



Advancing the Education of Roma in Croatia

REF Country Assessment – 2014



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PREFACE

This document is part of a series of Country Assessments produced by the Roma Education Fund (REF). It seeks to provide an analysis of education and the ongoing education reforms from the perspective of the inclusion of Romani children in the countries taking part in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The document also reviews the different programs and activities REF has carried out since its establishment in 2005 and highlights the thematic and program areas on which REF plans to focus during the coming two years. In addition to serving as a tool for the Roma Education Fund's own programming, REF hopes that this document will offer a useful instrument for:

- Policy-makers seeking to improve education policies that address the education outcome gap between Roma and non-Roma.
- Civil society representatives who wish to improve the effectiveness of their educational programs by making them more relevant to the overall education reform of their country.
- The overall development and donor community, which needs to better understand the situation faced by Romani children in order to identify niche areas where available resources would produce the greatest impact.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ROMA IN CROATIA

According to the latest Census (2011) the Roma population in Croatia identifies 16,975 individuals (0.4 percent of the total population) and 14,369 people who speak Romanes as their mother tongue. Most Roma in Croatia are indigenous and settled, with a significant part of the population having migrated from ex-Yugoslavia during the war. Administrative data point to a Roma population of little over 20,000 individuals while unofficial sources estimate the number at over 150,000.

EDUCATION

During recent years and in the context of accession to the European Union, the Government of Croatia, with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport playing a central role, has developed a series of strategies and policies aimed at improving the situation of Roma in education in terms of access to early education, desegregation and generally increasing Roma participation in all levels of education.

Despite progress recorded in the last decade, problems persist with regard to the quality of education, completion of compulsory school and segregation in Roma-only classes on linguistic criteria. However, the government has committed to abolish the Roma-only classes by 2015, particularly in view of the European Court of Human Rights' judgment in *Oršuš et al.*

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Implementing early childhood development programs: Increasing the number of Roma enrolled in mainstream kindergartens through supporting the implementation of state policies which is covering the parental share of Roma in preschool;
- Combating early school leaving from primary education: Decreasing the education gap between Roma and non-Roma through school after school and mentoring programs;
- Increasing the rate of Roma students completing secondary school and enrolling into universities;
- Advocating for desegregation of education and for full inclusion of Roma children into mainstream educational system;

THE ROMANI POPULATION IN CROATIA

HISTORY AND POPULATION SIZE

Roma¹ are recognized as one of the 22 national minorities in Croatia,² who are believed to have arrived in Croatia in the 14th century as part of a larger group migrating through Asia Minor and South Eastern Europe. The first written record mentioning the presence of Roma in Croatia dates to 1362 and it is considered that they were primarily merchants, tailors, butchers and musicians. In the 19th century large groups of Roma from Romania arrived in Croatia,

¹ In this assessment the term "Roma" is used as an inclusive collective term and is not intended to exclude any related groups including (but not limited to) Sinti, Travellers, Ashkaelia or Egyptians. In general, REF follows the local official policy as to whether other groups are considered as, or together with, Roma.

² http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2010_07_85_2422.html



forming the core of the present Roma population, together with the already present Kalderaši and Lovari. The Roma population in Croatia suffered great losses during the Second World War, with over 16,000 Roma having died in one concentration camp.³

The latest official data on Roma in Croatia stems from the 2011 Census which recorded 16,975 Roma (0.4 percent in the total population) and almost twice as many as in 2001 (9,463). According to the 2011 Census 14,369 people (0.3 percent of the total population) speak the Romani language as their mother tongue compared to 7,860 in 2001.⁴

Table 1.

Number of Roma in Croatia (1971–2011)

	Census 1971	Census 1981	Census 1991	Census 2001	Census 2011
Number	1,257	3,858	6,695	9,463	16,975
Percent in total population	0.03	0.08	0.14	0.21	0.40

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

According to Administrative data from the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, 21,381 Roma were receiving welfare support during the school year 2002/2003.⁵ In a communication to the Government Office for National Minorities from September 20, 2010, the Ministry of the Interior reported that on record there were 15,615 Croatian citizens of Roma ethnicity with permanent residence in Croatia. The number included only those whose status was legally ascertained and who declared their Roma ethnic affiliation. According to the recently adopted National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020 (NRIS), about 10 percent of the Roma in Croatia do not hold Croatian citizenship while 3 percent have no documents certifying their citizenship or legal status.⁶

Despite the significant growth in the number of individuals officially self-identifying as Roma, the real size of the Roma population in Croatia is considered much larger. In 2003 the government⁷ estimated it at 30,000–40,000 (0.7–0.9 percent of the total population), as did the Council of Europe in 2010. All relevant studies and documents support this estimate. In his study on Roma in Croatia, Neven Hrvatić⁸ cites the estimate of 60,000–150,000 (1.4–3.5 percent of the total population) made by some Roma organizations. Nenad Pokos writes in his “Demographic Analysis of the Roma Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics Data,” without mentioning a source, that “some even think that this number is around 60,000.”⁹ This estimate is additionally supported by some data collected by different ministries.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

⁴ All Census data are available at the site of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (Državni zavod za statistiku) <http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/censuslogo.htm>.

⁵ Kušan, Lovorka and Ina Zoon (2004) *Izveštaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju, Hrvatska* (Report on the Access of Roma to Employment, Croatia), Council of Europe.

www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp.

⁶ Government of the Republic of Croatia (2002), National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf, p. 51.

⁷ Government of the Republic of Croatia, *Nacionalni program za Rome* (National Program for Roma) www.vlada.hr/hr/uredi/ured_za_nacionalne_manjine/nacionalni_program_za_rome.

⁸ Hrvatić, Neven (2004) “Romi u Hrvatskoj: od migracija do interkulturalnih odnosa” (The Roma in Croatia: From Migration to Intercultural Relations) *Migracijske i etničke teme* 4 (2004); p. 374.

⁹ Pokos, Nenad (2005) “A Demographic Analysis of the Roma Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics Data”, in Štambuk, Maja (2005) (ed.) *Kako žive hrvatski Romi / How Do Croatian Roma Live*, Zagreb: Institut Ivo Pilar (published in Croatian and English in single volume)

The relative invisibility of Roma in official statistics is caused primarily by the reluctance to declare oneself as Roma due to the long history of ghettoization and other forms of discrimination (including the most severe persecutions during the Second World War) but also by the fact that the Roma population in Croatia is not homogenous.¹⁰

STRUCTURE OF THE ROMA POPULATION

Based on the Census data, the Roma population in Croatia is much younger than the general population (see Figure 1) with an average age of 21.8 years compared to 41.8 years among the total population.¹¹ Fifty-five percent of the Roma are aged between 0 and 19 compared to 21 percent of the total population.

Table 2.

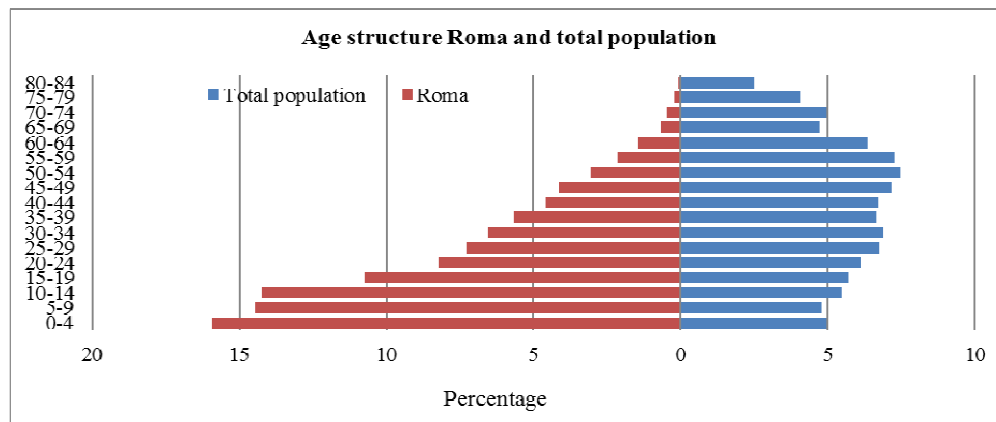
Roma and total population in the 0–19 age group

	Total	0–4		5–9		10–14		15–19	
Total	4,284,889	212,709	5%	204,317	5%	235,402	5.5%	244,177	5.7%
Roma	16,975	2,706	16%	2,455	14.5%	2,419	14%	1,825	11%

Source: 2011 Census.

Figure 1.

Age structure of Roma and total population

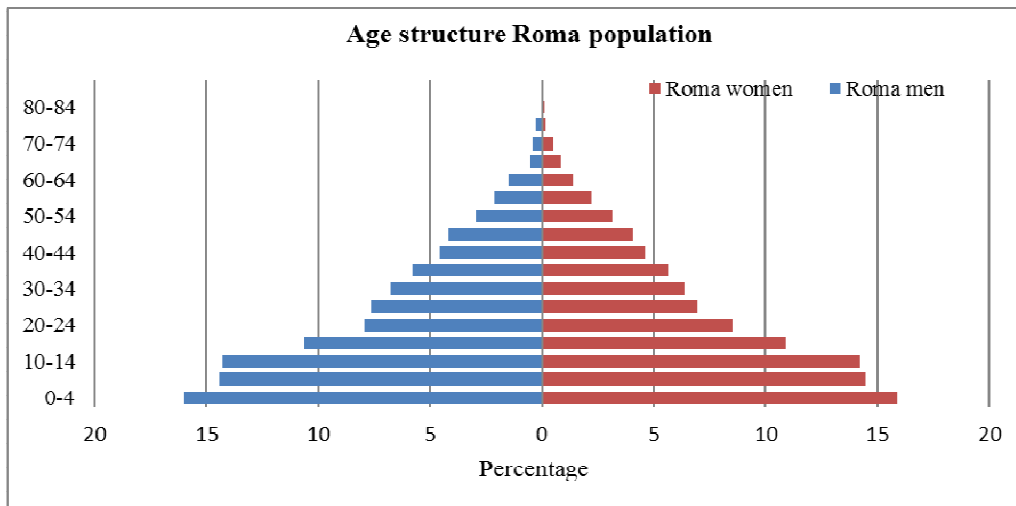


Source: 2011 Census.

¹⁰ Government of the Republic of Croatia (2002), National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf, pp. 26-27.

¹¹ DZS, Average age by ethnicity (based on the Census 2011) (Prosječna starost stanovništva prema narodnosti, Popis 2011), http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/census2011/results/graphs/usp_G3_HR.pdf.

Figure 2.
Age structure of the Roma population (by gender)



Source: 2011 Census.

TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION

According to official data (Census 2011) 30.09 percent of Roma in Croatia (5,107 persons) live in Međimurje County, where they make up almost 4.5 percent of the population. 16.23 percent Roma (2,755 persons) live in the city of Zagreb, 11 percent in the Osijek-Baranja County, 8.62 percent in the Sisak-Moslavina County and 6.94 percent in the Brodsko-Posavska County (see the complete list in the Annexes).

The city of Zagreb accommodates the largest Roma settlement. Other cities and towns with large Roma populations (more than five percent of the total population) include Nedelišće (1,239), Slavonski Brod (1,142), Čakovec (1,039) and Rijeka (867).¹²

LIFESTYLE, MOBILITY, PREJUDICES

There is no research data suggesting a nomadic or itinerant lifestyle among Roma in Croatia. Despite the massive forced migrations caused by the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, the vast majority of Roma were born in Croatia and never left their place of birth. 2001 Census data shows that two thirds of the declared Roma (65.9 percent) have lived in the same settlement since birth while only 17.6 percent moved from other regions of Croatia and 16.2 percent immigrated from abroad, mostly from other parts of former Yugoslavia.¹³ Another research from 2009 found a similar pattern (see Table 3).

¹² The list of all settlements with 1% or more of the Roma population is included in the Annexes.

¹³ Pokos, *op. cit.* 2005, based on the 2001 Census data.



Table 3.

Roma in Croatia by countries of origin

Croatia	69.31%
Kosovo	21.36%
Macedonia	2.83%
Bosnia-Hercegovina	2.40%
Serbia	2.26%
Slovenia	0.42%
Austria	0.14%
Hungary	0.42%
Italy	0.42%
Germany	0.28%
France	0.14%

Source: Baranović, 2009¹⁴ (sample: N=720 subjects).

In addition, the UNDP/World Bank/EC Roma regional survey from 2011 showed that migration intentions are slightly lower among Roma (17.3 percent) than among non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma households (19.48 percent).¹⁵

Mobility of the Roma people within the country is, among other factors, limited by resistance of the local population as a manifestation of the widespread prejudice and stereotypes. For example, in early May 2012, in the town of Škabrnja (near Zadar), local inhabitants (mostly of Croat ethnicity) forced a Roma family, who intended to settle in Škabrnja, to leave the land they had purchased. Around a hundred local inhabitants, led by the mayor, gathered and threatened to evict the family by force and surrounded the family's land with wire fencing. Unable to withstand the overall hostility, the family eventually left its property.¹⁶ A month prior to this, a "Crisis Headquarters for Defense of Lika against Gipsy Racism" was established, reportedly as a reaction to violence committed by members of the Roma community settled in the region of Lika.¹⁷ Although it is possible that some Roma individuals behaved violently, the open hostility of the campaign led by the "Crisis Headquarters" is problematic in terms of generalizing the responsibility to the entire Roma population.

LANGUAGE

Roma in Croatia mainly speak two dialects: Romani Chib and Ljimba d'bjaš. The members of the Ashkali community, who moved from Kosovo and living mostly in Zagreb and Rijeka, speak a variant of Albanian.¹⁸ Different dialects of these languages have not been

¹⁴ Branislava Baranović, "Život Romkinja u Hrvatskoj s naglaskom na pristup obrazovanju" (izvještaj o rezultatima istraživanja) (Life of the Roma women in Croatia, focused on the access to education – research report), Udruga žena Romkinja "Bolja budućnost", Zagreb 2009

www.ijf.hr/socijalna_ukljucenost/adminmax/files/Izvjestaj_ZivotiObrazRomkinja.pdf

¹⁵ UNDP-World Bank-European Commission Regional Roma Survey 2011. Country statistical profile data available at: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/data/show/D69F01FE-F203-1EE9-B45121B12A557E1B>

¹⁶ The case was reported in most media, for example: T-portal, "U Škabrnji nisu živjeli ni Srbi ni Romi, pa neće ni sada!" (Serbs and Roma never lived in Škabrnja; they won't be allowed to do it now!), May 2, 2012, available at: www.tportal.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/191288/U-skabrnji-nisu-zivjeli-ni-Srbi-ni-Romi-pa-nece-ni-sada.html#.UGq33WfwkUU. The information on the charges against the mayor was reported by T-portal, "Načelnik Škabrnje kazneno prijavljen zbog diskriminacije" (Criminal charges against the mayor of Škabrnja for discrimination), May 11, 2012, available at: www.tportal.hr/vijesti/crnakronika/193199/Nacelnik-skabrnje-kazneno-prijavljen-zbog-diskriminacije.html#.UGq1jWfwkUU.

¹⁷ "U Lici osnovan Krizni stožer za zaštitu od Roma" (A Crisis Headquarters for the defence of Lika against Gipsy racism established in Lika), *Novi list*, May 9, 2012, www.novolist.hr/Vijesti/Regija/Lika-Senj/U-Lici-osnovan-Krizni-stozer-za-zastitu-od-Roma.

¹⁸ National Program for Roma, 2003, p. 8.



standardized. The official 2011 Census data only register “Romani” language, spoken by 14,369 persons (0.34 percent).¹⁹

The first Romani-Croatian dictionary was published in 2008.²⁰ A handbook on teaching Croatian as the second language for Roma Bayash speakers was published a year prior to that.²¹ Since November 2012, Romani language and Roma culture and literature are taught as non-obligatory subjects in the Department of Indology and Far Eastern Studies at the School of Liberal Arts (Filozofski fakultet) in Zagreb.

While it is known that most Roma do not speak Croatian as their first language, it is uncertain how many and how well speak it as a second language. In 2002 a governmental research project showed that only 6 percent of the surveyed Roma spoke Croatian.²² Insufficient command of the Croatian language has been used as a justification for segregating Roma children in separate classes in elementary schools, but experience and case law indicate that it may not necessarily constitute an objective and proportional justification.²³

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The data collected by the Croatian Employment Service (CES) do not allow the direct identification of ethnicity among the registered unemployed. However, the number of the unemployed members of the Roma minority can be estimated on the basis of their place of residence, on the data individuals provide when applying for welfare support and on their knowledge of the Romani language. The estimates provided by CES should be used with caution because they do not include the (unknown) number of unemployed persons who do not approach the CES due to the fluidity of ethnic identity.

At the end of June 2012, the total number of the unemployed in Croatia was 294,877²⁴ (7 percent). The estimated number of registered unemployed Roma was 4,428 (1.5 percent of the total unemployment in the country and approx. 26 percent in the Roma population based on Census data), including 2,165 women (48.8 percent). The largest group of unemployed Roma – 55.1 percent – were 35 years old or younger (including 20–25 years old: 17.6 percent, i.e., 781 persons; 25–29 years old: 15 percent, i.e., 667 persons; 30–35 years old: 14.7 percent, i.e., 653 persons).²⁵

UNDP/World Bank/EC data from 2011 reveal a very low employment rate among Roma in Croatia (14 percent) when compared to non-Roma living in close proximity to Roma households (49 percent).²⁶ The unemployment rate presents a reverted picture: 65 percent and 23 percent respectively, while the rate of informal employment was nearly 8 times higher among Roma than non-Roma in the 15–64 age group (44 percent and 6 percent respectively,

¹⁹ Državni zavod za statistiku, *Statistički ljetopis 2012*, p. 109.

²⁰ Veljko Kajtazi (ed.), *Romano-Kroacijako thaj Kroacijako-Romano Alavari, Romsko-hrvatski i hrvatsko-romski rječnik* (Romani-Croatian and Croatian-Romani Dictionary), “Kali Sara,” Udruga za promicanje obrazovanja Roma u Republici Hrvatskoj (Association for promotion of education of Roma in the Republic of Croatia) and Odjel za orijentalistiku Hrvatskoga filološkog društva (Oriental studies department of the Croatian Philological Society), Zagreb 2008.

²¹ Lidija Cvikić (ed.), *Drugi jezik hrvatski: Poučavanje hrvatskoga kao nematerinskoga jezika u predškoli i školi s posebnim osvrtom na poučavanje govornika bajaškoga romskoga*, Profil, Zagreb 2007.

²² http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf p. 29

²³ REF Project, “Initial Assessment CRO 015 From preschool to full integration September 2011 – June 2012. With preschool education to complete integration”; ECtHR case *Oršuš et al.*

²⁴ by the end of January 2013, the figure exceeded 370,000

²⁵ Croatian Employment Service (Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje), “Nezaposlenost i zapošljavanje osoba romske nacionalne manjine tijekom 2012. godine” (Unemployment and employment of members of the Roma national minority during 2012), p. 3 (this report was received as a communication to the Croatian Law Centre, October 1, 2012; the current presentation was originally made for the Croatian chapter of the FRA annual report 2012).

²⁶ UNDP-WB-European Commission regional Roma survey 2011.



with the highest discrepancy in the 15–24 age group).²⁷ In addition, more Roma than non-Roma interviewed preferred to be in secure employment with low pay as opposed to insecure employment generating more income (81 percent and 74 percent respectively).

The causes of such high unemployment include negative attitudes towards Roma leading to discrimination²⁸ and a lack of work and education experience.²⁹ According to CES data from 2012, 3,083 persons (including 1,597 women) of the unemployed Roma did not complete primary education or never attended school at all, while 1,073 persons (460 women) finished elementary school and only 235 (87 women) finished a three-year vocational school. Only 28 persons (20 women) completed the 4-year secondary school (vocational or grammar schools). Five of the unemployed Roma (including a woman) had completed a higher school or the first degree of university or professional studies and one Roma man had a university degree. Most of the registered unemployed Roma (61.8 percent, i.e., 2,739 persons, of whom 30.5 percent of women, i.e., 1,331) were long-term unemployed (for over a year). The highest concentration of unemployed Roma was found in two counties: Osijek-Baranja (984 persons of whom 485 women) and Međimurje (970 persons of whom 371 women).³⁰ In addition, as revealed by UNDP/World Bank/EC data, unskilled workers prevail both among employed (41 percent) and unemployed (60 percent) Roma compared to non-Roma (10 percent and 11 percent, respectively).³¹

The relative poverty rate among surveyed Roma in 2011 was more than double than that of their non-Roma neighbors (92 percent and 42 percent, respectively). Other indicators of poverty collected by UNDP/World Bank/EC also show significant differences between Roma and non-Roma populations living in the same areas: only two percent of Roma households, as opposed to 22 percent of non-Roma households, indicated they have some savings and thus a sense of financial security.

The share of the Roma population suffering from material deprivation is 88 percent (including 70 percent suffering from severe material deprivation), while the corresponding shares for the non-Roma population are 42 percent and 24 percent, respectively. In addition, malnutrition was reported by 38 percent of Roma and only by five percent of non-Roma households.³² 13.5 percent of all beneficiaries of welfare support allocated to the citizens of Croatia in the middle of the last decade were Roma.³³

Due to the high poverty and unemployment rates among their parents, Roma children are often engaged in informal jobs necessary to make a living, or are required to stay at home and take care of their younger siblings.

HEALTH

Although the official sources of health data do not allow for disaggregation on ethnicity, the government identified a gap between Roma and the general population when it comes to healthcare and has dedicated a part of its National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS) to

²⁷ Ibidem

²⁸ Z. Šućur, “Romski kao marginalna skupina” (Roma as a marginal group), *Društvena istraživanja* 46-47 (2000), p. 217.

²⁹ No employment experience rate among Roma is 60% (30% for non-Roma) (UNDP-WB-European Commission regional Roma survey 2011).

³⁰ CES, “Nezaposlenost i zapošljavanje osoba romske nacionalne manjine tijekom 2012. Godine.”

³¹ Bruggemann, C. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

³² UNDP-WB-European Commission regional Roma survey 2011.

³³ Lovorka Kušan and Ina Zoon, “Izvještaj o pristupu Roma zapošljavanju: Hrvatska” (Report on the Access of Roma to Employment, Croatia), September 2004, Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/archive/stabilitypact/activities/Croatia/romaaccessemploymentCroatian_en.asp



measures aiming at reducing it.³⁴ The gap results from the generally poorer socio-economic situation of the Roma when compared to the total population but also from legal reasons and from experiences of discrimination at the hands of health care providers.³⁵ In addition, no official data is available on the life expectancy at birth or infant mortality rate among Roma, but estimates point towards a life expectancy that is 10 years shorter among Roma and towards a higher infant mortality rate among Roma.³⁶

Data collected by UNDP/World Bank/EC in 2011 show that fewer Roma (82 percent) than non-Roma (97 percent) surveyed had health insurance. The majority of Roma and non-Roma indicated having adequate access to healthcare services (92 percent and 98 percent respectively). Similarly, the perceived vaccination rate was high among both groups (97 percent of Roma and 99 percent of non-Roma) and few Roma and non-Roma assessed their health as bad (12 percent of the Roma and 11 percent of the non-Roma surveyed). However, 38 percent of the Roma said they did not go to the doctor because they did not have money for treatment (compared to 21 percent of non-Roma). Half of the surveyed Roma (older than 16) indicated they were smokers compared to a third of the non-Roma, and high differences were found in relation to access to essential drugs or medicine: 44 percent of the Roma indicated they had no access to such drugs/medicine compared with only 16 percent non-Roma.³⁷ A study from 2007 on the Bayash Roma community from Medimurje recorded a health insurance share of 50 percent, a smoking rate of 70 percent.³⁸

Regarding the health situation of children, the position of the Croatian Public Health Institute and that of the government is that Roma and majority children have equal access to healthcare because all children are entitled to free healthcare services until they reach the age of 18.³⁹

HOUSING

Roma generally live in marginalized and segregated communities both in urban and rural areas.⁴⁰ Research points to polarization between Roma and others even within the same town or village.⁴¹

The prevailing poverty in the Roma population is mirrored in their housing conditions. The Roma surveyed by UNDP/ World Bank/ EC in 2011 lived in households that were twice as crowded as those of their non-Roma neighbors (12.87 vs. 35.03 m² per household member). Housing of 35 percent of the surveyed Roma (as opposed to just four percent of the non-Roma) was unsafe comprising of households situated in ruined houses or slums. Also, 35 percent of the Roma interviewed did not have access to improved water supply and 45 percent did not have access to improved sanitation (compared with four percent and five percent, respectively, of the non-Roma surveyed). Additionally, fewer Roma than non-Roma have access to electricity supply (88 percent and 99 percent respectively). Nearly one in five Roma

³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

³⁵ Lack of Croatian citizenship or any citizenship constitutes a barrier in exercising the right to health insurance. (NRIS); http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

³⁶ Ibidem

³⁷ UNDP-WB-European Commission regional Roma survey 2011.

³⁸ A body mass index (BMI) of over 25 indicates that the individual is overweight.; Skaric-Jurik. T. *et al.*, Trapped between tradition and transition – Anthropological and epidemiological Cross-sectional Study on Bayash Roma in Croatia.

³⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

⁴⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

⁴¹ Šlezak, Hrvoje: “Prostorna segregacija romskog stanovništva u Medimurskoj županiji” (Spatial segregation of the Roma population in the Medimurje County), *Hrvatski geografski glasnik*, Vol. 71, No. 2, December 2009, p. 76.



have a computer at home (compared to nearly four in five of non-Roma) and only 17 percent of Roma live in a household with access to internet compared with 65 percent of non-Roma.⁴²

REPRESENTATION

Political participation/ representation

A member of the Roma minority was elected as the joint representative of the Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach, and Jewish minorities in the Parliament in the last two elections (Nazif Memedi 2007–2011; Veljko Kajtazi since 2011). In cities/municipalities wherein they make five to fifteen percent of the local population, national minorities elect one representative in the local council. At the local elections in 2009, Roma met this condition in the municipalities of Darda (Osijek-Baranja County) and Mala Subotica, Orehovica, and Pribislavec (Međimurje County).

In local units where the share of a national minority is 1.5 percent or more and where the number of local minority members is at least 200, they elect members of Councils of National Minorities. On the county level the threshold is 500 minority inhabitants. The Councils act as advisory bodies to the government.

17 Roma minority Councils and 11 individual representatives were elected in 2011. 577 Roma (76 women) stood as candidates in the elections for members of the minority councils and individual representatives in 2011 and 314 were elected. Table 4 shows that more than a third of the Roma voted in the elections for councils at all levels, while their turnout varies from 11 percent at the county level to over 60 percent at the municipal level.. It is also important to note that turnout for Roma was much higher than the average turnout across all the national minorities, with the exception of the election for representatives at the county level.⁴³

Table 4.

*Roma turn out for elections of Roma National Minority Councils (2011)
and representatives (2009)*

	Council	Representatives
Counties	32%	11%
Cities	38%	33%
Municipalities	33%	63%

Source: National Election Commission.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (hereinafter: MoSES) manages the education system at the national level and defines the national framework curricula on the basis of which schools define their own curricula. Schools established by private founders may implement their own curricula, which must include, but are not limited to, the common part of the national curricula. The Education and Teacher Training Agency, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training, the Agency for Science and Higher Education, the Agency for

⁴² Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Third Opinion on Croatia , adopted on May 27, 2010, § 207, p. 37; UNDP-WB-European Commission regional Roma survey 2011.

⁴³ The official site of the National Election Commission: www.izbori.hr/izbori/izborimanjine11.nsf/wi?openform.



Mobility and EU Programs and the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education are national public bodies that are also involved in the regulation, development and quality control of the educational sector. The work of schools is monitored by regional Administrative Departments (legal compliance), education inspectors, specialized agencies and MoSES (financial). The subsystem of school inspection is regulated by the School Inspection Act (1997) and it is responsible with the supervision of the activities performed by institutions of education at all levels, except higher education.⁴⁴

Institutions of preschool upbringing and education (mainly kindergartens) can be established by local and regional authorities (municipalities, cities or counties), private entities, religious communities, and the state. Kindergartens are typically established by local authorities – 1,170 out of the total of 1,534 kindergartens in Croatia. All founders except the state needs confirmation by MoSES of compliance with the law and of the regional Administrative Departments for Education of meeting the functional requirements. At least half of the governing council of the kindergarten is appointed by the founder, and the rest is composed by one parents' representative and members elected by the teachers and experts working in the kindergarten. Kindergartens can be closed by a decision of the state education inspection if they cease to meet legal and functional requirements.⁴⁵

The pre-primary school program is typically implemented by kindergartens. If there is no kindergarten in the area, elementary schools provide the program (sometimes other institutions, such as public libraries) for children who have not attended kindergarten. The network of preschool institutions is defined by local authorities, according to the needs of children and parents in their areas of jurisdiction. However, MoSES has pointed out that many local and regional authorities fail to develop such plans and has proposed amendments to the relevant legal act to include more specific standards to that effect.⁴⁶

Primary and secondary schools can be established by the national, local and regional governments, private persons, and religious communities, but they need to be certified in the form of approval of commencement as implementers of the public educational programs. Founders of primary and secondary schools need to obtain an opinion from MoSES confirming that the establishment and program of the school is justified and complies with requirements of accessibility, rationality, and other relevant indicators. A confirmation by MoSES on the legal compliance of the founding act is also required.⁴⁷

Schools are governed by seven-member School Boards. One member of the School Board is elected by the school employees, two members are elected by the Teachers' Council of the school (teachers or expert associates working in the school), and one member (not employed by the school) is a representative of the Council of Parents; the founder appoints three members.⁴⁸

A school can be closed if it does not meet the legal requirements regarding the implementation of the curriculum, professional staff, and pupils/students enrollment. In such

⁴⁴ The Act on Upbringing and Education in Elementary and High Schools (Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi), art. 12 (consolidated text, Official Gazette (Narodne novine – hereinafter: NN) No. 126, 16.11.2012), art. 97; <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Croatia:Overview>; Like the Agency for Upbringing and Education (AZOO) or the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education; Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia nos 50/95 and 73/97; <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=2540>

⁴⁵ Act on the Preschool upbringing and education, <http://www.zakon.hr/cms.htm?id=477>; The Act on Upbringing and Education in Elementary and High Schools (Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi), art. 12 (consolidated text, Official Gazette (Narodne novine – hereinafter: NN) No. 126, 16.11.2012), art. 13 and 34

⁴⁶ i.e., “accessibility and rational composition”, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ [Law on education in Primary and Secondary Schools] Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi (consolidated text), *Narodne novine* no. 126, 16.11.2012, art. 92.; art. 90, § 4.

⁴⁸ Act on the Preschool upbringing and education, <http://www.zakon.hr/cms.htm?id=477>



case, the founder has to close the school on request of MoSES; if the founder fails to close the school, it will be closed by ministerial decision.⁴⁹

FINANCING

Preschool education of children with developmental difficulties and talented children of Croatian citizens from abroad, of ethnic minority children and the program of pre-primary school are all financed from the national budget, in accordance with the policies determined by MoSES. The founder of the kindergarten covers its expenses. The income of kindergartens includes fees paid by the parents of the attending children.

Financing of public schools is provided from the state budget as well as from the budgets of local and regional authorities. Private educational institutions are not funded by the state but by fees paid by the attendees. Higher education is also financed to a large extent from the state budget, covering salaries of the academic staff, running costs for academic institutions, research funds, capital investment and student subsistence and tuition fees.⁵⁰

According to World Bank data, public expenditure on education in Croatia was below the OECD average and accounted for 4.3 percent of GDP in 2010. Moreover, the public expenditure per student in tertiary education was 23 percent of GDP per capita in 2010, down from 29.4 percent in 2008. In 2009, 11.6 percent of the state budget was spent on education.⁵¹ Around three percent of the total budget of MoSES (400 million HRK, ~52.5 million EUR) was allocated for paying textbooks for elementary and first and second-year secondary school children.

Furthermore, 1,929,108 HRK (257,214 EUR) from the state budget was spent on preschool education in 2012 (nearly 4 times more than in 2009), 1,728,976.32 HRK (230,530 EUR) on primary education and 2,249,343 HRK (299,912 EUR – compared with 183,200 EUR in 2009) on secondary school in 2012. During the 2011/2012 academic year the state financed tertiary education with 290,000 HRK (38,670 EUR) for Roma scholarships and with 700,000 HRK (93,330 EUR) for adult education of Roma (literacy programs).⁵²

FACILITIES

At the beginning of the 2012/2013 academic year, there were 1,534 kindergartens in Croatia of which 20 were founded by the state, 1,170 by the local and self-government units and 54 by religious communities (see table below) and 290 private entities.

⁴⁹ Act on the Preschool upbringing and education, <http://www.zakon.hr/cms.htm?id=477>, art. 94 and 95

⁵⁰ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Croatia:Funding_in_Education;
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Croatia:Overview>

⁵¹ Data on students from other education levels are not available.;
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TERT.PC.ZS/countries/HR?display=graph>

⁵² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/natreport11/croatia_en.pdf;
http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9276_file2_decade-progress-report-hr.pdf



Table 5.
Kindergartens and other legal entities implementing preschool education programs,
beginning of 2012/2013 school year

Founder	Total	Kindergartens			Other legal entities		
		Self-contained	With departments	Departments	Basic schools	Playrooms in libraries	Other institutions
Total	1,534	282	253	836	134	5	24
Republic of Croatia	20	1	3	11	5	–	–
Local government and self-government units	1,170	134	191	699	124	5	17
Other domestic legal entities and natural persons (private)	290	134	47	99	5	–	5
Religious communities	54	13	12	27	–	–	2

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, *First Releases*, No. 1496, May 9, 2013.⁵³

At the beginning of the 2012/2013 school year, there were 2,057 state-founded basic schools, eight private and two of religious communities. At the same time, there were 73 basic education institutions for children with developmental difficulties and 118 art schools. Upper secondary education was taking place in 245 upper secondary schools of which 202 were state founded, 29 private and 14 of religious communities.⁵⁴ National minority education in the language and script of a relevant national minority⁵⁵ was conducted in 68 basic schools (332 classes).⁵⁶

According to the official website of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, there are around 130 higher education institutions in Croatia (universities, public or private polytechnics, public or private schools of professional higher education).

A study of the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education from 2010 showed that 44 percent of the 715 teachers interviewed 44 percent considered they were teaching in a classroom with generally good material conditions, while six percent rated the conditions in their classrooms as not good.⁵⁷

EDUCATIONAL CYCLE AND PROGRESSION CRITERIA

The general system of education in Croatia includes five levels: preschool, basic, secondary, tertiary, and education of adults. Basic (elementary) school covers the compulsory schooling of eight years/forms (primary and lower secondary) while (upper) secondary school covers the two to four years/forms of schooling after elementary school.

Preschool, implemented mainly in kindergartens,⁵⁸ provides upbringing and preparation for school for children between six months and six years of age. Children who are not included in such preschool program are supposed to attend a one-year pre-primary school before their enrollment in the elementary school. According to the Law on Preschool Education, which has been modified in 2014, all children who reach the age of five by March 31, 2014 are obliged to start one year of preschool.⁵⁹ The Statute on the Duration and Content of Preschool specifies the duration for minimum 250 school hours (or 150 at minimum depending on the

⁵³ http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2013/SI-1496.pdf

⁵⁴ http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2013/SI-1496.pdf ; http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2013/SI-1497.pdf

⁵⁵ Czech, Hungarian, German, Serbian, Italian.

⁵⁶ http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2013/SI-1496.pdf

⁵⁷ <http://www.ncvvo.hr/drzavnamatura/web/public/unaprijedenje>

⁵⁸ The Croatian system does not distinguish between nursery schools and kindergartens

⁵⁹ <http://www.zakon.hr/z/492/Zakon-o-pred%C5%A1kolskom-odgoju-i-obrazovanju>, clause 23a, 3



number of children) plus 20 percent of out-of-school cultural and other activities.⁶⁰ These regulations will be in force from 2015.

Elementary (compulsory) schooling is free of charge and mandatory for all children between six and fifteen years old.⁶¹ It consists of eight years/forms. In the first four forms teaching is not divided into separate subjects and all material is taught by one teacher.

Upper secondary education includes general education (four-year grammar schools as a preparation for the university), art and vocational education (between one and four years). For the time being, upper secondary education is not compulsory, and though the Government has been considering making it so, it reiterated such possibility in the last five years although in a 2011 report to the European Commission it has reiterated that this possibility will temporarily be postponed due to the economic crisis.⁶²

Higher education includes university studies (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate) in line with the Bologna process and professional studies lasting two to three years or one to two years, depending on the (specialist professional graduate studies). The enrollment requirements in higher education are determined by the tertiary education institutions themselves.⁶³

Adult education is conducted in the elementary and secondary education framework and it covers secondary vocational education, semi-skilled training, retraining, training and skill improvement. The program for secondary education for adults is determined by the educational institutions providing this type of education and it requires the approval of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.⁶⁴

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Pupils with special needs are able to learn in three settings: regular education institutions in inclusive settings, or in mainstream classes with special education groupings, or they can learn in special schools. Children attending special education institutions are taught a different curriculum accommodating the student's particular disability. Only few data are available on achievement in these schools and there are concerns regarding the way in which limited funding affects their functionality.⁶⁵

At the beginning of the 2012/2013 school year, there were 73 basic education institutions for children with developmental difficulties.⁶⁶ Official data on Roma children in special schools is not available. However, according to UNDP/WB/EC data seven percent of the Roma aged seven to fifteen interviewed in 2011 were or had been attending a special school.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_09_107_2081.html

⁶¹ The Act on Upbringing and Education in Elementary and High Schools (Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi), art. 12 (consolidated text, Official Gazette (Narodne novine – hereinafter: NN) No. 126, 16.11.2012), stipulates the maximum of 15 years of age “as a rule”, i.e., leaving a margin of appreciation, but it is generally interpreted and implemented as a strict limit. Therefore, in practice, primary education is no longer considered mandatory when a child turns 15.

⁶² In June 2007 the parliament adopted the National Program of Policies for Introduction of the Compulsory Secondary School Education (published in the Official Gazette – Narodne novine no. 71, 9 July 2007). ; http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/natreport11/croatia_en.pdf

⁶³ <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=5865&sec=2510>

⁶⁴ <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=5841&sec=2504>

⁶⁵ http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Croatia_2010.pdf

⁶⁶ http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2013/SI-1496.pdf

⁶⁷ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/154052340/Roma-education-in-comparative-perspective>



MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

National minorities have the right to education in their language and script, guaranteed by the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities and the Act on Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities⁶⁸. Such programs can be implemented at all educational levels. The programs defined by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport offer three models:

The NRIS provides for a shift in the strategic approach towards multicultural education in the sense that if until recently it was regarded as a separate program reserved for minorities⁶⁹, the government aims at an overall integrative approach provided by mainstream schooling and based on increased capacities of all teachers for multicultural socially inclusive teaching and the school curricula based on specifics of the local community (Objective 1).

Currently, the lack of access to a bilingual curriculum in preschool or primary school hinders compulsory school completion among Roma children. Roma children who do not speak Croatian as their first language and whose teachers are not trained in bilingual education or Romani are likely to have a poorer prognosis for successfully completing compulsory education since they cannot adequately access the curricular content.⁷⁰ In addition, in some circumstances the language problem can be exaggerated, to conceal prejudices on the side of the school or their staff or the alleged language barrier may be used by Roma pupils as a 'shield' against the demands of the education process.⁷¹

Teachers working with Roma children, both in preschool and elementary-school education, apart from the aforementioned requirement of knowledge of at least basics of the languages of the Roma children⁷², lack appropriate training on social and cultural differences. Although teachers learn about inclusive pedagogy as a part of the regular curriculum of the Teachers' Faculty, the focus of the subject are children with special needs, rather than ethnic and cultural minorities. The notion that training is necessary for educational work with Roma children, even though it takes place within the mainstream system, has not yet prevailed. Currently, the only institutional bridge between the children who do not speak Croatian and the teachers who do not speak Romani are the Roma teaching assistants. Their position as employees has been recently improved (in the form of receiving regular labor contracts), but their auxiliary role in the educational process and in linking schools with Roma communities, may not provide for significant change. A study carried out by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education in 2010 showed that teachers considered Roma teaching assistants not helpful or useless.⁷³

As a result of the absence of education programs for Roma similar to programs for other national minorities, Roma pupils are often placed in segregated classes established only for Roma allegedly on linguistic criteria (see ECtHR case law below). Out of 2,028 elementary school classes in Croatia which included Roma pupils at the beginning of the 2012/13 school

⁶⁸ <http://www.zakon.hr/z/318/>

⁶⁹ Although Roma did not benefit from it because it was envisaged for Czech, Italian, Serbian and Jewish minorities.

⁷⁰ Ivana Batarelo Kokić, Anton Vukelić, Maja Ljubić, *Mapping policies and practices for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity. Croatia country report* (working document) European Training Foundation (ETF), Bologna, January 2010, [http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/C12578310056925BC125772E002BD5AB/\\$file/NOTE85SBD6.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/C12578310056925BC125772E002BD5AB/$file/NOTE85SBD6.pdf), p. 47-48; Neven Hrvatić, "Odgoj i izobrazba Roma u Hrvatskoj" (Upbringing and education of Roma in Croatia), *Društvena istraživanja* no. 46-47, 2000, p. 280 (quotation translated by SD).

⁷¹ See footnote 24; Ivana Batarelo Kokić, Anton Vukelić, Maja Ljubić, *Mapping policies and practices for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity. Croatia country report* (working document) European Training Foundation (ETF), Bologna, January 2010, p.67

⁷² Ivana Batarelo Kokić, Anton Vukelić, Maja Ljubić, *Mapping policies and practices for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity*, p. 38.

⁷³ http://dokumenti.ncvvo.hr/Kvaliteta_obrazovanja/Romi/analiza_rezultata.pdf



year, 50 were Roma-only classes (two fewer than in the 2011/2012 school year).⁷⁴ The National Roma Inclusion Strategy for 2013–2020 sets “the elimination of potential segregation in schools” and the “abolishment of Roma-only classes” as two of the main goals and objectives by 2020.⁷⁵

Pursuant to the *Oršuš et al. vs. Croatia* judgment, the Act on Upbringing and Education in Primary and Secondary Schools, which entered into force on July 24, 2010, was amended (Article 43/1) to stipulate the schools’ duty to provide special assistance to children/students without sufficient command of the Croatian language. In addition, the Ordinance on the enrollment of children to primary school was replaced by an Ordinance on the Procedure for Establishing the Psychophysical Condition of a Child and of a Pupil and on the Composition of the Committee of Experts in May 2011. The new law establishes a panel of experts for each school to test all children before enrolling them into primary school with the purpose of assessing (among others) children’s knowledge of the Croatian language. The National Curriculum for elementary schools was also modified (July 30, 2010) to allow schools to adjust their curricula to the specific needs of their pupils, including minorities. According to the Croatian government’s action plan of December 16, 2010, the pupils’ abilities and progress would be assessed and monitored on the individual basis and “*teachers will be required to provide a monthly detailed report on the improvements of pupils in their knowledge of Croatian language.*” The progress would be monitored by an external expert team, including a representative of the Agency for Upbringing and Education (AZOO).

In the revised plan of implementation of the *Oršuš et al.*, judgment of April 7, 2011, the Government announced the amendments to the State Pedagogical Standard and the rules on the size of the school classes (number of pupils), which would enable smaller classes. According to the amended National Curriculum, a special program would be implemented for teaching the Croatian language in temporary classes. The pupils would attend Croatian lessons in the first few classes of the day followed by regular classes for the rest of the day. Pupils whose knowledge of Croatian is at a higher level, but who still require some help with their language skills, shall be given additional lessons of Croatian language (in accordance to article 433 of the Act on Upbringing and Education in Primary and Secondary Schools). Pupils included in this model of assistance shall attend their regular classes with a certain number of additional Croatian language lessons. The number of such additional lessons shall be determined individually for each pupil, depending on his/her specific needs. It is questionable however whether schools have the capacity and resources to properly implement the measures thus conceived.

SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS

In terms of social support for students in the total population, the state subsidizes 75 percent of the meals of all full-time students, tuition fees, the accommodation in student dorms and local transportation, while it provides tax relief for parents off every child studying full-time, free health insurance for full-time students and allowances for orphans or disadvantaged children as a result of their participation in the war.⁷⁶

In the preschool setting, the government committed to provide material support for Roma parents in terms of funding a share of the costs of preschool and pre-primary programs for children in integrated groups (the share of the kindergarten and pre-primary school fees paid by parents is entirely covered by the state in the case of Roma children).⁷⁷ The state also committed to raise awareness of the importance of preschool, to promote a multicultural

⁷⁴ http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9276_file2_decade-progress-report-hr.pdf p.7

⁷⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf p.47

⁷⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/natreport11/croatia_en.pdf

⁷⁷ http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9296_file14_croatian-decade-national-action-plan-2011-2012-pdf.pdf p.5



climate in institutions providing preschool education, and to encourage the enrollment of Roma children in primary education and train Roma teaching assistants.

Scholarships are provided for all students belonging to the Roma national minority as one of the measures of the Action Plan of the Decade for Roma 2005–2015. Full-time secondary school, university and post graduate students belonging to the Roma national minority qualify for scholarships.⁷⁸ Students in secondary and tertiary education who live far from the place of education receive a place in a dormitory. Roma students also have the possibility to benefit from financed preparation for entry exams at universities and, depending on their individual needs, assistance in studying can be provided. These measures are continued under the new National Strategy for Roma Inclusion.

Roma pupils in secondary education may receive a scholarship worth 670 EUR per year (or 67 EUR per month during the school year). 425 Roma secondary pupils received this scholarship in the 2011/2012 school year.⁷⁹ Scholarships of 1,335 EUR per year are also available for Roma students in post-secondary education under the condition that students request them and declare their Roma ethnicity. Twenty-nine Roma students received this scholarship in the 2011/2012 academic year.⁸⁰ For the purpose of receiving social support, children, pupils and students are identified as Roma not only on the basis of a declared ethnic affiliation, but also by recognition of traits such as the language spoken at home and other elements of ascribed ethnicity.

Following the ECtHR judgment from 2010 in Medimurje County, the program of the pre-primary school (including transport and meals) was provided for all Roma children in Medimurje for a year preceding elementary school (in 2010/11) by the Roma Education Fund, MoSES and County Office.⁸¹

PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

Increasing the level of participation of Roma in all levels of education but particularly in preschool education has been one of the government's goals ever since the adoption of its first National Program for Roma in 2003.

Table 6.

Children, by type of preschool education program and by sex, end of 2011/2012 school year

Founder	Total		In regular programs		In preschool institutions*		In shorter programs	
	All	Girls	All	Girls	All	Girls	All	Girls
Total	127 066	61 013	113 176	54 109	11 819	5 799	2 071	1 105
Republic of Croatia	2 465	1 182	2 296	1 093	150	78	19	11
Local government and self-government units	105 809	50 861	93 564	44 775	10 520	5 150	1 725	936
Other domestic legal entities and natural persons (private)	15 573	7 375	14 196	6 697	1 075	532	302	146
Religious communities	3 219	1 595	3 120	1 544	74	39	25	12

*The data refer to the preschool program implemented in the 2010/2011 school year.

Source: Državni zavod za statistiku, *First Releases*, No. 8.1.8, June 8, 2012.⁸²

⁷⁸ MoSES, <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=9062&sec=2601>

⁷⁹ http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9276_file2_decade-progress-report-hr.pdf

⁸⁰ http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9276_file2_decade-progress-report-hr.pdf

⁸¹ Povjerenstvo za praćenje provedbe Nacionalnog programa za Rome, *Izvjешće o provođenju Nacionalnog programa za Rome za 2010. i 2011. godinu. Nacrt* (Report on Implementation of the National Program for Roma (draft)), p. 66.

⁸² http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-08_01_2012.htm



The number of Roma children included in *preschool* integrated groups (which Roma attend together with other children) for whom the parental share in the expenses was covered from public funds grew between 2009 and 2011 from 113 to 204, but in the last year (2012) dropped to 182.

Apart from these programs especially meant to provide integrated preschool upbringing and education, Roma children attended regular kindergartens and pre-primary school programs. In the period from 2006/07 to 2012/13, the total number of Roma children included both in the preschool program (mainly in kindergartens) and in the pre-primary school varied between 520 and 824, without a clear upward or downward trend.⁸³ The percentage of Roma children in the total number of children in preschool upbringing and education was 0.55 percent in 2009/10, 0.79 percent in 2010/11 and 0.61 percent in 2011/12. According to the 2011 Census, the share of Roma children aged zero to four in the total population was 16 percent and considering that preschool covers the zero to six age-group, it can be concluded that Roma children are still highly underrepresented in preschool programs. This is also consistent with the UNDP/WB/ EC research findings that the preschool enrollment rate (children from ages three to six) was only 21 percent among Roma as opposed to 45 percent among non-Roma living nearby.⁸⁴ In addition to that based on the same report, 47 percent of six-year-old Roma children not attending any kind of institutional education (seven percent in primary school; 47 percent if preschool education), while they should be either in the last year of preschool education or the first year of primary school.⁸⁵ Moreover the difference between group affiliation and average time spent in preschool is the highest in Croatia from the region: Roma with preschool experience attended preschool on average 1.7 years, in comparison to non-Roma with preschool experience who attended on average 2.6 years.

A clear positive, upward trend is visible in the number of Roma pupils enrolled in *primary education*. During the same period (from 2006/07 to 2012/13) the number of Roma pupils grew steadily by 72 percent, from 3,010 to 5,173. The success is even greater when compared with the number of 1,500 Roma pupils in elementary schools in the year 2002/03, when the National Program for Roma was launched. Owing to the successful enrollment, the gap in the gross enrollment rate in compulsory education in the seven to fifteen age group between Roma and non-Roma is reduced to a relatively small difference (87 percent to 93 percent).⁸⁶

However, the inclusion of Roma pupils in the extended day program at school has not shown a consistent progress. In the period from 2006 to 2013 it has oscillated around 350 pupils, with the minimum of 183 in the school year 2007/08 and the maximum of 563 at the end of the 2009/10 school year.

Both the preschool programs and the extended day programs are crucial for overcoming the reportedly main obstacle to the full inclusion of Roma pupils in the mainstream education system.. As a result of implementing the amended Article 43(1) of the Act on Upbringing and Education in Primary and Secondary Schools, special assistance in learning the Croatian language has been provided to 865 elementary school pupils of Roma origin in the 2010/11

⁸³The source of the data are the regular biennial reports on implementation of the measures of the Decade for Roma Action Plan published at the MoSES website (<http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=3156>). The most recent report, covering 2011 and 2012, was released at the end of January 2013. The detailed monitoring is made possible by the electronic database maintained by MoSES. The complete numerical data on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Decade for Roma are presented in the Annex.

⁸⁴ Bruggemann, C. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme..

⁸⁵ Bruggemann, C. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

⁸⁶ Regional Roma survey, *ibid.*



school year (342 of whom are from Medimurje County). In the 2011/12 school year such assistance was offered to 700 pupils.⁸⁷

Between 2006 and 2013, the number of Roma students enrolled in *secondary education* almost tripled from 172 in the 2006/07 academic year to 480 at the beginning of 2012/13. Similarly, the number of Roma students enrolled in *universities* between 2006 and 2012 has tripled, but the total number remains very small (10 and 29 students respectively). Literacy programs for *adults* have included around 300 persons annually. The “first vocation” training program included a very small number of Roma beneficiaries.

The average number of years spent in education has increased between generations by more than 50 percent. While the Roma population in the 25–64 age group spent 4.5 years in education, the younger generation (16–24) spent 6.8 years. Admittedly, it is still less than two thirds of the education time of the corresponding section of the non-Roma population (10.8 years).

As a result, there is a shift in the highest level of education attained between generations. In the older generations (25–64), 40 percent of the Roma had no formal education, 16 percent completed the compulsory elementary school and only 9 percent completed upper secondary education (grammar school). In the younger generation (16–24), the proportion of those without formal education has dropped to 17 percent, 28 percent having completed elementary education and 20 percent (more than double) completed upper secondary education.⁸⁸

According to MoSES data, the number of Roma pupils who did not finish elementary school has grown from 136 in 2008/09 to 189 in 2012/13. The number of those who repeat the same school year has also increased from 565 to 643 between 2008/09 and 2010/11, after which it dropped to 431 at the start of the 2011/12. The limited efficiency of primary schooling of Roma is manifest in the low rate of enrollment in the lower secondary schools: despite the constant growth, it encompasses less than 10 percent of Roma pupils of the primary schools.

Research from 2009 shows that, contrary to common belief and stereotypes, Roma parents recognize the importance of formal education and want their children to attend school and complete compulsory education even if they themselves have not done so.⁸⁹

These data should however be used with caution as it is possible that they do not include all Roma pupils and students. Roma pupils/students who are well integrated in the regular education process are not specially reported on. No alternative sources of information, either through independent monitoring and reporting, or through research are available.

Data from the 2011 Regional Roma survey are illustrative of the discrepancy of dropout rates of Roma (87 percent) when compared to their non-Roma neighbors (31 percent) in the 18–22 age group.⁹⁰ The national dropout rate (in the 18–24 age group) was 4.1 percent in 2011 and 4.2 percent in 2012.⁹¹

Notwithstanding the positive developments, the implementation of the programs and strategies are lagging behind partly due to the inability to meet the envisaged deadlines and insufficient resources (human, financial, infrastructural).

⁸⁷ http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9276_file2_decade-progress-report-hr.pdf

⁸⁸ Bruggemann, C. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

⁸⁹ Branka Baranović, “Život Romkinja u Hrvatskoj s naglaskom na pristup obrazovanju (izvještaj o rezultatima istraživanja)” (Life of Roma women in Croatia, with the emphasis on the access to education (a research report)), Udruga žena Romkinja “Bolja budućnost”, Zagreb 2009 www.ijf.hr/socijalna_ukljucenost/hr/rodna-ravnopravnost, p. 95.

⁹⁰ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/154052340/Roma-education-in-comparative-perspective>

⁹¹ http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_ifse_14&lang=en



The importance of preschool and pre-primary programs (including the extended day- or after-school programs in elementary school) is widely recognized by education specialists and reiterated in all Roma-related Croatian strategies. However, according to the report on the implementation of the National Program for Roma, the funds necessary for the full inclusion of Roma children in Međimurje (concentrated as a response to the ECtHR verdict in the *Oršuš et al. vs. Croatia* case) exhausted the budget for preschool programs meaning they could not be fully implemented in the rest of the country.⁹²

The preschool programs be evaluated by an independent agency in 2011⁹³ For the time being, there are only preliminary insights by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCVVO) obtained on a non-representative sample suggesting that Roma pupils of elementary schools are slightly more successful if they had previously attended a preschool program in a kindergarten or a pre-primary school.^{94 95}

The kindergarten teachers are not systematically trained for the education of children from multiple cultural backgrounds, nor are they educated to teach Croatian as a second language. Kindertgartens do not tend to employ Roma teaching assistants either.

All this indicates that there are a number of issues that remain even after a relatively successful implementation of the policies endorsed through the National Program for Roma and the Decade for Roma Action Plan. Roma pupils and students still have difficulties in fitting into the system and face various kinds of discrimination.

PROGRESS AND REMAINING WEAKNESSES IN EDUCATION FOR ROMA

Progress:

- Establishment of electronic database on school participation of Roma, however the collection of data is not enough comprehensive since there is no clear guideline about the precise procedure of ethnicity based data collection;
- Increased enrollment in primary school: more young Roma finish compulsory school and secondary education when compared to their parents;
- Provision of scholarship for Roma students at primary and secondary level;
- Political commitment to end segregation of Roma children expressed in official documents;
- Introduction of obligatory preschool education.

Weaknesses:

- Underrepresentation of Roma children in mainstream preschool persists compared with mainstream pupils;
- Persistence of ethnically segregated classes at preschool and primary school level;
- Lack of teacher training in multiculturalism and diversity;
- Low completion rates of compulsory school compared with mainstream pupils.

⁹² *Izvyješće o provođenju Nacionalnog programa za Rome za 2010. i 2011. godinu. Nacrt* (Report on Implementation of the National Program for Roma (draft)), *loc. cit.* MoSES intended to find a solution through the IPA project of integration of disadvantaged groups into the regular education system.

⁹³ Nacionalni centar za vanjsko vrednovanje obrazovanja (the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education – NCVVO).

⁹⁴ Their average marks were 2.60; the average marks of pupils who did not attend preschool programs or pre-primary school were 2.43. *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁹⁵ 24 elementary schools selected by MoSES, in eight counties. The sample included 1993 pupils from the 4th and 6th forms, 1807 parents, and 715 teachers. NCVVO, “Analiza rezultata istraživanja provedenog u sklopu projekta ‘Pristupačnije i kvalitetnije obrazovanje roma u Republici Hrvatskoj’” (August 2010), http://dokumenti.ncvvo.hr/Kvaliteta_obrazovanja/Romi/analiza_rezultata.pdf.



GOVERNMENT AND DONOR COMMITMENTS

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Overall legal framework

The Republic of Croatia is a signatory party and has ratified all core international minority and human rights laws under the remit of the United Nations and Council of Europe. At the national level, ethnic minorities are protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia which guarantees equality of all citizens (art. 14) and particularly protects national minorities (art. 3 and 15). The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities guarantees the representation of minorities in representative bodies of all levels, from municipal councils to the national Parliament (Sabor), the proportional representation in public administration and establishes the Councils of National Minorities. The Act on the Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities guarantees the use of the language and script of a national minority on the level of local or regional authorities if the share of the minority in question exceeds one third of the inhabitants. The Act on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities provides for the possibility of children/pupils who are members of a national minority to be educated in their first language, partly or completely, while also learning the Croatian language. The Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination, direct or indirect, in all areas of life including education. There are also provisions against discrimination in other acts of legislation, such as the Labor Act, the Criminal Code and the Act on Small Offences.

Case law

In 2012 a Croatian court ruled for the first time on the newly adopted Anti-discrimination Act in a case of discrimination against Roma in employment and decided in favor of the plaintiffs.⁹⁶

*The ECtHR judgment: Oršuš et al. vs. Croatia*⁹⁷

In 2003 15 Northern Croatian Roma brought a case against Croatia before the European Court of Human Rights arguing that they had been placed in segregated classes when they were pupils in primary school. The applicants alleged that this was a discriminatory practice (art. 14) violating their right to education (art. 2 of Protocol no. 1) and their right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (art. 3). Additionally, the applicants alleged that the excessive length of the national proceedings amounted to a violation of their right to a fair hearing within a reasonable time (art. 6 para. 1 of ECHR).

In 2008 the Strasbourg Court found no violation of the right to education (alone or in conjunction with the right to non-discrimination) but did find a violation of the right to a fair hearing within a reasonable time. The plaintiffs lodged an appeal and in 2010 the Court held by nine votes to eight that the applicants had been indirectly discriminated against by being placed in separated classes insofar as the actions of the authorities could not be objectively justified and the means to achieve the goal appeared inappropriate. The Court duly noted that the reason provided by the Government for segregating the Roma children (Croatian language deficiency) cannot be regarded as objective justification since the law did not provide for

⁹⁶ Jursić, D. (2012) 'Ne možete kod mene na praksu jer ste Ciganke!', Večernji list, 18 April 2012, available at: www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/ne-mozete-kod-mene-praksu-jer-ste-ciganke-clanak-399783.

⁹⁷ ECtHR, Case of ORŠUŠ AND OTHERS v. CROATIA, application no. 15766/03, judgement of 16 March 2010, available at: [http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-97689#{"itemid":\["001-97689"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-97689#{)



separate classes for children with limited language proficiency and especially given that the curriculum for the special Roma class did not address this deficiency nor had the Government taken any steps to put safeguards in place and to monitor the children's progress. In addition, the Roma children were placed in separate classes after a psycho-psychical test which did not assess the pupil's linguistic abilities. Taking into account the specific situation of the Roma as a disadvantaged and vulnerable minority, the Court also considered that the parents of the children could not be held responsible for not requiring the transfer of the children to mixed classes especially since no waiver of the right not to be discriminated against can be accepted.

MEASURES TARGETING ROMA

The government has adopted and implemented policies for improvement of the opportunities for the Roma minority and its living conditions (in employment, housing, education, etc.).⁹⁸ Hate crimes against Roma (and other minorities) are legally recognized as aggravating circumstances.

The National Program for Roma (NPR) was adopted in 2003 by the Government of the Republic of Croatia. It defined policies for improving the socio-economic situation of Roma and for their integration into social and political life. The main priorities of the Program related to the preservation of the traditional Roma culture, legal status issues, combating discrimination and providing legal aid, upbringing and education, health protection, employment, social welfare, protection of the family, motherhood and youth as well as town and country planning. The implementation of the NPR was monitored by a Monitoring Commission appointed by the government. Originally, the Commission was required to report to the government every year, but later reports have covered periods of two or three years.⁹⁹

In March 2005 Croatia joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 and adopted its Action Plan (DRAP). The plan covered four fields: education, health, employment and housing. Its implementation was monitored by a working group appointed by the Government. The working group reports regularly to the NPR Monitoring Commission.¹⁰⁰ The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports regularly published the reports relevant for the education of Roma for two-year periods.¹⁰¹

The NPR and the Decade action plan (DRAP) have been replaced by the National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS) from 2013 to 2020 adopted by the Conclusion of the Government from 29 November 2012 and therefore they are no longer implemented.¹⁰² Similarly, the NRIS covers the fields of education, employment, healthcare, welfare protection, housing, culture and social life, discrimination, legal status and data collection. Its implementation is monitored by a new commission, while the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities will be the focal point of coordination and collection of information. The NRIS Action Plan was adopted in April 2013.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ For more information see the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for 2013-2020, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf, pp.19-25

⁹⁹ The last official report was submitted for the years 2007-2009; a draft report has been prepared for the period 2010-2011. See the reports page of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities: http://www.uljppnm.vlada.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23&Itemid=5.

¹⁰⁰ The relevant national programs (not including the NSIR) are available at the site of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, http://www.uljppnm.vlada.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113&Itemid=83. The final text of the NSIR has not been officially published yet.

¹⁰¹ The most recent reports cover the years 2011 and 2012 (including the beginning of the school-year 2012/2013). They are available at <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=3156>.

¹⁰² NRIS preamble.

¹⁰³ See the 'evolutionary' comparison of the objectives of the three strategic documents regarding education, in the Annex below.



GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

The Government of the Republic of Croatia committed through each of its strategic documents relating to Roma to advance equality and reduce the disadvantages faced by Roma not only in education, but in most areas of life. From 2003 in its NPR and 2005 in its DRAP to 2012 in the NRIS, the government has gradually taken a more ambitious stance towards Roma inclusion, from the mere inclusion in education to achieving equality between Roma and non-Roma in their access to quality education.

Despite the formal commitment, the implementation of these strategies has been received with criticism. Particularly, the apparently symbolic involvement of Roma in the implementation and monitoring processes, the disproportional allocation of budget and human resources and the lack of crucial measures such as those ensuring desegregation in educational settings, among others, raised serious questions as to the extent to which the NPR could contribute to the improvement of the situation of the Roma in Croatia.¹⁰⁴

Although the recently adopted NRIS goes a step further in terms of goals and objectives, its impact on the ground is still not yet to be seen. In particular, noting that despite the envisaged anti-discrimination measures, it contains no anti-Gypsyism component to counteract the general hostile environment towards Roma, nor does its action plan contain a clear budget allocation.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in 2011, the Ombudsperson for Children reported that a closer coordination between the national, regional and local authorities with institutions of the social welfare system is needed in order to uphold the implementation of compulsory primary education among Roma children.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, a positive change of position can be noted in where ethnic segregation is concerned. The NPR provided for the creation of separate classes for Roma children who did not have sufficient command of Croatian and/or did not attend preschool. That could be seen as problematic in practice because, although not constituting a legal basis, it could create the impression that ethnic segregation is allowed and/or desirable.¹⁰⁷ The current NRIS, on the other hand, establishes the ambitious goal of desegregating all Roma-only classes by 2020 while recognizing Roma children as a particularly vulnerable group.

In addition, other core legislative acts contain provisions that might be problematic. For instance, the Act on upbringing and education in primary and secondary schools includes an ambiguous provision which could be interpreted as an approval of a reduced curriculum: “While attending preparatory education [provided as a support in learning Croatian language], a pupil may, to a reduced extent, attend regular classes in the school where they are enrolled; this relates to the classes where a poorer knowledge of Croatian language does not pose a major obstacle.”¹⁰⁸

The budget allocated by the government for the implementation of the National Program for Roma and of the Decade for Roma Inclusion Action Plan increased from EUR 122,000 in

¹⁰⁴ See for more information http://www.undp.hr/upload/file/211/105998/FILENAME/monitoring_framework_-_complete_document.pdf and http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9319_file11_decadewatch--complete-english.pdf

¹⁰⁵ See for instance the case of Roma children being prevented to enter a school; THE NRIS specifically states that the budget for each measure will be given in the action plans.

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_hr_strategy_annex_en.pdf and

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Izvješće o radu pravobraniteljice za djecu za 2011. (Report of the Ombudswoman for Children, 2011), pp. 111-112.

¹⁰⁷ Government of the Republic of Croatia, *The National Program for the Roma*, Zagreb, October 2003, p. 37 (emphasized by SD).

¹⁰⁸ Art. 43, § 7 (emphasized by author) – the very same article whose § 1 was amended because of the ECtHR judgment in the Oršuš case.



2004 to nearly EUR 3,000,000 in 2012 and EUR 5,287,400 if including EU funds. The sums do not include the budget for other strategies, nor and neither the funds allocated by the local/regional self-governments. Between 2013 and 2015, the government allocated about EUR 6,000,000 for the implementation of the Action Plan of the NRIS.¹⁰⁹

Roma-related projects are mainly supported by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES): from 2009 to 2011 the ministry supported 39 such projects, with the total amount of 1.4 million HRK (a little less than 190,000 EUR). Most of the projects (36) were implemented by Roma organizations and focused on various activities. There were no partnership projects between Roma NGOs and the Ministry. The Ministry of Health and Social Care supported a project in partnership with a Roma organization (Udruga žena Romkinja “Bolja budućnost”) raising awareness among Roma women of their rights, and three other projects; the amount was small (less than 18,000 EUR). The Ministry of Justice supported three projects dedicated to the implementation of the Free Legal Aid Act. The Ministry of the Interior cooperates with local Roma organizations in crime prevention, prevention of discrimination and hate speech and prevention of family violence, among others. There are other ministries which support projects related to Roma (such as employment, housing), but without the involvement of Roma NGOs.¹¹⁰

Suggestions on necessary improvements:

- Building and improvement of capacities for all-inclusive preschool upbringing and education for Roma children. This includes adequate space and equipment as well as properly educated, trained, and appropriately stimulated and motivated educators, teachers, and professional staff;
- Building and improvement of capacities for extended day- or after-school-programs for all Roma pupils in elementary schools who need additional education in Croatian language, not at the expense of their full attendance of the regular educational programs;
- Further development of the monitoring and data-collecting system and databases, which should be upgraded from output-oriented to results-oriented;
- Inclusion of the social welfare institutions and developing a system of shared responsibility between them and the educational system to ensure the full compliance with the legal provisions on mandatory primary education. Furthermore, on the basis of improved insights into the causes of dropout and relatively unsuccessful studying in the elementary school, develop additional measures of social support to pupils and families;
- Systematic and continuous education of educators in Romani language and culture. This includes introduction of adequate subjects in the curricula of the institutions for education of teachers (primarily at the Teachers’ Faculty / Učiteljski fakultet) and linking them with the newly introduced courses at the Faculty of Liberal Arts (Filozofski fakultet). Within this measure, the existing Roma teaching assistants could be offered a possibility to upgrade their knowledge and qualifications;

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.pgfh.org/index.php/en/announcements/events/188-document-use-of-eu-funds-for-roma-inclusion-in-croatia-lessons-learned-and-future-perspectives-for-period-2014-2020>

¹¹⁰ “Analiza i smjernice za osnaživanje romskog civilnog sektora u Republici Hrvatskoj”, p. 13 ff.



- Education in inclusive inter-cultural education for all educators working in the environments with significant presence of ethnic minorities, regardless of whether they work with minority children/pupils directly, aimed at educating the majority to accept minorities as equals, to understand differences, and to combat prejudices;
- Development of the curricula, programs, literature, textbooks and other prerequisites for the model of bilingual education for Roma children
- Nevertheless, a positive change of position can be noted related to ethnic segregation. The National Program For Roma provided for the creation of separate classes for Roma children who did not have sufficient command of Croatian and/or did not attend preschool which could be seen as problematic in practice because, although not constituting legal basis, it could create the impression that ethnic segregation is allowed and/or desirable.¹¹¹ The current NRIS on the other hand establishes the ambitious goal of desegregating all Roma-only classes by 2020 while recognizing Roma children as a particularly vulnerable group.
- In addition, other core legislative acts contain provisions that might be problematic. For instance, the Act on upbringing and education in primary and secondary schools includes an ambiguous provision which could be interpreted as an approval of a reduced curriculum: “While attending preparatory education [provided as a support in learning Croatian language], a pupil may, to a reduced extent, attend regular classes in the school where they are enrolled; this relates to the classes where a poorer knowledge of Croatian language does not pose a major obstacle.”¹¹²

USE OF EU PRE-ACCESSION FUNDS FOR EDUCATION OF ROMA

The majority of EU funds financing projects on Roma inclusion were allocated through the IPA program (51 percent), PHARE 2006 (33 percent) and PHARE 2005 (14 percent). Most of the IPA-funded projects concerned education (42.5 percent), housing (40 percent) and employment (10 percent) and were directed towards Roma in Medjmurje (67 percent).¹¹³

Between the period of 2000–2004 the EU has dispersed around 178 million EUR to Croatia through the CARDS program (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization) and 167 million EUR through the PHARE program.¹¹⁴ About 3.8 million EUR were allocated to projects targeting over 4,000 Roma through the PHARE project in 2005 and 2006.¹¹⁵

Between 2007 and 2012 Croatia has benefited from 11.5 billion EUR financial assistance under EU’s IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance), of which approx. 95 million EUR was dispersed to strengthen human resources through education and training and to fight exclusion through the Human Resources Development component. About 8.5 million EUR

¹¹¹ Government of the Republic of Croatia, *The National Program for the Roma*, Zagreb, October 2003, p. 37 (emphasized by SD).

¹¹² Art. 43, § 7 (emphasized by author) – the very same article whose § 1 was amended because of the ECtHR judgment in the Oršuš case.

¹¹³ <http://www.pgfh.org/index.php/en/announcements/events/188-document-use-of-eu-funds-for-roma-inclusion-in-croatia-lessons-learned-and-future-perspectives-for-period-2014-2020>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.delhrv.ec.europa.eu/?lang=en&content=4444>
<http://www.delhrv.ec.europa.eu/?lang=en&content=1285>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.pgfh.org/index.php/en/announcements/events/188-document-use-of-eu-funds-for-roma-inclusion-in-croatia-lessons-learned-and-future-perspectives-for-period-2014-2020>



was spent on Roma inclusion projects reaching over 3,000 Roma beneficiaries (including Roma children).¹¹⁶

Projects targeting Roma children and youth were also financed through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights and Youth in Action (127,308 EUR).¹¹⁷

The Council of the European Union approved the 2013 budget of the structural funds for Croatia at 449.4 million EUR in commitments and 149.8 million EUR in payments.¹¹⁸

REF IN CROATIA

SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Between 2005 and 2012 REF committed 772,955 EUR for projects in Croatia (3 percent of the total committed funds) – see Table 5.¹¹⁹

Table 5.

Project grants commitments in Croatia, by year (in EUR)						
2006	2007	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
551,250	34,440	62,097	70,128	28,573	71,702	818,190

The impact is relevant on two levels: (1) infrastructure, i.e., building and improving institutional basis (including space, equipment and human resources) for inclusion of Roma children and pupils in preschool and school programs including the extended day- and after-school activities necessary to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma in language and cultural capacities, as well as in general living conditions; (2) knowledge, meaning primarily research and deeper understanding of all conditions which determine different circumstances of living, potentials, and attitudes, which in turn determines the chances of young Roma to make optimal use of education as a tool of overcoming the existing disadvantages.

The project “Improvement of access and quality of Roma education in Croatia” aimed at providing quality preschool education for Roma children integrated in educational groups with non-Roma children in a number of places, thereby increasing their chances for successful integration in the next step – primary education. The policy of covering from the state budget the share of expenses otherwise covered by parents was eventually scaled up and adopted as a policy for all Roma children attending preschool programs. Furthermore, the project introduced monitoring and assessment of performance of participants based on research data, as well as recording a number of relevant data in the special database on the education of Roma, run by the MoSES and used for monitoring of implementation of DRAP. Additionally, one of its most important contributions was the research carried out by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education, which broadened the view of the problems Roma face in their everyday life, as mirrored in the school performance of Roma children. It detected the attitudes and real roles of all stakeholders – pupils, parents, teachers (including their opinions and experiences with the Roma teaching assistants), and schools themselves.

¹¹⁶ <http://www.pgfh.org/index.php/en/announcements/events/188-document-use-of-eu-funds-for-roma-inclusion-in-croatia-lessons-learned-and-future-perspectives-for-period-2014-2020>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.pgfh.org/index.php/en/announcements/events/188-document-use-of-eu-funds-for-roma-inclusion-in-croatia-lessons-learned-and-future-perspectives-for-period-2014-2020>

¹¹⁸ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/137628.pdf

¹¹⁹ REF Annual Report 2012



Other REF- funded projects in Croatia focused on improving access of Roma children in preschool and research on their linguistic and cultural capacities of Roma children but also research on the situation of Roma women with an emphasis on their access to education.

Roma university students in Croatia have also benefited from the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP). This scheme has awarded 12 scholarships since 2006/07, including three in 2011/12, two in 2012/13.¹²⁰

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE REF ACTIVITIES

Project funding:

- Implementing early childhood development programs: Increasing the number of Roma enrolled in mainstream kindergartens through supporting the implementation of state policies which is covering the parental share of Roma in preschool;
- Combating early school leaving from primary education: Decreasing the education gap between Roma and non-Roma through school afterschool and mentoring programs;
- Increasing the rate of Roma students completing secondary school and enrolling into universities (Establish the Romaversitas program in Croatia through strategic partnership with a local/national organization);
- Croatia is lacking professional and experienced Roma and also non-Roma civil organizations, therefore capacity building and networking between the organizations would be necessary.

REF research and policy analysis priorities

- Evaluation of the preschool education of Roma in terms of access and quality together with the external evaluation of preschool education in Medjimurje County
- Study on compulsory school completion and the extent of absenteeism;
- Advocating for desegregation of education and for full inclusion of Roma children into mainstream educational system.

REF Scholarship Programs

The Croatian Government ensures higher amount of stipends and therefore REF/SP does not have scholars from Croatia.

The Croatian government ensures a higher amount of stipends for higher education Roma students and therefore the REF Scholarship Program had very few scholarship beneficiaries. Roma university students in Croatia have benefited from the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) and the Roma International Scholar Program (RISP). These schemes awarded 18 scholarships since 2006/07, including three in 2011/12;2 in 2012/13 and none in 2013/14.¹²¹

Expected results of REF activities

Based on the identification of REF's strategic priorities, results of REF activities should be visible in the next five years on the following levels:

Legal, financial and administrative changes:

¹²⁰ REF's 2012 Annual Report, p. 49, <http://ref.rmusp.org/news/ref/news-and-events/ref-annual-report-2012-out>

¹²¹ REF's 2012 Annual Report, p. 49, <http://ref.rmusp.org/news/ref/news-and-events/ref-annual-report-2012-out>



- Rulebook/Strategic Plan on Desegregation adopted by the Ministry of Education, according to the Specific objective 4 of the National Strategy for Roma Integration 2014–2020

Key education indicators:

- Increased enrollment rate of Roma in integrated preschool education
- Increased completion rate of Roma in primary education
- Increased completion rate of Roma in secondary education
- Increase completion rate of Roma in higher education

Social cohesion

- REF interventions will contribute to the decrease of isolation of Roma communities by promoting desegregation and by influencing the success rate in education of Roma pupils;
- By supporting activities of Roma and non-Roma civil society organizations REF will increase chances for Roma participation in decision making on the local, regional and national level.

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Annex 1: Key education indicators

Table A1. National education indicators

Note: Empty cells in the table below indicate that the corresponding data are unavailable.

	INDICATOR (%)	ROMA		GENERAL POPULATION
		Official data	Non official data ¹²²	Official data
1	Use of early care and education services (ages 0-3)	n/a		24,171 ¹²³
2	Enrolment in pre-primary education (ISCED 0)	811	21%	127,066 (61%)
3	Enrolment in first four years of primary education (ISCED 1)	n/a		39,070 ¹²⁴
4	School-aged children in school (ISCED 1 and 2)	5,173		351,281 ¹²⁵
5	Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the first cycle of compulsory education	n/a		0.26% ¹²⁶
6	Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the second cycle of compulsory education	n/a		0.78% ¹²⁷
7	Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the third cycle of compulsory education (if applicable)	n/a		
8	Pupils in compulsory education (ISCED 1 and 2) attending special schools and classes	n/a		2,021 ¹²⁸

¹²² Bruggemann, C. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

¹²³ DZS (Croatian Bureau of Statistics), http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-08_01_2012.htm

¹²⁴ DZS, http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-02_01_2012.htm

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Calculated from the DZS data. This is only the percentage of the 1st cycle; the percentage of the total is 0.12%.

¹²⁷ Calculated from the DZS data. This is only the percentage of the 2nd cycle; the percentage of the total is 0.42%.

¹²⁸ DZS, http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-02_01_2012.htm



	INDICATOR (%)	ROMA		GENERAL POPULATION
9	Pupils completing compulsory education in terminal lower secondary programs (ISCED 2C)	n/a	49%	49,586 ¹²⁹
10	Graduates of compulsory education enrolling in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	480		49,926 ¹³⁰
11	Enrolment in upper secondary technical or vocational education (ISCED 3C) not providing access to tertiary education	n/a		13,314
12	Completion of upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	378	18%	32,359 ¹³¹
13	Enrolment in post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	n/a		
14	Completion of post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	n/a		
15	Enrolment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	29		152,857 ¹³²
16	Completion of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	n/a		36,488 ¹³³

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ DZS, http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-03_01_2012.htm

¹³¹ “Several countries report percentages well above the European average: in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, about nine out of ten people between the ages of 20 and 24 hold at least an upper secondary qualification. *The highest level is found in Croatia, where the figure is over 95 % for this age group.*” – EACEA P9 Eurydice & Eurostat, *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012 – Final Report*, http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice/Key%20Data%20on%20Education%202012%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf, p. 171.

¹³² DZS *First Release* no. 8.1.7, 19 October 2012 http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-07_01_2012.htm

¹³³ DZS *First Release* no. 8.1.6, 28 September 2012 http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/08-01-06_01_2012.htm

Annex 2: Administration of public education

Table A2. Administration of public education¹³⁴

	Function	Responsible Organs by Level of Education			
		Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary
1	<i>Establishes and closes institutions</i>	local and regional authorities (municipalities, cities, counties), private entities, religious communities, the state	local and regional authorities (municipalities, cities, counties), private entities, religious communities, the state	local and regional authorities (municipalities, cities, counties), private entities (natural and legal) the state	regional authorities (counties), private entities (natural and legal) the state
2	<i>Funds institutions</i>	the founder + parental contribution	the founder + parental contribution	state budget, local and regional budgets private founders parents' participation for particular services and activities	state budget, local and regional budgets private founders parents' participation for particular services and activities
3	<i>Decides on admissions</i>	kindergarten	kindergarten	school	school
4	<i>Sets curriculum</i>	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES) (with ministries of health and welfare)	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES) (with ministries of health and welfare)	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

¹³⁴ see also: *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012 – Final Report* http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice/Key%20Data%20on%20Education%202012%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf

	Function	Responsible Organs by Level of Education			
		Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary
5	<i>Appoints teachers to institutions</i>	kindergarten – governing council	kindergarten – governing council	school (principal, with the consent of the schoolboard)	school (principal, with the consent of the schoolboard)
6	<i>Assesses institutional performance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legality: MoSES - general: educational inspection - educational and pedagogical: AZOO - health, social issues, sanitation – respective ministries and/or inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legality: MoSES - general: educational inspection - educational and pedagogical: AZOO - health, social issues, sanitation – respective ministries and/or inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legality: MoSES - general: educational inspection - educational and pedagogical: AZOO - health, social issues, sanitation – respective ministries and/or inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legality: MoSES - general: educational inspection - educational and pedagogical: AZOO - health, social issues, sanitation – respective ministries and/or inspections
7	<i>Assesses pupil performance</i>	n/a	n/a	teachers	teachers
8	<i>Assesses teacher performance</i>	Agency for Upbringing and Education*	Agency for Upbringing and Education	Agency for Upbringing and Education	Agency for Upbringing and Education
9	<i>Assesses director performance</i>	founder and kindergarten governing council	founder and kindergarten governing council	school board, educational inspection	school board, educational inspection
10	<i>Establishes and closes special schools</i>	the same as for other institutions (programmes for children with difficulties are implemented in ‘regular’ institutions)	the same as for other institutions (programmes for children with difficulties are implemented in ‘regular’ institutions)	the same as for other institutions (programmes for children with difficulties are implemented in ‘regular’ institutions)	

* This is the accurate translation of its original name in Croatian (Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje); officially, the Agency uses a different English name: “Education and Teacher Training Agency”)



	Function	Responsible Organs by Level of Education			
		Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary
11	<i>Funds special schools</i>	national budget	national budget	national budget	national budget
12	<i>Decides on special school admissions</i>			the expert commission which checks the psycho-physical condition of all pupils before admission to primary school*	
13	<i>Sets special education curriculum</i>	minister of education national pedagogical standard	minister of education national pedagogical standard	minister of education national pedagogical standard	

Annex 3: Student Performance on International Assessments

Table A3. Results of PISA 2009

Area	2006	2009	2012	OECD 2012	Difference Slovakia – OECD average (2012)
	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	
Mathematics	467	460	471	494	-23
Reading	477	476	485	496	-11
Science	493	486	491	501	-10

* There are no special schools for pupils with mental difficulties; some primary schools form special classes (Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi – The Act on upbringing and education in the primary and secondary school, *Official Gazette* Nos. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, consolidated text, articles 20, 65)



Table A4. Results of TIMSS 2011

Area	2011	Scale average (2011)	Difference Slovakia – scale average (2011)
	Mean score		
Mathematics	490	500	-10
Science	516	500	+16

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Centre;



Annex 4. Census Results

Table A5. Population structure by ethnicity (2011 census)

Ethnic groups	Absolute size	Relative size (percent)
Croatians	3,874,321	90.42%
Serbians	186,633	4.36%
Bosnians	31,479	0.73%
Italians	17,807	0.42%
Albanians	17,513	0.41%
Roma*	16,975	0.40%
Hungarians	14,048	0.33%
Slovenians	10,517	0.25%
Czechs	9,641	0.22%
Unknown	8,877	0.21%
Muslims	7,558	0.18%
Slovaks	4,753	0.11%
Montenegrins	4,517	0.11%
Macedonians	4,138	0.10%
Germans	2,965	0.07%
Orthodox	2,560	0.06%
Bosnians	2,059	0.05%
Ruthenians	1,936	0.05%
Ukrainians	1,878	0.04%
Russians	1,279	0.03%
Istrians	25,491	0.59%
Not declared	26,763	0.62%
Not classified	731	0.02%

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics (DZS)

* estimated real population: ~40,000 (0.93%)



Annex 5. Projects Financed with EU Funds

Table A6: Relevant Projects Financed with EU Funds

Project title	Beneficiary	Eligible value (EUR)
A New Tomorrow for the Roma Community (<i>Novo sutra za romsku zajednicu</i>)	Social Welfare Centre	IPA : 84,215.75 Total: 117,289.00
Roma in the Focus	ZaMirNET	IPA : 74,126.43 Total: 93,985.59
Project for Support to Roma – Phase III: Infrastructure improvements for two Roma settlements: Orehovica and Sitnice (Municipality of Mursko Sredisce), Medjmurje County	Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, Croatia	IPA : 1,467,925.33 Total: 1,957,233.77
Establishment of Cross-border Culture and Tourist Transversal: „DROM” and Development of Integral Roma Culture and Tourist Product (ROKIC: “DROM”)	Municipality Crensovci, Slovenia; partners: Municipality Orehovica, Croatia, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, “Romano Pejtausago”- Roma association Kamenci, Slovenia, „MISIJA – S” – Association for Sustainable Development of Pomurje, Slovenia	IPA: 499,526.66 Total: 596,135.42
Better Prospective of Roma Women in the Labor Market	Croatian Employment Service, Regional Office Zagreb	IPA : 121,539.31 Total: 157206,98
Education for Gender Equality	Women’s Association Izvor, Tenja	IPA: 54,041.75 Total: 67,552.19
Fair play!	Association of Roma Friendship Luna	IPA: 18.757,00 total: 22.688,00
Project for support to the Roma PHASE II - Improvement of the community infrastructure in 3 Roma settlements in Medjmurje County: Pribislavec, Piškorovec, Lončarevo	Government Office for National Minorities Contracted: Tegra d.o.o.	IPA: 2,500,000 Total: 3,771,429
ROMA : Common, sustainable and creative keeping Roma culture and heritage	Partner: Medjmurje Association of Sport Recreation “Sport for Everybody” – Cakovec	IPA : 67,833.40 Total: 90,444.53
Project for support to the Roma PHASE I - Improving Access to Education and Employment Opportunities for the Roma National Minority in Croatia	Government Office for National Minorities Contracted: University of Jyvaskyla, Finland	IPA: 521,500.00 Total: 745,000.00
Project for support to the Roma PHASE I – Infrastructural renovation of the settlements Parag and Parag II in the Municipality of Nedelisce, Medjmurje County	Government Office for National Minorities	IPA: 505,400.00 Total: 722,000.00
Roma Employment Initiative – REI	Association “Roma for Roma”	IPA: 95,684.00 Total: 108,326.13
Multi-beneficiary IPA projects including Croatia		
Best Practices for Roma Integration - BPRI	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe - OSCE	IPA: 3,000,000 Total: 3,300,000 (share for Croatia not specified)



Project title	Beneficiary	Eligible value (EUR)
Together against discrimination of Roma	Romany Society for General and Cultural Education, Pecs partners: various, including Association of Roma Friendship Luna	IPA: 260,215 Total: 326,206.59 Share for Croatia: 49,000
Social inclusion and access to human rights for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in WB	United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees- UNHCR partners: The Office of Ombudsman (in Croatia)	IPA: 1,000,000 Total: 1,250,000 Share for Croatia:100,000
IPA projects not directly targeting the Roma, but include them through activities		
Computer Education against Marginalization	Municipality of Darda	IPA: 96,544.00 Total: 116,700.48
Equality Scan	Croatian Institute for Local Government	IPA: 147,642.00 Total: 169,120.27

Source: MTM Study: Use of IPA Funds on Roma Communities in Croatia.
Produced by: Milena Babic, 2013, annex table.