



The Situation of the Roma Minority
in Selected New Member States
of the European Union



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Published by the European Liberal Forum asbl with the support of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Sofia and the Centre for Liberal Studies, Prague.
Funded by the European Parliament.

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Imprint

Publisher

European Liberal Forum asbl.
Square de Meeûs 40, 3rd floor
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Layout and production

Studio Blick Ltd.
10 Midjur str.
1164 Sofia
Bulgaria

**The Situation of the Roma Minority
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July-August 2012**

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Preface

With about 12 million people by average estimate, the Roma are the largest ethnic non-state minority in Europe. Although they live in practically each European country, they are at the same time certainly also the least integrated minority. Most of the Roma live on the fringes of the mainstream societies, with large segments excluded and segregated from the rest of the population. Whereas the group as a whole faces racism and other forms of discrimination, those Roma in segregated settlements live under very precarious socio-economic conditions. Their general status of development by no criteria meets acceptable European standards. In political terms, lobbying for their interests is very weak, since they have developed hardly any political interest groups of their own – not to mention political parties – which would be able to represent them adequately on the political level, i.e. in parliaments or even in governments. Not least because of the dynamics of population growth and migration, both among Roma and the mainstream societies, their lack of integration increasingly leads to social tensions and conflicts, with growing resentment of and antagonism towards the Roma, threatening the entire social cohesion of many countries. These trends and tendencies are especially significant in Central, East and Southeast Europe, where the proportion of Roma is the highest and the fastest growing among the European states, already reaching ten per cent in some countries.

Roma integration has been an issue on the agenda of international organizations, state governments and non-governmental organizations for many years, but for a variety of reasons all initiatives and measures have essentially failed to generate suitable and sustainable success. As a consequence, in 2011 the EU launched a new, comprehensive and multi-targeted initiative under the designation “Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020”. This initiative asks the Member States to find sustainable answers for the solution of the problems of Roma poverty and exclusion on the basis of the protection and promotion of fundamental human and civil rights, in order to “make a tangible difference to Roma people’s lives” within this time frame.

Roma integration involves a variety of different issue areas such as poverty alleviation, employment, education, racism, discrimination, the rule of law, equality, individual freedom and many more. Successful strategies and policies, therefore, need to be multi-layered and coordinated. This is indeed a challenge for all actors involved – for the EU and its Member States as well as for the Roma themselves. But it is also a challenge for liberals, since all of the issue areas cited above are core concerns, especially for liberals. Besides, the discrimination Roma face today is incompatible with the values on which the EU is founded. The overall situation of the Roma is a disgrace to a free and just Europe. Liberals need positions, arguments, strategies and policies in order to apply their norms and principles to this marginalized minority, the Roma.

Hence, the European Liberal Forum asbl. (ELF) and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) in cooperation with the Centre for Liberal Studies (CLS), with the support of the European Parliament, have initiated a project in 2012 which aims to formulate liberal positions for Roma integration based on the liberal core values of freedom and responsibility and within the context of the EU Framework. Our focus in this endeavour is on the situation in Central and Southeast Europe where the threats and challenges to social cohesion are the most pressing.

As a first step of this project, a joint workshop of ELF, FNF and CLS was held in Prague in May 2012; it focused on the situation of Roma integration in five selected countries of

the region – the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The results and findings of the workshop’s intensive deliberations were put together systematically and, with the help of available data and analyses, integrated into a comprehensive analytical study by two experts in the field, Will Guy (Bristol) and Ivan Gabal (Prague). ELF, FNF and CLS are indebted to these two authors for their impressive collection of data, their comparative analyses of the situation under different conditions of five countries, and their recommendations for strategies and policies based on their systematic expertise of the issues involved.

ELF, FNF and CLS present this study “The Situation of the Roma Minority in Selected New Member States of the European Union” to the public in order to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the challenges of Roma integration in Central and Southeast Europe and to highlight the scope of the necessary coordinated and coherent political steps that need to be addressed and implemented to change the current situation. On this basis, and as a second part of our project, specific liberal approaches for strategies and policies aimed at Roma integration can be deduced and presented to the public in due time.

This project is part of the multi-annual theme focus of “New concepts for migration and integration” that ELF has been pursuing since the beginning of 2012. Activities will be implemented during a three-year period running till the end of 2014. They include studies, workshops, seminars and conferences on a variety of relevant aspects across Europe.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The entry into the Community of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia (2004) and Bulgaria and Romania (2007) added around 4 million new Roma EU citizens, trebling their numbers and placing them high on the political agenda due to their extreme marginalisation.

1.2. 'Respect for minorities' had been a criterion for EU membership and in response candidate countries had all adopted anti-discrimination legislation to protect human rights. Nevertheless these measures were inadequate to reduce Roma exclusion.

1.3. At the same time EU-supported projects promoted Roma integration during the accession period and after. These targeted key areas such as education, infrastructure, unemployment, health, segregation and public opinion but were mainly small-scale and likewise made little significant impact.

1.4. Prompted by international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and EU, the predominant political focus of post-Communist governments had been on transforming their states into market economies. Relatively little attention was paid to excluded groups such as Roma, who had been among the main losers in the rapid restructuring process.

1.5. Now the price of this neglect is becoming starkly evident, threatening to undermine social cohesion in these countries. Surveys reveal a familiar picture of continuing discrimination, poverty, widespread unemployment, low educational attainment, dwellings without basic amenities, poor health and early death – in short a story of wasted lives and unused potential.

1.6. This is despite more recent efforts to reduce ethnic tensions and preserve minimum levels of wellbeing through social work support and other means. These attempts have not resulted in more integration of Roma communities or families and have failed to prevent a deteriorating situation where many remain destitute and living in third world conditions.

1.7. In 2011 the EU launched a new initiative – the Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) – in a further attempt to remedy this desperate situation at a time when some countries frankly acknowledged for the first time that the lives of their Roma citizens had been better under Communism.

1.8. During the forty-year period of labour-intensive, inefficient command economies Roma, like all other adults, had been required to work but restructuring following regime change led to the loss of their mainly unskilled jobs. This cut them adrift from mainstream employment and was the direct cause of their subsequent impoverishment.

1.9. However the relatively higher pay of manual workers under Communism had the disadvantage of giving Roma little incentive to stay on at school. This left most unqualified for new jobs in the post-1989 world where more overt discrimination made them the last to be re-employed. Further factors intensifying their marginalisation included the ending of national military service where male Roma had served alongside non-Roma and universal pre-school education.

1.10. The Framework initiative was launched after EU-wide austerity programmes had been introduced across the EU and at a time when popular antagonism towards Roma was growing.

1.11. Majority populations see Roma as workshy parasites and their dependence on social support as a drain on national economies and blame the Roma themselves for their predicament. Across a broad spectrum of public opinion – including the young and more educated – any trust in policy initiatives to bring about improvement is increasingly being lost.

1.12. Past experience therefore suggests that demands for commitment to anti-racism and desegregation are unlikely to succeed in the face of popular opposition to measures seen as benefiting Roma.

1.13. Although the Framework recommendations have been carefully elaborated, responsibility for implementation remains with Member States. In the past Roma integration policies advocated by the Commission have not been put into practice effectively, having been impeded by weak coordination and failure to mainstream them into general policy processes, while prominent politicians have expressed scepticism or lost interest in them.

1.14. Meanwhile structural funds made available by the EU have been underused or in some cases even misused.

1.15. Given the disappointing results to date it remains to be seen whether national governments will show sufficient political will and organising capacity for their proposed strategies to be realised.

1.16. Therefore new means of reversing negative trends are urgently needed as well as ways of persuading governments and majority populations that real progress can and must be made.

1.17. At the same time Roma families should be given hope and encouraged by practical measures so they no longer remain passive recipients of aid but instead actively engage in striving for a better future. In this pursuit of upward social mobility education must play a crucial role.

2. Methodology

2.1. This working paper is based on rapporteurs' reports for the workshop "The EU-Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies: Visions and Realities, Opportunities and Challenges for Roma Integration in Central and Southeast Europe", organised by the European Liberal Forum asbl. (ELF) with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and the Centre for Liberal Studies (CLS), and funded by the European Parliament in Prague (2-3 May 2012) on the current situation in the five Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries with large Roma populations listed above.

2.2. It is supplemented by key policy documents and recent research findings. In view of past shortcomings in implementing adopted policies a short section is devoted to institutional and organisational structures, coordination, monitoring and evaluation issues and the importance of reliable data. Apart from organisational failures, however, the underlying reason for lack of progress has been the absence of sufficient political will.

2.3. This section is followed by a brief general description of each country in turn, accompanied by selected measures for improving structural organisation, implementation and funding. These are partly based on rapporteurs' reports but also draw on the Commission's comments on individual countries' NRIS documents.

2.4. The paper then focuses directly on the main priority areas of employment, education, housing and health and social care, presenting empirical evidence about distinct characteristics of the situation in each of the five countries but where common problems are clearly evident.

2.5. All of these sectors involve anti-discrimination and gender aspects but more peripheral topics such as culture, language and history are not examined.

2.6. The paper concludes by considering policy options for the main priority areas and then how these broader approaches might need to be modified in individual countries.

2.7. A short appendix is attached giving positive examples of Roma inclusion from Spain.

2.8. The paper is not intended as a final product but as a basis for further discussion of appropriate policies to deal with this complex and intractable subject.

3. Benefits of a coordinated multi-sectoral approach

3.1. Roma face profound difficulties in each of the main policy areas. Yet these are not discrete problems to be tackled individually but interlocking issues. Rehousing Roma families without dealing with their unemployment and the poor educational attainments of their children does little to reduce their marginalisation.

3.2. Consequently, to address these interrelated problems effectively, a comprehensive coordinated strategy is required.

3.3. Spain presents an example of such a sophisticated, multi-sectoral approach, backed by sustained political will. While demonstrating that progress is possible and offering a guide for action, it is difficult to anticipate such a level of cooperation in CEE countries at present.

3.4. Nevertheless the NRISs of all five countries propose adopting an integrated approach in tackling the main priority areas in a coordinated way.

3.5. Meanwhile the Commission has insisted that concrete measures, explicit targets and measurable indicators, improved monitoring procedures and earmarked funding, as well as effective measures to fight discrimination and segregation, are needed to achieve the goal of significantly greater inclusion by 2020. It also noted that baseline studies involving need assessments are required if progress is to be assessed reliably.

3.6. Equally important is the active involvement of the intended main beneficiaries of the NRISs – the Roma citizens of Member States – by the discussion of policies with Roma civil society. The ERGO network and Spanish FSG Roma NGO already have prominent international roles as Roma representatives but levels of national representation vary considerably.

3.7. In implementing strategies National Contact Points, bearing responsibility for managing them, play a vital role. However preliminary assessments of NRISs indicate that governmental mechanisms to enable inter-ministerial cooperation in tackling complex problems with a multi-sectoral approach are often inadequate or lacking.

3.8. Also whether effective working partnerships can be established between central state bodies and regional and local authorities is uncertain in the wake of extensive decentralisation.

3.9. Therefore National Contact Points require strengthening or rather transforming – both in terms of staffing but also in powers – to become an Agency for Integration. Appointing a cabinet minister with special responsibility for integration would support the influence of such an agency while publicly demonstrating political will to make substantial progress.

3.10. Only Bulgaria (and Spain) propose using EU technical assistance, while other countries risk wasting this opportunity to improve the design, monitoring and evaluation of their projects.

3.11. Beyond these institutional links sustainable progress will depend on establishing genuine trust between Roma and non-Roma in local communities. Here the active

involvement of Roma NGOs and individuals can play a key part, as can anti-discrimination training for officials and community leaders as well as sensitively designed awareness-raising campaigns emphasising shared inter-communal benefits.

3.12. Finally the overall guiding role of the Commission will be pivotal in encouraging but also scrutinising Member States' performance in their take-up and appropriate use of available EU funding. In the present programming period the absorption rate of ESF funds remains very low with nearly 40% (€30 billion) still available.

3.13. While ultimate responsibility for their citizens' wellbeing lies with Member States, the Commission has a duty to hold them to account for their compliance with the Framework initiative and their observance of human rights and non-discrimination.

The five countries and selected organisational, implementation and funding measures

4. Bulgaria

4.1. With an estimated total of 750,000, Roma form 10% of Bulgaria's population – the largest proportion in the five countries – although Romania's Roma are more than double in numbers. In spite of their share of the total population Bulgarian Roma are not recognised as a national minority while some Turkish-speaking Roma self-identify as members of the Turkish minority.

4.2. Bulgaria and Romania have lower GDPs and wages and worse living conditions in terms of fewer basic amenities than the other three countries with Roma far more disadvantaged than the general population.

4.3. Both countries also generated large numbers of non-Roma migrants – mainly to Spain, Italy and France – seeking work opportunities and better pay. Along with them were many Roma whose arrival prompted highly publicised retaliatory measures from Italy and France.

4.4. The Bulgarian government and Roma civil society agreed the need for a Roma integration programme as early as 1998. Roma and non-Roma experts drafted a Framework Programme, which was endorsed by 75 Roma NGOs and adopted as official policy the following year.

4.5. This progressive document included legal measures to combat discrimination, employment and economic development, access to healthcare, housing regulation, education, protection of Roma culture, Roma presence in the media and safeguarding Roma women.

4.6. In 2010 the government adopted a new Framework Programme that, while broadly similar, is vaguer allowing for compromise – especially on desegregation.

4.7. The Bulgarian NRIS also puts Roma integration high on the political agenda but retains the same institutional structure that had previously proved ineffective, particularly for coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

4.8. The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues is the main Contact Point. Its record is poor, partly due to lack of capacity related to the low pay of public servants.

4.9. A multi-sectoral approach to interrelated problems is not evident as individual ministerial plans are presented quite separately in the NRIS.

4.10. Ensuring funds is the responsibility of an interdepartmental working group, chaired by the Minister of EU Funds Management, but national funding is not yet secured for many activities.

4.11. Bulgaria, alone of the five countries, did not specify target sectors for structural funds and the Commission noted that no mention was made of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The Commission also warned of Bulgaria's previous weak absorption capacity of structural funds. However it was the only country, apart from Spain, proposing to draw on EU technical assistance for its NRIS.

Bulgaria - selected organisational, implementation and funding measures

4.12. Sufficient numbers of quality staff should be in place for the National Contact Point to enable effective overall management of the strategy.

4.13. Coordinated multi-sectoral plans need preparation together with participating ministries.

4.14. Adequate national funding must be secured and close attention paid to structural funds.

4.15. To allow meaningful evaluation indicators that simply record tasks performed should be complemented by those measuring impact. Also there should be independent monitoring.

4.16. The NRIS was previously consulted with civil society, including Roma. This important dialogue should be continued.

4.17. Partnerships still need to be built with municipalities as partners in local implementation.

5. Czech Republic

5.1. Of the five CEE countries under review, the best placed to integrate its Roma population in objective terms would appear to be the Czech Republic. Even at a time of economic turbulence its economy seems stable, it possesses the lowest unemployment rate (8%) and also the smallest proportion of the population below the poverty line.

5.2. Furthermore estimated Roma numbers are far less at an estimated 200,000 and form a much lower share of the total population (2%) than in the other four countries.

5.3. In the Communist era their employment rates were among the highest in the CEE region. These Roma were seen as the most linguistically and culturally integrated with the majority.

5.4. Nevertheless negative attitudes have increased threefold over the past two decades in the belief that crime is endemic amongst Roma and that they abuse the social welfare system.

5.4. Not only extremists but also mainstream politicians have sought to gain electoral advantage by implicitly characterising Czech Roma in this pejorative way.

5.5. Roma are recognised as a national minority and are represented on the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, although this body has limited powers.

5.6. Education and housing are particularly challenging sectors, whilst inter-ministerial cooperation and ensuring regional implementation of national plans are problematic.

5.7. The Czech Republic was the only country not to prepare an NRIS for the Commission but instead submitted a previously existing National Action Plan (NAP).

Czech Republic - selected organisational, implementation and funding measures

5.8. The Commission had relatively little to say about the Czech Action Plan since this had been already in existence beforehand.

5.9. It did include, under identified gaps, that attention needed to be paid to timeframe and the monitoring and evaluation system, as well as to an integrated approach and the involvement of civil society. A special mention was made of sustainability of EU-funded measures.

6. Hungary

6.1. In Hungary the Roma population has been regularly surveyed and is now estimated at around 700,000 (7% of the total population).

6.2. Hungary is the only one of the five countries where the first language of the overwhelming majority of Roma is the majority tongue – Magyar. Smaller groups speak Romani or Beash.

6.3. In 1995 a unique system of Minority Self-Government (MSG) was introduced which delegates cultural and linguistic matters to national minorities and also to Roma – classified as an ethnic minority.

6.4. The MSG system has been criticised as offering the illusion of political power rather than genuine inclusion for Roma, since it does not enable them to combat problems of segregated education, discrimination, unemployment, housing and healthcare.

6.5. Nevertheless, during the accession period and after, Hungary introduced some of the most comprehensive, EU-supported integration programmes for Roma, linked to an equal opportunities-based policy and national development plans. Some initiatives made structural funding conditional on inclusion of desegregation activities.

6.6. The Hungarian NRIS is regarded as one the most thorough, being based on considerable previous experience of a multi-sectoral approach. During the drafting process the strategy has been widely consulted with Roma NGOs and also with regions and municipalities.

6.7. Also the Contact Point at the State Secretariat for Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice is credible.

6.8. However this positive approach is threatened by deteriorating economic and political conditions, particularly tensions following several murders of Roma and the rise of the stridently anti-Roma *Jobbik* party. This extremist right-wing party came within 3% of the previous ruling Social Democrats in the 2010 general election in which Liberal representation was eliminated.

6.9. Hungary is the only CEE country to have elected Roma MEPs but in 2012 one of these two prominent women representatives applied to Canada for asylum.

Hungary - selected organisational, implementation and funding measures

6.10. The Commission noted that the NRIS had prioritised situation of children and the need to raise awareness of discrimination. The latter is a challenging issue in Hungary.

6.11. The NRIS was praised for its quantified listing of EU resources for planned measures and for proposing to draw on the EAFRD, though here no amounts were specified.

6.12. As in the case of the Czech Republic, the Commission called for more precise information on the monitoring and evaluation system and added that the sustainability of EU-funded measures required further attention.

7. Romania

7.1. Romania presents the greatest challenge of all in achieving Roma inclusion with a population over double that of any other state.

7.2. The Council of Europe estimates an approximate total of 1,850,000 Roma. However the wide range from 1,200,000 to 2,500,000 indicates the huge gap in reliable information.

7.3. With the lowest educational levels of the five countries and containing some of the most marginalised Roma communities, Romania's highly visible Roma migrants to the West have provoked heated political controversy in recent years.

7.4. Certain Roma activists, seeking to pressure the EU, have encouraged migration while some Romanian politicians have concurred by taking the view that the Roma diaspora makes them the responsibility of the EU rather than of the Member States of which they are citizens.

7.5. These issues have even raised questions about the fundamental laws of the Community,

notable the Council Directives on discrimination and freedom of movement, as well as aggravating the relationship between the Commission and Member States.

7.6. In some places tensions have risen following forced evictions, building walls between communities, increased ethnic segregation and siting Roma settlements in polluted locations.

7.7. There can be huge income differentials in Romania between affluent and impoverished Roma communities. The latter are among the most destitute Roma in CEE countries.

7.8. Roma are recognised as a national minority and have a guaranteed seat in Parliament.

Romania - selected organisational, implementation and funding measures

7.9. The lack of adequate data reinforces the need for a baseline study to assess the scale of the problems and to enable realistic targets to be set and monitoring to be carried out.

7.10. With its very poor overall past record on tackling Roma inclusion, Romania's NRIS drew some sharp comments from the Commission.

7.11. The main criticism was that given the scale of the problems in every sector and their interrelated nature, the NRIS did not adopt an integrated approach or prioritise its goals clearly.

7.12. Nor did it define targets, responsibilities or budget allocations or explain how a previous weakness would be corrected, i.e. the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation system.

7.13. Although there had been limited consultation with local and regional authorities, and also with Roma civil society, much closer involvement with these bodies would be needed, as well as effective coordination of implementation.

7.14. Absorption of structural funds had been extremely low in the past and the Commission called for significant improvement as a priority.

8. Slovakia

8.1. In the five countries under review Slovakia is the only member of the Eurozone and has the highest general unemployment rate.

8.2. The main challenges in integrating the Slovak Roma population are their impoverishment, their spatial and educational segregation – the most pronounced of all five countries – and their distribution, mostly concentrated in the underdeveloped east of the country.

8.3. Segregation was not seriously addressed until after accession but some EU-supported projects adopted a multi-sectoral approach in tackling interrelated problems of marginalised Roma communities and disadvantaged regions.

8.4. Slovakia recognises Roma as a national minority and prepared a substantial NIRS document on which they were consulted.

8.5. In 2011 public representation of Roma was strengthened with the election of 29 Roma mayors and hundreds of municipal councillors, mostly in villages in eastern Slovakia. This is an increase from 19 mayors of Roma origin in 2006 and 11 in 2002.

8.6. An advisory Government Plenipotentiary for Roma matters is the NIRS coordinator although in the past this office has suffered from limited powers and budgets.

Slovakia - selected organisational, implementation and funding measures

8.7. The Commission emphasised the need to focus on sustainability of EU-funded measures.

8.8. Likewise it suggested that lessons should be learnt from past implementation of projects financed by structural funds, presumably referring to a questionable development programme.

8.9. Funding for measures appeared to be insufficient and amounts were not always quantified properly in the NRIS.

8.10. The Operational Programmes (2014-2020) need to be made compatible with the NRIS.

9. Employment situation

9.1. Roma unemployment levels are far higher than for the majority population living in the vicinity. Low educational levels severely restrict their access to the general labour market, which is hindered still further by discriminatory practices.

9.2. Most Roma families now subsist to a greater or lesser degree on social support, often supplemented by occasional casual work in the grey economy. Budget cuts and eligibility restrictions make survival on benefits alone increasingly impossible.

9.3. Some men still pursue their former labouring jobs but frequently removed from the protection of employment laws – an abuse to which officials turn a blind eye. Consequently wages of these vulnerable workers are very low and often paid cash in hand. This results in them forfeiting insurance and pension contributions.

9.4. A widespread and even more marginal activity is scavenging waste materials for recycling, which sometimes involves child labour.

9.5. For women – reporting unemployment rates on average one third higher than men – and the young (aged 15-24) finding work is even harder and petty crime offers a tempting option.

9.6. Nowadays many Roma children grow up never having experienced any of their family in work. Many long-term unemployed adults, especially the more elderly, are unlikely to find jobs in present-day economies and a main goal must be that their children and grandchildren avoid a similar fate.

9.7. Marked exceptions are found among the formerly nomadic sub-ethnic group that resisted proletarianisation. These had made a livelihood as illegal traders during the Communist era – often in league with corrupt officials – and now prosper in a market economy environment.

10. Bulgaria – Roma employment

10.1. Roughly a third of Bulgarian Roma of working age are in some form of paid employment as opposed to over half the majority population.

10.2. The legacy of Communist-era employment patterns is evident with almost a third of employed Roma working in industry or construction in Romania and a quarter in Bulgaria, although here a fifth work in agriculture. In both countries a further quarter are employed in public administration and social work activities.

10.3. Of all employed Roma, 80% of both men and women in Bulgaria are employees compared to only 25% in Romania, where over half of Roma men and women are self-employed – a far more fragile situation. While a quarter of employed Bulgarian Roma men and women work part-time, in Romania the corresponding rate for both sexes is 65%.

10.4. Over half of Roma in Bulgaria are unemployed – a rate three times that for non-Roma – and the rates are only slightly lower in Romania. The situation is even worse for women in both countries, particularly for those under 25 where over 70% are unemployed.

10.5. This is only partly due to most young Roma leaving school at 16. Higher educational levels improve employment prospects but Bulgaria and especially Romania have lower shares of Roma completing more than their basic education than the other three countries.

10.6. Discrimination when seeking jobs was reported by third of Roma in Bulgaria and rather less in Romania. Rates were higher in Hungary, Slovakia and especially the Czech Republic.

10.7. Previous relatively large activation programmes involving public works in Bulgaria had been questionable, leading the Commission to advise that such schemes should be examined to see whether they led to sustainable employment and work-related qualifications.

10.8. Training schemes for Roma entrepreneurs and aiding them with loans had been introduced by the UNDP with some success in EU-supported programmes.

10.9. Roma themselves are active in seeking better work prospects and higher incomes – often by migrating. Of the estimated 164,000-350,000 Bulgarians in Spain, between a quarter and a third are thought to be Roma. Whereas Bulgarian Roma often invested their earnings in new housing at home, some have now bought property in Spain.

10.10. Romanians prefer Italy with their numbers currently around one million. The situation of Roma migrants to Italy was far more precarious in a hostile political and social environment, although this might change with the new government's inclusive policy.

11. Czech Republic – Roma employment

11.1 In spite of public opinion to the contrary, the level of Czech Roma in paid employment (either full-time or part-time) at over 40% remains higher than elsewhere.

11.2. However up to four times as many Roma as non-Roma see themselves as unemployed. The situation of young Roma is deteriorating and 77% have no previous work experience.

11.3. Over 60% of Roma aged 16 and above have reported experiencing discrimination when looking for work – much the highest rate in the five countries.

11.4. Though over half of adult Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are currently entitled to an old-age pension, this level will soon fall unless employment trends improve.

11.5. In contrast to the national picture there exist structurally disadvantaged regions where general unemployment rates reach 20-30% and poverty levels are high. Within these areas lie specific socially excluded localities with unemployment rates above 90% and characterised by severe social problems and serious criminality.

11.6. Numbers of Czech and Slovak and also Hungarian Roma migrated to the West in the late 1990s, claiming asylum mainly in the UK and Canada. Many are established there and relatives travel to stay with them to increase their incomes – often in the informal economy. Some migrate abroad to escape from usury.

12. Hungary – Roma employment

12.1. While only around 35% of Hungarian Roma are in paid employment of some kind, the gap between Roma and the majority population in the vicinity is less than elsewhere.

12.2. General unemployment is highest and impoverishment widespread in the north-east where two-thirds of the population formerly worked in heavy industry. As in Czechoslovakia, many Roma had migrated to this industrial region for employment during the Communist era. Remote agricultural areas also badly affected by economic decline.

12.3. As elsewhere young Hungarian Roma under 25 often have no work experience but, for them, the unemployment rate of 58% is lower than for Roma in the other four countries.

12.4. A 2011 study found that the ethnic employment gap had remained remarkably stable since many Roma lost their jobs in the early 1990s.

12.5. Education levels were the most important factor explaining the gap but rather surprisingly geographic differences played little part once education had been controlled for. Female employment rates were understandably lower if they had more children.

12.6. Although discrimination experienced when seeking work is lower overall than in the Czech Republic *Jobbik* support is strong, especially in the north-east – a former socialist stronghold. Predictably *Jobbik* voters (79%) were most likely to agree that ‘criminality is in the blood of gypsies’, but the levels of agreement of supporters of the ruling party FIDESZ (60%) and particularly social democrats (61%) are disturbing.

12.7. Since 2000 Hungary has targeted disadvantaged areas, identifying excluded micro-regions with multi-sectoral pilot programmes. It plans to continue to develop this approach in pursuing active labour market policies.

12.8. In addition there are plans to create jobs in the social economy and introduce public employment schemes for the most disadvantaged. However this last strategy has been misinterpreted by some *Jobbik*-controlled municipalities as punitive workfare-type activation.

13. Romania – Roma employment

13.1. 30% of employed Romanian Roma work in industry or construction while, as in Bulgaria, a further quarter are employed in public administration and social work activities.

13.2. Commerce accounts for another 13% of Roma workers in Romania and 10% in Bulgaria. It is not clear how many of the successful Roma entrepreneurs are included in this figure.

13.3. A third of Romanian Roma are unemployed – more women than men – and with higher rates among those under 24 and over 55.

13.4. However the figure of another third of Roma in some form of paid employment disguises the fact that 65% of Roma men and also women in employment work part-time and over half are self-employed. All of these indicators reveal their precarious employment status.

13.5. The low wages paid in Romania, particularly for unskilled jobs – the only work for which most Roma are eligible, is another decisive factor in the decision of many to migrate.

13.6. This seems more significant a factor than discrimination experienced when seeking work reported by a quarter of the economically active – the lowest rate in all five countries.

13.7. A 2012 study found that two thirds of Romanian Roma and 86% of Bulgarian Roma in Italy said that their motivate for migrating was to find a job and more than half of Roma migrants in Spain said the same thing.

13.8. Twice as many Roma men as women migrated and most returned home at intervals. Preferred destinations varied depending on current perceptions of economic opportunities and political climates. Roma often migrate in entire family or extended family groups.

13.9. Some migrants – not only Roma – attracted protests by semi-legal and illegal activities such as trafficking and drug dealing, though only Roma worked as professional beggars.

13.10. In contrast, seasonal labour contracts are a legal and viable form of migration, like those negotiated between Germany and Romania – mainly for agricultural work. Such earnings bring valuable new investment to Roma communities.

14. Slovakia – Roma employment

14.1. Due to high domestic unemployment many non-Roma and Roma travel long distances as migrant workers, e.g. to the Czech Republic, as they did in former times, or to Austria.

- 14.2. Survey statistics that only 11% of Roma men and 5% of women in Slovakia are employed do not reflect casual work in the informal labour market.
- 14.3. Nevertheless the proportion of Slovak Roma in some form of paid employment (under 30%) is lower than in the other four countries and is less than half that for non-Roma living in neighbouring districts (over 60%) – by far the largest comparative difference.
- 14.4. Most unemployment is long-term and while Roma are 5% of all those unemployed for six months, they form over half of those unemployed for over four years.
- 14.5. Work prospects are best for Roma living in integrated surroundings, rather better for those on the edge of non-Roma districts and worst of all for those in segregated settlements.
- 14.6. Levels of discrimination experienced by Roma aged 16 and above while seeking work are exceeded only in the Czech Republic.
- 14.7. Chances of Roma finding jobs in Slovakia improve with increasing educational attainment but a considerable gap in employment levels still remains between Roma and non-Roma with equivalent qualifications.
- 14.8. Main strategies to combat unemployment have been activation programmes and vocational training. Up to half of unemployed Roma have taken part in activation schemes while only 5% of Roma have participated in training but to little apparent effect in either case.
- 14.9. A major problem is that in many areas the number of people with low educational levels far exceeds the supply of work available. There are simply not enough appropriate jobs.
- 14.10. Much activation involves public works duties that do little to improve job prospects and can involve tasks like removing litter from the roadside or weeding municipal flower beds.
- 14.11. EU-supported development interventions in deprived areas took a multi-sectoral approach, including a horizontal priority programme to improve employment, education and health in marginalised Roma communities (MRC).
- 14.12. A study revealed weaknesses in these examples of ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’. Employment projects tended to invest in existing staff – excluding most Roma – but obtained funding as MRC-relevant, even though numbers of Roma beneficiaries were unknown and possibly minimal as the ethnic composition of target groups was not stated. These projects, largely ESF-funded, raise serious doubts about evaluation as outcomes were unmeasurable.

15. Education situation

15.1. While discrimination remains a problem, poor qualifications of adult Roma are the main barrier to Roma employment when jobs now demand higher levels of literacy and numeracy.

15.2. This critical situation is perpetuated by the high numbers of Roma children continuing to underperform at school and dropping out prematurely. In the five countries fewer than one in three Roma pupils completes a general or vocational upper secondary education.

15.3. The EU's more limited goal is for all Roma children to complete at least primary school and have access to quality education. While the NRISs of most Member States are more ambitious, past results suggest these more optimistic expectations are unrealistic.

15.4. Early years quality education for children in socially excluded families is seen as crucial in improving their life chances. Roma children from CEE countries aged 5-6 lag significantly behind non-Roma neighbouring children in cognitive outcomes.

15.5. Roma children who attended kindergarten have better cognitive outcomes than those from the same Roma communities and with similar backgrounds. They are also much more likely to complete secondary school.

15.6. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic less than a third of Roma children have some pre-school education as opposed to over 80% in Hungary where it is compulsory.

15.7. Several factors had combined to reduce pre-school opportunities for the youngest Roma. In some CEE countries many kindergartens closed as the previous system of universal, state-funded pre-school education was not continued.

15.8. Those that remained often introduced charges to cover the costs of staff, materials and lunches, while transport costs could be an additional expense for parents. Even if located nearby, priority was sometimes given to children of working parents.

15.9. Nevertheless many Roma parents do not appreciate the value of pre-school education. Between a fifth and a half of Roma not sending their children to kindergarten think this is unnecessary – either because they are too young or childcare is available at home.

15.10. As well as lack of employment another driver of emigration for many Roma families has been fear for their children's future in the hostile environment of their home countries.

15.11. Widespread antipathy towards Roma people finds institutional expression in educational segregation. In a practice dating from the Communist era many Roma children are placed in what are termed 'special schools' for those with mental disabilities or separate classes in mainstream schools.

15.12. However some Roma parents prefer their children to attend these special schools with Roma class-mates, believing they are less likely to be shunned or bullied. This is frequently reinforced by their view that, for Roma, education has little point since it brings no benefits.

15.13. Other Roma parents disagree and a recent survey in the five countries found that more than 60% wished at least a secondary education for their children – both boys and girls. Such educational aspirations were highest in Hungary (80%) and lowest in Romania (just over 50%) although these findings conflict with other studies and have been challenged as unreliable.

15.14. Consignment to a special school – with a reduced curriculum and low qualifications – severely limits future educational and employment prospects.

15.15. Responding to EU criticism, countries that practice what amounts to ethnic segregation have sometimes prevaricated by conducting drawn-out research on testing procedures. However the high proportions of Roma children judged incapable of mainstream education have been dismissed as completely implausible by both international and domestic opponents.

15.16. In some countries teachers are unwilling to work in these special schools, which can result in the employment of unqualified personnel, but elsewhere higher pay rates encourage staff to defend their institutions and privileges.

15.17. Roma children in mainstream schools are often placed in separate, all-Roma 'remedial' classes – on the grounds that they need extra support. In practice this usually leads to lower levels of attainment and an early exit from full-time education.

15.18. Where the Roma share of pupils increases in integrated classes, a common outcome can be 'white flight' as non-Roma parents enrol their children elsewhere.

15.19. Nevertheless some Roma activists are in favour of separate schools. They maintain that Roma children receive better nurture from a Roma-only educational environment and point to the risks of hasty, ill-conceived, enforced desegregation. Like apologists for segregation, they argue that the main issue at stake is the quality of education but this view is highly contested.

15.20. Poor outcomes of most Roma pupils imply more fundamental shortcomings – namely the failure of education systems to meet special educational needs. Not only Roma but children from the majority population, too, suffer from inflexible regimes and fail unnecessarily.

15.21. It must not be forgotten that the right to education is protected both by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Discriminatory practice that prevents equal access to quality education amounts to a denial of this basic human right.

16. Bulgaria – Roma education

16.1. Compared with almost three quarters of non-Roma living nearby, less than a fifth of Roma children complete general or vocational upper-secondary education. Of the five countries only Romania has worse results with just one in ten Roma reaching this basic level.

16.2. In Bulgaria residential segregation is matched by considerable educational segregation. This is more pronounced at primary and secondary than at pre-school level and is only exceeded by Slovakia. An estimated 50-70% of all Roma children still attend schools where they form more than half of the pupils. The Commission remarked on this continuing problem.

16.3. The number of special schools and Roma within them has declined sharply since 2000.

16.4. 45% of Roma children attend kindergarten – more than elsewhere apart from Hungary.

16.5. Even though the principle of desegregation had been adopted as official policy in the 1999 Framework Programme, the initiative was taken by Roma NGOs not government.

16.6. Only from 2008 was limited desegregation supported from the state budget and the ESF in an Operational Programme. Nevertheless NGOs still take the principal role and the Roma Education Fund provides the bulk of resources.

16.7. In spite of better pre-school attendance than elsewhere, Bulgaria's drop-out rate shows 15% of children aged 7-15 not in school and at least 5% working outside the home,

These drop-outs then become the 12% who are illiterate. These rates are only exceeded by Romania.

16.8. In both countries the main reason (60%) given for leaving school early was lack of money but in Bulgaria a further 12% said the children had to work for money and 17% that they were needed for housework. 7% of girls left to get married or because they were pregnant.

17. Czech Republic – Roma education

17.1. A major problem faced by Czech Roma seeking a job is that now over a quarter (27%) of all Roma children are educated in special schools (since 2005 relabelled ‘practical elementary’ schools) for those with ‘light mental disabilities’ compared with only 2% of non-Roma children.

17.2. In these schools half or more of the pupils are Roma but at least a tenth of such schools are attended entirely by Roma.

17.3. The low educational attainments they achieve prevent them from obtaining all but the most basic types of employment. This underachievement is damaging not only to individuals but also to society as a whole.

17.4. The practice of separating Roma in this way had been justified by supposedly objective psychological tests but their dubious basis was revealed by recent research showing that Czech and Slovak Roma children, previously in special schools but now in UK mainstream education, not only learn to speak English fluently but after a few years achieve similar educational levels as their UK peers.

17.5. That such segregation represents unlawful discrimination was confirmed in a 2007 ruling by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, which also noted that other European countries act in similar ways. The incoming Czech Minister of Education accepted this judgement and adopted an inclusive education agenda.

17.6. Subsequent political changes, including abolition of the post of Minister for Human Rights, have halted the reform process and future progress is now uncertain.

17.7. Reform policies are still in place although it is unclear whether there is the political will to implement them. Meanwhile desegregation is said to be under threat from a proposal to restructure regional education funding.

17.8. In the Czech Republic teachers in special schools are better paid and form a highly influential lobby in defence of their privileges and the status quo.

17.9. About a third of Czech and Slovak Roma attend kindergarten – the lowest proportions in all five countries – but enrolment is increasing in the Czech Republic.

17.10. Pre-school education lowers the chances of a Czech Roma child being sent to a special school by 33% and this risk is reduced still further if these classes are attached to a mainstream school.

17.11. The last year of Czech (non-compulsory) pre-school education is free of charge, although fees are charged to cover costs of food, etc. At 25 Euros per month these fees are much higher in the Czech Republic than in the other four countries, although subsidies are sometimes offered.

17.12. A 2009 PISA study noted that the Czech education system is significantly underfunded in comparison with other OECD countries. Large differences in attainments between regions revealed poorest performances in areas with concentrations of socially excluded localities – North Bohemia and North Moravia – where standards are declining.

17.13. Although fewer Czech Roma drop out of compulsory education and more complete general or vocational upper-secondary education than in the other four countries, under a third have the possibility of skilled work or higher education compared with a local non-Roma average of over 80%.

18. Hungary – Roma education

18.1. Hungary maintained a system of free pre-school education although only the final year was compulsory. Consequently around 80% of Roma children attend kindergarten, almost the same share as non-Roma and roughly double that of Roma in the nearest of the five countries.

18.2. Poorer families are paid out-of-pocket expenses and for school lunches and subsidies reward regular pre-school attendance.

18.3. After kindergarten results are more disappointing. The share of drop-outs (around 5%) is higher than in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and a smaller proportion (just over one in five) complete general or vocational upper-secondary education than in the Czech Republic.

18.4. The Hungarian education system remains highly selective and an OECD study revealed children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, including most Roma, having worse outcomes than in many other countries. However overall standards are improving.

18.5. Children attending smaller schools in more isolated rural locations with poorer facilities and less qualified teachers are particularly at risk.

18.6. In spite of anti-discrimination legislation, establishment of an Equal Treatment Authority, requirements for schools to give priority to disadvantaged children and the introduction of multicultural material into the curriculum, educational segregation remains a problem.

18.7. This is only partly due to residential separation as white flight is also a factor.

18.8. Municipalities are responsible for schools and negative majority attitudes can affect local practice even though government policy encourages desegregation by financial incentives.

18.9. Funding has even been used to perpetuate segregation, monitoring is weak and few sanctions have been applied. Schools serving Roma and non-Roma often have remedial classes that can easily become permanent all-Roma classes.

18.10. A 2005 poll found that although 62% of officials supported integration, in practice they feared public opposition to change. Consequently a 2010 survey reported 799 Roma-only classes in Hungarian elementary schools.

18.11. Other studies have found not only that integrated classes improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils but also that national standards had improved overall.

18.12. Integration would also benefit many of the 6.5% of Roma children in special schools, although this is only half the share of those in such schools in Slovakia and a third of that in the Czech Republic (proportions are far lower in Bulgaria and Romania).

18.13. Therefore evidence demonstrates that support should be offered in integrated classes in mainstream schools. Nevertheless some Roma activists point to the counter example of the mainly all-Roma Ghandi boarding school where over half the students go on to university.

19. Romania – Roma education

19.1. The poor education of Romanian Roma is one of the most troubling aspects of their situation. A full quarter are illiterate – double the rate in Bulgaria, the next worst performer.

19.2. As in the case of Bulgaria, this is in spite of a higher share of children attending kindergarten (45%) than in the Czech and Slovak Republics.

19.3. Illiteracy is directly linked to a drop-out rate of over 20%, which parents explain as due to the lack of money. Romania has the greatest proportion of children under 15 working outside the home (12%) of the five countries. All this results in under 10% of Romanian Roma completing general or vocational upper-secondary education.

19.4. Unlike some other countries Romania was praised for its early enactment of anti-discrimination legislation in 2000 which, following activism by Roma NGOs, eventually led to a Ministry of Education Order banning school segregation in 2007.

19.5. In the meantime no Ministry research had been done but a 2008 UNICEF-funded NGO study monitoring desegregation measures revealed that two-thirds of schools had not implemented the Order and remained segregated at classroom or school level.

19.6. Segregated schools typically had poor resources, high staff turnover and used unqualified teachers. In 2010 another UNICEF-funded NGO study resulted in similar findings.

19.7. The recent 2011 Education Law does not mention segregation. However few Roma were consigned to special schools and their share within these institutions is the same as that of non-Roma in the vicinity. In this at least Romania is a rare exception.

20. Slovakia – Roma education

20.1. Raised educational levels are the best hope of Roma finding work but Slovakia faces two major challenges. Both were highlighted in the Commission's preliminary NRIS assessment.

20.2. International evidence points to the importance of early intervention for child development and life opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

20.3. Slovak Roma children who have attended kindergarten are 70% less likely to be sent to 'special schools' and have a far better chance of completing secondary school.

20.4. However only 28% of Roma children (aged 3-6) attend kindergarten in Slovakia, where this was neither mandatory nor free.

20.5. EU-funded pilot projects using a child and family-centred approach to early years education with Roma teaching assistants proved successful from 2000 onwards.

20.6. These measures are very important since many children have limited knowledge of Slovak as Romani is commonly spoken, particularly in segregated and separate settlements.

20.7. Slovakia is the only country of the five where a significant number of kindergartens use mostly Romani (15%).

20.8. The second challenge is that of segregation which, in spite of a 2008 School Act prohibiting segregation and discrimination, is greater in Slovakia for elementary and secondary schooling than in the other four countries.

20.9. As yet no clear legal or operational definition of segregation has been agreed, making the 2008 law ineffective, while school financing arrangements encourage the reproduction of special schools and classes.

20.10. Even zero grade or remedial classes have been criticised for becoming permanent rather than integrating mechanisms.

20.11. In some places municipalities have defined catchment areas to avoid educational integration – cases which the Inspection Agency ruled to be non-discriminatory.

20.12. A 2009 study revealed that 60% of children in special schools are Roma and of those in separate special classes in elementary schools 85% are Roma. Of all Roma in education 12% were in special schools.

20.13. As in the case of employment the higher the level of residential exclusion in terms of location of dwelling, the greater the segregation at school and the poorer results achieved.

20.15. Of children living in separate settlements 44% failed to finish primary school, while the figures for those in peripheral districts and in integrated surroundings were 37% and 24% respectively. However the drop-out rate was lower than for Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

21. Housing situation

21.1. Nowadays very few Roma are nomadic and even where this way of life is still prevalent – mainly in some western European countries – problems in finding stopping places makes it increasingly unviable.

21.2. In CEE countries the vast majority have been settled for centuries and mostly live together either in specific Roma quarters of towns and villages (e.g. Bulgaria and Romania), often on the periphery, or sometimes in segregated settlements (especially in Slovakia).

21.3. Although patterns of Roma distribution vary greatly, certain features are widespread although by no means universal. These include poor quality of housing – ranging from dilapidated flats and houses to rudimentary huts, lack of basic amenities and services, remoteness from schools, shops and public transport and overcrowding.

21.4. Rural to urban migration for work during the Communist era led to the emergence of new concentrations of Roma families in larger towns and cities and industrial areas where the authorities allocated them municipal or state flats. Some employers also provided housing.

21.5. Later the combination of endemic unemployment and rent increases of now privatised accommodation has led to growing debts among urban Roma. Families with large rent arrears are often evicted and rehoused in substandard accommodation elsewhere or in temporary boarding house-type accommodation. These families can often live a single room, sharing toilet and bathrooms with other residents.

21.6. Housing pressures are intensified by the formation of new families. This whole situation has been aggravated by a lack of social housing, compelling dispossessed or new Roma families either to move in with relatives, thereby increasing overcrowding, or to squat in derelict buildings or erect primitive shacks.

21.7. As squats and shacks have no planning permission, they are illegal and technically do not exist. Therefore they cannot be connected to services by public utilities. Consequently hazardous electrical connections are frequently improvised and many homes have no water. Heating is usually inadequate and is commonly provided by a wood stove.

21.8 Such dwellings fail to meet minimum standards and in legal terms are uninhabitable. Local authorities usually prefer to ignore such situations rather than take action, which would require them to fulfil their statutory duties.

21.9. Families in shacks usually do not own the land and so are vulnerable to forced evictions. Such illicit dwellings are a particular problem in Bulgaria and Romania.

21.10. Apart from poor quality of accommodation and infrastructure, the positioning and size of most Roma population concentrations has further negative consequences. One of the most damaging is the lack of available employment opportunities. In the most excluded locations, where families subsist on social support, drug dealing and prostitution are common job options.

21.13. Geographical segregation of Roma communities often leads to educational segregation where children attend mostly or entirely all-Roma schools in hostile environments where striving for qualifications to gain employment appears meaningless and drop-out rates are high.

21.14. Non-Roma living in disadvantaged localities also have poor employment prospects, inferior schools and deficient infrastructure but shared problems do not usually lead to social cohesion but rather to inter-communal tensions. Nevertheless pressures can be

exaggerated as different groups, especially in rural areas, can be used to living alongside each other.

22. Bulgaria - Roma Housing

22.1. As in the Czech Republic and unlike the other three countries Bulgarian Roma are highly urbanised with three quarters living in cities, although mainly on the fringes in homogenous Roma districts. This separation is matched by that of the quarter of all Roma who live in the countryside, mostly near small villages.

22.2. Nowadays nine out of ten Bulgarian Roma inhabit segregated neighbourhoods but in the 1980s less than one in two lived separately from non-Roma.

22.3. 90% of Bulgarian Roma live in a house or part of a house and only 5% in flats. This contrasts with Spain, for example, where a similar proportion are city-dwellers but very few are located on the periphery and approaching two thirds live in flats.

22.4. A quarter of Spanish Roma have a mortgage – so have access to financial services – and a further quarter rent from the municipality. The corresponding figures for Bulgaria are 0.2% and 3% (even less for private rentals). By 2002 only 3% of Bulgarian housing stock remained in the ownership of the state or municipalities.

22.5. These differences reflect the sustained policy focus in Spain of integrating Roma into the mainstream urban fabric whereas many Roma districts have been virtually abandoned by Bulgarian municipalities.

22.6. While 86% of Bulgarian Roma own their own homes, a quarter of Roma dwellings in segregated neighbourhoods are illegal.

22.7. 80% of Roma lack basic amenities with a similar proportion of Roma homes having outside toilets and only 70% with running water and 40% a bathroom. Their situation is at least twice as bad as conditions for the majority population.

22.8. Likewise in Bulgaria, as is true for all the five countries, Roma homes have twice or more the occupancy level of nearby non-Roma housing.

22.9. Because many Roma households are in debt they fall into arrears with their utility bills and run the risk of their electricity, gas and sometimes even water supplies being cut off.

23. Czech Republic – Roma Housing

23.1. Following regime change many former state and municipal flats were privatised or returned to their previous owners. Subsequent deregulation permitted rent increases, causing many – now unemployed – Roma tenants to amass rent arrears that often led to their eviction.

23.2. Roma families living in town and city centres have become increasingly vulnerable to attempts to remove them from what are now potentially valuable properties in prime locations. Inducements to leave their former homes range from bribes and promises of cheap housing elsewhere to illegal threats and forced evictions.

23.3. In some places many evicted or displaced Roma families have been moved to already disadvantaged areas where new concentrations are formed in socially excluded locations. Even though the housing on offer is substandard, rents are disproportionately high since no alternative rental property is available for Roma. The predictable result is often spiralling debt, intensified by dependence on loan sharks.

23.4. The whole process destroys any sense of community cohesion and criminal subcultures

flourish. This negative pattern is an entirely new, post-Communist phenomenon.

23.5. An estimated 80,000 inhabitants (or 20,000 families) are thought to live in such areas, although these are not exclusively Roma. These localities were mapped in 2006 and some are now closely monitored.

23.6. Impoverished tenants face difficulties in heating their homes and feeding their families. Their landlords frequently neglect the maintenance of essential amenities.

23.7. Apart from families in expensive yet wholly inadequate flats, growing numbers are living in temporary emergency accommodation such as hostels. Some municipalities had earlier pioneered the provision of what were termed 'bare flats' – extremely basic accommodation with shared bathroom and cooking facilities – for families of rent defaulters.

24. Hungary - Roma Housing

24.1. 60% of Hungarian Roma homes are in villages, often small and in underdeveloped rural areas where unemployment is high and agriculture is the main economic activity.

24.2. Here Roma housing is mostly clustered on the edges of towns and villages, forming distinct quarters with only 6% of families living in entirely separate settlements.

24.3. Younger, more educated people in the majority population have moved away for jobs or further education leaving behind the elderly, the less qualified and the unemployed.

24.4. Together with higher Roma birth rates this has contributed to the growing 'Romification' of many villages and schools in such rural areas.

24.5. In contrast the Roma population of north-east Hungary is concentrated in the city of Miskolc and surrounding towns and villages in neighbourhoods mostly populated by Roma.

24.6. Impoverishment is widespread following the collapse of the region's heavy industry.

24.7. Segregation is less extreme than in Slovakia yet a 2003 survey characterised 72% of Roma families as segregated and living in substandard housing lacking basic amenities.

24.8. Hungary is the most proactive of CEE countries in tackling residential segregation. Disadvantaged micro-regions have been identified and mapped as a basis for action.

24.9. Drafted by the Department of Roma Integration and adopted in 2005, the Housing and Social Integration Programme (HSIP) aimed at abolishing residential segregation by targeting low status social groups, including Roma.

24.10. This programme was mainstreamed by being integrated into national housing policy.

24.11. A strategic plan with a schedule was drawn up and larger towns and cities were obliged to develop a desegregation plan as a condition of EU-funding for urban development.

24.12. As in Spain it was recognised that the interrelated problems required a coordinated multi-sectoral approach, involving not only housing and infrastructure improvements but regional development plans, employment and education initiatives, better access to social services and healthcare, and community development.

24.13. A mentoring system (also used successfully in an infrastructure project in Slovakia) placed a mediating expert in each village to aid the design and implementation of projects, to hold meetings with Roma and resolve any conflicts and to report back to the Ministry.

24.14. Nevertheless, as elsewhere and especially in the Czech Republic, action has

been taken to force our Roma families from potentially profitable city and town-centre properties. Most evident in Budapest this affects not only Roma but also other poor people.

25. Romania – Roma Housing

25.1. In sharp contrast to Bulgaria where three quarters of all Roma live in a city, albeit at the periphery, most Romanian Roma live in the countryside – over half of them in small villages. A further 9% live in a settlement near a village but spatially separated from it.

25.2. However nearly a third of Romanian Roma live in cities – mainly in the suburbs. Wherever they live, over half have only or mostly Roma friends but those in villages are the most likely to have non-Roma friends, while those in separate rural settlements the least likely.

25.3. Separate settlements in remote or hazardous environments are the most excluded of all.

25.4. Almost all Roma (86%) live in a family house on which they do not pay rent or a mortgage (82%). But many homes were built illegally and therefore are vulnerable to forced evictions.

25.5. Only 6% of Romanian Roma rent housing from the state or municipality.

25.6. Almost 90% of Romanian Roma live in households lacking at least one basic amenity – only matched in Bulgaria (with almost 80%).

25.7. Unlike Slovakia, where housing inequality is sharp with over 55% of Roma living in this situation as opposed to less than 10% of non-Roma nearby, the nearly 60% of non-Roma without a basic amenity indicates the extent of underdevelopment in rural Romania.

25.8. Although Roma homes contain twice as many persons per room as local non-Roma in all five countries, at 2.5 per room overcrowding is worst in Romania and Slovakia.

26. Slovakia – Roma Housing

26.1. In 2004 a comprehensive survey found 320,000 Roma living in 1,575 Roma communities. Roma numbers have since been estimated at 350,000 to 380,000 (7% of the total population).

26.2. Slovakia has the largest Roma household size of all five countries, averaging nearly 6.

26.3. Slovak Roma live in mainly rural areas, unlike their highly urbanised Czech relatives, and the 2004 survey characterised their settlements as segregated (remote or separated by a barrier from the majority population), separated (a distinct quarter or on the outskirts of non-Roma development) or integrated among the majority.

26.4. The survey found that living conditions (as with employment and education levels) deteriorated markedly as separation from the majority population increased.

26.5. Less than half the 100,000 inhabitants in segregated settlements had brick-built houses. However these could be substantial and were often constructed using their owners' savings from periods as migrant workers in the Czech lands – sometimes in Communist times.

26.6. Nearly a quarter of households in these settlements lived in often illegal, overcrowded shanties. These illicit dwellings were mostly ignored by the authorities but occasionally were demolished illegally by landowners and municipalities.

26.7. Almost 80% of households in segregated settlements had a wood stove for heating.

26.8. In separated settlements a third of households lived in substandard wooden houses.

26.9. Basic amenities were often inadequate or missing. For almost half of all Roma households their source of drinking water was outside their house and nearly a quarter drew water from a covered well or bore-hole, while 4% used a spring or stream.

26.10. At present only 6% of the housing stock is owned by municipalities.

27. Health and Social Care Situation

27.1. The most striking aspect of the health status of Roma is their shorter life expectancy – at least ten years less than national average levels for both women and men. These shorter lifespans have been compared to those for entire CEE countries during the 1930s' depression.

27.2. Similarly infant mortality rates for Roma in these states are between two to six times higher than for the general population.

27.3. Historically Roma have been viewed as a source of contagion. Only recently have health studies focused on the commonest causes of death in CEE countries – cardio-vascular and liver diseases, cancer and accidents – and compared rates among Roma with those for the general population.

27.4. Such factors, together with high birth rates, low life expectancy and above average infant mortality, are all associated with poverty. A recent survey revealed over 90% of CEE Roma live in households with incomes below the national poverty line. Yet Roma morbidity is attributed mainly to unhealthy lifestyles, including poor diets, for which the individual is held responsible.

27.5. Unsafe water, primitive sanitation, uncollected garbage and unhygienic conditions lead to a higher incidence of infectious diseases and parasites than in the general population.

27.6. Consequently, rather than tackling the underlying causes – material deprivation and hazardous living conditions, the limited number of interventions have typically adopted the much cheaper alternative of promoting health education.

27.7. With the exception of Hungary, large-scale health surveys of CEE Roma populations have not been carried out until recently. Therefore reliable health needs assessments of Roma communities have not been available. In some cases this is partly due to earlier official claims that the collection of ethnically disaggregated data would infringe data protection laws.

27.8. Neither has much EU funding been used for health-related Roma programmes.

27.9. Access to adequate healthcare varies greatly across the region but remains problematic for many Roma. In some CEE countries this is further hindered by lack of health insurance, especially where incomes depend on informal earnings. Also the rising costs of medicines – formerly free – deter their use. Some doctors are reluctant to accept Roma patients while others solicit bribes. Roma women giving birth are sometimes put in all-Roma wards.

27.10. Such factors, together with remoteness of many rural Roma concentrations from medical centres, has led to the practice of Roma calling the emergency services for treatment.

27.11. Among the most vulnerable are women, the very young, the elderly and the disabled – the latter two groups sometimes insufficiently unprotected by appropriate pensions.

27.12. Drug addiction and HIV/AIDS conditions are serious problems, particularly in the most socially excluded locations. Alcohol abuse has been reduced in some Roma communities following the adoption of Pentecostalism.

27.13. Roma are heavily overrepresented in juvenile care homes in the five countries ranging from a quarter to four fifths of all children in these institutions. Poverty and inadequate material conditions are the most common reasons for placing children into care. As with education there are implications in terms of the Rights of the Child and Charter of Fundamental Rights.

27.14. Roma indebtedness is greatly worsened by their dependence on illegal loan sharks – both Roma and non-Roma usurers – charging exorbitant rates of interest and often taking possession of families' entire social benefits payments on a regular basis.

27.15. Provision of social care has been vulnerable to administrative reorganisation as in the case of decentralisation, where responsibility for former state services often passed to NGOs with insufficient resources to deliver them.

28. Bulgaria – Roma Health and Social Care

28.1. A striking difference between Bulgaria and Romania and the other three countries is the low proportion of Roma with medical insurance. Whereas in the latter countries it is around 90%, in Bulgaria this figure is 45% and in Romania just over 50%.

28.2. Total per capita expenditure on health is low in these two countries and the poor – including many Roma – are the hardest hit by government cuts. In Bulgaria the health services have deteriorated following the emigration of numerous health professionals due to low salaries and the refusal of many pharmacies to continue working with the public health system.

28.3. Private medicine accounts for two fifths of total health expenditure in Bulgaria and 96% of this is paid out-of-pocket. Four-fifths of adult Roma buy medicines without a prescription.

28.4. Although less than a third of all Roma reported illness affecting daily activities, rates for the most vulnerable – the elderly and the very young – rise to 40%, while the infant mortality rate for Roma is over double the national average.

28.5. Social exclusion has reinforced 'traditional' Romani patriarchal behaviour, increasing early marriages and also teenage pregnancies where the rate among Roma is 10-12 times higher than in the majority population.

28.6. Roma can have difficulty in accessing healthcare since medical centres are rarely nearby, especially in rural areas. This factor plus lack of medical insurance means they often call on emergency services at the last moment and then are swiftly returned to unhygienic conditions.

28.7. Bulgaria had experimented successfully by employing Roma health mediators to improve communication between Roma communities and medical staff and encourage greater access to health services for Roma. They also offered family planning and other advice.

28.8. In spite of their effectiveness a third of these mediators (around 200 of a total 600) fell victim to unplanned decentralisation of responsibilities to local authorities. Mayors who failed to appreciate their valuable role terminated their employment, even though their salaries were still fully covered by the Ministry of Health budget.

28.9. The disabled and their families can face problems of discrimination and bureaucracy in obtaining certificates for the pensions to which they are entitled.

28.10. Bulgaria and Romania vary importantly in income differentials within Roma communities from the other three countries. In the latter inequalities are small but in Bulgaria and Romania the incomes of the richest 20% are respectively 12 and 13 times more than the poorest 20%.

28.11. Nevertheless in Bulgaria 80% and in Romania 90% of Roma households suffer severe material deprivation.

28.12. In Bulgaria Roma children were found to be almost two thirds of those in care homes

– the second highest rate after Slovakia with four fifths – while in Romania they are a quarter.

28.13. As well as children the elderly are especially vulnerable with only a third of adults in Bulgaria and Romania entitled to an old-age pension.

29. Czech Republic – Roma Health and Social Care

29.1. Morbidity and mortality rates are related to poverty levels. 70% of Czech Roma households are reported to live in conditions of severe material deprivation, although these levels are lower than in the other four countries.

29.2. However a 2009 comparative survey reported that in the Czech Republic Roma health was comparatively satisfactory and that access to health services was better than elsewhere.

29.3. Almost 90% of Roma have health insurance, slightly below Hungarian and Slovak rates.

29.4. Just as responsibility for social housing has shifted from municipalities to NGOs, the same is true of the provision of social care with similar consequences. In place of a range of services, operating within a comprehensive planning framework, several uncoordinated and often overlapping organisations offer patchy coverage.

29.5. The Czech Republic has been criticised for the high numbers of children in institutional care, particularly Roma. Many have been placed there for economic and housing reasons.

29.6. Serious crime, not restricted to Roma, is a feature of socially excluded localities. Roma often complain that they are victims of crime yet are left unprotected.

29.7. In recent years extremist parties organised marches to foment anti-Roma antipathy. Police have intervened to prevent escalation of violence to a greater extent than elsewhere.

30. Hungary – Roma Health and Social Care

30.1. Approaching half of all Hungarian Roma aged 35-54 experience health problems that limit their daily activity but the same is true of a third of non-Roma living in the vicinity, i.e. in largely disadvantaged areas.

30.2. This is the highest rate for the majority population in all five countries. In this limitation and also in their lower use of health services, Roma are similar to the poorest people in the majority population.

30.3. Over 90% of Roma have health insurance – the highest level of all five countries.

30.4. Nevertheless a third of Roma reported experiencing discrimination when they tried to access preventative and specialist care.

30.5. In spite of a national screening programme a survey found only a quarter of Roma women had been screened for breast cancer within the previous two years.

30.6. Roma health is also affected by smoking rates two to five-times higher than in the general population and while rates of moderate to heavy drinking are similar, consumption of fruit and vegetables is far less.

30.7. Roma are more likely to feel their health is threatened by unhygienic conditions such as uncollected refuse, poor sewage and flooding, as well as by unpaved roads and lack of water and gas mains. Here the Housing and Social Integration Programme (HSIP) is directly relevant.

30.8. Over 90% of Roma households in Hungary experience severe material deprivation. This is the highest rate of all five countries but the same is true of 65% of the majority population.

30.9. Only half of all Roma are covered by a pension as opposed to a national average of 80%.

30.10. Of children in care homes 66% were found to be Roma. These were more likely than non-Roma to be placed there for material reasons, although a Child Protection Act bans this.

31. Romania – Roma Health and Social Care

31.1. The health status of Romanian Roma appears worse than in the other four countries with approaching half of adults aged 35-54 saying that health problems limited their daily activities, as opposed to almost a quarter of non-Roma living in the vicinity.

31.2. Lack of basic amenities also contributes to unhygienic living conditions, the spread of infectious diseases and poorer health in general.

31.3. At the same time barely over half of adult Roma have health insurance with only Bulgaria having a lower share at 45%. The corresponding figure for the majority population in both countries is over 80%.

31.4. These low rates for Roma are often related to their work in the informal economy that excludes them from social security and other benefits.

31.5. As in the other countries Romanian Roma have difficulties in accessing health services which is made worse by the fact that the majority live in the countryside.

31.6. Apart from being remote from medical centres, with the time and cost of travel a deterrent, many physicians and nurses had emigrated – as in the case of Bulgaria – reducing their numbers and increasing waiting times.

31.7. As elsewhere Roma increasingly made use the emergency services at the last moment rather than seeking earlier consultations. Women were particularly at risk due to limited levels of cancer screening.

31.8. Roma often felt that medical staff discriminated against them and they were sometimes put in separate wards when hospitalised – particularly for childbirth.

31.9. In Romania 90% of Roma households experience severe material deprivation. This is almost as high as in Hungary with the highest rate of all five countries. Like Hungary a relatively high share of the nearby majority population (over 50%) were in a similar situation.

31.10. Of children in care institutions 28% were found to be Roma. While this is far less than in the other four countries it is nevertheless almost three times their share of the total population.

32. Slovakia – Roma Health and Social Care

32.1. Reduced life expectancy of more than ten years for Roma men and women is affected by high infant mortality rates that are double the national average and equivalent to levels for the Slovak population in the late 1950s.

32.2. Almost one in five Roma suffered a disability or chronic disease but the difference in health situation between Roma and the majority appeared less than in the other four countries.

32.3. Although over 90% of Roma have health insurance a 2009 comparative survey found poorer health associated with greater degree of segregation, impoverishment and worse living conditions, including unsafe water and lack of sanitation.

32.4. Access to health services varied in relation to standard of accommodation with those in poor housing visiting doctors least often – not because their health was better but due to barriers such as costs of transport and medicines, health staff attitudes and, for those in more remote locations, the time required to reach a medical centre.

32.5. Less than a quarter of women had been screened for cancer while only 60% of Roma children were vaccinated against basic diseases.

32.6. Widespread impoverishment is the main problem, regardless of the level of integration with the majority population, and profoundly affects both physical and mental health.

32.7. Almost three-quarters of Roma households (73%) depend on some form of social support and in 2004 a sudden cap on child benefits for large families sparked Roma food riots in fourteen Slovak towns. 2,000 police and troops were deployed in response.

32.8. Nevertheless many Roma households fail to draw on benefits to which their material situation would entitle them – mainly because of ineligibility for technical reasons such as living in illegal shanties.

32.9. As in the Czech Republic, Slovak Roma form a high proportion of children in care institutions (up to 82% – the highest share in the five countries).

Policy Options

33. Employment policy options

33.1. Chances of Roma finding jobs demonstrably improve with higher educational levels.

33.2. However statistical evidence revealing the gap in employment levels between Roma and non-Roma with equivalent qualifications and research on CEE labour market discrimination demonstrate the need for enforcing anti-discriminatory practices and monitoring, as in the UK.

33.3. Initiatives for the more educated have involved employing Roma in the public sector. Some Roma have been appointed as ministry advisors or as labour office officials to counter discrimination and in some countries have been recruited to police forces as means of improving inter-communal relations. Others work as mediators, teaching assistants and health auxiliaries – but generally at lower grades to deal with other Roma.

33.4. Another option, targeted at excluded adults, has been to subsidise employers who take on Roma or similarly disadvantaged workers.

33.5. For the vast majority of unemployed Roma with low educational levels the main policy measure to counter unemployment has been activation schemes and, to a much lesser extent, vocational training.

33.6. The training element in these schemes has often been virtually non-existent and very few new jobs have materialised in depressed labour markets where discrimination is prevalent. In some cases people have worked for below the minimum wage.

33.7. Promising results in Spain have rarely been replicated in CEE countries, although there have been some positive examples of activation where placements with public and private firms have resulted in jobs. The key to success is systematic profiling of individual clients, appropriate training and long-standing partnerships building trust with potential employers.

33.8. In France another promising strategy has been skills certification, which takes account of existing work skills and adds further training to enable formal qualifications to be gained.

33.9. Based on the reputation of Roma as entrepreneurs, a number of co-operative ventures and SMEs have been established, supported by appropriate training and loans.

33.10. Other individuals and groups have been encouraged to take up craftwork and activities such as horticulture, sometimes financed by micro-credit schemes. However these varied initiatives report mixed results. When asked, most Roma say they just want a regular job.

33.11. Although many Roma worked in the informal economy abroad, others found jobs as agricultural or general labourers – sometimes on seasonal labour contracts. While most returned home periodically with their earnings, some saw their future in the West.

34. Bulgaria – Employment policy options

34.1. Previous good experience of UNDP-implemented projects with training of Roma while constructing infrastructure for their housing eventually resulted in jobs with Bulgaria's largest building contractor. Such schemes involving partnerships, as Spain has shown, are effective. Similar initiatives could increase Roma numbers in industry and construction – sectors where they are already established as regular employees.

34.2. The significant number of Roma employees engaged in public administration and social work activities provide positive role models for young Roma men and women. More could be encouraged and trained to enter these professions.

34.3. To improve Roma access to the labour market staff training and the appointment of Roma representatives in Bulgarian labour offices has been proposed.

34.4. The individual sector employing the most Roma workers in Bulgaria is agriculture but wages are low. The Commission felt that rural areas in Bulgaria had been neglected.

34.5. The Commission noted that the Bulgarian NRIS had suggested subsidised employment for vulnerable groups.

34.6. Schemes to train and assist Roma entrepreneurs as in UNDP projects might strengthen the position of the 10% of employed Roma engaged in commerce and boost their numbers. However self-employment initiatives, supported by loans and micro-financing, had mixed and often disappointing results in the past.

35. Czech Republic – Employment policy options

35.1 High levels of Roma youth unemployment endanger future inclusion and must be tackled proactively. With the best rate in the five countries of Roma completing general or vocational upper-secondary education – nearly a third, many young Czech Roma would seem relatively well placed to take advantage of employment opportunities. However relatively advantageous situation is deteriorating because of segregated education and other forms of discrimination.

35.2. Anti-discrimination measures need to be introduced and enforced, supplemented by the appointment of Roma to labour offices. More employment of Roma in the public sector would further help reduce discrimination.

35.3. Illegal employment should be countered to raise wages and secure entitlement to social insurance and pensions. This is proposed in the NRIS but little action was taken previously.

35.4. For those with lower educational levels, requalification, 'life-long learning' and vocational training courses – ideally linked to partner employers – would improve their prospects.

35.5. Training, mentoring, and micro-credit schemes could support would-be entrepreneurs. The NRIS proposes this but previous attempts were unsatisfactory since Roma entrepreneurs were unwilling to employ other Roma, preferring to recruit from the majority population.

35.6. For disadvantaged regions significant investment and redevelopment are necessary, aided by EU structural funds, but there are doubts about Czech access to these due to control and auditing problems. Renovation would benefit the entire population of such regions.

35.7. At present, however, job prospects for long-term unemployed adults are minimal and improved social support is needed to safeguard families at risk.

35.8. In place of discredited activation schemes local initiatives to create work opportunities in the social economy and adult education, as proposed, could provide a basis for eventual future employment and alleviate community tensions.

36. Hungary – Employment policy options

36.1. The NRIS adopts a systematic and comprehensive approach combining active labour market policies, jobs in the social economy and public employment for the most disadvantaged.

36.2. The Commission suggested developing more concrete measures for creating jobs in the social economy, for self-employment using micro-finance and for providing vocational training.

36.3. Clearer responsibilities and tasks for local labour offices should be specified.

36.4. While the NRIS understandably proposed expanding job opportunities in the agricultural sector in rural areas, the Commission said other employment possibilities should be explored.

37. Romania – Employment policy options

37.1. The Commission dismissed the NRIS target of 60,000 new jobs for Roma men and 25,000 for women as inadequate for making an impact on high levels of Roma unemployment. It also said insufficient attention was paid to women's and youth unemployment in particular.

37.2. The NRIS was also criticised for neglecting the problems of insecure part-time jobs and casual work in the grey economy and how to convert these to regular long-term employment.

37.3. Another weak point was that social economy structures were not discussed.

37.4. Nor were the problems of disadvantaged micro-regions and segregated neighbourhoods specifically addressed.

37.5. While agricultural activities and traditional crafts were proposed for rural areas, the Commission responded that for these regions job creation in other sectors should be explored.

37.6. Since a quarter of employed Romanian Roma already work in public administration and social work activities, these would seem promising areas for expanding Roma employment.

37.7. Initiatives in the NRIS included promoting entrepreneurship and offering incentives to SMEs such as infrastructure investments, loans and subsidies for recruiting Roma employees. These measures could boost the 13% of employed Roma already engaged in commerce.

38. Slovakia – Employment policy options

38.1. The Commission drew attention to the ineffectiveness of the current Active Labour Market Policy and public works schemes pointing to both inappropriate measures and discrimination.

38.2. A considerable gap in employment levels between Roma and non-Roma with equivalent qualifications emphasises the need for anti-discrimination measures and the appointment of Roma to labour offices. These public offices should provide accessible and targeted services.

38.3. The Commission also urged the adoption of policies to fight prejudice involving the majority population, schools, social partners and the media. The NRIS had mentioned motivating employers to offer job opportunities to the marginalised and socially excluded.

38.4. Ideally new work opportunities could be created by regeneration schemes drawing on EU structural funding. However lessons should be learnt from the poorly monitored MRC horizontal priority programme where intended Roma funding was diverted for other purposes.

38.5. Increased training opportunities should be tailored to the availability of suitable local jobs or linked to schemes for commuting or relocating newly trained workers and their families. 'Second chance' education would improve general literacy and skills levels.

38.6. The Commission recommended additional job creation in rural areas in sectors other than agriculture and forestry, such as traditional crafts and micro-businesses, supported by micro-finance. In one village near a national park Roma now offer accommodation to foreign tourists.

39. Education policy options

39.1. Ideally the best way of stimulating improved Roma school performance would be the reintroduction of compulsory pre-school education – preferably for more than one year.

At present only Hungary and Bulgaria have compulsory kindergarten but for just one year.

39.2. In the meantime measures to improve access to pre-school education are essential. These should target current barriers preventing Roma children from enrolling. Parents need to be persuaded about the value of pre-school attendance for their children's future outcomes.

39.3. Parents should be encouraged to become involved in kindergartens and their activities with the aid of Roma teaching assistants and a child and family-centred pedagogic approach. Home visits should also foster learning at home.

39.4. Whole day schooling with after-school educational and social activities can compensate for the restricted resources and difficult environment for learning in many overcrowded homes.

39.5. Cost barriers for poorer families should be removed including payments for meals, materials and transport, where necessary.

39.6. Desegregation benefits Roma pupils. However this should be handled sensitively and firm persuasion of non-Roma parents by committed staff can bring positive results. Sometimes Roma parents also need to be convinced of the benefits of desegregation. Additional support for pupils and their families, where necessary, must be sufficient to meet needs.

39.7. Bussing children from Roma concentrations can counter segregation but careful planning, including preparation of staff and parents, is essential. Once more adequate support is needed.

39.8. Special support in the form of grants and allowances, as well the guidance of mentors, has sometimes been provided. These initiatives encourage and support Roma pupils in the transition to secondary school and tertiary education and for the duration of their studies. The aim is to boost the tiny but growing proportion of Roma with higher education qualifications.

39.9. 'Second chance' classes targeting adults who were previous drop-outs aim at improving their literacy and qualifications and so increasing their possibilities in the labour market.

39.10. Adoption of a multicultural curriculum can help reduce fears and prejudice and increase majority awareness and appreciation of Romani culture. Opinions vary among Roma about the value of teaching or even using the Romani language in school.

39.11. Experience elsewhere suggests that segregation of any child with genuine special needs is damaging and support to meet these needs within the mainstream system is more effective. This also leads to more tolerant attitudes throughout the school and beyond.

39.12. Family-oriented approaches have improved involvement of parents and higher retention of pupils. Therefore an important lesson, which applies not only to the field of education, is that adoption of more inclusive systems would bring significant benefits to wider society.

40. Bulgaria - Education policy options

40.1. Although Bulgaria provides a year of compulsory pre-school education where costs are covered, more free years would greatly improve the cognitive outcomes of Roma children.

40.2. The NRIS identified drop-out rates as a major problem to be countered by whole-day schools with extracurricular activities and increased parental involvement. Children also receive a meal – important when 40% of Bulgarian Roma households reported experiencing hunger.

40.3. A more child-centred approach and support workers, such as Roma teaching assistants, should also improve retention rates.

40.4. Desegregation remains the most challenging issue. Inspired by US activists, Roma NGOs bussed children from their Roma districts (*mahali*) to mainstream schools. Crucial to the success of such schemes is careful preparation in the receiving schools and on-going support for both Roma and non-Roma participating pupils and families. This initiative is continuing.

40.5. Government remains ambiguous and new Framework Programme should express a clear commitment to desegregation as a goal and support this stance with appropriate funding.

40.6. The NRIS proposes training for teachers in multiculturalism. A Roma NGO successfully introduced a voluntary multicultural strand to the curriculum that has also enrolled non-Roma.

40.7. A neglected area in the NRIS is tertiary education where preparatory courses, mentoring and stipends could encourage students, as in Romania.

40.8. 'Second chance' and especially literacy classes would benefit many previous drop-outs.

41. Czech Republic - Education policy options

41.1. The Czech government and Ministry of Education should accept the Grand Chamber ruling and proceed to implement the National Action Plan of Inclusive Education. Likewise the Strategy of Combatting Social Exclusion should be supported and put into practice.

41.2. The NRIS plans to 'improve the diagnosis process' for identifying children with special needs. Previously this has been used as a delaying tactic and a smoke screen for inaction.

41.3. The Action Plan includes increasing access to pre-school education for children in socially excluded localities. However kindergarten should be universal including all children and be extended to more than one year. All fees should be covered for poorer families.

41.4. Full day schools are also planned. To provide a firm basis for future progress, these should be offered to all children – Roma and non-Roma – in disadvantaged areas.

41.5. Roma children are often supported by teaching assistants – usually Roma. This is listed in the NRIS and more should be employed in both kindergartens and elementary schools.

41.6. Teaching assistants and others could play an active role in persuading Roma parents of the value of pre-school education and in encouraging them to participate in school activities.

41.7. A better funded and more inclusive education system could provide mentoring support, extra teaching materials, scholarships and extra activities to help prevent drop-outs. Stipends now encourage poorer students to remain in full-time secondary education.

41.8. Additional resources should be made available to disadvantaged regions.

42. Hungary - Education policy options

42.1. The NRIS plans for pre-school compulsory education to start from three years of age – the most radical approach of all CEE countries.

42.2. While praising the overall education strategy as sound, the Commission recommended a greater focus on implementing desegregation – a continuing problem in Hungarian education. Financial incentives alone have proved a weak instrument in encouraging desegregation.

42.3. It also said that mainstream policies should respond to the specific needs of Roma.

42.4. Reintegration projects for drop-outs have been piloted and ‘Second chance’ schools for older previous drop-outs are planned.

42.5. More Roma teaching assistants and after-school schemes, including extra-curricular study groups (*tanoda*), will provide greater support and aid retention rates. Also not requiring pupils to undergo the humiliation of repeating failed grades should have a similar effect.

42.6. For secondary education boarding schools have been used to overcome problems of geographical distance, bursaries were introduced and vocational schools have been improved.

42.7. In tertiary education poorer students have been offered free courses and the support of mentors as well as scholarship schemes but many resources are provided by NGOs.

43. Romania - Education policy options

43.1. From 2012-2013 the compulsory pre-school year will be free of charge but more than one free year is required to provide children with better cognitive abilities.

43.2. Although the NRIS adopts an inclusive approach and explicitly combats school segregation it lacks clear objectives and targets as well as an adequate evidence base. Nor does it aim for all children to complete at least primary school – the stated goal for all NRISs.

43.3. Furthermore, in the NRIS, education measures are not integrated with other initiatives for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

43.4. The NRIS acknowledges the evident need for proactive desegregation. All schools should be informed of the 2007 law banning school segregation and their compliance should be monitored. Recruitment of Roma school inspectors should assist this process. However this will not be an easy undertaking and support should be offered for sensitive local negotiations.

43.5. This initiative could be combined with provision of better funding, particularly for severely under-resourced rural schools, so that all could benefit. Extra resources could include the recruitment and training of school mediators, as in the NRIS, but as regular employees.

43.6. Stipends for children from poor families could increase elementary and secondary school numbers and help reduce the high drop-out rates.

43.7. Paid second chance schemes could improve the skills and qualifications of earlier drop-outs and reduce debilitating illiteracy.

43.8. Romania already provides dedicated places in high schools and universities for Roma students and these schemes should be extended.

44. Slovakia - Education policy options

44.1. Although the last year of pre-school education has now been made free of charge, provision remains limited. The NRIS aims at increasing Roma numbers from the age of three. These small improvements are completely inadequate to make a significant impact. As the EU Pre-accession Advisor had earlier recommended, the Commission repeated the view that compulsory pre-school education should be considered.

44.2. The NRIS mentions greater inclusiveness of the educational system but the Commission called for more focus on desegregation and for measures to develop local policies to prevent 'white flight' from schools attended by Roma children.

44.3. Bussing, with support, as in Bulgaria, is an option but on its own is unlikely to overcome the multiple disadvantages of life in segregated settlements.

44.4. Provision of pre- and afterschool facilities, including meals, could improve children's performance and help counteract the inadequate study resources in most Roma dwellings. Over half of Slovak Roma children live in homes with only one book.

44.5. More support for family involvement and mentoring should encourage higher numbers of Roma to enter and complete secondary education. Modifying eligibility criteria of scholarships for children in material need could increase poor take-up rates.

44.6. The Commission also recommended more focus on 'Second chance' education and on ensuring that mainstream policies should respond to the specific needs of Roma.

45. Housing policy options

45.1. Disadvantaged regions need substantial development programmes but governments have shown little interest in promoting investment projects to revitalise such neglected areas, whether urban or rural, and younger non-Roma abandon them in search of jobs elsewhere.

45.2. For those in Roma concentrations – whether urban or rural – the difficulties associated with rehousing the large numbers involved are daunting. As already stated the interlocking problems call for a coordinated approach. A Spanish example is given in the Appendix.

45.3. Rather than moving entire communities, individual Roma families eager to change their circumstances could be identified and offered new housing, training and school places as part of a coordinated programme. Ideally, as popular trust is gained that this strategy is viable, numbers could be progressively increased. Nevertheless this would be a long-term process.

45.4. A crucial part of the Spanish example was the availability of cheap subsidised social housing, since their new tenants were initially unemployed. In CEE countries former public housing has been largely privatised. Consequently there is an urgent need for it to be replaced if the proclaimed EU goal of significantly greater social inclusion by 2020 is to be achieved.

45.5. Affordable mortgages from housing associations are perhaps a preferable alternative to rental accommodation since Roma usually take more care of property if they own their houses.

45.6. Acting on the principle of ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’ and to minimise potential backlash, housing beneficiaries should not only be Roma but also disadvantaged families from the majority population.

45.7. There has been a strong tendency to locate housing for Roma on the periphery with their marginalisation finding expression in their growing spatial isolation.

45.8. Rural settlements and quarters (and also some urban districts) pose different problems including the dilemma of whether to improve living conditions while perpetuating segregation.

45.9. Until 2010 EU funding was not available for housing but a limited number of EU-supported projects were undertaken to improve essential infrastructure – roads, water and electricity supply and sewage – in Roma quarters and settlements. Some of these contained plans for short-term Roma employment and were linked to other projects promoting integration, e.g. shared community centres, but the issue of school desegregation was mostly avoided. Hungary made desegregation a condition of eligibility for EU development funding.

45.10. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can now be used for housing projects but take-up by CEE countries has been very limited. A major role for an Agency for Integration would be to ensure that full use is made of available EU financial support.

45.11. At least as temporary measures, unregistered rural houses in better condition should be legalised – perhaps following land transfers – allowing them to be connected to public utilities. Basic infrastructure should be improved while grants and loans would fund better amenities. These last actions would often also benefit the majority population in the vicinity.

45.12. Roma families living dispersed among the majority population have many advantages

in comparison with those in Roma concentrations and the aim should be to ensure they have access to the services available to other citizens. In terms of housing this could include grants or loans for repairs or legal advice if in rental accommodation. While employment chances and better schools might be nearer at hand this does not guarantee their availability in practice.

46. Bulgaria - Housing policy options

46.1. The Commission noted that municipalities were expected to make housing needs assessments and action plans to improve Roma housing but that delivery was not ensured. To assess the scale of the problem a detailed baseline housing survey should be carried out, as in some other CEE countries and also Spain.

46.2. The peripheral location of most Roma housing and the poor quality of amenities and services present particular challenges. Upgrading infrastructure for existing dwellings would maintain existing segregation and distance from potential employment opportunities.

46.3. Relocation would entail either reversing previous policy by purchasing private housing for low rentals or supported mortgages or building new social housing on a massive scale. In either case the numbers involved preclude anything but a partial solution by stages.

46.4. The Commission also argued desegregation should be pursued in the areas of housing and education, together with labour market integration, by adopting a multi-sectoral approach. Progress on gradual desegregation could be made following the multi-sectoral Spanish example using profiling of families and meeting their employment, education and health needs.

46.5. The NRIS included plans for a pilot initiative new social housing in four municipalities. One earlier exemplary project in a central Sofia suburb demonstrated how 132 Roma families could be rehoused in a purpose-built complex, including a refurbished kindergarten, school and community centre as well as shops the families could rent.

46.6. In the meantime municipalities need to fulfil their legal and civic duties by taking responsibility for Roma neighbourhoods. This should be done in full cooperation with Roma residents and NGOs. Infrastructure, including access roads, as well as amenities and public services should be improved to provide better living conditions and access to the outside world. A review of public transport links leading to better services would also lessen isolation.

46.7. Rural housing often lacks basic amenities and access to micro-credit and grants would help alleviate these unacceptable circumstances.

46.8. Micro-credits can also solve the problem of arrears with utility bills as illustrated by a Plovdiv project where the electricity provider now collects 80% of liabilities.

46.9. The many illegal dwellings need to be regularised or their occupants rehoused.

47. Czech Republic - Housing policy options

47.1. The NRIS proposes integrated urban development plans to revitalise socially excluded localities but doubts about Czech access to structural funds have already been raised above.

47.2. Reintroduction of rent controls seems unlikely in today's market economy but the NRIS lists 'reduction of discrimination and unlawful practices applied to Roma in the housing market'. The Commission also emphasises the importance of legal steps against unlawful practices.

47.3. Increasing access to social housing for poorer Roma households, as proposed, would lower current rental levels in the housing market but only if sufficient numbers were involved. Presumably such accommodation would be owned by housing associations not municipalities.

47.4. The NRIS also plans to prevent the eviction of socially excluded Roma with rent arrears – possibly by financial counselling and education plus action against loan sharks.

47.5. NGOs could assist Roma tenants in taking legal action against negligent landlords.

48. Hungary - Housing policy options

48.1. The Commission praised the Hungarian NRIS, particularly for its complex and integrated multi-sectoral approach to the problem of residential desegregation.

48.2. The Commission's only criticism was that the NRIS rather neglected social housing.

48.3. Main difficulties for desegregation initiatives include increasing anti-Roma attitudes in the majority population and the general economic situation in Hungary.

49. Romania - Housing policy options

49.1. The NRIS does mention a regional development infrastructure project to build 10,000 km of local and regional roads. This should lessen isolation and improve access to employment and education opportunities for almost two thirds of Romanian Roma living in the countryside. Further regional development schemes using ERDF funding should be a priority.

49.2. The Commission asked that the NRIS should identify extremely poor communities and define targeted measures to improve their situation. This would imply a needs assessment.

49.3. In Romania only 15% of Roma families have an inside toilet and only a third have running water so there is an evident need for water and sewage infrastructure as well as loans or grants for private housing improvements. Most Roma have no access to financial services.

49.4. Illegal housing should be regularised or replaced, possibly by social housing as proposed in the NRIS. These dwellings are amongst the most overcrowded of all in the CEE region.

49.5. The Commission complained that social housing plans were inadequate since they failed to specify time-scale, targets, indicators or budget.

49.6. In the meantime action should be taken to prevent illegal forced evictions.

49.7. Both on health and human rights grounds Roma families living in dangerously polluted environments should be rehoused immediately as an urgent priority.

50. Slovakia - Housing policy options

50.1. Slovakia's NRIS was not alone in mentioning ERDF funding for housing but the Commission said links between the goals and the process to reach them need strengthening.

50.2. A EUROMA evaluation of planned use of structural funds in all Member States' NRISs praised Slovakia's insistence on effective, results-oriented monitoring, implying dialogue with all stakeholders, especially Roma. Such monitoring was not in evidence during the horizontal priority MRC programme and Slovak Roma complained of limited consultation over the NRIS.

50.3. The Commission thought that concrete, more ambitious and integrated measures were required to provide non-discriminatory access to housing.

50.4. A multi-sectoral approach had been partially attempted in some earlier EU-supported Slovak infrastructure projects. Other NGO projects, focused entirely on housing, demonstrated the need to tackle all four key areas simultaneously. Building new housing in segregated settlements fails to address all the other interrelated disadvantages of such locations.

50.5. An earlier government scheme to provide cheap family accommodation – where Roma helped build houses and paid some of the cost with their labour – was opposed by the supposed beneficiaries as substandard because toilet and washing facilities were shared.

50.6. Slovakia – with some of the most segregated settlements of all – raises once more the question whether marginalised Roma should be re-settled elsewhere in new social housing, giving greater access to jobs, schools and other amenities, or whether improved infrastructure, amenities and services including transport links should be provided in existing Roma localities. There Roma might have invested in substantial houses and sometimes would prefer to remain. There is no simple answer to this dilemma and solutions will vary depending on local circumstances and residents' aspirations.

51. Health and social care policy options

51.1. In 2007 EU-funded large-scale surveys of Roma health status in CEE countries were carried out under the direction of a Spanish Roma NGO giving a reliable comparative picture as well as providing a guide for future monitoring as required by the Framework strategy. Also Traveller women played a prominent role in an all-Ireland study of Traveller health needs.

51.2. Only the Czech Republic and Hungary mentioned using structural funds for healthcare in their NRISs. (The Bulgarian NRIS did not specify any areas for the use of structural funds.)

51.3. Infant mortality, though poverty-related, would be improved by better access to and take-up of paediatric monitoring and perinatal care from the onset of pregnancy till after childbirth.

51.4. Infrastructure improvements, better public services and upgrading of amenities in the home, plus health education, should reduce the incidence of infectious diseases and parasites.

51.5. Lack of medical insurance is more problematic in Bulgaria and Romania than elsewhere. Such fundamental protection should be made universal for all citizens.

51.6. Likewise prescription medicines should be free to the most vulnerable, i.e. poorer families, children, pregnant women, the elderly and disabled and the unemployed.

51.7. Access to healthcare is relatively less difficult in the Czech Republic and Hungary but in Bulgaria, in particular, mobile health units were introduced in order to reach remote locations. Slovakia also invested in such units only to discover their use was in breach of Slovak law.

51.8. Roma mediators have been recruited to offer family planning and general health advice and to improve Roma access to services. However the employment status of health mediators has sometimes proved insecure and jobs have been lost following organisational restructuring.

51.9. Extra training for health professionals can improve their empathy for Roma health-related problems. An innovative French scheme provided hospital accommodation for visiting relatives supporting Traveller patients, greatly improving inter-communal relations.

51.10. Preventative medicine is underused by most Roma and wider provision and take-up of services like screening, immunisation and regular check-ups would bring substantial benefits.

51.11. Many Roma families need advice to enable them to access public services effectively. Mediators can assist in negotiations with officials but reliable funding is required to ensure the sustainability of their NGOs, which have often become service providers in place of municipal social work departments that used to fulfil this function.

51.12. Some of the most socially excluded neighbourhoods have been virtually abandoned by the state. Exploitative landlords, illegal loan sharks and gangsters operate with impunity while police often offer Roma little protection. These have been described as *favelas* in the making.

51.13. Social support activities in such conditions can amount to little more than keeping people afloat but there are examples of community opposition with women taking the lead. Meanwhile promising candidates can be sought for mobility by relocating them elsewhere.

51.14. Also drug rehabilitation and HIV/AIDS projects can function and produce positive results even in such intimidating environments.

51.15. The scandal of the high proportion of Roma children in special schools is matched by their share of inmates in care homes from which they have virtually no hope of being adopted. Rather than remove children from their families to these institutions, frequently because of their parents' poverty, it would be more humane and make more sense to support families so that their children can remain with them. It would even be cheaper.

52. Bulgaria - Health and social care policy options

52.1. A full survey of Roma health needs and outcomes is required for proper planning.

52.2. Basic medical insurance should be made universal or at least provided to safeguard the health of the poorest.

52.3. Although an increase in numbers of Roma health mediators is included in the NRIS their employment needs to be protected and guaranteed.

52.4. Another experiment to improve rural access to healthcare was by mobile medical units.

As well as treatment they could offer preventive services such as screening and immunisation and their use should be continued. Health education was another important component.

52.5. Training for medical staff is needed to reduce discrimination.

52.6. Counselling advice would also aid the disabled to access pensions.

52.7. Old-age pensions or compensatory benefits should be given to the most needy elderly.

52.8. Families should be aided to stay together rather than placing children in care homes.

53. Czech Republic - Health and social care policy options

53.1. The Commission said systematic monitoring of health needs and outcomes was required. Also measurable targets and a clearer time frame for implementing the Action Plan.

53.2. The NRIS plans to improve communication between medical staff and Roma, partly by supporting a programme for health mediators in socially excluded localities.

53.3. More resources should be devoted social work especially in excluded areas. There should be better coordination between municipal services and NGOs offering similar services.

53.4. Financial counselling would help Roma families plan and manage their resources better.

Strategies for debt management would lessen the likelihood of eviction for rent arrears.

53.5. Alternative loan sources to usurers could be established, such as credit unions.

53.6. Instead of placing children into care a more effective and humane strategy would be to provide affordable housing and support entire families rather than splitting them up.

53.7. Action needs to be taken against illegal activities. The NRIS fails to mention this.

53.8. A positive response has been the active recruitment of Roma to police forces.

54. Hungary - Health and social care policy options

54.1. The Commission praised the NRIS is for its sound and analytic approach as well as for acknowledging the need to target women and children in particular.

54.2. It also emphasised the need to develop measurable targets and more specific measures.

54.3. Civil society and Roma representatives are involved in implementing the strategy.

54.4. Training is proposed to improve attitudes of health and social care staff.

54.5. Health education programmes employing Roma mediators will explain lifestyle issues.

54.6. Health provision is for the whole population of disadvantaged areas, e.g. an earlier Roma health project also offered screening to women from the majority population. Likewise a community centre providing free meals for Roma pensioners also gave them to non-Roma, improving local, inter-communal relations.

54.7. As elsewhere, means of preventing family break-up should be used, not care homes.

55. Romania - Health and social care policy options

55.1. The Commission understandably focused on the immediate need for concrete measures to increase medical insurance coverage and for people to be registered with a doctor.

55.2. Welcoming the positive proposals to extend preventative medicine and health education and carry out vaccination and screening campaigns, the Commission concluded that the plans were insufficient in size and scope to make much difference.

55.3. Concerns were also raised about effective implementation for which specific plans, timetables, targets and indicators and budgetary resources would be required.

55.3. The NRIS plans recruitment of more medical staff for rural areas but low pay and locations lacking amenities are a deterrent. More Roma health mediators are also planned.

55.4. As with employment the scale of the problems appeared overwhelming.

56. Slovakia - Health and social care policy options

56.1. The Commission called for a quantitative assessment of the health status of Roma, together with the definition of measures to be taken, responsibilities and budget requirements. Also needed was monitoring of progress and health outcomes.

56.2. It also suggested a greater focus on children and the role of Roma health mediators.

56.3. Health insurance is not a significant problem and main deterrents to accessing health services are cost and time, which could be countered by free medicine and transport vouchers.

56.4. The most radical proposal in the NRIS was to consider resettling families from locations which threatened their health. In the past housing in toxic surroundings has been refurbished.

56.5. Infrastructure improvements would lead to better hygiene in Roma settlements.

56.5. A few new village medical centres have been established with private sponsorship.

56.6. Health education is proposed and specialist support and community involvement is needed in relation to use of tobacco, heroin, solvents and other substances.

56.7. Over two thirds of Roma said they did not play any sport or take any physical exercise but provision for dances in community centres and development of sporting facilities would help, especially to boost the numbers of the 10% of children who practice sports regularly.

56.6. Awareness training for medical staff would also improve inter-communal relations.

56.7. Conditions should be revised to support households in material need. Better take-up of benefits would be encouraged by Roma mediators or others, based in community centres as well as visiting settlements, offering advice to the whole community, not only Roma.

56.8. As in the Czech Republic Roma form a high proportion of children in care institutions (up to 82% – the highest share in the five countries) and similar corrective measures are needed.

Appendix – Examples of Roma Inclusion from Spain

A multi-sectoral approach

A.1 Spain offers an example of a sophisticated, multi-sectoral approach, backed by sustained political will. Most importantly the overall policy for Roma integration was agreed by all political parties and presented to the public as a national plan benefiting the entire population. This removed the danger of different parties making political capital from what might easily have been a highly contentious issue and ensured continuity following changes of government.

A.2. A central administrative body was established, supported by three coordinating commissions with representation from principal ministries and the support of participating regions and municipalities. The creation of an overall authority with the power to oversee implementation encouraged policy coherence and allowed effective horizontal and vertical coordination.

A.3. At the same time a substantial national budget was provided, which was supplemented by matching funding from regional and local authorities, ensuring their commitment, and by a voluntary income tax levy.

ACCEDER – An activation programme that finds jobs

A.4. The Spanish *ACCEDER* (Access) programme, supported by EU structural funds, found jobs for 25,000 (mainly Roma) clients in the service, industrial, construction and agricultural sectors between 1998 and 2009.

A.5. The success of *ACCEDER* is due to systematically profiling of individual clients, followed by appropriate training and placements with public and private employers with which the organising *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) had established long-standing partnerships.

Avilés – An integrated multi-sectorial rehousing scheme

A.6. At a time of economic depression, the northern city of Avilés resolved that shantytowns were no part of its post-industrial future. Therefore it decided to abolish them and rehouse their inhabitants – mostly Roma. This bold programme won the agreement of all political parties and was supported by national, regional and municipal funding and key local stakeholders.

A.7. In the first phase a separate model settlement was constructed on the outskirts of the city where social workers were to teach its residents learn how to integrate. After a few years it was realised that the process of ‘socialising’ the Roma was, in fact, making them more excluded.

A.8. Now the Roma were to be moved in the city, as they had asked, nearer to shops and work opportunities, and rehoused among the majority population. As with *ACCEDER*, families were interviewed and profiled to match them to suitable flats, within reach of relatives, and their future non-Roma neighbours were persuaded by project workers to give them a chance.

A.9. Most importantly the resettlement programme was fully supported and monitored and also included vocational training for adults, school enrolment for children and health registration and vaccination for families. Similar projects have been successful elsewhere in Spain.

A.10. Significantly the numbers involved in Avilés were relatively low and it is unrealistic to expect that wholesale resettlement of sizeable Roma concentrations could take place in CEE countries, even if there were political consensus. However small-scale progress could be made using the same principles and in the process build trust among the majority population.

Rapporteurs Reports

from the Workshop «The EU-Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies: Visions and Realities, Opportunities and Challenges for Roma Integration in Central and Southeast Europe », 2-3 May 2012, Prague, Czech Republic.

An event organised by the European Liberal Forum asbl. (ELF) in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (Sofia, Bulgaria) and the Centre for Liberal Studies (Prague, Czech Republic). Funded by the European Parliament.

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO)

Gabriela Hraňová (ERGO) *ERGO Network Position Paper*

Bulgaria

Momchil Baev (Amalipe) *Towards Following Steps Necessary: Assessment of the National Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration*

Maria Metodieva (Open Society Institute, Sofia) *Roma Inclusion Process in Bulgaria*

Czech Republic

Šimon Pánek* (People in Need)

Martin Šimáček (Agency for Social Inclusion, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic) *Social Inclusion in the Czech Republic: Analysis and Application of Politics and Measures*

Hungary

Gábor Daróczi (Romaversitas Foundation) *Notes on Monitoring, Reality Checking and Education*

Peter Kreko (Political Capital Institute) *Social Psychological and Political Barriers to Integration in Hungary: 'Gypsy Crime' in the Public Opinion and in Political Campaigns*

Romania

Elena Mihalache (Roma Civic Alliance of Romania) *The EU Framework for National Roma Strategies: Visions and Realities, Opportunities and Challenges for Roma in Central and Southeast Europe*

Iulian Stoian (Roma Civic Alliance of Romania) *Challenges for the Romanian Strategy for the Integration of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority*

Slovakia

Marek Baláž (County Association of Roma Initiatives, Banská Bystrica) *Situation of Roma in Slovakia*

Laco Oravec* (Milan Šimečka Foundation)

* *Verbal presentation only*

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Note on the editors

Will Guy

Will Guy is a Research Fellow at the University of Bristol's Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship. He has evaluated EU-supported PHARE programmes designed to promote Roma inclusion in Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia for the European Commission and jointly authored a comparative evaluation of PHARE assistance to Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe. More recently he served as Thematic Expert for EC Peer Reviews of Roma programmes in Spain and Greece and was lead author of a 2010 EC study comparing Roma-related policies and examples of good practice in eighteen EU Member States.

Ivan Gabal

Ivan Gabal graduated from the Charles University in 1975, Department of Philosophy, with a major in sociology and the theory of culture. During 1978 to 1989, he worked in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Czech Academy of Sciences (CSAV) where he carried out empirical analysis on lifestyle, education and mobility. In 1989, he founded the Circle of Independent Intelligence – an opposition movement within the academic community. In November 1989 he became a member of the Civic Forum (CF), which took down the Communist regime, and a year later, in 1990, he led the CF election campaign for the 1990 Parliamentary elections. In 1991, Ivan Gabal joined the Office of (then Czechoslovak) President Havel to manage the Section of Political Analysis, and during Mr Havel's second term, he continued working as one of President's external consultants. In 1992, Ivan joined AISA, a public polling agency, as a partner, and since 1994 he has been working exclusively for his own companies (Ivan Gabal Analysis & Consulting and then GAC), which focus on formulating strategies and policies in the area of ethnical relationships, security, environmental policies, regional development, educational system reform and other fields of public interest. Ivan also assisted government institutions during the preparation by the Czech Republic for accession to the EU. GAC was the first company to map socially excluded Roma localities (2006) and prepared the first comparative analysis of the educational inequality caused by ethnic origin within the Czech education system (2009) and the first to produce a policy paper concerning the Roma minority integration issues commissioned by the Czech government (2010). During 1999 to 2003, Ivan Gabal was a Board member of the Masaryk University in Brno. He also authored more than 300 articles in newspaper and magazines and contributed to several printed publications.

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South Caucasus and Central Asia (CESE)**

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Centre for Liberal Studies (CLS) was established in 1994 as foundation and then re-established in 1999 as civic society organisation. It is a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit think tank. The main objective is to develop contacts between exponents of liberal thoughts, to contribute to clarifying the definition of liberalism, to define its place in contemporary society, and to apply liberal approach in political, economic, social transition of the Czech Republic towards a full-fledged liberal democracy.

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Founded in the fall of 2007, the European Liberal Forum, asbl (ELF) is the non-profit European political foundation of the liberal family. ELF brings together liberal think tanks, political foundations and institutes from around Europe to observe, analyse and contribute to the debate on European public policy issues and the process of European integration, through education, training, research and the promotion of active citizenship within the EU.

The role of the European Liberal Forum is to:

- Serve as a framework for think tanks, national political foundations, institutes, academics and leading liberal personalities to work together at European level.
- Develop close working relationships with and among its member organisations, the national parliamentary groups, the ALDE Party in the European Parliament, Liberal International (LI), the world federation of liberal political parties, and the European liberal youth (LYMEC), the youth organisation of the ALDE Party.
- Observe, analyse and contribute to the debate on European public policy issues and the process of European integration, through education, training, research and the promotion of active citizenship within the European Union, particularly with regard to young Europeans.
- Strengthen the liberal, democrat and reform movement in the European Union and throughout Europe.
- Seek a common position, as a transfer of experience gained from the contracting Members, on all important matters affecting the European Union.
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