowledge about the employment situation of Roma.

### *3.5. Promoting equality and anti-discrimination*

#### Policy Framework

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey adopted in 1982 states that “All individuals are equal without any discrimination before the law, irrespective of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such considerations”. Turkey ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in 2002, the year when it entered into force.

Potentially discriminatory legal provisions were abolished in recent years, the last of them being article 21 of the Law regarding the Residence and Travel of Foreigners in Turkey according to which “The Ministry of Internal Affairs is authorized for the expulsions of the Gypsies, who are stateless or citizens of a foreign state, and of the foreigner nomads, who are not affiliated with Turkish culture”. As an outcome of the Roma Opening process, this article is being removed from the law after discussion at the National Assembly Commission.

With regard to anti-discrimination legislation, a draft law has been prepared under the Ministry of Interior and has been passed to other ministries for consultation. It will cover several grounds for discrimination, including race and ethnicity, contain definitions of direct and indirect discrimination, and establish a specialised body for preventing and combating discrimination and sanctioning discrimination deeds.

#### Key policy challenges in the field of anti-discrimination and equality

- ✓ Adopting anti-discrimination legislation on the grounds of race and ethnic origin and making it effective for Roma.
- ✓ Establishing an equality body with functions such as assisting victims of discrimination and promoting equality and making it work effectively for Roma.
- ✓ Raising awareness in public services through training about equal treatment in service delivery.
- ✓ Raising rights-awareness among Roma groups and building capacity of legal professionals and NGOs for playing an effective role in implementing anti-discrimination legislation.
- ✓ Raising awareness about discrimination practices against Roma by commissioning independent surveys and research.

### *3.6. The state of debates as regards social inclusion of Roma*

This paragraph presents an overview of the positions and expectations on Roma social inclusion from representatives of a number of institutions and organizations with a major stake in the implementation of policies and measures in fields which are relevant to social inclusion. Three main groups of stakeholders were consulted: Government stakeholders, Social Partners, and Roma and other civil society organisations.<sup>40</sup>

It was generally acknowledged by the parties consulted that Roma groups are in an extremely disadvantaged position in Turkish society. While the Ministry of National Education recognised that Roma children have an important weight in the groups with high incidence of early school drop-out, with problems of regular school attendance, with problems in transitioning to secondary education, etc, officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and from the Turkish Employment Agency \_\_KUR also acknowledged that their policies and programmes are having very little impact on Roma. Furthermore, officials from the Ministry of Health acknowledged that Roma groups may have a worse health situation than the average; officials from the State Planning Organisation (SPO) acknowledged the marginalization of large Roma groups, and officials consulted from the DG Social Assistance and Social Solidarity recognised that many Roma are not benefiting from the support they deliver and the projects they implement.

Most of the parties consulted do not generally have answers as to why mainstream services and generic programmes are not reaching Roma groups. Reasons for the social exclusion situation of Roma are often seen as problems of the Roma themselves, although it was also recognized that prejudice and social stigma reinforce barriers to their social inclusion. Officials consulted from DG Social Assistance and Solidarity and from \_\_KUR pointed at the lack of awareness of Roma about the existing possibilities as the chief problem. In the view of a representative of an employers' organisation, barriers for access to employment opportunities are a combination of the social stigma Roma suffer and their own attitude to education and formal employment. In relation to this, a member of a trade union consulted added that the social rejection problems experienced by Roma may be caused by living in ghettos rather than simply by being Roma.

Furthermore, there appears to be a lack of vision about the approaches to be followed for pursuing social inclusion of Roma. This extends to making some assumptions about what Roma want, and about the need to preserve the distinct Roma way of life by avoiding cultural assimilation. In this regard, it was pointed out by several NGO activists that the real situation of Roma and their culture is largely unknown by policy-makers and their views are dominated by stereotypes and wrong assumptions.

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<sup>40</sup> Officials and representatives of the following authorities and organizations were consulted: Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Turkish Employment Agency (\_\_KUR), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Housing Development Administration (TOKI), General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity, State Planning Organisation, State Ministry headed by Faruk Celik, HAK-IS Trade Union Confederation, Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TISK), Edirne Roma Association (EDROM), ROM-Ankara, Zero Discrimination, *Sosyal ve Kulturel Yasami Gelistirme Dernegi* (SKYGD), Bartin Roma Association, Çorlu Hıdıra\_a Neighbourhood Roma Social Assistance and Culture Association, Antakya Dom-Der, Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Human Rights Association.

The neutrality or ‘ethnic blindness’ of mainstream policies was stated by most parties consulted. The principle of “all citizens are treated equally”, and the statement that Roma can benefit from programmes and services equally with all other citizens were referred to on various occasions.

Some parties consulted, such as \_\_KUR, stressed the need to frame any effort within a broader policy for disadvantaged groups rather than creating new frameworks for Roma-focused interventions. Linked to this, others mentioned the potential risk that other socially-disadvantaged groups may perceive negatively positive discrimination measures for a specific group, and referred also to the need to approach the complexity of social inclusion from a holistic perspective, pointing out that it would be a mistake to focus exclusively on access to the labour market.

Nonetheless, on the basis of the acknowledgement of the problem, all parties consulted assumed that in the future social inclusion of Roma would be addressed with new impetus and showed generally a readiness to contribute to this goal and to cooperate with other agents. In this regard,

- the Ministry of National Education has planned a workshop in autumn 2010 to bring together academics, representatives of Roma organizations and representatives of school institutions to carry out an analysis of the problems Roma face in education and to discuss the most effective ways to tackle them. Under this same Ministry, another official expressed interest in preparing projects to address the specific situation of Roma children in the future. Furthermore, the Board of Inspectors under this Ministry has designed a project in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture to carry out integrated actions with the Roma population in Koycegiz;
- consulted officials at \_\_KUR expressed an openness to cooperate with other institutions to seek ways of addressing the exclusion of Roma from the labour market and stated they can contribute to Roma social inclusion in two ways: by giving more visibility to \_\_KUR programmes amongst Roma groups, and providing practical guidance on how to participate. In this regard it was stated that \_\_KUR in its capacity of IPA beneficiary may deliver training on how to participate;
- the SPO’s consulted officials considered that more projects could be financed in the future for Roma since the SODES Programme (*Sosyal Destek Programi*) will expand to all regions in Turkey by 2011, thus being available for social inclusion actions in Western regions where most Roma live.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The SPO has implemented since 2007 the SODES Programme in 25 provinces of South-Eastern Turkey financing 775 individual projects implemented by public and civil society organizations. One of them was specifically targeted at the Roma population, in particular, the project “Getting Gypsy children into the school”, implemented by the elementary school “Nisan” in the Fatih District of Adiyaman. This project was specifically aimed at enrolling unschooled children in school, providing support (e.g. financial, uniforms, extra-curricular activities, etc.) and raising awareness among Roma parents about the need to keep their children at school.

It is also worth noting that officials from various Government institutions expressed interest in getting to know model practices that have proved to be successful in other countries.

Nonetheless, the lack of disaggregated data is perceived by some as a barrier to starting action. The social exclusion problems of Roma are acknowledged but their real extent is poorly known. Several parties consulted pointed to the need to start by producing better data. For example, for a trade union representative who manifested full support for pursuing Roma social inclusion, the start of action should be launching an in-depth study on Roma groups in Turkey which would allow a sufficient gain of knowledge to determine 'what to do next'. Others, such as the president of a Roma NGO, stated on the contrary that while studies are important, action should not wait until comprehensive diagnostics are completed because this may take too long to happen.

In relation to the European Union financial assistance (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance), it has been underlined in preceding sections that it provides good opportunities to promote measures directed at Roma social inclusion. Officials consulted at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security from the Operating Structure of the Human Resources Operational Programme under IPA component IV considered that in the future more projects aimed at improving Roma conditions could be funded by this instrument, as well as being possible that future operational programmes set some specific objectives in relation to Roma inclusion. However, some parties consulted expressed concern about the capabilities of potential beneficiary organisations to design sound proposals, considering there is not much knowledge at present in Turkey on methods of approaching this subject.

On a different matter, the importance of involving Governorships and local Government structures was emphasised by several informants. In the opinion of an expert on social inclusion, action should be encouraged at local level where, despite the availability of funds there may not be enough vision about what to do. The importance of local institutions was also remarked on by several Roma representatives. At the level of Governors and local authorities, individual examples of goodwill to support Roma social inclusion were reported, while in other cases attitudes of authorities appear to be much less positive. Nonetheless, it was underlined that positive examples are not framed in any systematic approach. Likewise, a representative of an employers' organisation emphasized that specific action is needed at the grass-roots level and that local authorities are very important agents in pursuing inclusion in the areas of education and employment. In relation to the latter area, a specific example was mentioned: the *Provincial Vocational Education and Employment Boards*, (tripartite boards chaired by Governors, or their deputies), were proposed as a potentially functional mechanism for assessing training needs of Roma and initiating specific projects.

In relation to the commitment shown by the Prime Minister to address Roma problems, it must be noted it was generally welcome, especially by Roma representatives and NGOs, who see it as an unprecedented meaningful recognition of the situation of Roma groups in Turkey, as well as a window of opportunity for moving ahead. However, concerns were also expressed about the risk of the process losing momentum and not being translated into positive outcomes if a clearer policy framework is not established. For others, the immaturity of the Roma civil society movement when it comes to

participation in policy-making is perceived as a barrier to making progress. It was noted that if Roma representatives were able to influence authorities more effectively with clear proposals the process could be progressing more speedily.

### *3.7. An emerging civil society movement*

Rights-based Roma organisations have recently been developing in Turkey. The Roma in Turkey have been establishing rights-based organizations/associations approximately since the beginning of the 2000s. The first associations were the Izmir Roma Association, the National Roma Confederation in 2000 and the Edirne Roma Association. Particularly since 2005, due to changes in legislation which allowed associations to be founded on cultural grounds, the number of Roma associations has increased dramatically, up to some 60 in 2009. Various Roma associations have also established federations: the Roma Association Federation, the Ege Roma Association Federation, the Akdeniz Roma Association Federation and the Çanakkale Roma Associations Federation were the first ones to be established.

One motive behind the increasing mobilisation in the second part of the last decade is the integration process of Turkey with the European Union. Kolukirik/Tokta\_ states that “[e]specially since 2005, there has been a proliferation in the number of associations founded by the Roma...The legislative reform packages passed to fulfil EU requirements...expanded the freedom of opinion, expression and association as well as the Law on Associations amended in 2004 in accordance with EU demands allowing associations to be founded on cultural and ethnic grounds”.<sup>42</sup>

Since the meeting of 14 March with the Prime Minister, there has been a proliferation of new Roma associations which at present amount to around 120. The same has happened with the establishment of new federations which now number more than 10.

It is reported that only a limited number of the registered associations can be considered active, (e.g. Izmir, Edirne, Bandirma, Mersin, Bursa). There is a general view that many of the new Roma associations were established with the intention of accessing funds or benefits from the new measures announced by the Government.

In terms of organizational capacity, only a few organizations have the capacity to organize their work with a defined strategy. Furthermore, most of them lack premises, facilities and personnel. Some of the more developed organisations (e.g. Edirne, Ankara) participate in projects with donor assistance.

In terms of capacity to interact with other institutions, the general impression is that very few organizations know how to relate to Government institutions. Nevertheless, at local level, the more developed organizations cooperate with local authorities, Governorships and other institutions and are often able to maintain positive interaction. Some organizations cooperate with community centers or with \_\_KUR (e.g Izmir and Mersin). There are also examples of cooperation between Roma associations and other Non-Roma NGOs (Edirne, Ankara).

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<sup>42</sup> Kolukirik, S. and Tokta\_, \_ (2007) “Turkey’s Roma: Political Participation and Organization”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.43. No.5, p.765.

In terms of capacity of action, some organizations are functional for the community in helping Roma to deal with bureaucratic procedures for obtaining ID papers, helping access to health services as well as informing about health campaigns or catch-up education.

Some weaknesses pointed out about some Roma associations are that they serve the electoral interests of the local politicians in exchange for support for the association or community - either a commitment to do something to benefit the community (e.g. fixing the road), or some minor support for the running of the association (e.g. furniture, computer, etc.). Another weakness is that some associations do not always represent the interests of the local Roma group, but rather the interests of a kin network or a family.

In this sense Kolukırık/Tokta\_ have noted that “the biggest hurdle to the organization of the Turkish Roma is the lack of common stance or unity among them”.<sup>43</sup> The authors also add that the “lack of trust also hinders the Roma from actively working in an association or getting organized under an association. Since the Romani community, by and large, is part of the lower class of the society, this low socio-economic status also contributes to the low levels of organization. In is in this context that the existing Romani associations are limited in scope and membership diversity, and are participated in and run by a small group of Roma”.<sup>44</sup>

According to \_ncirlio\_lu, many Roma in Turkey realised that it was impossible to struggle with the discrimination that they faced on an individual basis and thus recognised the need for organisation. However, according to \_ncirlio\_lu, Romani organisations struggle with serious problems. \_ncirlio\_lu states that some of the obstacles they face are common to most civil society organisations while some are the results of them being *Çingene*. For \_ncirlio\_lu, discrimination, prejudice, financial problems and inexperience in dealing with bureaucracy are some of the chief *external* obstacles. \_ncirlio\_lu also comments that *internal* problems are more important. According to \_ncirlio\_lu, internal problems include: dispersion of Roma communities all over the country, isolated from each other; differences in self-identity among various Roma groups; class stratification among Roma manifested as differences in either income level or lifestyle.<sup>45</sup> The author emphasises that her “findings present that *Çingene* mobilisation is extremely crucial to defend the rights of *Çingene* yet this process very difficult and slow [...] Problems such as reproduction of prejudices about Roma can only be solved through organisations. However, chief obstacles before the organisations are rooted in discrimination and prejudices. It will take some time to break this vicious circle”.<sup>46</sup>

Other important issues that Uzpeder highlights include the failure of associations to streamline general purposes into concrete objectives; not having clear goals and focus; common misconception amongst many Romani activists that donors provide support for

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<sup>43</sup> Kolukırık, S. and Tokta\_, \_ . *op. cit.* p.774

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p.775

<sup>45</sup> Incirlio\_lu, E.O. (2005) ‘\_ecaat Arzederken Merd: Türkiye Çingenelerinin Örgütlenme Sorunları’ [The Organization Problems of the Turkish Roma], in G. Putlar and T. Erman [eds.], *Türk(ıye) Kültürleri* [Cultures of Turkey] Istanbul: Tetragon Yayınevi, p.183.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188

any kind of “project” related to Roma issues furthers the “project myth”; lack of knowledge about the legislation on associations, and lack of cooperation with other rights-based organisations.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, Uzpeder and Diler mention the increasing number of Romani university students as a significant step forward for Roma rights movement.<sup>48</sup>

The Roma associations were brought together in a workshop held in December organised by the State Minister, Faruk Celik, where they presented their demands to the Government. Apart from the over-reaching demand to change the negative image of Roma in Turkish society and prevent discrimination, they specifically demanded improved education facilities and support, the provision of vocational training compatible with their culture, social accommodation tailored to their needs and more health facilities in their neighbourhoods. They also demanded that bureaucratic procedures for obtaining identity cards be simplified and that subsidies should be provided for strengthening their associations, and also that Turkey joins the decade for Roma Inclusion.

General perceptions about the role of Roma associations in the process of establishing dialogue with Government at national level are not positive so far. Disorganisation, fragmentation and personal agendas are perceived to be hampering the process of establishing a positive interaction with Government representatives to support the process launched after the December workshop. In that workshop a Committee comprised of representatives from 11 Roma associations was established to continue dialogue with the Government. According to reports, there appear to be new initiatives underway to establish new platforms.

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<sup>47</sup> Uzpeder, E, *Op. cit.* p.125

<sup>48</sup> Uzpeder, E. *Op cit.* p. 127; Diler, M. “The Survivors: Roma University Students in Turkey”. Unpublished M.Sc. thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Social Science of Middle East Technical University. 2008. p. 134-135

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED FROM EU PRACTICE AND KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TURKEY

### 4.1. EU practice and lessons learned

The recent EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 have implied a turn in the way Roma inclusion is addressed within the EU. The demographic weight of the Roma population in some EU Member States, as well as in the EU as a whole, together with the awareness of the severe social and economic disadvantage affecting many Roma across Europe has placed the issue of Roma inclusion high on the agenda of European institutions and has stimulated EU institutions and Member States to define policies and to agree on principles.

There has been a progressive consensus on the centrality of social inclusion when tackling the inter-related issues affecting the Roma population. This approach has allowed the Roma population to become a target group specifically considered within EU policies and measures. EU institutions and Member States have recognised common principles with regard to Roma social inclusion and there is a shared approach as result of the experience gained over the last few years as well as a willingness to learn together from success and failure. Future EU enlargements as well as relations of European institutions with candidate countries should be built on this experience and incorporate these shared approaches.

At national level, EU Member States have developed diverse policies over recent years concerning the Roma population, with measures such as the creation of specific bodies within the governmental structures, the elaboration of national plans and strategies, the allocation of specific funds, etc. European institutions have addressed Roma inclusion mainly through political measures, legislative initiatives and the provision of economic resources. A key issue is to use existing instruments in a more efficient way, both financial ones (mainly EU Structural Funds) and legal ones such as the Directive 2000/43/EC “Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial and ethnic origin”.

The social inclusion of the Roma is a joint priority of national governments and the EU institutions. The European Commission has political influence and leadership, provides guidance and plays a coordination role (and its role should be even stronger according to the European Parliament<sup>49</sup>). However, national governments have the primary responsibility for social inclusion of the Roma.

Recently, the European institutions and Member States recognised a series of guiding principles for addressing the disadvantaged situation of the Roma: the **10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion** reflect the accumulated experiences through various projects, programmes and policies taking place in different Member States and an analysis of what strategies and approaches have created added value and positive

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<sup>49</sup> European Parliament Resolution of 31 January 2008 on a European strategy on the Roma. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0035+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

impact on the Roma communities. These 10 Basic Principles have been agreed within the context of the European Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion under the Czech Presidency. At the *Council Conclusions on advancing Roma Inclusion* adopted 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010 (Article 27), the Council invites the Commission and the Member States to take them into account in the design and implementation of all relevant policies and to develop orientation and support to facilitate their practical implementation.

<b>10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies.</li><li>2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting.</li><li>3. Inter-cultural approach.</li><li>4. Aiming for the mainstream.</li><li>5. Awareness of the gender dimension.</li><li>6. Transfer of evidence-based policies.</li><li>7. Use of Community Instruments.</li><li>8. Involvement of regional and local authorities.</li><li>9. Involvement of civil society.</li><li>10. Active participation of the Roma.</li></ol>

Recent developments at EU level have reinforced the idea of the need for increased cooperation among key stakeholders to advance the social inclusion of the Roma population, unifying criteria and approaches at EU and national level. The European Parliament Resolutions<sup>50</sup> as well as the recent European Commission Communication on *The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe* (7th April)<sup>51</sup>, together with the Conclusions on advancing Roma inclusion (7th June)<sup>52</sup>, the Joint Trio Statement on the occasion of the II Roma Summit (Córdoba, 8-9 April)<sup>53</sup>, are key documents that set the guidelines for future developments within the European context.

The Commission Communication has a clear social and economic approach towards Roma inclusion and offers new arguments. Roma inclusion has traditionally been considered as a question linked to equal opportunities, social solidarity, human rights, etc. Now it includes the “economic benefits” of Roma inclusion: “*The full integration of*

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<sup>50</sup> Resolutions of the European Parliament of: 28 April 2005 on the situation of the Roma in the European Union (OJ C 45 E); 1 June 2006 on the situation of Roma women in the European Union (OJ C 298 E); 31 January 2008 on a European strategy on the Roma (P6\_TA(2008)0035); 11 March 2009 on the social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU (P6\_TA(2009)0117); and 25 March 2010 on the Second European Roma Summit (P7\_TA-PROV(2010)0085).

<sup>51</sup> COM(2010)133 final. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0133:EN:NOT>

<sup>52</sup> Council Conclusions on advancing Roma Inclusion. 7th June 2010. Available at: [http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/agenda/agenda\\_junio/jun07\\_romani.pdf](http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/agenda/agenda_junio/jun07_romani.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Joint Statement by the Trio Presidency (Spain, Belgium, Hungary) on the Occasion of the Second Roma Summit. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=es&eventsId=234&furtherEvents=yes>

*Roma will have important economic benefits for our societies, especially for those countries with a shrinking population which cannot afford to exclude a large part of their potential labour force”.*<sup>54</sup> A recent study of the World Bank on the economic costs of Roma exclusion in four European countries proves that they are losing hundreds of millions of Euros annually in productivity and in fiscal contributions to the governments.<sup>55</sup>

## **Key Approaches**

### ***Aiming for the mainstream and explicit targeting***

The experience has demonstrated that mainstream measures by themselves do not reach most socially excluded groups, and even less such groups as the Roma who are often distant from the system. On the other hand, in those countries that have mainly opted for offering targeted measures exclusively for the Roma population, these measures have led to segregation in public policy and have had limited social impact.

The combined use of mainstream and targeted actions appears to be the most successful option to address social inclusion for Roma. This balance is reached by combining social policies inclusive with the Roma population with targeted measures to compensate for greater inequalities, allowing a slow but sustained social inclusion process. This idea is supported by some of the Ten Basic Principles: *Aiming for the mainstream* and *Explicit but not exclusive targeting*. It implies, on the one hand, going beyond the idea that all Roma problems are linked exclusively to social assistance and services, when indeed they are also linked to employment, education, housing, equal treatment, etc. Explicit mention of Roma as beneficiaries of mainstream policies is strongly encouraged. On the other hand it is also recommended that other social disadvantaged groups with similar socio-economic conditions should not be excluded when designing and implementing social inclusion policies. Both the European Commission Communication as well as the Council Conclusions reinforce this approach of mainstreaming Roma inclusion into all relevant European, national, regional and local policies: *“Mainstreaming Roma inclusion issues into the broad policy areas of education, employment, public health, infrastructure and urban planning, and economic and territorial development, rather than treating it as a separate policy (...) Mainstreaming does not invalidate the promotion of integrated and tailor-made approaches that take the specific situation of Roma communities in the Member States into consideration.”*<sup>56</sup>

This combination of targeting and mainstreaming approaches also refers to gender, namely, how Roma women are to be specifically targeted within policies aimed at the

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<sup>54</sup> European Commission Communication on *The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe* (7th April 2010)

<sup>55</sup> The study in four EU countries explores the enormous productivity losses and fiscal costs resulting from the wide exclusion from the labour market of working-age Roma. The report highlights, “investing into inclusive and quality education is not only the best social choice but also the economically smart choice to make”. *Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion*, World Bank Europe and Central Asia Human Development Department, 2010. Summary available at: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic\\_Costs\\_Roma\\_Exclusion\\_Note\\_Final.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic_Costs_Roma_Exclusion_Note_Final.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> European Commission Communication 2010, *op. cit.*

social inclusion of Roma, since they are understood to have specific needs, exposed to particularly high risks and extra disadvantages which need to be tackled. Special attention has thus been given to Roma women in various EU documents. As stated in the European Commission report on Roma Women, gender equality is an important issue for the EU and evidence shows that ethnic minority women are more vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty than women of the native population and minority men.<sup>57</sup> The specificity of Roma women has been also acknowledged by the European Parliament through its Resolution on Roma women in the European Union.<sup>58</sup> It also appears in all key documents related to Roma inclusion<sup>59</sup> where key references to Roma gender equality or the need to adopt a gender perspective at the EU level are multiple. Specific references to gender mainstreaming refer to the need for the gender dimension to be systematically integrated into the analysis of instruments and policies, both by the EU and by Member States.<sup>60</sup>

### ***Integrated approach***

Another key approach addressed by the Commission Communication relates to the need to integrate interventions in order to achieve real social inclusion, since exclusion is not a one-sided problem but rather an interrelation between various factors: *“The complexity and interdependence of the problems calls for sustainable responses which tackle all aspects of Roma deprivation through an integrated approach. Low educational attainment, labour market barriers, segregation in housing and other areas, and poor health outcomes need to be addressed simultaneously”*.

Furthermore, the need to adapt the interventions to the heterogeneity of situations encountered has been acknowledged by the European Commission Communication on *The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe* (7th April) through the concept of Developing Model Approaches, namely, to define not one single strategy “one size fits all” but rather to develop *“differentiated approaches that take account of geographical, economic, social, cultural and legal contexts”*<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> European Commission report *Ethnic Minorities and Roma Women in Europe. A case for gender equality? DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities*. 2008.  
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=813&langId=en>

<sup>58</sup> *European Parliament resolution on the situation of Roma women in the European Union* (2005/2164(INI). P6\_TA(2006)0244. Available at:  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P6-TA-2006-0244>

<sup>59</sup> *European Parliament resolution on a European strategy on the Roma*. P6\_TA(2008)0035. 31 January 2008. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0035&language=EN>; *Council Conclusions on inclusion of the Roma*. 2914th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting. Brussels, 8 December 2008. 16862/08 (Presse 359). Available at: [http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article\\_8359\\_en.htm](http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_8359_en.htm) and <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st15/st15976-re01.en08.pdf>

*Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe, Brussels, 7.4.2010 COM(2010)133 final.*

<sup>60</sup> *Commission Staff Working Document: Roma in Europe: The Implementation of European Union Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion – Progress Report 2008-2010*, Brussels, 7.4.2010 SEC(2010) 400 final.

<sup>61</sup> Four major types can be identified: 1. Roma communities living in disadvantaged, highly concentrated (sub)urban districts, possibly close to other ethnic minorities and disadvantaged members of the majority; 2. Roma communities living in disadvantaged parts of small cities/villages in rural regions and in segregated rural settlements isolated from majority cities/villages; 3. Mobile Roma communities with citizenship of the

## *Use of community instruments*

The use of existing EU financial instruments to address Roma needs and improve their living conditions is a message emphasised by the three documents mentioned. The experience of the Structural Funds, which can be translated also to other EU financial instruments such as IPA, shows that they have increasingly become a pivotal financial and political instrument to tackle the disadvantages encountered by Roma in an effective and practical way. Furthermore, they constitute a powerful mechanism for the articulation of national Roma policies with the active participation of all stakeholders.

As regards the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), between 2008 and 2010 the European Commission raised awareness and encouraged enlargement countries to develop targeted projects on Roma as well as mainstreaming of Roma issues in projects on civil society, education, employment, social inclusion, housing etc.

As stated in the recently published report “*Roma and the Structural Funds*” by the EURoma Network,<sup>62</sup> the added value of these funds is multiple: they offer a long-term approach, extensive financial support, the opportunity for combining action at various levels (national and local); they offer an opportunity for strong partnerships, for capacity building, and most importantly, they are an opportunity to target the most excluded groups while mainstreaming Roma inclusion. This potential shows how EU funds should consolidate its role not only as financial resources but also as political instruments.<sup>63</sup>

To sum up, recent political developments at EU level provide new opportunities to support Roma social inclusion in a more efficient way and with shared approaches. EU measures and instruments can play a key role in supporting both Member States and candidate countries in their efforts to tackle the needs of the Roma population and to correct inequalities.

## *4.2. Policy recommendations per policy area*

Several initiatives have assessed existing good practices regarding Roma social inclusion in Europe. The European Commission Staff working Document in 2008,<sup>64</sup> and its recent Communication<sup>65</sup> and Progress Report<sup>66</sup> in 2010 has identified trends and approaches that could be said to be more effective than others in their objective of

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country or of another EU country; 4. Mobile and sedentary Roma communities who are third-country nationals, refugees, stateless persons or asylum seekers. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0133:EN:NOT>

<sup>62</sup> EURoma (European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds) is a European Network made up of representatives of twelve Member States, determined to promote the use of Structural Funds to enhance the effectiveness of policies targeting Roma people and to promote their social inclusion ([www.euromanet.eu](http://www.euromanet.eu)).

<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, as latest development the recent Trio Statement proposed “the introduction of some minimum requirements in EU funds allocation in order to ensure the equal access of Roma to resources”.

<sup>64</sup> Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions. Non-discrimination and equal opportunities. A renewed commitment, COM (2008) 420.

<sup>65</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0133:EN:NOT>

<sup>66</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=518&langId=en>

achieving the social inclusion of Roma. Successful examples demonstrate how “*integrated Roma strategies which address the complexity of the problems (...) are much more effective than isolated projects which address only one or two issues*”.<sup>67</sup>

Policy recommendations in the different areas described in this section relate to specific measures and approaches that have been tested through various experiences and have been identified as leading to the social inclusion of Roma; many of them may have been from the outset pilot tailor-made interventions but have become over time included in general policy.

#### 4.2.1. Key Recommendations in the field of Education

Different European initiatives as well as recommendations by international organizations<sup>68</sup> show that in order to achieve effective results when addressing the educational situation of Roma a number of key elements must be considered.

These elements will be seen in relation to the current policy goals of the Turkish Government in the area of education, as expressed in the National Development Plan of Turkey and in the Strategy of the Ministry of National Education seen in the preceding chapter. Some recommendations and examples can also well be adapted to the existing programmes to improve the education of disadvantaged groups.

- ✓ ***Ensuring enrolment in school by supporting students and families throughout the compulsory period of formal education***, ensuring that local educational institutions do not prevent the enrolment of children due to their ethnic origin or that bureaucratic criteria (such as having a proper identification card for example) do not deny the child’s right to education. It can also be achieved through the involvement of parents in education, initiatives to reduce drop-out rates, after-school measures,<sup>69</sup> the provision of free textbooks and other educational materials, scholarships, anti-bias and tolerance training for teachers, and the use of school mediators. Developing a set of actions that include students, families, teachers and other key actors is essential.

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<sup>67</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0133:EN:NOT>

<sup>68</sup> Council of Europe. Recommendation CM/Rec (2009) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe. 2009. Available at: [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec\(2009\)4&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2009)4&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

Farkas, L. (2007) *Segregation of Roma Children in Education. Addressing Structural Discrimination through the Race Equality Directive*, European Commission. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=813&langId=en&moreDocuments=yes>

Fundamental Rights Agency (2006) *Roma and Travellers in Public Education. An overview of the situation in the EU Member states*. Available at: [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/roma\\_report.pdf](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/roma_report.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Drawing on experience of other projects and with support from the Roma Education Fund (REF), the centre in Rimavské Štúrovo, the first after-school center in Slovakia, was successful in improving school performance and progression among 80 disadvantaged children (75 of whom are Roma) through extra lessons and structured free-time activities. This project shows the experience of adapting and implementing the after-school model in Slovakia.

In Turkey, the key challenge of preventing school drop-out and ensuring continuity in the education of Roma children can be addressed within the framework of the current efforts of the Ministry of National Education to monitor school attendance. Tackling school absenteeism involves the efforts of key actors and the decisive involvement of Roma parents, so specific targeted measures should be framed in wider integrated community interventions. Increased efforts to outreach Roma in the context of the MONE “Catch Up Education Programme” can also have an impact on the Roma youngsters who were not enrolled in school or abandoned prematurely.

A necessary element for meeting the above challenges and a key challenge itself is to raise the awareness of Roma families about the importance of education and to stimulate increased interaction with the school centres. The current *Parenting Education Programme* in Turkey could be adapted to the Roma situation. For this, outreach efforts would be necessary.

#### PROMOCIONA Programme, Spain

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) in Spain includes in their Operative Programme of Fight against Discrimination 2007-2013 (ACCEDER programme) a specific strand for educational actions as a previous and necessary link for the labour market insertion of the Roma population. This sub-programme is called *Promociona* (Promote).

This programme aims at reducing school drop-out among Roma students and fosters the completion of compulsory education and the transitioning to secondary studies. The primary targets of this programme are not only Roma students, but also their families, the schools, and other relevant stakeholders. To ensure the permanence and increase the success of Roma students *Promociona* defines three levels of intervention: individual support (counselling, etc.), group support (*Promociona* classes: academic and pedagogic assistance, school support, etc.) and community work (non-formal education with social agents, schools, and other key players in the students’ environment).

Further information:

[http://www.gitanos.org/upload/32/21/Folleto\\_PROMOCIONA\\_FSG.pdf](http://www.gitanos.org/upload/32/21/Folleto_PROMOCIONA_FSG.pdf) (in Spanish).

- ✓ ***The education system can be either the greatest barrier or enabler of the social inclusion of Roma. Mainstream education should be ensured for all persons***, implementing a nation-wide strategy effective at the local level,<sup>70</sup> and when needed, special measures should be introduced to engage all relevant stakeholders, such as local authorities and schools, and to provide training for teachers as well as information for parents and students.
- ✓ ***Expanding access to pre-school education***, since it is known to have a very positive impact on the further cognitive development of children. Appropriate measures include information campaigns, assistance with the registration process and work with parents to promote pre-school attendance.

In Turkey, this challenge could be framed within the current efforts to strengthen pre-school education for disadvantaged groups of the Ministry of National Education. Bearing in mind that pre-school education is not compulsory and that the

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<sup>70</sup> An example of bridging mainstreaming and targeting approaches is provided by the United Kingdom’s Traveller Education Support Services, which links a specific initiative within the general education policy framework supported by mainstream education budgets.

overall enrolment is still low, this challenge must be addressed over a long period of time. Early childhood development could also be addressed by means of nursery services provided in social services centres within the framework of broader community development programmes.

- ✓ ***Long term strategies for the abolition of segregated schools are needed.***<sup>71</sup> Both interventions to fight existing segregated schools and prevention measures should be taken.

As highlighted in the preceding chapter there is no institutional segregation in Turkey. Yet residential concentration of Roma results in high proportions of Roma children in some schools, and it has already been underlined that a high concentration of Roma pupils has a negative impact on their level of attainment. Measures such as splitting Roma pupils into different schools are complex and require special efforts to sensitise Roma parents and children, as well as support at all levels (school centres, transport, funding), and the close cooperation and commitment of different actors, including Roma parents themselves. These types of measures could be experimented with in Turkey in the context of a pilot intervention in a location where favourable conditions are found.

#### **Evaluation of the National Hungarian's School Integration Programme (OOIH)**

This is a study presenting the benefits of the initiative run by the Hungarian government in desegregating classes and schools in 35 elementary institutions in geographical areas with over-representation of Roma since the year 2003. The programme required schools to provide education in non-segregated classes and provided schools with complex support in the educational, managerial and financial spheres. This governmental initiative was initially funded by national funds and subsequently by EU Structural Funds.

The research was carried out in 30 schools of those included in the programme and the results have been compared to a control sample of 30 other schools not participating in the government initiative but sharing some characteristics with it. The research took place during the period 2005-2007.

Some of the findings of this research showed that:

- Students of the schools programme achieve higher grades, their reading skills are also better, and they are more likely to pursue further education in secondary schools that provide a graduating examination than their peers in control schools. The effects on cognitive and academic development are largest for the Roma students. It is positive, if often modest, for all student groups.
- Ethnic prejudice against the Roma is also positively affected by the program. Non-Roma students of the schools programme see the Roma in a less stereotyped way, and they keep less of a social distance from them."

Further info (in English):

[http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/A0F71511-4E3A-4894-A714-9A0118289619/FinalDownload/DownloadId-174B00238834F8319A500A1953498A66/A0F71511-4E3A-4894-A714-9A0118289619/documents/OOIH\\_english\\_kezdi.pdf](http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/A0F71511-4E3A-4894-A714-9A0118289619/FinalDownload/DownloadId-174B00238834F8319A500A1953498A66/A0F71511-4E3A-4894-A714-9A0118289619/documents/OOIH_english_kezdi.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Some EU countries share specific critical situations regarding segregation and have therefore, to various degrees, focused their intervention in this direction. It is the case of Bulgaria, Italy, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary (the latter being the Member State which has demonstrated the more active commitment against segregation), that has linked EU funding requirements with anti-segregation plans. In this country, the city of Hódmezűvásárhely carried out a reform which limited the right of schools to freely determine the admission of students and admission became compulsory. A system of quotas (maximum 20 per cent of disadvantaged children per school) and a performance evaluation system for all schools were also established.

- ✓ **Increasing access to non-compulsory education and adult education**, through scholarships, career advice for secondary school students and adult literacy courses.

Various countries have developed measures and scholarships to support Roma students, sometimes with a focus on Roma girls, transitioning to secondary education or higher levels. At present scholarships for Roma University students in Turkey are supported by the Roma Education Fund.

As regards adult education, there are programmes in Turkey which could be further exploited to outreach Roma men and women such as the activities of the Public Education Centres (*Halk Egitim Merkezi*). Adaptation to local circumstances could be done in conjunction with local stakeholders and Roma themselves.

- ✓ **Enhancing the capacity and skills of teachers as key actors in bringing change.** Their capacities need to be built at all levels, strengthening their abilities so that they can work with culturally diverse groups.

In Turkey, the current on-going efforts to enhance pre and in-service training for teachers could include the promotion/provision of multicultural education with special informative efforts on the specific situation of Roma in Turkey.

- ✓ Curriculums including Roma history and recognition of the added value of Roma to society (literature, music, relevant people, etc.) and **intercultural approaches** have also shown good results when promoting cultural diversity.

- ✓ **Introducing mediators/assistants** generally from Roma origin, in schools, has been one of the most common measures taken in education programmes to promote a better understanding between Roma and non-Roma. The idea underlying these measures is that these actors fulfill the function of improving the link and communication between schools and families, and also of improving access to school and increasing the chances of success at school for Roma children. Most of the countries where this figure was introduced started to experiment with Roma mediators as pilot initiatives and have later advanced to different degrees in its institutionalisation on the basis of the good results achieved. The tasks performed by these mediators may vary with different national contexts, but generally refer to: work in the classroom to facilitate communication between teachers and Roma children; work outside the classroom, monitoring attendance, supporting activities; fostering communication between schools and Roma parents, etc. All this has been proven to foster trust between the communities and the educational institutions.

It is considered that the introduction of **Roma mediators and assistants could** bring important benefits in Turkey in relation to the challenges in this area. Young Roma men and women could be trained and promoted to serve as bridges between school centres and Roma parents, assist Roma pupils, assist teachers, help to monitor attendance, etc. A necessary condition would be that they are recognised and involved inside the school centres. For that, additional efforts to inform Roma parents would be needed.

In Turkey, besides national funding, the Priority Axis 2 of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme under IPA provides opportunities to support some of the lines of actions proposed, in particular those aimed at, inter alia, decreasing the rate of early school drop-out and increasing enrolment rates in secondary and vocational education, as well as promoting awareness-raising for parents of the importance of education. It is worth highlighting that monitoring and evaluation actions are also eligible under this instrument, crucial for demonstrating the benefits of the pilot actions and thus establishing the grounds for further replication.

Besides all recommendations highlighted in this section, it is also proposed to run a number of **pilot projects** in target locations where the conditions are found to be more favourable, and address all issues identified as relevant for improving educational attainment, i.e. individual support to pupils (after-school support, financial support, guidance), alignment of different stakeholders, participation of Roma communities, communication between school centres and Roma families, in-service training for education practitioners, etc. Many of these components are eligible under existing programmes and financial instruments in Turkey. The task would then be to create synergy between all these instruments and related stakeholders and explore an integrated formula. This has proved to be effective in other national contexts and there are no reasons to consider it would not be in Turkey.

#### **4.2.2. Key Recommendations in the field of Employment**

Several documents have shown that there is a cluster of critical employment obstacles that Roma people are faced with when trying to access the labour market in Europe.<sup>72</sup> It is also acknowledged that no sustained improvement of the living standards can be achieved without incorporating Roma into the mainstream workforce.

Following the analysis of some European initiatives,<sup>73</sup> a set of key elements has been identified as being crucial in confronting the employment exclusion of the Roma population:

- ✓ ***Targeting Roma within mainstream policies and programmes in the area of employment.*** Solutions adapted to target groups increase the impact of the actions on these groups. However, these need to be carried out alongside actions promoting access to mainstream services and resources in order to avoid segregation and to fully achieve the desired social inclusion impact. Bridges can thus be built between the needs of the Roma and active employment policies, closing the gap between Roma and mainstream services and adapting these services to the specific

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<sup>72</sup> Recommendations of the Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market( 1) Lack of education and training (2) Lack of language skills (3) Lack of recognition of skills and qualifications (4) Lack of access to professions (5) Lack of access to citizenship (6) Lack of integration policies (7) Stereotypes, prejudices and negative attitudes (8) Lack of mobility and concentration in certain areas (9) Industrial Change (10) Disincentives through welfare systems (11) Discrimination (12) Lack of information (13) Labour market competition (14) Undeclared work

<sup>73</sup> This analysis is based to a great extent on the ACCEDER Programme experience. Lessons learned have been also acknowledged by the European Commission and other European experiences.

characteristics of the Roma. Special attention must be given to overcome the specific barriers Roma women face.

In Turkey, as mentioned in a preceding chapter, there are currently increased efforts to enhance the active employment policies and to achieve better impact on the most disadvantaged groups in society. Furthermore, there is a focus on promoting job opportunities for the youth and for women by granting employers of these groups. It should be stressed again that Roma inclusion measures must be mainstreamed into social policies and measures of a general nature. Thus, the special needs of Roma women and Roma youth must be taken into account in each measure targeted at women and youth.

A policy option to be given further consideration in Turkey is that the general policy frameworks for employment, such as the National Employment Policy and the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, currently under preparation, may include explicit reference to Roma citizens. This would stimulate the mobilization of key actors, and furthermore allow monitoring of the impact on Roma of policy measures and programmes for disadvantaged groups.

- ✓ ***Vocational training and its link to labour market opportunities*** is a key factor for employability. Vocational training options need to keep a balance between individual expectations and real employability perspectives on the one hand, and labour market requirements and demands on the other.

Special attention should be given to disseminate the existing programmes in order to outreach Roma. For example, existing active employment programmes implemented by \_\_KUR should be made more accessible to Roma, i.e. vocational training courses, on-the-job training, and public workfare programmes. Specific actions to assure that job-seekers are registered, as well as intensified efforts on individual guidance, must outreach Roma. For this it is necessary that partnerships are formed with representatives of Roma groups. Partnerships between public and private organizations with the involvement of employers have been an essential element in other contexts, and specific mediation structures between Roma, employment offices and employers have also been functional in achieving better results. In this regard, the possibility of fostering discussion about Roma employment at the Provincial Vocational Education and Employment Boards is also suggested.

Investing in the youth (both male and female) and increasing their employability is a key challenge, and this is also the target group for which the most benefits can be achieved. On-going improvements in vocational training (both formal and non-formal) and greater analysis of labour market demands can help to find niches and provide alternative job opportunities to those Roma for whom their parents' traditional occupations are not a viable option. Individual guidance and support must be provided from the start and should continue during the first steps of the job.

- ✓ ***Individual comprehensive employment pathways***. Focusing on individual needs and capacities is essential if real impact on employability is desired. This individualised approach applies to all phases of the intervention, namely: the

diagnosis, the design of actions within the pathway (training, job-search techniques, accompaniment to job interviews) and very importantly, follow-up once the person has access to a labour contract. This action has been identified as a key element in maintaining a job.

It has been perceived that there is sometimes a tendency in Turkey to discuss the issue of employment solutions for the Roma in collective terms, as if it was possible to create specific niches adapted to their cultural idiosyncrasy. In this regard, it is worth noting that successful approaches proposed are based on an individual assessment of individual circumstances and potential, as well as the design of individually tailored guidance, job training and a job integration pathway. Being realistic, not all the interventions will lead to a stable job for every beneficiary in the current context of high unemployment in Turkey, but the benefits of activating the beneficiaries, increasing their employability, giving them the possibility of an internship connected to the training, allowing the emergence of role-models, changing mentalities among employers, public officers and the Roma themselves, etc. should not be underestimated since they are positive outcomes themselves for the social advancement of the group.

- ✓ **Initiatives for self-employment** (supported by microfinance) are also **convenient**, mostly if they co-exist with salaried employment options, opening up a range of opportunities for the Roma depending on each person's employability, professional perspective and individual/family situation. Self-employment initiatives should not be seen as a unique solution, but rather as an alternative that is adequate only for a certain profile of jobseekers. In order to be effective, self-employment initiatives need to be closely linked to market opportunities and to be based on professional business plans that follow business ideas. They also need to be supported by funding in order to be a real option. The provision of the necessary support (administrative, accounting...) and follow-up of the whole process (during and after the establishment of the business) have also been identified as relevant to success. In fact, microfinance, along with an assessment of the quality of the business idea and plan, has proved to be a good way forward in the promotion of self-employment as the experience of ADIE in France shows.

#### **Micro-finance for self-employment, ADIE, France.**

ADIE (Association for the Right to Economic Initiative), is a French NGO established in 1988 with 110 branches and 300 employees at present. It provides micro financing and mentoring to enable socially excluded people to set up and develop their own small businesses. Results show that the average given loan was around 3,000€; up to 90 per cent of total given loans were returned; over 50 per cent of total beneficiaries were social welfare recipients. They have become one of the largest microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Europe, and have become one of the most outstanding references regarding micro finance, employment and excluded groups, such as the Roma.

Further information:

<http://www.adie.org/>

In Turkey, the Income-Generating Projects scheme run by the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity (GDSAS)<sup>74</sup> could be further explored to have an

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<sup>74</sup> The aim of these income-generating projects is to enable poor households to establish and sustain their business. In the period 2003-March 2009, 122,068 families were supported by 12.378 projects.

increased impact on Roma people. For this it should be combined with outreach information efforts, and establish synergies with other interventions in the framework of integrated social inclusion actions.

- ✓ ***Focus on employment as a key element of social inclusion processes.*** There is also a need to complement employment processes with social actions for them to be fully consolidated.

It should be stressed again that a key factor for success is to integrate employment projects into broader interventions. National funding schemes such as the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund, which supports, amongst others, employability training and temporary employment projects, could also be used to experiment with integrated employment interventions within a broader community intervention, which should cooperate with the \_\_KUR offices. Furthermore, integrated interventions with a focus on employment should foresee actions to improve the social perception of the Roma, especially among employers in order to prevent discriminatory treatment. Successful interventions must be made visible in order to weaken stereotypes about the Roma "lack of work habits or motivation" and also to build Roma confidence that job integration is possible.

Besides national funding, the use of EU assistance provides the opportunity to develop this kind of initiative. Priority Axis 4 of the Human Resources Development Programme (HRDP) under IPA is particularly relevant for promoting initiatives in this area, as it aims at increasing opportunities for disadvantaged groups to access employment. The adaptation of counseling and guidance services (or the establishment of new ones to serve as a bridge to the mainstream services), strengthening the capacity of employment-related services to better meet the needs of Roma people, or fostering cooperation between key actors are all activities fully in line with the rationale of this axis. Priority Axis 1 is also relevant for supporting innovative interventions, especially the measures aimed at promoting and increasing employment of youth and women; and Priority axis 3 is as relevant when it comes to the provision of non-formal training of basic skills for adults. This instrument can also monitor and measure the impact of the actions.

- ✓ ***Strong partnership between public and private organisations:*** a tight collaboration with the different levels of public administration, business sectors, civil society and other key actors on the ground is essential. This can be initially eased through funding (i.e. Structural Funds co-financing requirements); however, collaboration can go much further by creating synergies between every key actor's contribution in financial terms, knowledge and specific role and duties. The aim is to cooperate in a win-win situation with all of the key actors by mobilising and combining resources, thereby generating a greater impact than isolated mono-funded actions. Apart from bringing together different economic resources, it is highly efficient for any specific employment intervention to take advantage of the existing resources in the territory (job training courses, counseling services, etc.), creating links between all of them and referring the beneficiaries of programme/initiatives to existing actions, thereby avoiding duplications by creating new services when they already exist.
- ✓ In this regard, building a ***close relationship with enterprises*** is the most important source of information for designing job training courses and providing realistic

guidance and assessment through the process of job search. Any employment interventions promoting Roma access to the labour market require the establishment of a very strong relationship with enterprises – with those offering job opportunities that match the professional profiles of potential Roma job seekers. Establishing partnerships with enterprises means establishing a stable relationship for recruitment processes (the enterprises need a work force and the employment project can intermediate and offer candidates) and for cooperation in job-training for potential future employees. Thus, when employers participate in delivering the training they obtain direct information on the potential workers, thereby facilitating their recruitment.

The Spanish Acceder Programme (see box above) has been run for more than a decade, applying the aforementioned approaches. The inspirational guidance of this project for Turkey lies also in the way it was established. Before expanding to more than 50 localities, a pilot intervention was run for two years in the city of Madrid. The relevance to Turkey of some of its success factors may be considered. It is proposed that this is done by putting them into practice through a pilot intervention in a limited number of locations in Turkey where favourable conditions are found (with a view to a subsequent replication in other locations).

#### **The ACCEDER Programme in Spain**

The ACCEDER programme in Spain has been identified as being among the most successful large-scale programmes aimed at promoting Roma employment in Europe.

Its success comes mainly from its capacity to promote the access of Roma people to salaried employment by enhancing the labour capacities of the Roma while mediating with potential employers. It is also an example of developing solutions adapted for a target group while promoting its participation in generic employment services.

The Programme has achieved a positive impact thanks to its long term approach, to the strong partnerships it has promoted and to the effective use of different resources (EU, national, regional and local).

Most labour contracts were in the service sector (71 per cent) followed by industry and construction. Almost 60 per cent of total employed Roma were under 30 years of age. Indeed, offering job opportunities for the young and for those with greater chance of success has been at the heart of the methodology of the programme. By achieving success with “the most successful”, the programme has opened up doors with enterprises for other Roma to be incorporated, while the Roma communities have acknowledged the positive role of the ACCEDER in facilitating their access into the labour market.

The programme is an example of a long-term targeted programme focusing on salaried employment and complementing interventions with other social measures to ensure access to the labour market. Some measures relate to the development of positive actions, through the ACCEDER programme, for Roma women, as a needed strategy to promote their participation (enterprise intermediation in labour market sectors in which women would have a chance to be employed, prioritisation of training courses that stimulate the participation of Roma women, conciliation measures to support the participation of Roma women...).

Some of the job-training courses within the ACCEDER programme have focused on community and personal services, tourism and catering, company services (cleaning, security...) and commerce. They were linked to immediate employment opportunities, especially for Roma women for whom training has been identified as a key for success in accessing a job. Examples of protocols and agreements with firms include those with big supermarkets in Spain where the employer provided on the job training (in some cases financed by the programme, in others just covered by their own Human Resources budget line). Job

profiles such as shop-attendants, stock clerks, cashiers, butchers, fishmongers and forklift operators have benefitted particularly from these job-training activities. Out of the 150,000 training hours provided in the framework of the programme, more than 65,000 have consisted in practical training within enterprises. Working in partnership with other training services is an essential part of the ACCEDER methodology: more than 51 per cent of the programme beneficiaries undertaking training activities were directed to use other training resources.

The programme is combined with information, awareness-raising campaigns and sensitization to combat prejudice and to challenge stereotypes.

<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/memoriaacceder2007/english/12.pdf>

### 4.2.3. Key Recommendations in the field of Housing

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) recently published a study giving evidence of the disadvantage Roma and Travellers in the EU face in housing.<sup>75</sup> The Agency considers that Member States and local authorities should pay greater attention to the issue of residential segregation and poor housing conditions and implement existing anti-discrimination legislation and policies for Roma inclusion.

Besides positive initiatives, it must be acknowledged that there have also been experiences in the EU of housing interventions for Roma that have sometimes caused more harm (e.g. segregation, social conflict, etc.) than remedy. These mistakes were mainly caused by reasons such as, concentrating Roma families in areas separated from society, emergency solutions of short-term nature, lack of provision of social inclusion measures alongside the housing interventions, failing to bring together various stakeholders and the decisive involvement of civil society and target beneficiaries, etc. The European Commission has recently noted that “(...) policies which maintain or promote the segregation of Roma communities or the provision of segregated housing (...) for Roma should be ended”.<sup>76</sup>

For the first time in the 2008-2013 programming period, social housing has been included within the scope of EU Structural Funds. Article 7 of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Regulation has recently been amended, allowing all Member States to have access to this funding in order to tackle the housing problem of marginalised communities, including the Roma. The ERDF can now be used for renovating existing housing as well as for replacing existing houses by new ones, regardless of the area (urban or rural). Up until now, it could only be used for the renovation of existing social housing in urban areas.<sup>77</sup>

Proven experience shows that in order to achieve effectiveness when addressing difficulties in housing Roma, a number of issues should be taken into account. These

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<sup>75</sup> In 2009 the Fundamental Rights Agency published the study *Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the European Union – Comparative Report*. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications\\_per\\_year/2009/pub-cr-roma-housing\\_en.htm](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/2009/pub-cr-roma-housing_en.htm)

<sup>76</sup> European Commission (2010) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe*. COM(2010)133 final. Brussels. 7 April.

<sup>77</sup> Regulation (EU) No 437/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 amending Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalized communities. Article 7 (2) has been replaced.

lessons learned are relevant to the current situation of Turkey, in which urban renewal plans have affected Roma districts in recent years, and a Government plan to build some 10,000 housing units for Roma is ongoing.

- ✓ ***Development of comprehensive and inclusive housing interventions: linking rehabilitation or re-housing measures with social inclusion measures.*** Relocation measures should not be envisaged individually from an urban development perspective, but rather from an integrated vision of the myriad of factors having an impact on the situation of the most disadvantaged families. It is not only about providing a dignified home but also creating the conditions and environment to facilitate social inclusion.
- ✓ ***Re-housing Roma is not sufficient in itself for achieving social inclusion.*** This is one of the main lessons learnt from past practices. ***Social measures therefore need to accompany the re-housing process*** for Roma families. Resettlement processes in social housing are long-term processes for which social support for the adaptation of families to their new homes and integration into a new physical and social environment becomes a key factor for success. By doing this, stable and sustainable processes will be achieved, avoiding the possible resurgence of slums and substandard housing.

Given the housing situation of Roma in Turkey, improving inadequate housing conditions is a key policy challenge, but re-housing measures cannot be seen exclusively from a one-sided urban perspective, but rather require an integrated approach to the wide range of factors having an impact on the situation of the most disadvantaged families and of/on the socio-economic development of the neighbourhoods. The aim should not be limited to providing a better house/home but should also create the conditions and environment that facilitate opportunities for social inclusion. That is why housing initiatives must go hand-in-hand with accompanying social measures and must link up with objectives such as education, job integration, health, women, rights awareness, mediation, combating stereotypes and fostering co-existence. A link between housing and employment could be explored by providing job-training in the areas of construction, basic building maintenance, electricity, etc. Therefore, it is proposed that any rehousing intervention within the current Housing Development Administration (TOKI) plan for Roma housing, which envisages that 10,000 housing units will be made available for Roma at low prices and tailored to their lifestyle, should be integrated into comprehensive social inclusion programmes.

- ✓ ***Strategies to avoid concentration and spatial segregation.*** It is widely accepted that, large reallocation' neighbourhoods have been much more vulnerable to flare-up slums and other forms of substandard housing. When rehousing people into flats, families should not be grouped together in the same building. As a reference figure, not more than 10 or 15 per cent of the families in a given area should be relocated families. It is likewise important to prevent the concentration of vulnerable groups with social, educational, employment and other needs in the same neighbourhood or area, so as to avoid ending up with a situation where other families move out, schools are "ghettoised" and the area becomes deprived.
- ✓ ***The involvement and coordination of different levels of public administration.*** In

light of the breadth of the work that needs to be undertaken and its economic, political and social implications, municipal governments are clearly unable to meet this challenge on their own (not only from an economic standpoint but also due to social and political repercussions). Collaboration between municipalities, regional and national departments dealing with housing issues and other departments (health, social affairs education, training and employment, etc.) is therefore indispensable.

In Turkey, the engagement of different institutions and creation of synergy with the available resources is required for ensuring the success of these initiatives: TOKI, governorships, municipalities, and the branches of Government institutions such as KUR, DG Social Assistance and Solidarity, Community Centres, Public Education centres, etc. and use of available funding from this and other sources such as EU pre-accession assistance. The role of municipalities and of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund is crucial for ensuring affordability of the rent and facilities and preventing loss of housing.

The housing plan for Roma in Turkey is promoted by the Government through the agency TOKI, but it will be developed in those cities where the local authorities cooperate by providing public land. A point for further discussion in Turkey will then be how to ensure that local authorities in the areas with greater need take the steps necessary for improving Roma housing conditions independently of political factors,

- ✓ ***Involvement of other social agents.*** Experience shows that the most successful resettlement initiatives have been those characterised by broad-based participation and social consensus. When these actions involve people from disadvantaged groups (or groups stigmatised by a negative social image such as Roma), rejection is often the response and this can be remedied or alleviated by encouraging participation and dialogue with the different stakeholders. All relevant stakeholders should be committed to the implementation and development of initiatives, including civil society sectors.
- ✓ ***Final rather than transitional solutions.*** Actions should focus on definitive solutions and steer clear of transitory measures which simply pass the problem on or postpone it, often making it worse and hence more costly to solve. The aim is to develop viable plans within a defined timeframe and with sufficient economic resources and political support. Sometimes the urgency of the situation needs immediate intervention to improve minimum living conditions (sanitation, running water, etc) but these interventions should not be without a time frame and must include **long term options** for Roma families and other vulnerable groups.
- ✓ ***Monitoring and control.*** From the moment the decision is taken to implement a relocation plan, it is important to carry out a swift and accurate census of the homes and families affected and to monitor the situation to prevent the arrival of new families, squatters moving into the housing left behind by relocated persons, the resurgence of shanty towns, etc.
- ✓ ***Participation and commitment of the relocated target population.*** The involvement of the projects' beneficiaries from the start of the planning process is crucial for achieving better results. Once again, the role of civil society is crucial in

informing the target beneficiaries of their rights. It is likewise important to ensure their commitment to the re-housing process and participation in social inclusion measures.

- ✓ ***Envisaging measures to prevent the deterioration of neighbourhoods where the relocated population has been provided with accommodation.*** Both preventive and palliative measures must be undertaken in those places where new marginalisation is emerging in order to prevent the *ghettoisation* of those neighbourhoods (e.g. implement social accompaniment programmes, improve habitats, rehabilitate deteriorated housing, etc.).
- ✓ ***“Effective policies are informed policies”.*** Another key policy challenge is to map and assess the housing needs of the Roma.

It was pointed out in a preceding chapter of this report that a key challenge for Turkey is mapping the housing needs of Roma in order to carry out effective interventions. Different housing solutions could be then considered according to criteria. Roma themselves should participate in the determination of these criteria. Rehabilitation of houses and environments where Roma live and establishing measures to prevent their further deterioration may be considered as alternative to re-housing when it is a feasible option.

#### **Kerecsend and Smomolya in Hungary**

Kerecsend is a good example of the successful application of the “nest-home” innovative concept that allows young Roma families to move into an integrated social environment. In the case of Szomolya, all families were provided with accommodation in non-segregated areas of the village, eliminating two out of four segregated settlements. Both projects provided mainly a short-term solution to unemployment for their Roma beneficiaries. Both settlements implemented actions in education aiming at the very young and older children but without addressing the issue of segregation (this must be re-examined for future projects).

According to a local authority representative, the key lessons learned from the project in Kerecsend included the need for: strong cooperation among the partners involved; inclusion of elements that benefit non-Roma as well as Roma to gain the support of the wider public; the involvement of project beneficiaries, and coordination of the different project elements and sources of funding to increase the impact of the project.

Important lessons learned in the Smomolya project include the need for better regular communication to allow everyone involved to develop a sense of ownership. Furthermore, it is important not to ‘overprotect’ beneficiaries, but to provide assistance only when necessary to avoid overdependence on social workers. The involvement of local actors is crucial: *‘local NGOs have to be encouraged and motivated; there should be professional guidance and expertise, but local people should do the work.’*

These projects illustrate how important it is to address the problem of Roma exclusion from a holistic perspective. They also show that successful integration is a two-way process and thus both Roma and non-Roma need to experience benefits.

Further information:

[http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/090210-ROMA\\_Housing\\_Case-studies-ENHU.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/090210-ROMA_Housing_Case-studies-ENHU.pdf)

**Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration (IRIS), Madrid, Spain**

The regional government of Madrid through the programme implemented by the Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration (IRIS) seeks the eradication of slums and shanty towns in Madrid, Spain, by providing persons from socially disadvantaged backgrounds with integrated accommodation rented by the Institute. This initiative includes accompaniment to families in their social integration by means of a wide range of activities delivered in community centres established in the areas where population were relocated. Since 1999, over 5,000 Roma individuals have been supported to find employment through the Institute as a key issue for the social inclusion of persons.

Elements worth highlighting:

- Coordination of all actions in one institution and co-operation with relevant stakeholders: public administrations, NGO, etc
- Multifaceted approach to housing
- Desegregation approach criteria for the reallocation of families
- Eradication of slums
- Accompaniment to families in order to support their social inclusion

It is good example of an innovative alternative to facilitate access to housing for disadvantaged groups, such as the Roma, guaranteeing they benefit from existing mainstreamed housing programmes. To make sure of this, they established a quota of 3-5 per cent of public social housing to be set aside for socially excluded families. This measure has prevented spatial segregation of the Roma.

Further information: FRA (2009), Case Study: Improving Roma Housing, Spain [http://194.30.12.221/fraWebsite/attachments/090210-ROMA\\_Housing\\_Case-final-ENES.pdf](http://194.30.12.221/fraWebsite/attachments/090210-ROMA_Housing_Case-final-ENES.pdf)

#### 4.2.4. Key Recommendations in the field of Health

To improve the health standards of Roma communities sanitation standards need to be increased and health education programmes intensified. Some general recommendations<sup>78</sup> for the improvement of the health situation of the Roma and the reduction of health inequalities are:

- ✓ ***Aiming at the normalisation and stabilisation of health programmes*** aimed at the Roma population: an *explicit but not exclusive targeting* approach as a means of making sure that the Roma have access to health provision on equal terms with all other citizens.

A first and foremost key challenge for Roma health in Turkey is that they have guaranteed full free access to the public health system regardless of their situation in relation to the social security schemes. Once this is ensured, special programmes for enhancing the quality of this care for Roma can be developed.

- ✓ ***Tackling the structural determinants of health*** and developing inter-sectoral intervention in education, training, labour market inclusion, housing as well as health.

Meeting the challenge of tackling the structural determinants of health implies integrated specific action in the field of health together with social inclusion

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<sup>78</sup> A recent study undertaken within the framework of the EU's Public Health Programme reported that 15 percent of the European Roma population is suffering from a chronic illness or disability, while access to healthcare remains inadequate. Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2009) *Health and the Roma Community. Analysis of the Situation in Europe*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=813&langId=en&moreDocuments=yes>

interventions in other fields. Thus, the removal of environmental health dangers that affect the habitats where Roma live is, for example, a link between the areas of health and housing. Other actions to address the key challenges in this area include the location of health facilities near Roma population centres; plans for health care centres to promote better access and care of Roma patients and to ensure checkups for pregnant women and children; adapted information material to raise awareness of health habits; anti-bias training for medical personnel including information on Roma attitudes about health, as well as outreach education to Roma on prevention, health habits and on how to make best use of the existing health system.

- ✓ ***Focusing on preventive healthcare*** and targeting Roma youth as a priority.
- ✓ ***Health education initiatives for Roma***: targeting Roma in general health promotion campaigns including special outreach efforts using adapted materials for their optimal dissemination.
- ✓ ***Data gathering and analysis***, in order to get in-depth knowledge of the health situation of the Roma, identifying key factors underlying health inequalities to be able to keep track of mid and long-term changes.
- ✓ ***Training of health professionals*** regarding the health situation of Roma and cultural perceptions of health as a means to improve their professional performance in relation to Roma people.
- ✓ ***Inclusion of the gender perspective*** both when promoting Roma participation and in the design and implementation of programmes, as well as in monitoring and evaluation.
- ✓ ***Promotion of Roma involvement; recruiting Roma to act as mediators*** or intercultural agents have proved to be effective. In various countries this figure has been introduced to improve Roma groups' access to health. Health mediators are usually respected women who are trained to be able to offer health-related information (access to health care services and health promotion) to their communities, as well as to facilitate communication between the medical personnel and the Roma community. Generally the activities they perform are focused on ensuring both access to and use of health care services:
  - Assisting Roma with bureaucratic procedures necessary to access the health services (i.e. registrations, insurances, etc).
  - Facilitating patient/doctor communication.
  - Health education within the community (i.e. vaccination, family planning, hygiene, nutrition, etc).
  - Awareness-raising of health professionals of the cultural background and socio-economic situation of the Roma to facilitate their access and use of the health services.

#### **Health Mediators in Romania**

The Health Mediation programme started in 1993 in Rumania run by the NGO Romani Criss, and in 2002 it was taken up by the Romanian Government (Ministry of Public Health) who widened its scope and

added national budget. Romania became the first country with a functioning health mediator network integrated in the public health system. The number of Roma persons with improved access to health services has increased as result of the health mediator programme.

Health mediators visit Roma families and help families that face social and health difficulties. There are already 500 active health mediators, each one serving an average of 750 beneficiaries, being the mothers and children the main target group. Building on the experience of health mediators, a training programme was established for new mediators. The mediators are organised in the “Order of Health Mediators of Romania” which is supported by the Romanian Ministry of Public Health and the Roma National Agency. The independent Decade Watch assessed the Health Mediator Programme as an example of good practice and one of the best initiatives to improve the health situation of Roma. From July 2009 a reform in the health care system has transferred the responsibility on health mediators to the local authorities.

Further information:

[http://www.romanicriss.org/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=8](http://www.romanicriss.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=8)

Evaluations have provided evidence that these programmes have a positive impact on the health situation of the Roma groups. They contribute to higher levels of primary healthcare coverage; they strengthen the reproductive health of women and improve child health. They have also helped to increase the participation of the Roma community in health education and disease prevention programmes. When these programmes are jointly developed with housing and education interventions the impact increases.

Adoption of a health mediation programme is considered very relevant to the Turkish context and can help to meet the key policy challenges in this area by serving as a bridge between the health system and the Roma groups. The health mediators, adequately trained, can help to monitor the health situation of the communities, increase awareness of health prevention issues within the community, improve doctor/patient communication, and cooperate closely with the family practitioners and the health services. In other national contexts, the big majority of the health mediators are usually Romani women, providing an opportunity to empower women and give them an institutional role within Roma groups.

The selection and training of Roma women as health mediators may well fit within the Human Resources Development Operational Programme in Turkey under IPA component IV as long as it could provide disadvantaged women with job skills for an occupation.

#### **Medical and Social Centres, Greece**

In the case of Greece, mentioned in the European Social Fund and Roma report, the establishment of medical and social centres targeting Roma in areas with social needs has helped them to use public services in employment, education and healthcare. The key actions of the centres were: Provision of social care through the dissemination of information and assistance; settling registry issues; networking with appropriate services in the public sector; provision of basic health and vaccination for children; promoting the values of education and supporting the registering of children in schools and collaboration with bodies that provide adult education, promoting employment especially of women. These socio medical centres continue to be funded, as a long-term needed investment, by ESF and ERDF in 2007-2013 and they are foreseen to support 32.000 people. This data is corroborated in the *European Social Fund and Roma report*.

Further information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/docs/esf\\_roma\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/docs/esf_roma_en.pdf)

The example above, referring to Medical and Social Centres in Greece, provides some inspirational guidelines for Turkey in various ways: it integrates health issues together with other areas of social intervention from registration issues to primary health care. The centres thus aim to improve Roma access to public services and to help the Roma use them for the benefit of their social inclusion through better education, including adult education, and job opportunities, etc. Although it is not proposed to transfer these centres to Turkey as such, the approach of outreaching particularly excluded Roma groups through integrated measures in a tailored programme is considered relevant to Turkey. The idea of multi-service centres could also be inspirational for the establishment - or adaptation - of Community Centres in Turkey to address the needs of Roma groups. A network of Community Centres already exists in Turkey under the umbrella of the Social Services and Child Protection Organisation (SHÇEK), and social services projects in these centres are supported by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund. Among these social services projects are mother-child health projects.

#### **4.2.5. Key Recommendations in the field of Equal Treatment and Anti-discrimination**

The fight against discrimination and the promotion of equal treatment is fundamental to all Roma-related actions. The study of EU-MIDIS<sup>79</sup> carried out by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights includes a series of “data in focus reports” on different groups and key issues related to the perception of discrimination. The survey specifically focused on Roma and revealed the extent of discrimination this group suffers, with Roma reporting the highest overall levels of discrimination across all areas surveyed.

The EU has established a legal framework to combat discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin. The Racial Equality Directive (Directive 2000/43/EC)<sup>80</sup> *Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial and ethnic origin* provides a legal framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin and prohibits direct or indirect discrimination in employment, education, social protection, property matters and services. Anti-discrimination legislation, even though not specifically targeting Roma, provides important legal tools for combating direct and indirect discrimination; however, there are certain limitations in its real impact against the widespread discrimination Roma face.

It must be acknowledged that, on the one hand, society widely accepts as ‘natural’ the unequal treatment of the Roma, meaning that despite legislation many people find it difficult to recognise the presence of discrimination with regard to the Roma.<sup>81</sup> On the

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<sup>79</sup> FRA (2009) *EU-MIDIS. European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey*. Some of the general and key findings are as follows: the majority of respondents are unaware of anti-discrimination legislation, minorities are often less familiar with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights than the majority of the population, Equality Bodies enjoy limited recognition and there are low levels of reporting of discrimination.

<sup>80</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:en:HTML>

<sup>81</sup> In this sense, a study commissioned by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights showed that important social actors such as employers and trade unions displayed a limited understanding of the relevance of the Directive for the Roma: FRA (2010): *The impact of the Racial Equality Directive. Views of trade unions and employers*

other hand, Roma themselves lack awareness of their rights, of what it means to be discriminated against, as well as which channels they can use, and may fear victimisation. Combating discrimination is a very long term process, and should be understood as such. Measures for reducing prejudice and discrimination must also take place in all areas and spheres of life, on many levels, and with multi-dimensional approaches.

A report recently released by the European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET)<sup>82</sup> provides examples of good practices achieved by equality bodies from Member States in responding to the Roma situation and highlights approaches that equality bodies could take to enhance their work on these issues. This network recommends that national authorities handle the Roma issue with a holistic perspective through comprehensive crosscut measures within specific fields, such as civic registration, housing, health and education..

The recommendations which can be drawn from this recent study should make anti-discrimination legislation and equality bodies more efficient as regards the Roma and are fully relevant to Turkey, bearing in mind that Turkey is preparing comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation which includes the establishment of a specialised equality body. According to informants from the Ministry of Interior, the new legislation will cover discrimination on the grounds of race and the related equality body will also seek to promote equality on these grounds.

- ✓ Preparing, delivering and *disseminating the informative materials targeting the Roma*. This is especially effective if combined with training activities and in close co-operation with Roma organisations.
- ✓ *Training* for public officials, judiciary, legal profession and police.
- ✓ *Capacity building within the equality body*: they have to focus on capacity building, not only of target groups but also of their own staff in order for them to be fully efficient in their duties.
- ✓ *Support to advocacy initiatives* and strategic litigation to provide independent assistance to the victims of discrimination.
- ✓ *Conduct independent surveys* and research in order to produce independent reports.
- ✓ *Promote and support positive actions and initiatives*. It has been acknowledged that a strategy simply based on litigation and court decisions was not enough to achieve equality or to reduce discrimination. Therefore, equality bodies are expected to carry out a set of activities such as:
  - Challenging deeply rooted stereotypes and prejudices against Roma and Travellers.

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in the European Union. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Racial-equality-directive\\_conf-ed\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Racial-equality-directive_conf-ed_en.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> Equinet (2010): *Making equality legislation work for Roma and travellers. An Equinet opinion*. Available at: [http://www.equineteurope.org/23\\_03\\_10\\_equinet\\_roma\\_opinion\\_w\\_template\\_final\\_1.pdf](http://www.equineteurope.org/23_03_10_equinet_roma_opinion_w_template_final_1.pdf)

- Giving practical support to public administration bodies to adapt their institutional structures and systems so that Roma and Travellers have access to, and can benefit from, their services.
  - Giving practical support to employers in the development of policies and practices to recruit (and advance the career of) Roma and Traveller employees.
- ✓ ***Promotion of policy mainstreaming.*** Equality mainstreaming in policy making and programme design is an essential and effective tool. Equality bodies should ensure that national and local authorities assess the implications of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, for Roma and Travellers, specifically giving account of the practical implications regarding non-discrimination.
  - ✓ Being aware of the heterogeneity of the Roma community itself, paying ***special attention to those persons with specific needs such as Roma women, young people***, etc.
  - ✓ ***Coordination of actions and the active involvement of all actors***, including the Roma. The experience of the equality bodies has demonstrated the importance of the coordination of actions and the active involvement of all competent authorities (central, regional, local) in ongoing cooperation with civil society and, more specifically, with Roma civil society.

In this regard, it is relevant to highlight the lesson learned from other countries: namely, that enhancing the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation is a process that Turkey will have to undergo. Building the capacity of the equality body, raising public awareness about anti-discrimination, and supporting NGOs to play a role in promoting equality, are all needed. All this suggests that, rather than only reacting to individual complaints, proactive efforts by the specialised equality body should be carried out at different levels: supporting awareness raising and implementing activities that promote and make public services, judiciary, and employers sensitive to the concept of equal treatment. Promoting rights awareness among Roma and building the capacity of Roma organisations as anti-discrimination agents, able to detect discriminatory practice, is a requisite for the body to be effective.

#### **4.2.6. Recommendations in the field of Data Collection**

There has been a growing debate around the need to collect data disaggregated by ethnicity in recent years. Generally, there is a consensus among international institutions and policymakers that to tackle the disadvantages suffered by the most vulnerable groups, monitoring the effectiveness of policies on these groups is indispensable. There is sometimes a misperception that personal data protection laws prohibit the collection of ethnic data,<sup>83</sup> while there is still an insufficient awareness of the importance of ethnic

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<sup>83</sup> In general, international texts on data protection, freedom of information and respect for privacy refer to “sensitive” categories such as ethnicity, race, religion, etc., given that historically, recording such characteristics has had negative effects on the individuals, especially under totalitarian regimes. The main EU instrument regulating the issue of data collection is the Council Directive 95/46 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data. Article 8.1 of the Directive sets that ‘Member States shall prohibit the processing of personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade-union membership, and the processing of data concerning health or sex life’. However, the Directive also provides a series of exemptions to this prohibition: If the following issues are

monitoring in the fight against discrimination and social exclusion. In this sense, the European Commission Communication on the application of Directive 2000/43/EC (COM (2006) 643) highlights the crucial role played by statistics in activating anti-discrimination policies and increasing their capacity to ensure social cohesion and promote diversity and equality.

In the case of the Roma there is a lack of relevant statistical data which makes it hard to monitor the performance and measure the impact of both Roma-targeted and mainstream programmes. Reliable data on Roma is indispensable for the making of policies as well as for monitoring their impact. The surveys disaggregated by ethnicity produce a wealth of statistics regarding such important questions as income, age, education, housing situation, and in some cases comparisons with non-Roma population. Policies must be based on robust data on the target group's situation and measuring their impact can only be effectively done on the basis of accurate information.<sup>84</sup>

In the context of the implementation of EU funding for the benefit of Roma this debate has important implications for the improvement of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Currently, both the European Commission and Member States have a need to verify whether national EU funded programmes (i.e. Operational Programmes) are actually outreaching Roma beneficiaries (e.g. number of final beneficiaries, type of actions, etc.), as well as what the actual results and outcomes are. The *EURoma* Network has acknowledged the need to collect ethnically disaggregated data in the context of EU Structural Funds.<sup>85</sup>

In Turkey, as noted elsewhere in this report, there is little knowledge about the situation of Roma groups. There is thus a need to produce relevant data which can be used to set priorities, adapt policies or set new ones, establish measurable goals and monitor implementation of action.

An issue which has sometimes been the subject of debate is how to determine who can be considered Roma for sampling purposes, related also to the controversy about the disclosure of ethnic identity. A comprehensive Czech study on marginalised Roma communities avoids this controversy by focusing on socially excluded communities. In this case results do not show an overall picture of Roma, but an in-depth analysis of social excluded settlements which is actually more relevant for policy-making purposes.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Communities and the Absorption Capacity of Subjects Operating in the Field. (Czech Republic)</b></p>
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respected, data collection is allowed: 1) there must be an explicit consent of the subject to the processing of the data; 2) there must be adequate safeguards; 3) reasons of public interest are a basis for deciding to collect sensitive data.

<sup>84</sup> The Open Society Foundation recently published the report *No Data-No Progress. Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2010* encouraging Decade countries to give a definite impetus to the establishment of methods for ethnically disaggregated data collection.

<sup>85</sup> There is a need to collect better data in the following areas: 1) Roma-targeted interventions contained in the relevant Operational Programmes where the Roma are explicitly defined as a target group and as the intended final beneficiaries. 2) Other interventions where Roma are not the only specific target group amongst other vulnerable groups. 3) The impact of other activities (especially infrastructure, urban regeneration, etc) on the conditions of Roma.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, in a nine-month project, identified and mapped socially excluded Roma communities in order to set priorities of European Social Fund interventions for the programme period 2007-2013. In that study a socially excluded Roma community was conceptualized as a space inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered Roma by their neighborhood and are socially excluded. The project results provide:

- analytical results concerning life conditions in socially excluded Roma localities, their causes and development;
- information on institutions participating on the solution of social exclusion, on possibilities and barriers of social inclusion;
- a strategy which reflects alternatives and solutions to tackle Roma exclusion.

[http://epolis.cz/download/pdf/materialsEN\\_31\\_1.pdf](http://epolis.cz/download/pdf/materialsEN_31_1.pdf)

In Turkey, besides national funding, carrying out surveys and studies can be eligible under EU funding (IPA included), and may be funded by a project or through the Technical Assistance Axis. Of special importance as regards these activities could be the Progress Programme which is at present available in Turkey and can fund research and studies on social issues.

There are other examples of surveys, the design and methodology of which can be considered relevant to building up reliable, comprehensive and comparable data on the specific situation of Roma (education, employment, health...) over time. Such is the case of the quantitative research *Roma Population and Employment: a Comparative Study* carried out by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano in Spain, applying the Labour Force Survey (based on the European survey standards which allow for comparison among Member states). The main objective of this research was to gain insight into the reality of the Spanish Roma with regard to employment and to compare the results obtained with the situation of the overall Spanish population. This data has served to programme employment actions for the Roma and has the potential for replication in EU countries which apply the Labour Force Survey methodology, thus allowing for a wide comparison between countries.

***Roma Population and Employment: a Comparative Study***  
**Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Spain**

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano carried out a quantitative research on Roma and Employment in Spain applying the Labour Force Survey to a Roma sample. The main objective of this research, carried out in 2005, was to gain insight into the reality of the Spanish Roma with regard to employment and to compare the results obtained with the situation of the overall Spanish population.

The survey focused on the following index of indicators:

1. The Roma population. Socio-demographic characteristics.
2. Employment situation
  - Main indicators of the economic activity
  - Basic characteristics of the population and labour market status
3. Active Roma population
  - Overall data
  - Demographic characteristics of the active Roma population.
  - Gender, age and marital status
  - Academic level of the active Roma population
  - Health and disablement among the active population
  - The homes of the active Roma population

- Roma family members and their employment situation
- 4. Employed Roma population
  - Gender and age of the working population
  - Employment, activity of the employing entity and professional status
  - Work contracts or labour relationship -Type of working day and working hours
  - Studies and labour training
- 5. Unemployed Roma population
  - Characteristics of the unemployed Roma population
  - Employment search techniques
  - Employment status one year ago
  - Subjective perception of the usefulness of training
  - Subjective perception of the cause of unemployment
  - “Free time” – “Busy time”
- 6. Inactive Roma population
- 7. Do the Roma people feel discriminated against?

Outcomes of the research helped identifying existing inequalities between the labour situation of the overall Spanish population and those specificities of the Spanish Roma population. The data obtained was used for introducing changes in the ACCEDER Programme (aforementioned in a preceding section). Having produced comparable data on the employment situation of the Roma and the rest of the Spanish population has contributed to identify the main education and employment policy gaps. It has certainly helped improving programme actions and sensitising both public administrations and society in general, since results were widespread. In 2010 the research is being replicated to allow longitudinal comparison.

This methodology is going to be applied in Romania, Bulgaria and Italy as part of a project funded by the Romanian ESF-Managing Authority. Comparison will be then possible among these countries.

This survey was funded by the European Social Fund.

Further information:

*Roma Population and Employment. A comparative study.* FSG. 2005.

Full text:

<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/estudioempleo/EstudioempleoUK.pdf>

Conclusions: <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/estudioempleo/estudioempleofolletoUK.pdf>

Carrying out studies replicating the questions of national surveys and applying them to a Roma sample can be done in Turkey. The Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) carries out periodically, amongst others, a Labour Force Survey, and Income and Living Conditions Survey, as well as a Turkey Health Interview Survey. The questions selected for these surveys could be applied to a Roma sample, allowing a comparison between Roma groups and the overall population.

### ***4.3. Roma empowerment in decision-making***

Both the European Parliament<sup>86</sup> and the World Bank<sup>87</sup> have highlighted in various events and publications that Roma participation in public decision-making processes is a pre-condition to achieving their equal treatment, as well as to being effective in any field of intervention addressing them.

On the occasion of the II Roma Summit (Cordoba, 2010) the European Parliament launched a resolution in which it stated its concern about the low levels of political

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2005-0151&language=EN>

<sup>87</sup> [http://www.policy.hu/olmazu/useful\\_rep/Roma%20in%20expanding%20Europe.pdf](http://www.policy.hu/olmazu/useful_rep/Roma%20in%20expanding%20Europe.pdf)

participation of the Roma and encouraged “*the EU institutions to involve Roma communities, from grassroots level up to international NGOs, in the process of developing a comprehensive EU Roma policy, including in all aspects of planning, implementation and supervision, and to draw on the experiences of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, the OSCE Action Plan, and the recommendations of the Council of Europe, the United Nations and Parliament itself*”; and “*calls for the mobilisation of the Roma community so that inclusion policies can be implemented jointly, as they can be successful only if all parties involved fully participate in them*”.<sup>88</sup> References to the need to empower Roma also appear in The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion in principles n° 9 “Involvement of civil society” and Principle n° 10 “Active participation of the Roma”.

This section focuses on two levels: the participation of Roma at national policy-making level, and the participation of Roma through partnership building at the local level.

### National policy-making level

Empowerment of Roma at national policy-making level can take various forms. Different EU Member States have developed different types of Roma participation mechanisms.<sup>89</sup> Some of them have opted for specialised Roma-focused bodies (e.g. Slovakia, Romania) while others have set up units or departments within Government departments (e.g. Spain, Greece). Some countries have inter-ministerial coordination structures which include Roma representatives (Czech Republic, Romania, Spain). These provide an opportunity for Roma to be involved in high-level policymaking, although in most cases Roma members play a merely consultative role with limited decision-making capacity.

There should be counter-measures for several risks in all models: specialised bodies or units may tend towards a certain “segregation effect” of Roma-related discussion within general public policies, particularly if the special unit does not have sufficient powers to mobilise line ministries and negotiate with them. On the other hand, the lack of special units or departments with the responsibility of bringing Roma policies into the mainstream entails the risk that these may lose weight or even disappear from the agenda of the relevant departments. Inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms should be established with a strong secretariat with administrative capacity to support their functioning.

An inspirational guideline relevant to the current situation in Turkey is that these structures have been able to set out a vision of the desired outcomes for Roma people and developed a strategy which contains a concept on how Roma social inclusion should be approached.

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<sup>88</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0085+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

<sup>89</sup> According to the European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds -EUROMA- Report *Roma and the Structural Funds* the majority of countries participating in this network have succeeded in establishing functional structures dealing with Roma policies, although most of the existing coordination mechanisms are relatively young and are still assuming new functions. Available at: [http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/62/20/EUROMA\\_REPORT\\_web.pdf](http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/62/20/EUROMA_REPORT_web.pdf)

It is worth noting that in some cases, such as the Spanish Council for Roma People,<sup>90</sup> ad hoc working groups have been established in relation to the key policy areas (i.e. education, health, housing, employment, equality) for identifying priorities and possible policy responses. These working groups are formed by some of the Council's appointed members as well as by external experts (i.e. academics, professionals, etc.), and have provided the opportunity for discussion and reflection between Roma and non-Roma on finding solutions to problems from a public interest perspective.. In the current situation in Turkey, this space, this dialogue and this reflection is needed at present to keep up momentum after the Roma Opening process.

It is suggested that a suitable option for Turkey at present would be to set up a coordination working group between relevant Government departments with a view to establishing inter-departmental dialogue on the subject. Sectoral sub-working groups formed by Roma representatives, professionals, academics, etc. may contribute with analysis and proposals per policy area. This option may develop towards a more institutionalized model (e.g. membership, accountability, frequency of meetings, etc. regulated by law) in the future.

### Local partnerships

Partnership development has been identified by all relevant actors to be one of the key factors in achieving a positive impact on the social inclusion of the Roma. A strong partnership allows for better diagnosis, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. This is one of the lessons learned through the European Union EQUAL initiative. Partnership is about “... *bringing together key actors (local and regional authorities, training bodies, public employment services, NGOs, enterprises, social partners) in Development Partnerships (DPs) on a geographical or sectoral level to tackle discrimination and inequality*”.<sup>91</sup> Working in partnership is essential not only in terms of social impact but also for a more efficient use of public funds. Some key elements contribute to functional and effective partnerships for Roma social inclusion:

- The need to invest in the partnership creation process.
- Involvement of all key actors (different public administration levels and areas, Roma representatives, other NGOs and other relevant actors),
- Each key actor contributes according to their capacities and field of competence in a complementary way. In order to achieve better performance capacity building needs to be put in place.
- The involvement of key actors should take place from the very beginning of project/programme up to the evaluation phase. The involvement of Roma women and youth must be encouraged.
- The sense of a *win-win* situation among all actors and the establishment of common objectives and performance indicators for evaluation.
- Available disaggregated data about Roma to identify problems and needs,
- Medium and long term planning and budget.

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<sup>90</sup> The consultative State Council for Roma People is comprised of high-ranking officials from different Government departments and representatives of Roma organizations.

<sup>91</sup> EQUAL Success Stories *Development Partnerships working against discrimination and inequality in Europe*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal/about/key-doc\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/about/key-doc_en.cfm)

Empowering Roma by ensuring their participation in the partnership building process is essential for enhancing the sense of ownership, facilitating positive involvement of the community and achieving greater social impact. Such participation should happen at all phases: from diagnosis, design and implementation of social inclusion interventions, to monitoring and evaluation.

It is important to underline that partnership building at the local level must be supported in order to generate the conditions for dialogue and cooperation between local authorities, Roma organisations and other stakeholders:

It is necessary to assure the **consistency of local social inclusion approaches with the national policy framework** which establishes priorities and strategies. By doing so the sometimes insufficient political will of some local authorities to address Roma needs could be overcome. Since important powers in the promotion of social inclusion policies often lie in the hands of local administration bodies (decisions and budgets) if national governments do not push for localities to promote inclusion measures it may be the case that no action is taken in certain locations.

The lack of political will at local level, or the lack of vision on how to approach social inclusion interventions require counter-measures such as **technical guidance, capacity building, and facilitation** in promoting and supporting municipalities and Roma NGOs to design and implement actions.

The experience of the Agency for Social Inclusion of Roma in socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic is worth mentioning for their focus on assisting, at local level, the preparation and implementation of projects which target socially excluded Roma communities at the local level.

#### **Agency for Social Inclusion of Roma in socially excluded localities, Czech Republic**

This Agency was established in 2008 and currently operates within the Government Council for Roma issues. It acts on the local level by assisting the preparation and implementation of projects which target socially excluded Roma communities. It is connected to the EU Structural Funds since one of its tasks is to assist in the project identification and implementation of the EU funds for the benefit of socially excluded Roma. It promotes partnership alliances between different Government departments and fosters networking activities for public administration and non-for-profit organisations.

Its main working methods are facilitation, support of networking and strategic and community planning processes, support of ESF-funded project, etc. It includes project preparation and submissions, support of research, awareness-raising, training, organisation of thematic conferences etc. In 2009 the work of the Agency focused on 13 localities and it will include another 10 in 2010 and 10 by 2011. Some important elements of its work are:

-A link between the central and local approaches, meaning having a centre that coordinates all activities but focusing very much on the real and practical issues of municipalities, with a continuous feedback between the two levels.

-Facilitation of networking and plans development in municipalities where there are: weak or non existing non-profit and civic sector, lack of political will, or lack of overall specialist competencies, information, community planning etc.

-Strong facilitation and negotiation skills of the Agency staff.

-Support of local civic engagement including Roma themselves through participatory methods such as focus groups, thematic fora, local meetings, etc.

The Agency has been recognised to be effective in being able to empower and support competent local capacities with the ultimate aim of establishing the grounds for addressing the social exclusion of disadvantaged Roma groups.

Further information:

[www.socialni-zaclenovani.cz](http://www.socialni-zaclenovani.cz)

The model example of this Czech agency is considered relevant to Turkey because the lack of political will and the lack of *know-how* are both issues which may be found in Turkey at the local level. An issue to take into consideration is that a pool of specialised professionals and facilitators is required to provide guidance on designing social inclusion projects for Roma. This suggests that capacity building efforts with a view to increasing the expert knowledge and facilitation skills of a number of experts and facilitators (including Roma) may have positive outcomes in the future.

Another example of how to stimulate involvement at the local level comes from the Spanish Government *Roma Development Programme*, running since 1989, which consists in economic transfers to regions, municipalities and NGOs for carrying out social inclusion projects. The inspirational guideline of this practice lies in the fact that the allocation of Government funding, which must be matched (or co-financed) by regional and local authorities has implied that Roma social inclusion is placed in the agenda of municipalities, and at the same time the activities they carry out are in line with a national policy framework of key themes and priorities, which the Programme allows to be adapted to local circumstances. This also involves the delivery of in-service joint training sessions to public servants and to Roma and other civil society organisations. These training sessions aim at strengthening the capacity of the trainees to carry out Roma social inclusion interventions.

Capacity building measures of Roma NGOs have been widely implemented in EU countries and the Balkan region supported by European Union instruments (e.g. former PHARE pre-accession instrument), as well as by private donors, particularly the Soros Foundation through the Roma Initiative in Eastern Europe and the Balkan region.<sup>92</sup> At present much focus is given to the creation of know-how and to providing technical support to the design and evaluation of projects, both for NGOs and local authorities, with a view to generating potential good managers and partners in local or regional projects/programmes and therefore to improving the quality and impact of those initiatives aimed at the social inclusion of Roma.

The facilitation for building local partnerships in Romania (within the framework of a Phare Project) can serve as an example of how partnership building was supported in more than 200 localities.

#### **Facilitation for building Local Partnerships in Romania**

The Phare Project in Romania "Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception",<sup>93</sup> included an activity for supporting partnership building in more than 200 localities in the country. The methodology included:

- Delivery of joint trainings to local authority representatives and Roma together on community development, with a view to facilitate the establishment of partnerships between local Roma

<sup>92</sup> Soros Roma Initiative <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma>

<sup>93</sup> PHARE RO 2004/016-772.01.01.01

representatives and representatives of local authorities, and establish the grounds for the preparation of action plans.

- Facilitation of the preparation of action plans in each locality to improve the condition of the Roma.

The process was supported by a network of 40 facilitators with experience in community development. Facilitation started with forming initiative groups (where there was no local Roma association), mapping the problems of the community with a common methodology and through a participatory process, and establishing priorities in conjunction with the local authorities.

As a result of the project, more than 800 participants from local public administrations, and Roma representatives from 285 localities were trained together in 40 courses, more than 200 protocols of cooperation were signed by Mayors and local initiative groups, and more than 200 local action plans were developed including some project ideas which were ready to be submitted to grant schemes.

This idea of facilitating the building of local partnerships is considered fully relevant to Turkey where there is a perceived need to strengthen dialogue and cooperation at local level between local authorities and Roma, as well as to better map the needs of different Roma groups in different locations across the country, with a view to designing effective and adapted interventions involving the participation of Roma themselves.<sup>94</sup>

In Turkey there are financial instruments, such as the Community Development Projects scheme run by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund, which support projects with an integrated approach that encompasses various sub-projects. This type of partnership building for Roma social inclusion may also fit well into the priorities for the funding of the SODES Grant Scheme Programme run by the State Planning Organisation. Finally, the Axis on Social Inclusion of the Turkish Human Resources Development Operational Programme under IPA component 4 may also consider supporting this kind of intervention.

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<sup>94</sup> It is worth noting that a similar approach is being implemented in six Turkish localities since April 2010 by the project entitled “Project developing integral social policies for Roma Communities” (EIDHR/2010/232-543) supported by the European Union. Some of the objectives of this project are: to contribute to building social policies by bringing together representatives of local administrations and target groups, and to create action plans. This kind of initiative may be replicated in other locations.

## **5. THE WAY AHEAD: POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF ROMA IN TURKEY**

### *5.1. Policy options for social inclusion of Roma in Turkey*

There are certain elements that need to be considered in order to assess the relevance of EU experience to Turkey as regards Roma social inclusion. These are the political environment, political will, policy framework, the economic situation, the situation of Roma, civil society engagement and funding opportunities.

Key recommendations presented in the previous chapter are considered relevant to Turkey in the most part for a number of reasons:

- Social development is at stake in Turkey within the context of the “Democratic Initiative”, and there is a declared commitment of the Prime Minister to improve the socio-economic situation of Roma in Turkey. Since the organisation of a Roma workshop in December 2009 and a meeting between Prime Minister Erdogan with Roma groups some steps are already being taken within the context of the Roma Opening.
- There is an emerging debate in Turkey about the need to start action to improve Roma conditions and perception of the Roma, and key stakeholders are acknowledging the situation and pursuing efforts to find solutions to address the socio-economic problems of Roma.
- The key policy documents of Turkey such as the Ninth Development Plan of the Republic of Turkey, and sectoral strategic plans etc. set goals and objectives fully relevant for the situation of Roma groups (e.g. improving the education of disadvantaged groups, increasing the employability of disadvantaged groups, improving health services, adopting anti-discrimination legislation, etc).
- The social protection system and key sectoral policies are undergoing reforms towards modernisation and improvement in the education system, employment policies, health system, housing plans, social solidarity and anti-discrimination legislation on the grounds of ethnic origin (amongst others). This new policy framework offers an opportunity for increasing effective action targeted at Roma groups.
- There are national and European financial instruments available for funding interventions aimed at Roma social inclusion, despite the fact that at present Roma are not explicitly mentioned in any of them. Specifically, Roma as vulnerable persons are part of the target group of IPA pre-accession assistance. The Human Resources Development Operational Programme under IPA component IV foresees promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged persons into the labour market by facilitating their access to the labour market and to social protection, and by eliminating the barriers in accessing the labour market. There are therefore good

opportunities for Roma communities to benefit from this programme and to promote their social inclusion.

- There is an emerging Roma civil society movement which is a crucial factor for designing and implementing effective measures, providing a structured dialogue with public administration.

However, there are also some barriers that should be taken into account:

- Although the Turkish economy appears to show signs of recovery since the last quarter of 2009, the unemployment rate in Turkey is still high and the female participation in the labour market is still very low. Furthermore, there are other groups in Turkey experiencing poverty and social exclusion, having difficulties in achieving academic success, in accessing mainstream jobs etc., and this must be acknowledged.
- Addressing the situation of a distinct ethnic or cultural group with specific measures appears still to be a contentious issue in Turkey. Although this report attempts to underline that fostering the socio-economic promotion of a particularly disadvantaged group of Turkish citizens has nothing to do with the development of collective rights or nation-building dynamics, some may still show a certain reluctance to change. Political will at national and local level needs thus to be further strengthened.
- The general lack of robust data about the situation of Roma in different parts of Turkey hampers (although does not prevent) the possibility of planning well-informed policies.
- Since there have been few structured interventions aimed at the social inclusion of Roma in Turkey, there is a certain lack of expertise and know-how as regards Roma-related interventions on the part of both public officials and not-for-profit organisations.
- An additional concern is the fragmentation of the Roma movement which appears to result in the difficulty of establishing an effective dialogue with relevant Government offices.

## *5.2. Fundamentals for approaching social inclusion of Roma*

Social inclusion of Roma is a matter of guaranteeing their civic rights as Turkish citizens, ensuring access to goods and services on an equal footing with other citizens and preventing discriminatory practices they may confront. It is also a matter of strengthening social protection to compensate for the disadvantages and correcting inequalities. Lastly, there is also a question of economic opportunity.

It was seen earlier that articulating policy measures to address Roma problems is still perceived as a sensitive issue in Turkey by some stakeholders. This report proposes conceptualising this issue, avoiding any contentious dimension as regards minority

rights. Improvement of the socio-economic conditions of Turkish citizens is a policy goal of public interest for society at large, and thus is set out in the main policy documents and framework plans of the Republic.

Experience has proved in different contexts that generic policies do not always reach some categories of disadvantaged groups. Even social inclusion measures tend to have a disproportionately low impact on certain socially excluded groups with specific problems. This can be due to inertia (e.g. groups which did not benefit in the past are not expected to benefit at present), lack of inclusiveness of measures (not being adaptable to specific circumstances), resistance by implementers to addressing the needs of certain groups (because they think it is too difficult, or senseless to invest efforts), organisations not applying for funds (because they fear implementation will not be successful), etc. Therefore, the assumption that general policies will equally benefit all citizens according to their needs does not appear to work in practice for a number of inter-related factors.

The social inclusion of a largely marginalized group should also be seen as an economic opportunity. Social inclusion of Roma is not only a question of social solidarity. While it is important to keep reminding ourselves of the moral case for social inclusion – and Roma groups are amongst the most socially excluded in Turkish society – there is also an economic case to be made. The social exclusion of the Roma is a waste of human potential. Not only will it be important for the economy to make use of all the talents in the country, but the failure to do so will have expensive consequences.

For Roma social inclusion, leadership is required at many levels, but it starts at the top. Without continuous signals from the top the issue may lose momentum in Turkey. The leadership should set out a vision of the desired outcomes for Roma people, show Government commitment, create a sense of urgency, mobilise key actors, set targets, support plans and measures, and demand results and visible progress. Furthermore, Roma issues should not be a matter of political confrontation.

### *5.3. Proposed strategic roadmap for moving forward*

#### Setting up the institutional framework

- **Set out a strategic vision** for the social inclusion of Roma as a distinct disadvantaged group of Turkish citizens with specific needs. This vision should have a mid-term perspective and contain, as a minimum, clear messages, principles and approaches to guide subsequent actions. The degree of formalisation may vary. It can be a policy concept which can serve as a ground rule for further development, or it can convert into a specific policy plan for the social inclusion of Roma formally adopted by political decision. In both cases it should establish priorities and targets and connection to the existing policy framework in the key sectors for social inclusion.
- **Mainstreaming Roma social inclusion** into key policy sectors. Experience in other countries has proved that making explicit reference to the Roma situation in policy documents can be the key for mobilising important actors and maximizing the effectiveness of mainstream interventions. Therefore, it is proposed to insert explicit

references to Roma in key policy documents in relation to the social inclusion goals relevant to their situation. Key policy documents in Turkey would be, inter alia, the National Employment Policy, the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, strategic plans of key authorities such as those responsible for education, health, housing etc. Operational programming of these policies and plans may set specific targets, develop specific **action plans** for addressing the Roma situation, and should envisage monitoring and measuring how Roma benefit through the planned interventions.

- This approach also implies an **effective use of the available financial instruments** (i.e. from central Government to decentralized structures such as Governorships, and local budgets) for accomplishing social inclusion goals with the Roma population. IPA pre-accession assistance can also play an important role in supporting key stakeholders to address the disadvantages Roma citizens suffer. This would not preclude the allocation of specific funds for Roma-focused interventions when necessary to contribute to achieving social inclusion goals.
- The need to align the efforts of key actors calls for the establishment of **policy coordination mechanisms**. These mechanisms can adopt a varying degree of formalization and should be established both at horizontal and vertical levels.
  - One option would be to create Government structures dedicated to the Roma. This model, adopted in other countries in Europe, as mentioned earlier, normally implies the institutionalization of the mechanisms, either through the establishment of a specialised Government body, or through the creation of a new department under another Government structure. A non-exhaustive list of possible tasks for this agency or department would include: coordinating policy, establishing dialogue with Roma representatives, setting priorities for funding, providing technical assistance, managing a grant scheme. The mandate, structure, membership, tasks and frequency of meetings is usually regulated by law.
  - A second option would focus on making key social inclusion-related departments and structures more aware of and responsive to the Roma dimension. This option implies the establishment of an effective coordination structure between line ministries and relevant bodies. This coordination structure may be regulated by law in its composition, duties etc. (e.g. inter-governmental council), or may be more informal, acting as a working group with no legal mandate linked to a policy plan. In both cases this coordination structure should include relevant officials of line ministries.

As experience has shown in other countries, it is very important that these coordination mechanisms are coordinated with the managing authorities (or operating structures in the case of IPA) of relevant operational programmes of EU funds. Moreover these mechanisms may include, or should be linked to, mechanisms for the participation of Roma in policy-making.

- For establishing a **mechanism for Roma participation** at the policy-making level, there exist examples of councils of Roma participation which are entirely formed by Roma representatives either in their individual capacity or representing Roma organisations. In other cases Roma representatives are full members of inter-

departmental committees, or form the staff of specialised agencies or departments. In any case, the confusion between having Roma staff and ensuring the participation of Roma should be avoided. It is worth examining options for a mixed civil society participation which comprise, besides representatives of the Roma movement, members of other NGOs, academics, professionals, etc. This kind of working group can be more effective in designing concrete policy interventions. One should also bear in mind that public policy-making for social inclusion is not only demand-driven. Participation of Roma is essential in all stages of the process, from needs identification to evaluation of interventions, but the formulation of a policy should involve the participation of key stakeholders. Any structure for Roma participation should ensure the participation of Roma women and youth.

The options presented here are inspired by existing Government approaches in other EU countries to address the social inclusion of Roma. In the case of Turkey it is suggested that it starts by experimenting with coordination and participation structures rather than by regulating highly institutionalised ones. This would allow maturation of the process and flexibility for adopting changes when necessary, and the structures could always develop by law later. A working committee for developing a policy concept including representatives of relevant departments of line ministries working in dialogue with thematic groups of Roma, experts and academics is proposed as a starting point.

Although there are different alternatives as regards the institutional framework, there is an issue that needs to be dealt with which is common to all options: it is necessary that progress achieved and benefits of Roma social inclusion for society are made visible. Therefore, **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** for measuring impact of interventions and progress made should be developed through the use of the existing baseline indicators. Additional data collection may be necessary.

### Priority Actions

- Making **explicit reference to the situation of Roma in key policy documents**. The operational programming of key policies crucial for social inclusion (i.e. education, employment, health and housing) must set specific targets for Roma and develop specific plans addressing key challenges.
- **Supporting partnerships** between local authorities and Roma groups (and other local actors at the local level), with a view to establishing local action plans for improving the living conditions of Roma and increasing their participation in society. For encouraging the establishment of these partnerships and making them functional, one option is to promote them through grant schemes which can support the mapping of needs, training activities for professionals and Roma representatives, the process of designing actions and their implementation. Assistance during the partnership building process through expert facilitation is important to increase its effectiveness. Partnerships should ideally involve a wide range of sectoral administration at local level in order to make them jointly responsible for the initiatives, thereby avoiding landing the whole responsibility on the social services.
- **Improving information, knowledge and data** about the situation of Roma groups in Turkey. Improved knowledge about their diverse situations and needs across the country is necessary in order to plan effective measures and actions, and to allow

subsequent monitoring of progress achieved. It has been seen that collecting and handling sensitive data subject to special protection, such as ethnic identity, is complex and sometimes contentious, although it has been also noted that data protection legislation does not preclude the possibility of collecting such data. Yet, at the very minimum, it is necessary to address the mapping of the situation of socially excluded Roma and people living under Roma-like social conditions. Mapping the situation of socially excluded communities, health studies, and replication of national labour force surveys to Roma samples could be priority studies commissioned by Turkish institutions.

- **Empowering Roma to act as mediators** and fostering mediation structures. As has been presented earlier, training Roma mediators and promoting their participation in the framework of social inclusion programmes in the fields of education, health, employment and community development has proved to be effective in other contexts. Designing and delivering training courses for Roma with the participation of women and youth would be the first step before their future utilisation in the framework of community development projects or sectoral programmes.
- Establishing an outreach information plan for **providing identity cards** to Roma still lacking them with a specific focus on mobile Roma groups, providing information about the benefits of holding them and with guidance and support in obtaining them.
- **Establishing as a requisite the social dimension for any re-habilitation or re-housing plan** for Roma. An integrated social inclusion programme should accompany any re-habilitation or re-housing intervention for Roma in Turkey, addressing key policy fields (education, employment, health, social participation, empowerment of women), to make the process sustainable and to avoid possible deterioration of the accommodation.
- **Stimulating innovation and pilot actions** at local level. These pilot actions should be multi-dimensional and therefore the use of multi-funding should be encouraged. This does not simply mean financing the same project through different funds, but financing integrated actions which encompass different synergic interventions. This option requires establishing specific methodological guidelines and support for those applying for funds relevant to the design of Roma-focused interventions. It also requires increased effort to reach these applicants. Translating the key elements of successful pilot projects into broader policy must be channeled through the framework of the inter-departmental coordination mechanisms.
- Promoting new or adapted **community resource centres** where activities such as first job counselling, extra-mural activities for children, early childhood development, parenting education, information on access to social services and health education programmes can take place within the framework of integrated community development plans. The work of Roma mediators could also be based on these centres.
- **Fostering know-how development** by promoting communication and exchange of knowledge and experiences through thematic workshops and seminars between institutions, organizations and professionals working with Roma groups in Turkey. Facilitating the establishment of professional and expert networks, and stimulating

constructive international cooperation within the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, as has been demanded by Turkish Roma organizations, is important for ensuring that successful pilot actions inform policy-making. Besides national funding, EU instruments can be used for this purpose.

- Making the **anti-discrimination legislation and the Equality body** effective for disadvantaged Roma when these are adopted and established by, inter alia, strengthening the capacity of the staff of the new structures, raising rights awareness among Roma groups, informing and training public officials, legal professionals, police and civil society, conducting surveys, and providing guidance to public administrations so that Roma have better access to their service provision.

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