

STRATEGY OF EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF ROMA UNTIL 2030



ÚRAD
SPLNOMOCNENCA VLÁDY
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY
PRE RÓMSKE KOMUNITY

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Contents | 1 |
| Introduction..... | 3 |
| Key concepts and terms used in the Strategy..... | 5 |
| Who is the 2030 Strategy aimed at..... | 8 |
| 2030 Strategy development process..... | 9 |
| Education priority area | 11 |
| Background..... | 11 |
| Global goals..... | 22 |
| Sub-objectives..... | 23 |
| Housing priority area | 24 |
| Background..... | 24 |
| Global goals..... | 27 |
| Sub-objectives..... | 28 |
| Employment priority area | 29 |
| Background..... | 29 |
| Global goals..... | 31 |
| Sub-objectives..... | 32 |
| Health priority area | 33 |
| Background..... | 33 |
| Global goals..... | 35 |
| Sub-objectives..... | 36 |
| Combating anti-Roma racism and promoting participation priority area | 37 |
| Background..... | 37 |
| Global goals..... | 40 |
| Sub-objectives..... | 41 |
| Monitoring and evaluation | 42 |
| Annexes | 46 |
| Education area..... | 46 |
| Housing area..... | 49 |
| Employment area..... | 52 |
| Health area..... | 55 |
| Combating anti-Roma racism and promoting participation area..... | 56 |
| List of abbreviations used..... | 59 |

Introduction

The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (OPGSRRC) based on point B.1 of Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 324 of 3 July 2019, has developed a Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until the year 2030¹. There is also a need to elaborate on the strategic document results from the adopted Vision and Strategy for the Development of Slovakia until 2030 - long-term Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic - Slovakia 2030, which was approved by Government Resolution No 41 of 20 January 2021. Framework strategic document is a commitment of the Government of the Slovak Republic (SR), which defines at the priority level the direction of public policies to achieve visible change in the field of equality and inclusion Roma.

Regular European and national evaluations continue to find that the four priority areas - employment, education, health, and housing, remain key to achieving the objectives. Emphasis is placed on non-discrimination and on stepping up interventions to combat anti-Roma racism.

Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the 2030 Strategy) was developed following a request for a conceptual document that considers the evolution of the situation and the experience of the previous eight years since the adoption of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020 and the relevant action plans.

It was also the result of a joint effort by the Member States of the European Union. Important starting documents in this respect are in particular:

- European Semester 2019: Assessment of progress made in implementing structural reforms, preventing, and correcting macroeconomic imbalances and results of the in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 (Annex D)
- Cohesion Policy Legislative Package 2021-2027 (Annex IV)
- Council Recommendation No 2021/C 93/01 of 12 March 2021 on equality, inclusion, and participation of Roma

"There is no equality when discrimination persists, and discrimination cannot be effectively combated without combating anti-Roma sentiment and improving the socio-economic inclusion and participation of the Roma population. The potential of Roma children is limited because too many do not have equal access to education due to poverty, exclusion, and discrimination."²

For this reason, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament as well as several pan-European and national civil society organisations point to the need to renew and intensify the commitment to achieve Roma equality. Specifically, by focusing on non-discrimination and addressing the four main socio-economic areas of education, employment, health, and housing.

Due to its cross-ministerial nature, the 2030 strategy is a roofing document in the creation and implementation of the planned strategic documents of the responsible ministries in the relevant areas, and also provides coherence with existing materials. Its content contributes

¹ In accordance with the Council Recommendation on Equality, Inclusion and Participation of the Roma no. 2021 / C 93/01 of 12 March 2021, the original title of the document was Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration until 2030, modified to the new title Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation by 2030.

² Explanatory memorandum to the draft Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on equality, inclusion and participation of Roma: <https://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2020:0621:FIN:SK:PDF> .

to the fulfilment of the government's intentions in relation to improving the position and situation of the Roma, stated in the Program Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2020-2024³, and also reflects the goals of the Vision and Development Strategy of Slovakia until 2030⁴. In the 3rd round of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva (28 January 2019)⁵ and the 6th round of monitoring of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Slovak Republic (ECRI report of 8 December 2020)⁶.

The national strategy represents a set of starting points and goals that aim to stop the segregation of Roma communities, a significant positive turnaround in the social inclusion of Roma, non-discrimination, change of attitudes and coexistence improvements. As a long-term planner, the document is open for updating, supplementation and/or modification on the basis of a revision based on the monitoring or evaluation process.

The global and partial objectives of each priority will be developed into a level of measures and activities with a realistic quantification of the necessary financial requirements and identified appropriate resources to cover them through thematic action plans, which will be updated in line with the 2030 Strategy monitoring cycle. The process of creating action plans is a follow-up to the government-approved 2030 Strategy.

A prerequisite for the effectiveness of a national strategy is implementation, which requires a cross-ministerial approach, active participation and cooperation between the levels of government, coordinated by a single entity. The coordinating role/agency in relation to the 2030 Strategy is the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities through the OPGSRRC which is also the national focal point.

³ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/24756/1>

⁴ <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/03-Vizia-a-strategia-2019-06-18.docx>

⁵ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/23865/1>

⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-slovak-republic/1680a0a08a>

Key concepts and terms used in the strategy:

Integration and inclusion:

Inclusion⁷ / **Inclusive Policies** / **Active Inclusion**⁸ means enabling every citizen, especially the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society, including the possibility of employment. Inclusion is underpinned by the principles of equal opportunities⁹, fairness, cooperation and solidarity, with diversity seen as an opportunity to enrich society as a whole. Society adapts to the diversity of all its members, which includes policies promoting equal access to public services¹⁰ and full civic participation in decision-making¹¹. The inclusion of disadvantaged groups is complete and unconditional. For example, in the area of education, inclusion takes place as a continuous process of identifying and reflecting on educational needs of all children and pupils, respecting the uniqueness of each child, acknowledging diversity (including disadvantages) as normal, actively working with and benefiting from it (adapting objectives, content, methods, forms, assessment). Progress of the child is monitored according to his/her abilities and in this sense the school takes into account the individual needs of each child in order to fulfil his or her full potential.

Integration is a process of blurring differences and creating equal opportunities, in which the inclusion of disadvantaged citizens or groups of citizens into society is a manifestation of solidarity, tolerance and acceptance of differences.^{12,13} It does not presuppose a change or transformation of the foundations of the whole society, but requires a change in the mindset of the majority, as well as of the members of Roma communities and their leaders.¹⁴ Inclusion is partial and conditional, and its prerequisite is a certain degree of adaptation of disadvantaged groups in relation to the rest of the society. Integration in education is possible through the individual integration of a child or pupil into a classroom among intact children or pupils, on the basis of diagnosed special educational needs. The child or pupil is assimilated to mainstream children or pupils with assistance (has an individual education plan, a teaching assistant, a professional member). A child with a disability is adapted to the school so, as far as possible, to cope with what is considered the norm.

Unequal treatment (discrimination):

Indirect discrimination is an externally neutral regulation, decision, instruction or practice that disadvantages or is likely to disadvantage a person in comparison with another person; indirect discrimination does not exist if the regulation, decision, instruction or practice is objectively justified by the pursuit of a legitimate interest and is reasonable and necessary

⁷ Šaling, S. – Šalingová-Ivanová, M. – Maníková, Z.: Great dictionary of foreign words. 2008. ISBN: 978-80-89123-07-0.

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1059&langId=en>

⁹ Equal opportunities <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet-sk.pdf> pg. 11.

¹⁰ Access to basic services, <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet-sk.pdf> pg. 22.

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/issues/social-integration.html>

¹² Rudiger, Anja & Spencer, Sarah. (2003). Social Integration of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities: Policies to Combat Discrimination, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260781134_Social_Integration_of_Migrants_and_Ethnic_Minorities_Policies_to_Combat_Discrimination.

¹³ Considering the Diversity of the Roma population in a post-2020 EU-initiative for Roma equality and inclusion, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/post2020_eu_roma_in_diversity.pdf

¹⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, https://www.mpsvr.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/medzinarodna-spolupraca/europska-unia/strategie-eu-ropskej-unie/kom_2010_133.pdf KOM(2010) 133 in the final version, pg. 5.

to achieve that interest.¹⁵ An example would be requirements for the granting of a public service that a large segment of a particular group cannot meet.

Institutional (structural, systemic) discrimination - represents a disadvantage to a particular (e.g. ethnic or racial) group resulting from rules, regulations, practices and behaviour in institutions and other social structures that make it impossible for a given group to realise their rights and opportunities available to the majority population. Thus, structural discrimination is not the result of discriminatory behaviour by individuals, but relates to established practices, norms and treatment of minorities in institutions, whereby the staff of institutions and attitudes are consciously or unconsciously adopted and applied.

Multiple discrimination is used as a general term for all cases of discrimination on the basis of more than one ground of discrimination and manifests itself in two possible ways. It can take the form of 'additional discrimination', where discrimination occurs on the basis of multiple grounds of discrimination operating independently, and 'cross-ministerial discrimination', where two or more grounds of discrimination operate and interact in such a way that they are inseparable or indivisible.¹⁶

Segregation is defined as a physical or social separation of members of different groups - typically a national, ethnic, racial, religious, social or other minority from the majority, or members of a vulnerable group from the mainstream society. Segregation arises either as a result of conscious (e.g. administrative or political) decisions - which constitute unlawful discrimination according to domestic and international jurisprudence - but can also be the result of economic (e.g. the movement of poor and discriminated groups to marginalised areas with limited employment opportunities and poor quality services) or demographic developments. The most visible manifestations of Roma segregation are in education and housing (residential segregation), but it also occurs in other areas of public services, such as health care. Public services are usually of lower quality and lead to poorer outcomes than segregated services provided to the mainstream population; in any case, they limit social interactions between the minority and the majority and thus run counter to the goals of integration and inclusion.¹⁷ Therefore, the state has a duty to prevent the emergence and deepening of segregation (the so-called **non-segregation approach**) and to actively eliminate it (the so-called **desegregation approach**). There is a large body of empirical evidence that targeted reductions of the segregation of Roma, alongside the promotion of inclusive processes, leads to greater social good than maintaining the segregated status quo.¹⁸ Desegregation activities without inclusive measures (aimed at supporting both the minority to be integrated and the majority, to enable inclusion), or inclusionary measures alone without conscious efforts to desegregate usually do not lead to the expected results.¹⁹

Discrimination in some areas, including access to services (education, housing, health care) and to employment, on grounds of nationality, ethnicity or race, is prohibited by European, international and Slovak law. As a Member State, the Slovak Republic is responsible for implementing European law (EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Race Directive 2000/43) irrespective of how it organises the national implementation of individual policies, i.e. how

¹⁵ Section 2a par. 3 of Act no. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act), as amended

¹⁶ Combating multiple discrimination: procedures, policies, and legislation. European Commission report (2007). Multiple Discrimination in EU Law: Opportunities for Legal Responses to Intersectional Gender Discrimination. European Network of Legal Experts on Gender Equality. European Commission (2009).

¹⁷ European Commission (2015) Guidance for Member States on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/thematic_guidance_fiche_segregation_en.pdf

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ Idem. See also: Hajdu, T., Kertesi, G. & Kézdi, G. (2019). Inter-Ethnic Friendship and Hostility between Roma and non-Roma Students in Hungary: The Role of Exposure and Academic Achievement. In: B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, 19(1).

it chooses to decentralise public administration on its territory. For this reason, the central government has a duty to take measures against discrimination and segregation, also in areas which are the original competence of local authorities (for example, education or housing) or the private sphere (employment, housing), to which it can use its legislative, political and financial instruments.

Who is 2030 Strategy aimed at

The Roma population in Slovakia is very diverse, therefore it would be stigmatizing to consider all Roma men and women as disadvantaged in terms of poverty and social exclusion. This assumption is equally incorrect in relation to the inhabitants of all settlements considered to be Roma.

At the same time, however, it is true that Roma are among the population groups that are most vulnerable and can be affected by structural disadvantages and discrimination regardless of their socio-economic background or living conditions. For this reason, it is not appropriate to understand marginality solely through the prism of socio-economic conditions, but a broader context, encompassing disadvantages in different dimensions of life, is needed.

Among the priority areas defined in the 2030 Strategy, particularly in the areas of education, employment, combating anti-Roma racism and participation, this should be reflected.

Even after taking into account all of the above, it can be stated that a large part of the Roma population faces multiple disadvantages. However, this group is not homogeneous (e.g. in terms of needs). Accepting this fact, we define marginalised Roma communities (hereinafter referred to as MRC) for the purposes of 2030 Strategy as:

- (a) Segregated settlements²⁰ which are considered by their surroundings to be Roma and in which various structural disadvantages are cumulated;
- (b) Settlements which are considered by their surroundings to be Roma, located on the periphery and within villages or towns in which various structural disadvantages are cumulated;
- (c) Roma populations who do not live in settlements but face socio-economic disadvantages as a result of structural inequalities. This group includes municipalities with a majority Roma population.

²⁰ In understanding the category of Roma settlements, the author's team is based on the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013.

Strategy 2030 development process

In the preparation of the submitted material, the OPGSRRC used the procedure set out in Scenario 4 using the coordination group model, in accordance with the recommendations of the Rules of Public Involvement in the Creation of Public Policies adopted by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 645 of 17 December 2014. Active work with the Methodology and the institutional framework for the creation of public strategies adopted by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 197 of 26 April 2017 was an integral part of the preparation of this material.

The development of 2030 Strategy was preceded by a thorough analysis of internal and external evaluations of the Government Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 (hereinafter refer to as 2020 Strategy) and its Action Plans for education, employment, health, housing and financial inclusion. In the framework of this phase, the results of monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of the measures were also taken into account, as defined in the Operational Programme Human Resources 2014-2020 at the level of Priority Axis 5 (Integration of marginalised Roma communities) and Priority Axis 6 (Technical equipment in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities).

The review and mapping of the findings was particularly guiding for setting up the structure of the document and the consultation mechanisms, respecting the principles of participation. The basic platform for the involvement of a sufficient number of relevant stakeholders from the state administration, local government, academia and NGOs is the Advisory Commission of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the preparation, revision and updating of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration, development and implementation of its action plans, monitoring and evaluation, established by Measure No. 6/2014, as amended.²¹ The Advisory Commission fulfils the role of the steering group of the OPGSRRC, adapts main decisions in the relation to the content of the 2030 Strategy and the follow-up Action Plans (see the list of institutions attached as Annex 1 to this document).

Participants in the thematic working groups of the relevant priority areas of the Strategy, which were set up after the first meeting of the Steering Group of the OPGSRRC, play a key role in the process of drafting the document. External experts, in cooperation with the Office's professional staff, were responsible for preparing the basis for the thematic working groups (TWGs) discussion and for processing its outputs into the specified structure of global and sub-objectives, including indicators (list attached as Annex 2 to this document).

The external team also acted as facilitators and process experts, i.e. they provided expert advice throughout the process of developing the priority themes. In order to ensure the widest possible public participation, TWGs were also carried out outside Bratislava. However, the overall process of developing Strategy 2030 was strongly influenced by the pandemic situation during 2020, therefore it was necessary to proceed to online formats, while within the framework of the maximum application of participatory approaches, and the draft of the strategic document was published on the OPGSRRC's website for public commenting.

²¹ <http://www.minv.sk/?poradne-organy&subor=369478>

| Meetings | VII. 20 | VIII. 20 | IX. 20 | X. 20 | XI. 20 | XII. 20 | I. 21 | II. 21 | III. 21 |
|--|---------|----------|--------|-------|--------|---------|-------|--------|---------|
| Meeting of the steering group | X | | | | | | | X | |
| TWG Education | | X | X | X | | | | | |
| TWG Employment | | X | X | | | | | | |
| TWG Housing | | X | X | X | | | | | |
| TWG Health | | X | X | | | | | | |
| TWG Non-Discrimination | | X | X | X | | | | | |
| Consultation group for marginalized Roma communities | | | | | X | X | | | |
| Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms | | | | | | X | | | |
| Public commenting | | | | | | X | | | |
| Steering group reviews | | | | | | X | X | | |

In the process of preparation, the 2030 Strategy was renamed under the influence of the published draft Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, published by the European Commission (EC) on 7 October 2020,²² to better reflect the updated background and objectives of the Strategy.

The document was submitted to the OPGSRRC Steering Group on 10 February 2021.

MRC definition process

The definition was created in a working group (team of authors)²³, in the second step it was moved to a group of reviewers with a request to evaluate it in terms of the diversity of local situations of Roma communities and populations in municipalities and cities. The group of reviewers was represented by experts - helping professionals with an overview of the practice and the mayor of the municipality with a majority of the Roma population.

²² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2020:0621:FIN:SK:PDF>

²³ Author's team (appendix - Author's team: Jurina Rusnáková, Jaroslav Kling, Jan Grill, Zuzana Havířová, Zuzana Kumanová, Rastislav Rosinský, Daniel Škobla, Adriana Ďatková, Roman Bartoš).

EDUCATION priority area

Starting points

The Slovak education system has long faced problems with the inclusion of children from the marginalised Roma communities (MRC), or children with special educational needs (hereinafter refer to as SEN). "Compared to other children, socially disadvantaged children have almost half the participation in pre-primary education, but more than four times higher representation in special education and an eight times higher rate of grade repetition."²⁴ Despite some improvements in the field of education of Roma children from the MRC, including the adoption of legislative measures,²⁵ we have to conclude that the intentions of the previous 2020 Strategy have not been satisfactorily fulfilled in the field of education. The 2020 Strategy, and in particular its updated Action Plans, are criticised for the large fragmentation of the implementing institutions as well as of the operational national programmes, which limits the effectiveness of the implementation of the objectives and measures. At the same time, the previous strategy is reproached for not linking its objectives with the objectives of the measures to achieve them in the updated action plans, which causes problems in monitoring the effects and effectiveness of the measures. Another serious shortcoming of the 2020 Strategy, which should also be closely monitored in the current strategy, is the absence of data, which makes it impossible to evaluate indicators in a relevant way or to assess the impact of the implemented measures. A fundamental problem of the 2020 Strategy and the Action Plans is the almost absolute dependence of the financing and implementation of measures on the European Commission resources, with only a minimal contribution of the state budget and public administration resources, as well as the very slow and administratively demanding drawdown of funds, or the time discrepancies between drawdown periods.²⁶ Problems and needs of the 2020 Strategy and the Action Plans are of the target group, which we consider to be the most pressing, despite the visions of the previous Strategy have not been met, e.g. the long-term absence of standard diagnostic tools for assessing the level of inclusion of pupils in special classes and schools, or even the deepening spatial segregation of Roma children, which has begun to extend to secondary schools in the form of so-called allocated workplaces of secondary vocational schools (SVS). At the same time, the qualitative evaluation of the 2020 Strategy, its measures and activities shows the high relevance and effectiveness of full-day educational activities, but on the other hand the implementation fails for the lower secondary vocational education after compulsory school attendance. Although the 2020 Strategy was intended to control the organisation of education for the acquisition of lower secondary vocational education in full-time or external form studies in selected schools, it was measured only on the basis of the number of pupils enrolled, without taking into account control of the quality of the programmes provided. As highly relevant and effective objectives with a significant positive impact on increasing the representation of children from the MRC in education the implementation of inclusive education programmes in kindergartens and primary schools, in

²⁴ Value for Money Department of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, Institute of Educational Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic and Institute of Social Policy of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (2020) Revision of expenditures on groups at risk of poverty or social. Final Report, p. 9, available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/revizia-vydavkov-na-skupiny-ohrozene-chudobou-alebo-socialnym-vylucenim-2020/>

²⁵ Modification of the consequences of Act No. 188/2015 Coll., Amending and supplementing Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education (School Act) by amending Section 9f, especially its paragraph 3, which established a classification criterion for providing a contribution to improve the conditions for education and training of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and the adoption of an amendment to the School Act on compulsory year of pre-primary education with effect from 1. September.2021.

²⁶ Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Charles University (2019): External evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration until 2020.

the form of the national programmes School Open for All (SOA) and Promotion of Pre-primary Education for Children (hereinafter referred to as PRIM).

PRIM²⁷, whose sustainability is questionable, despite its current continuation in the second phases²⁸ depends on the continuation of financial support. In this context, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, within the framework of the intra-departmental dialogue and in cooperation with experts from practice, identified key areas where finding solutions will be a priority, but only for the period 2021²⁹.

The goals of the current 2030 Strategy are focused on three basic areas of the education system: goal (1) aimed at supporting the child / pupil and family care, goal (2) aimed at supporting the professional capacities of the teacher and goals (3 - 6) aimed at supporting the creation of stimulating environment for the students from MRC³⁰.

The vision of the 2030 Strategy is to increase the real participation of children and pupils from the MRC in quality education and training in mainstream education, with an emphasis on the application of desegregation and inclusive measures in the educational process at all levels of education, including lifelong learning programs. As part of the preparation for mainstream education, it is necessary to focus on increasing the share of Roma children aged 0-3 in early care programs to at least 30% of all MRC children. By increasing the participation of 3-4 year-old children in pre-primary education to the level of 50% and 100% by training Roma 5-6 year-old children in the Slovak Republic, the level of the national average will reach 75% of the educated children from MRC at pre-primary level. The ambition of the 2030 Strategy is also to reduce the share of MRC pupils in primary and special primary schools (secondary schools) that repeat the year by half to 11%, to reduce the share of early completion of compulsory primary education by half to 36% and to increase the share of Roma with complete secondary education as high as 45% for men and 40% for women, with an emphasis on applying tools to address the current educational gap between women and men.³¹ An important element of the 2030 Strategy is to implement inclusive and desegregation policy measures at all levels of education in order to reduce the number of children educated in predominantly ethnically homogeneous classes or schools by at least half to 30% and reduce the proportion of Roma who feel discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity at 3%.

Early childhood

According to OECD (2016)³², Slovakia is one of the countries with the lowest share of GDP investment in early childhood care, despite the knowledge that the first three years after childbirth are key to positive influence of the brain development and building a strong bond of children under 3 years of age and creating a bonding figure for the emotional stability of

²⁷ National project SOA - School open to all, more at: <http://npsov.mpc-edu.sk>, PRIM - Support for pre - primary education of children from MRC, more at: <https://www.minv.sk/?NP-PRIM-predprimarne-vzdelavanie-MRK>

²⁸ National project POP - Assisting professions in the education of children and pupils, more on: <https://mpc-edu.sk/sk/pop1>, National project POP II - Assisting professions in the education of children and pupils II., more on: <https://mpc-edu.sk/sk/pop2>, National project PRIM II. - Support for pre - primary education of children from marginalized Roma communities II., more on: <https://www.minv.sk/?np-prim-ii-projekt-inkluzie-v-materskych-skolach>

²⁹ Action plan: zero, more on: <https://www.minedu.sk/nulty-akcny-plan-je-prvotnym-vychodiskom-pre-urychlene-nastartovanie-funkcnych-zmien-k-zvyseniu-inkluzivnosti-vo-vzdelavani/>

³⁰ Construction of buildings and improvement of material equipment, elimination of segregation, introduction of elements of inclusive education into the educational process, content and specifically focused changes in the curriculum in relation to education of children from MRC, mother tongue education, improvement of methods and forms of educational procedures of children from MRC.

³¹ Differences in the educational level of women and men include a comprehensive approach to levelling out inequalities, including eliminating stereotypes about the roles of women and men.

³² Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicator, pg. 205.

the child. Only 5% of children under the age of 3 use formal care facilities, which is the least within the EU (EU15 average is 42% of children and V4 average is 11%).³³ Slovakia lacks a legislative framework, as well as public policies or national strategies that would focus on a comprehensive approach to early childhood care. The area of early care is the responsibility of several state and public administration bodies³⁴, without effective coordination of services. The unavailability of early childhood care services and natural family programs for people living in extreme poverty is also a problem. At present, services are provided only for children whose development is endangered due to disability and claim a legal right to social service within the scope of the Higher territorial unit (HTU), which in terms of accessibility for MRC families means that de facto all children aged 0-3 years, who live in an MRC environment do not have access to quality early childhood care services. These are currently provided only to a minimal extent, mainly through non-profit organizations.³⁵

The priority of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the next strategic period must be to build a system of effective counselling, including the creation of a supra-ministerial early care strategy³⁶ and measures to ensure the collection of data on the number of children from MRC in early care programs. There is a need to implement and evaluate screening and stimulation programs aimed at the holistic development of MRC children, to support activities aimed at effective parenting and child welfare directly in communities, and to provide intervention formalized and accessible early care for MRC children. The potential for the implementation of these measures is 4.9 mil. EUR, while the financial space for the implementation of measures in the field of early care in the first year 2021 is 0.6 mil. EUR.³⁷

Kindergartens

The participation of Roma children in pre-primary education has been low for a long time. In 2015, only 34% of children aged from 4 years of age participated in education in kindergartens until the beginning of compulsory school attendance and in the school year 2018/2019 it was only 32% of children from MRC aged from 4 years of age.³⁸

As of 1 January 2021, an amendment to the Education Act on the compulsory year of pre-primary education entered into force, which is an important step in terms of increasing the pre-primary training of children from the MRC and the implementation of desegregation measures. The most pressing problem is the lack of staff, professional and space capacity.³⁹

³³ Value for Money Department of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, Institute of Educational Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic and Institute of Social Policy of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report, (2020), pg. 9.

³⁴ Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, Ministry of Health of the SR, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR, higher territorial units

³⁵ For example, through the "Omama" program implemented by the NGO Cesta von, which provided early care to 265 children aged 0-3 years (inclusive) and 37 children aged 4-6 years in 2020 in eleven MRC locations, or through programs aimed at improving health with the Healthy Regions program, available at: <https://www.zdraveregionu.eu/>, as well as the Healthy from the Beginning and Hračka program for inclusion for the education of Roma children at an early age and their parents, implemented in Slovakia by the organization School wide open - Wide Open School n. o, available at: <https://epha.org/healthy-from-the-beginning-ensuring-a-good-start-in-life-for-all-roma-children/> and at: <https://www.reyn.eu/toy4inclusion/>, Early Intervention Program OZ Detstvo deťom in Dobšiná, available at: <http://dede.sk>, Mission 1000 ACEC Rudňany program available at: <https://www.acec.sk/o-nas/>

³⁶ The intention is also declared in the Program Statement of the Government by the sentence "The Government of the Slovak Republic will introduce a coordinated supra-ministerial system of early intervention for children with disabilities and for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and their families, <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/24756/1>

³⁷ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg.13.

³⁸ Rigová, E., Kováčová, L., Šedovič, M. (2020) Policy brief: Pre-primary education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds: Problems of introducing compulsory school attendance in kindergarten through the eyes of self-government, pg. 3 according to ÚHP, IVP and ISP, 2020, available at: https://www.governance.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Policy_Brief_PPV.pdf

³⁹ As of 15 September 15 2020, according to data from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the SR, registers 88 municipalities in which conditions for pre-primary education of 3,596 children aged 5 were not created as of the given date, of which 2,620

The spatial and financial unavailability of education also remains a problem. Of the 191 settlements outside the village, a quarter (48) have an average distance from the school of 5.4 km.⁴⁰ The principles of non-segregation (i.e. not creating new segregated facilities) and desegregation (i.e. making every effort to actively eliminate existing racial segregation) need to be applied when building new capacities. Thus, the purpose of mitigating spatial and physical inaccessibility is not to build schools and school facilities in close proximity to segregated settlements, but to complete new infrastructure so as not to deepen the exclusion of the Roma community and to ensure transport links between settlements and school facilities. However, in addition to capacity building, it is important to increase the quality of pre-school education, ensure the presence of pedagogical, professional staff and helping professions speaking the Romani, introduce innovative elements into the educational process that significantly contribute to the implementation of inclusive education. The financial potential for the implementation of these measures is 78.2 mil. EUR of savings from the state budget, while the financial space for the implementation of measures in the area of pre-primary education in the first year 2021 represents 11.8 mil. EUR.⁴¹ This can also be increased by EU Structural and Investment Funds.

Primary schools

Addressing the current pandemic situation and the extraordinary interruption of distance education as the only viable solution in this situation, it has been shown⁴² that not all children, including children from MRC, have the same access to education, either due to poor hygiene or due to no access to digital technologies. The report of the Institute of Education Policy⁴³ pointed to the fact that more than 30,000 children are unlikely to have access to the Internet and more than 110,000 children are dependent on free meals in schools. This situation underlined the fact that the Slovak education system has significant problems with the education of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Comprehensive attention needs to be paid to addressing social inequalities in education, including addressing the emerging issue of the digital divide and strengthening digital literacy.

The international PISA testing shows that Slovakia is the second country after Spain in which the social background has the greatest impact on the repetition rate. The impact of socio-economic background on pupils' results is higher in Slovakia compared to other developed countries (eg 18% compared to 12% of the OECD average in reading literacy results in PISA 2018) and the difference in pupils with high and low socio-economic status corresponds to about three years of school attendance.⁴⁴

The share of early school leavers (ESLs) who do not continue their education is significantly higher in socially disadvantaged groups than in the rest of the population. In the 2017/2018

missing places are located in 72 municipalities located in the Atlas of Roma Communities. Source: Internal material of the Section of Pre-primary and Basic Education, MESRaS SR, 5 October 2020

⁴⁰ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAaF SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), p. 62, according to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019.

⁴¹ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAaF SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 13..

⁴² Rafael, V., Krejčíková, K. (2020): What is the difference between "online" and "offline" pupils from Roma communities and what they are most worried about when they return to school, Bratislava, EduRoma, available at: <https://eduroma.sk/docs/ako-zostat-blizko-na-dialku-2.pdf> .

⁴³ Bednárík, M. et al. (2020): 'How to provide education for all children in times of crisis', comment 1/2020, April 2020, Institute of Education Policy, available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/16113.pdf> ..

⁴⁴ National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements, MESRaS: National Administration National Administration 2018, online: https://www.nucem.sk/dl/4636/Narodna_sprava_PISA_2018.pdf?fbclid=IwAR039_T7AevBhU5KPzB_bDTl0oO6ga-HYzdBy_aJcJK6JVDX52cY5P86QN4

school year, every tenth pupil in the material need system (10.6%) and 13.4% of pupils from the MRC environment did not complete their schooling. In the total population of this age group it was 6.4%.⁴⁵

In the area of support for ESL pupils, the education system focuses exclusively on compensatory measures in the form of the possibility of obtaining lower secondary education through secondary education, which is not a qualitative equivalent of primary school completion, or the completion of lower secondary vocational education in secondary school F-department without any possibility to continue to study at high schools with an apprenticeship or high school diploma⁴⁶ and with low employability.⁴⁷

Evidence of education in F-departments is a certificate with a clause stating that the graduate has completed education at the level of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2). He thus achieved a lower vocational education and leaves school as trained, with the possibility of performing simple auxiliary work and basic tasks of individual professions. In 2018, an estimated 2,574 MRC students were educated in F-departments, which is approximately 59%.⁴⁸ However, it is estimated that only 29% successfully pass and obtain a final examination certificate.⁴⁹

According to unemployment statistics, the employability of F-department graduates in the labour market is very low. They are still the largest group of registered unemployed. In its analysis of unemployment of secondary school graduates, the Center for Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic (CSTI) confirmed the trend of the highest unemployment rate of graduates of vocational fields among graduates of other types of education at secondary schools.⁵⁰

Despite the high investments of the state, the quality of education at the allocated workplaces of secondary schools in F-departments is not completely satisfactory; there is a low level of teaching expertise, especially in subjects of a general nature, which is related to the low qualification of teachers. Out of the total number of 46 schools, only three provide three-year programs, one of which offers three different specializations (engineering production, practical woman and seamstress). Through its focus, goals and acquisition of key competencies, the practical woman curriculum fulfils theories of the traditional gender role of women and reinforces stereotypes against women from MRC who are unable to take care of the family, raise children and manage money, which is contrary to EU gender equality policy, to which the Slovak Republic has committed itself.⁵¹ In some cases, even the segregated education was supported. 96% of the allocated secondary school workplaces that offer education in F-departments are located in municipalities with Roma concentration and

⁴⁵ Ministry of Finance of SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 74.

⁴⁶ Report of the State School Inspectorate on failing pupils 2018/2019.

⁴⁷ Unemployment of graduates, CVTI (2020). 13.8% of F-departments graduates were unemployed in May 2020, while the average period of registration of a graduate at the employment office is about 8 months..

⁴⁸ Estimation of the number based on data from the Review of Expenditure on Groups at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion, Final Report, 2020, pg. 75, which states "In 2018, a total of 4,364 pupils were educated in F-departments, 152, of which an estimated 59% are in the PHN system and 59% come from the MRC.", Then 59% of the total number of 4,364 pupils there are 2,574 students from MRC.

⁴⁹ Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (2017, 2019). Calculated as the share of F-department graduates in 2019 in first-year F-department students in 2017. The calculation does not include F-department students at secondary schools for the disabled and at secondary schools at re-education centres. Adjusted for 3-year unions..

⁵⁰ Herich, 2020, Registered unemployment of high school graduates: https://www.cvtisr.sk/buxus/docs//JH/Nezamestnanost_A20_.pdf

⁵¹ Balážová, CVEK, 2015: Elocated workplaces of secondary schools at MRC, <http://cvek.sk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Elovakane-pracoviska-final-1.pdf>.

almost 30% are located in municipalities with segregated settlements, which does not motivate MRC students to attend schools with majority pupils.⁵²

As a result of a statically determined norm per pupil,⁵³ second-chance education was provided in 2018 for 784 people in the range of 93% of courses⁵⁴ by secondary vocational schools, whose courses do not always correspond to the scope of the required education.

In the area of addressing the issue of F-departments and compensation programs of the ESLs, the 2030 Strategy will focus mainly on evaluating the content of existing ISCED 2 programs and their compliance with educational standards, implementing programs to compensate for differences in education levels between women and men and eliminate inequalities⁵⁵, system of monitoring and elimination of programs not meeting the required quality, methodological adjustment of the organization of education in F-departments in order to prevent spatial and social segregation and the absence of regulation of the number of students, creation of new programs according to labour market requirements, increasing the number of primary schools offering secondary education.

At the same time, it is necessary to focus attention on the solution of the elimination of the double-shift education of primary schools, which has a negative impact on the quality of the educational process. CVTI statistics show that there are 41 primary schools in the Slovak Republic, in which the educational process takes place in two shifts. The information provided by the district offices at the seat of the region shows that the biggest problem with double-shift education at primary schools is in the Prešov and Košice regions (regions with the highest concentration of MRC).

Based on statistics from 15 September 2020 provided by CSTI, there is a current need to expand capacity by 215 classes for 3,737 pupils in the Prešov and Košice regions. The analysis also states that it is necessary to set aside approximately 60,000 EUR (per class) for construction, reconstruction or extension, which represents a total cost of 12.9 mil. EUR.⁵⁶ In order to ensure that these pupils have the same access to quality education as pupils in mainstream schools, it is important to remove this ambiguity also in view of the demographic trends in some districts.

In the next strategic period, it is important to focus on solving problems with physical and financial unavailability of education for students from MRC. Of the 191 segregated settlements, 49 (i.e. 26%) are in average 3.5km from the nearest municipality with a school.⁵⁷ At the same time, despite subsidies to support education for eating habits for children and subsidies to support education to fulfil the school obligations of a child at risk of social exclusion, many families from MRC struggle with the so-called hidden fees (hygiene, school trips, class fund), or fees for school children's clubs (SCC), or leisure centres. The inability to cover costs in these forms of the education system separates MRC students from the school's afternoon activities.

⁵² Ministry of Finance of SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 76..

⁵³ 10% of the current norms of primary schools, § 4 par. 4 of Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll., Which lays down the details of the breakdown of funds from the state budget for schools and school facilities to adjust the norm for natural persons who have not obtained lower secondary education and are educated in external form at a primary school or secondary school for the purpose of obtaining this level of education.

⁵⁴ Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (2017, 2019). Calculated as the share of F-department graduates in 2019 in first-year F-department students in 2017. The calculation does not include F-department students at secondary schools for the disabled and at secondary schools at re-education centres. Adjusted for 3-year unions.

⁵⁵ These are mainly inequalities related to stereotypes about the roles of women and men.

⁵⁶ MESRaS SR, 2017: Analysis of two-shift operation of primary schools and proposals for measures to address the situation.

⁵⁷ Review of spending on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion, Final Report, 2020, pg. 14.

One of the programs in the area of eliminating early completion of compulsory primary education and increasing equal access to quality education of MRC pupils is the full-day education system.⁵⁸ It significantly contributes to the increase of school attendance and especially, through funding of teaching assistants and helping professions in the Romani language. Extending the full-day education system and mentoring and tutoring programs in lower secondary education to all schools with a higher concentration of MRC pupils appears to be an effective tool for increasing the success of MRC pupils in the next strategic period. The potential for the implementation of these measures is 6 mil. EUR of savings from the state budget, while the financial space for their implementation of measures in the first year 2021 represents 5.3 mil. EUR.⁵⁹ This can also be increased by EU Structural and Investment Funds.⁶⁰

High schools and colleges

Available data show⁶¹ that only 62% of pupils in material need and half (51%) of MRC pupils continue their education after the end of compulsory school attendance, while the share in the total population is 75%. Participation in higher education is even lower for socially disadvantaged groups. Only 10% of young people from families provided with assistance in material need are enrolled at a university in the Slovak Republic, which is less than a quarter of the share in the total population. In the MRC environment, participation in higher education among young people is minimal - less than 7% in total and 1.5% in the case of a combination of MRC and assistance in material need.⁶²

The share of young Roma in Slovakia who are unemployed and not in education process reaches a rate of 65%, compared to a 12% rate for the general population of the same age group 20-34.⁶³ Up to 31.8% of young women, compared to with 14.7% of young men are facing unemployment and not continuing the educational process.⁶⁴ Research shows that women are more vulnerable to this phenomenon, due to childcare or domestic responsibilities, as well as lower pay or the absence of tools to reconcile family and professional life.

Therefore, the priority remains to support intervention and preventive tools against early completion of compulsory primary education and interventions supporting the retention of MRC pupils in the education system so that they obtain vocational or complete secondary education for their application in the labour market, taking into account the support of MRC women with parental responsibilities. Slovakia has so far failed in these efforts, especially in the area of supporting mentoring and tutoring programs with the task of providing

⁵⁸ Implemented at 130 primary schools in Slovakia within the National Project School Open to All (NP SOA), in seven regions of the Slovak Republic within the Operational Program Human Resources, Final Evaluation Report of NP SOA, available at: <http://npsov.mpc-edu.sk/dolezite-oznamy/pracovne-stretnutie-ohladom-implementacie-narodneho-projektu>

⁵⁹ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 13.

⁶⁰ Data generated from the table of financing value measures from savings on the state budget within Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 13, Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 78.

⁶¹ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 78.

⁶² Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 79.

⁶³ FRA 2016, in Tomczyk – Vanek (Eds.), 2017. Adults Literacies as Benefit for Inclusion and Equity, Reports on young adults being NEETs: Estonia, Iceland, Poland and Slovakia. Banská Bystrica – Cracow: Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny w Krakowie, s. 115.

⁶⁴ Eurostat, 2015 in: Tomczyk – Vanek (Eds.), 2018. How to work with NEETs. Recommendation for policy and practice. Krakow: Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny w Krakowie, pg. 25.

counselling and support to vulnerable pupils and students, or tutoring and improving their results.⁶⁵

In 2018, 3 mil. EUR were allocated to high school scholarships. An average of 8,266 pupils per month were supported, representing 4% of all secondary school students and an estimated 34% of pupils at risk of poverty or social exclusion.⁶⁶

The potential for the implementation of mentoring and tutoring support for low-achieving students at the second stage of regular primary schools and at secondary schools is 4.7 mil. EUR from the state budget⁶⁷ and the potential for increasing secondary school scholarships was calculated at 4.1 mil. EUR.⁶⁸

Segregation and inclusion

The segregation of Roma children and pupils in separate classes, buildings or individual schools is a form of ethnic discrimination prohibited by EU law and national legislation, which has been confirmed by Slovak courts in several decisions.⁶⁹ The state therefore has an obligation to actively combat the segregation of Roma children, as called for by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, according to which Slovakia is not fulfilling its legal obligations due to the continuing segregation of Roma children.⁷⁰ In addition to ensuring legal compliance, segregation in education must be combated to ensure the effectiveness of inclusive policies, as the education in segregated environment is of lower quality when compared to an environment that responds to the diverse educational needs of each child. Scientific research has robustly confirmed that only a combination of desegregation (i.e. creating an ethnically mixed environment) and inclusive education (providing support for pupils with regard to their individual abilities and needs) contributes to positive interethnic interactions and reduction of anti-Roma racism, but also to improving the learning outcomes of Roma children.⁷¹ These positive factors are essential preconditions for the successful social integration of the Roma and the inclusiveness of the majority society, which are therefore largely in the hands of the education system.

The Amnesty International report, published in 2017, states that "discrimination and segregation of the Roma continues to be widespread throughout primary education (and) the Slovak authorities are fundamentally failing to address this situation".⁷² A similar conclusion

⁶⁵ These programs are provided by only 20 non-governmental organizations from EU sources, which support 968 pupils from the MRC. Source: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (2020), p. 77, available at: <https://www.minv.sk/?aktualne-vyzvy-na-predkladanie-ziadosti-o-nenavratny-financny-prispevok&sprava=vyzva-zamerana-na-poskytovanie-mentorskej-a-tutorskej-podpory-pre-ziakov-z-mrk-s-dorazom-na-uspesne-ukoncenie-zs-a-plynuly-prechod-na-ss-oplz-po5-2017-2>

⁶⁶ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 79. The proportion of at-risk students in secondary schools was estimated on the basis of the at-risk-of-poverty rate or social exclusion in the 15-19 age group in the 2016 SILC survey (23.6%), assuming participation in 'at-risk' education in this age group at the same level as in a group of people in material need.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 16.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 17.

⁶⁹ For example, the case of the Counseling Center for Civil and Human Rights against the Primary School with a Kindergarten in Šarišské Michaľany, but also cases of international case law, including the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of D.H. and Others v Czech Republic.

⁷⁰ UN (2016) Committee on the Rights of the Child: Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Slovakia, CRC/C/SVK/CO/3-5, 20. July 2016, Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/838734?ln=en>

⁷¹ The results of a quantitative survey carried out on a sample of 3,420 pupils at 82 schools in Hungary published in Hajdu, T., Kertesi, G. & Kézdi, G. (2019). Inter-Ethnic Friendship and Hostility between Roma and non-Roma Students in Hungary: The Role of Exposure and Academic Achievement. In: B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, 19(1).

⁷² Amnesty International (2017) Lessons from discrimination, available at: <http://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Amnesty-report-Slovak-WEB.pdf>

was reached by the European Commission, which due to discrimination in education in 2015 initiated proceedings against the Slovak Republic for violation of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 of June 2000, establishing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (hereinafter referred to as the Racial Equality Directive).

The current legislation in the so-called The Education Act prohibits discrimination and segregation, but lacks methodological guidelines for preventing segregation, accessible to all stakeholders. There is still an over-representation of MRC students in special education, we continue to stumble upon ethnically homogeneous classes, schools, separate pavilions, floors, classrooms, etc. We continue to witness the outflow of non-Roma children (a phenomenon known in the international literature as "white flight") or discrimination by teachers. In an effort to prevent the outflow of non-Roma pupils, some schools approach the creation of separate Roma and non-Roma classes, thus contributing to the deepening of residential segregation.⁷³ At the level of pre-school and primary education, the so-called Roma schools appear as a result of demographic development in a particular municipality. However, in the case of primary schools attended exclusively by Roma pupils, this may also be a direct consequence of the way school districts are defined.

The specification of the catchment areas of the primary schools established by the municipality is in the competence of individual municipalities. If there are excluded Roma localities in the municipality, or the Roma are concentrated in some parts of the municipality, in practice there are cases where the municipality adapts a seemingly neutral administrative decisions on school districts, which either contributes to the existing spatial segregation or even deepens it.⁷⁴ Although segregation in education is prohibited, there is currently no binding and enforceable legislation requiring municipalities to prevent the possible reproduction of spatial segregation when designing school districts.⁷⁵ Tendency to set aside Roma pupils in separate classes or schools may also be the result of a lack of other tools and insufficient funding for support measures.

In the next strategic period, it will be necessary to identify and eliminate the occurrence of segregation practices, e.g. through the implementation of desegregation projects, the abolition of special classes in primary schools, or the regulation of the number of pupils in F-departments, as well as preventing spatial and social segregation by methodically guiding the creation of school districts on the desegregation principle, e.g. so-called controlled choice. Given the demographic situation in municipalities and micro-regions with a high Roma population and the realization of the right (mainly non-Roma parents) to freely choose a school, which leads to their outflow from schools with a high proportion of Roma children, effective segregation in education is not only possible at individual municipalities, but it is necessary to involve schools and other actors in a larger area in this process.

The desegregation of Roma children needs to be addressed through legislative measures and with a wider goal of streamlining the school network. The state has a duty to support the process of desegregation (elimination of existing segregation) in education and at the same time to strictly prevent the creation of new segregation through preventive measures.

⁷³ Hapalová Drál, 2011, OSF: Regulation and management of the school system. RAFAEL, V. (ed.) Answers to questions of (de) segregation of Roma pupils in the education system in Slovakia.

⁷⁴ OSF, Huttová, Gyarfášová, Sekulová, 2012: Roma Segregation or Inclusion in Education: A Choice for Schools?

⁷⁵ Hapalová Drál, 2011, OSF: Regulation and management of the school system. RAFAEL, V. (ed.) Answers to questions of (de) segregation of Roma pupils in the education system in Slovakia.

EU rules do not allow investment from EU funds in projects that would create new or deepen existing segregation and, conversely, encourage investment in desegregation solutions.⁷⁶

In order for desegregation to be possible and schools to be able to provide the necessary support to MRC children, it is necessary to prepare them for this through the implementation of inclusive education, to which Slovakia has committed itself through international human rights treaties, but an inclusive education strategy has not yet the concept of "integration". Insufficient inclusion in education translates into significant differences in employment. Among the EU countries, Slovakia has the highest unemployment rate by people with low education, up to 29%.⁷⁷

At the same time, it is necessary to address the specific problem of excessive and unjustified placement of Roma children in special education, which is one of the tools of ethnic segregation and which, in addition, excludes victims from further education and stigmatizes lifelong learning. Increasing access to mainstream education for MRC pupils needs to be done through the development of new diagnostic tools, taking into account the cultural and linguistic specificities of MRC children, monitoring diagnostics and re-diagnostics, and moving children with mild mental disabilities A into mainstream education. The potential for the implementation of these measures is 1.8 mil. EUR from the state budget, while the financial space for their implementation in the first year of 2021 is 0.2 mil. EUR.⁷⁸ In the case of secondary school graduates, it is necessary to enable them to complete ISCED 2 and thus increase their chances of continuing their studies or finding a job.

Professional capacities

The lack of pedagogical and professional staff and helping professions, lacking the skills needed to educate pupils from different socio-cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic backgrounds, remains a long-term problem. The findings also confirm that undergraduate and in-service teacher training do not sufficiently prepare them to work with MRC children without discrimination. The employment of teaching assistants who speak the Romani language is recommended, but not systematically and financially supported. Their financial sustainability depends on the education allowance for the students from socially disadvantaged background, which is insufficient to cover the school's professional staff and material costs and covers only about 39% of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.⁷⁹ In order to increase the number of pedagogical and professional staff and auxiliary educators for work with students from the MRC, it is necessary to focus on measures related to their qualifications, or legislative and methodological specification of their activities in the educational process. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure their continuous and systematic financing by broadening the definition of the socially disadvantaged background and reviewing its calculation. In increasing the quality of work of pedagogical and professional staff and helping professions, it is necessary to implement programs of undergraduate, continuous and innovative education focused on various aspects of improving competencies in working with students from MRC. The potential for the implementation of these measures is 82.3 mil. EUR from

⁷⁶ European Union (2015) Guidance for Member States on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation, EGESIF_15-0024-01, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/the-matic_guidance_fiche_segregation_en.pdf

⁷⁷ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAaF SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 9.

⁷⁸ Data generated from the table of financing value measures from savings on the state budget within Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAaF SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 13.

⁷⁹ To cover a full-time assistant, the school needs 160 pupils from the SEN, with such many children being found in only about 7% of schools in Slovakia. Figure from 2018, estimated according to the revision of expenditure.

the state budget, while the financial space for their implementation of measures in the first year of 2021 represents 12.8 mil. EUR.⁸⁰ This can also be increased by EU funds.⁸¹

Development of Roma identity, language, art and culture

The right to education in the language of national minorities is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, but the teaching of the Romani language or in the Romani language is provided by only 2 state schools in Slovakia. The reason is the persistent absence of qualified teachers who speak the Romani language, the absence of textbooks or methodological materials, and the absence of undergraduate programs of future teachers to prepare students from MRC,⁸² and especially the lack of institutional and financial support for Romani language research and professional development, including protection of Romani language rights and the right to use the Romani language in official communication.

At present, the possibility of teaching the Romani language is based only on the demand of parents.⁸³ Therefore, it is necessary to formalize the teaching of the Slovak language as a second language and introduce a bilingual approach to teaching, including innovative methods of teaching the Romani language and improving Slovak language skills. National education in Slovakia is deeply underestimated financially and personally. We register one state and five private secondary schools,⁸⁴ of which provide the opportunity to graduate from the Romani language. Targeted state intervention in the development of national education outside the context of "social disadvantage" is needed to support the national minority. The Romani language should not be only an "auxiliary language" in working with children with weaker knowledge of the Slovak language, but a full-fledged language of a national minority and as such deserves the attention and support of the state, especially when linguists draw attention to its vulnerability.⁸⁵ Scientific, educational and research activities in the field in support of the Romani language, culture and history, building research institutes and scientific teams and their financial support are all needed.

A common feature of all bearers of the culture of the Roma national minority is financial instability, which affects institutional stability or the quality and reach of cultural content. Entities can apply for grants and subsidies from Minority Culture Fund, which was established in 2017 by Act No. 138/2017 Coll.⁸⁶ In the area of media support, we recommend creating a system of stable financial support for national television broadcasting and the national press, in addition to grants and subsidies. As a part of the strategic planning of state support for minorities, it is necessary to reconsider the source of information on the number of members

⁸⁰ Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 13.

⁸¹ Data generated from the table of financing value measures from savings on the state budget within Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 13.

⁸² There is only one accredited study program of the Romani language of pedagogical specialization at the University of Prešov and one program focused on romology at UKF in Nitra.

⁸³ Due to insufficient information and the absence of teachers able to provide education in the Romani language, only two schools (Kremnica and Košice) provided teaching for 203 pupils, see: Ministry of Finance of the SR, IEP MESRaS SR, ISP MESAAf SR, Revision of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Final Report (2020), pg. 70.

⁸⁴ Jozef Adamovič Conservatory in Košice, Private Gymnasium Z.J.Mall in Kremnica, Private Pedagogical and Social Academy in Košice, Private Music and Drama Conservatory in Košice, Private Music and Drama Conservatory in Rimavská Sobota and Private Secondary Vocational School Biela voda.

⁸⁵ Evaluation Report of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups on the Support of Cultures of National Minorities, on the State of National Education and on the Use of Languages of National Minorities for the Period 2017 - 2018, pg. 97, available at: <https://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/spravy-a-koncepcne-materialy/>.

⁸⁶ The text of the law is available at: <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2017-138> ; more information available at: <https://www.kult-minor.sk/sk/fond/charakteristika-fondu>

of the Roma national minority, which currently does not correspond to the real population of Roma origin in Slovakia.⁸⁷

Global goal

By 2030, ensure equal access for Roma, specifically MRCs, to quality mainstream education from birth to employment, with an emphasis on the application of desegregation and inclusive measures in the educational process at all levels of education.

Indicator 1.

Proportion of Roma children aged 0-3 participating in early care programs

Starting value: 1.3% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 30%

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Roma children aged 3-6 in pre-primary education

Default value: 25% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 75%

Indicator 3.

Proportion of Roma children aged 6-15 attending a school in which most of their classmates are Roma.

Default value: 60% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 30%

Indicator 4.

Proportion of pupils from MRC leaving education early (18 - 24).

Default value: 72% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 36%

Indicator 5.

Proportion of MRC pupils aged 7-16 attending primary or secondary school who repeated the year.

Default value: 22% (EU SILK MRC 2018)

Target value: 11%

Indicator 6.

Proportion of Roma aged 20-24 with completed upper secondary education broken down by sex.

Baseline: 30% men, 21% women (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

⁸⁷ Data from the Atlas of Roma Communities suggest that the Roma are the largest ethnic group in Slovakia and their number is estimated at 405,000, while in the last census in 2011 only 105,000 stated Roma nationality.

Target: 45% for men and 40% for women

Indicator 7.

Proportion of Roma over the age of 16 who felt discriminated against in the last 12 months because of their ethnicity in contact with school institutions (as a parent / guardian or as a pupil / student).

Default value: 7% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 3%

Sub-objectives

Sub-objective 1: To improve the school results of children and pupils from MRC from the period of early care to employment.

Sub-objective 2: To increase the number and quality of pedagogical, professional and auxiliary staff in the education of children and pupils from MRC.

Sub-objective 3: To ensure sufficient capacity of kindergartens and primary schools with the presence of children and pupils from MRC.

Sub-objective 4: Systematically prevent, mitigate and eliminate manifestations of segregation in the educational process at all levels of the education system.

Sub-objective 5: To increase the inclusiveness of schools through systematic and methodical support of individualization of the educational process.

Sub-objective 6: To develop the Roma national identity and to support the realization of the rights of the Roma as a national minority, with special regard to language rights.

HOUSING priority area

Starting points

Significant differences persist between the Roma and the majority population in the quality of their housing.⁸⁸ Housing remains an area where there are huge differences between the majority population, the Roma living among the majority population and the MRC, especially the segregated, so-called "Roma settlements" and urban ghettos. Improving the quality of housing has a direct positive impact on education, on improving the preparation for a job market, acquisition of a job, as well as a direct link to health, and a positive effect on overall social inclusion. Improving the living conditions of people from the MRC - whether by acquiring new housing or by reconstructing and legalizing their existing technically suitable housing - has a demonstrable positive impact on social mobility.

In connection with the fulfilment of the objectives defined in the previous strategy, the national project Support for Land Settlement in Marginalized Roma Communities was implemented in the past period. The settlement and legalization of legal relations to the land has other positive effects on increasing not only the quality but also the safety and security of housing. In pursuing the objectives, non-discriminatory access to social housing, the interconnection of infrastructure and human resources, as well as the creation of preconditions for the further development of transitional housing, were also promoted. However, the differences in the quality and availability of housing when compared to the majority remain significant and emphasis needs to be placed on reducing these differences.

The most fundamental factors in the housing sector of the MRC are social exclusion and poverty, resulting in limited opportunities to secure housing without a significant external help and widespread discrimination in the housing market (including access to private and public rental housing, as well as buying housing) which narrows these possibilities even further. According to the EU-MIDIS II survey for the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2016, up to 8% of Roma in Slovakia have experienced housing discrimination in the past 12 months.⁸⁹

An extreme consequence of these factors is the existence of segregated settlements, lacking basic technical and civic amenities, the quality of housing and the environment is low and there are processes of so-called ghettoization with structural disadvantages to the lives of their inhabitants. At the same time, the existence of such settlements reproduces the negative media representation and public perception of the Roma in general. The state should therefore take an active approach to the residential desegregation and de-ghettoization of MRC settlements, while actively preventing the emergence of new segregated settlements, which are the result of both demographic and economic trends, but also conscious administrative and political decisions. The case law of the Slovak courts has confirmed the responsibility of the state for the use of public funds provided to local governments, which must not be used to create or deepen residential segregation.⁹⁰ On the

⁸⁸ European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2019) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia: Assessing Progress in Key Areas of the Strategy, pg. 8, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-slovakia-2018-eprint-fin-sk.pdf>

⁸⁹ EU-MIDIS II survey a Roma Integration Indicators Scoreboard 2011-2016, in: European Commission (2018) Mid-term evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. Final report, str. 47, available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a1e33b4f-17af-11e9-8d04-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁹⁰ For example, a valid court decision in the case of residential segregation (as a form of illegal discrimination) of the Roma in the town of Sabinov (the so-called "Telek" case): Decision in the case of eight plaintiffs represented by Kristína Babiaková the City of Sabinov and the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development, 25 C 192 / 2007-585, case no. 8107241252 of 15 June 2009, p. 2. For more information see: European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2019) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy

contrary, the state has an obligation to implement its strategic commitments on Roma housing.

The EU lays down detailed rules for investing in the EU housing funds in order to prevent illegal segregation and promote desegregation.⁹¹ Under these rules, desegregation solutions must always be sought - in the case of housing interventions, moving (at least part of) segregated settlements into an integrated settlement/environment. And only if such a solution is not objectively possible, investment in improving living conditions in segregated settlements should be sought; however, such investments must not deepen existing segregation and should not invest in the construction of new dwelling in segregated settlements. In addition, investments to improve living conditions in segregated settlements must include desegregation elements (e.g. relocation of at least some families to an integrated environment, community planning for gradual convergence and interconnection of segregated settlement and municipality) and / or be linked to desegregation in other areas (e.g. desegregation in education and the development of public services shared by the MRC and the majority population). At the same time, with regard to the case law⁹² of Slovak courts, it is not possible to implement separate public housing projects for the Roma and the majority population, but both groups should use joint social housing. Housing investment should reduce the gap between the Roma and the majority population and improve the MRC's access to public services (mainly education) and the labour market. In order to enable interventions aimed at desegregation and sustainability of results, it is necessary to support housing investment with interventions in other areas of inclusion - mainly increasing employment, debt relief, social work, support for education and rapprochement of Roma and majority municipalities.

The social exclusion of poor Roma also occurs as a result of forced evictions (most often related to the termination of tenancies or the illegality of housing), the consequences of which are due to the lack of affordable rental housing and the inability to secure housing - as the most expensive economic asset. Slovak law stipulates the obligation to provide alternative housing, accommodation or at least shelter only in certain defined cases. In many cases, such forced evictions lead to the worst forms of homelessness,⁹³ which have a devastating impact on people with disabilities and especially on children (thus threatening to be removed from their families as a result of evictions) and make social integration virtually impossible.

Inadequate housing also contributes to the riskiness of housing, especially in the event of natural disasters (fires, rains and subsequent floods), but also in epidemics and pandemics, where poor housing quality and overcrowding can cause a life threatening situations. Some of the excluded MRC settlements are located in areas that are not only unsatisfactory from an environmental point of view, but also directly dangerous. For this reason, the construction of dwellings in these localities is also illegal. Every year, we witness several, mostly local emergencies, in particular floods in MRC settlements located in floodplains or landslides, which cause extensive damage and are capable of devastating and completely destroying MRC dwellings in the affected area and causing damage to health and lives (e.g. Krompachy, Chminianske Jakubovany, Richnava). Many MRCs are exposed to increased air

for Roma Integration in Slovakia: Assessing Progress in Key Areas of the Strategy, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-slovakia-2018-eprint-fin-sk.pdf>

⁹¹ European Union (2015) Guidance for Member States on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation, EGESIF_15-0024-01, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/the-matic-guidance-fiche-segregation-en.pdf

⁹²E.g. Judgment of the Regional Court Prešov no. 13Co / 38/2017.

⁹³ Without a roof over your head (outside, in a dormitory) or without an apartment (in shelters, with relatives or acquaintances). See the ETHOS homelessness typology developed by the European Network of National Organizations Working with Homelessness (FEANTSA), available at: <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>

pollution by hazardous chemicals and particulate matter due to their dependence on solid fuel heating. The location of some MRCs in an environmentally unsatisfactory and hazardous environment is largely a historical heritage that needs to be addressed. It is necessary to prevent any further expansion of such settlements, in which the inhabitants often live in illegal, makeshift dwellings, without direct access to the basic elements of the sanitary and technical infrastructure.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which Slovakia faced since the beginning of 2020, only brought back the threat of the infectious diseases spreading in MRC settlements, which lack drinking water and safe waste disposal, and where people live in devastating material poverty in overcrowded dwellings. Adherence to epidemiological recommendations or regulations to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases are virtually impossible in such an environment.⁹⁴

For this reason, it is a vision of a global goal in the field of housing to eliminate significant inequalities in housing between members of marginalized Roma communities and the majority population of Slovakia. So that by 2030 all inhabitants of marginalized Roma communities, and thus all citizens and inhabitants of the Slovak Republic without distinction, have proper access to safe and drinking water. Direct and seamless access to drinking water should be the basic standard in the 21st century. The basic elements of the hygienic infrastructure (flushing toilet, shower, washbasin, etc.) in every household should also be a reasonable standard. Closely related to this challenge is the presumption that there will be a significant degree of legalization of technically compliant dwellings and the settlement of legal relations to land on which illegal dwellings of marginalized communities are located. Legalization of dwellings and land is also a prerequisite for the overall improvement of access to basic technical infrastructure and civic amenities, as well as for the fulfilment of other objectives contained in this Strategy. Settled property relations can also be the first step to the construction and implementation of sewerage (if it is built in the municipality), comprehensive electrification, public lighting and the necessary engineering networks, possibly e.g. also to introduce the possibility of connecting households to broadband internet. Insufficient level of computerization of households and their computer equipment in marginalized Roma communities during the pandemic proved to be one of the major obstacles, which reduced opportunities for distance learning in the home environment.

With regard to segregated settlements, the vision is to reduce the proportion of Roma living in segregated communities, as well as to reduce the total number of segregated settlements. It is undesirable that they be supported from public sources, e.g. rental housing projects implemented directly in a segregated community, or in its immediate vicinity, which would mean strengthening the segregation of a particular community. However, improving access to legal housing should be a priority. In connection to the construction of new rental housing of a lower standard, it is desirable that these flats not only provide the technical possibility of installing personal hygiene equipment, the possibility of installing a flush toilet or heat source, but that these are directly part of the apartment.

For better and faster access for medical and rescue vehicles, as well as for general reduction of differences in the quality and safety of housing between members of the MRC and the

⁹⁴ The results of a study from the USA "indicate that those who ... cannot work from home are at the highest risk of infection." ... "Most of those who tested positive live in households with 3 to 5 members (59.6%) or more than 5 members (28.8%). "(Fernandez, E., Weiler, N. (2020) Initial Results of Mission District COVID-19 Testing Announced Latinx Community, Men and Economically Vulnerable Are at Highest Risk, available at: <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/05/417356/initial-results-mission-district-covid-19-testing-announced>). Another study from the city of Toronto in Canada found that "the number of cases of COVID-19 is almost four times higher among people living in urban areas with a high level of overcrowding. The data also show that these are the same areas with a high concentration of poverty and racially homogeneous communities (Elliott S., Leon, S. (2020) Crowded housing and COVID-19: Impacts and solutions, Wellesley Institute, available at: <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/healthy-communities/crowded-housing-and-covid-19-impacts-and-solutions/>)

majority population, it is necessary to ensure that access to all MRCs is ensured on a properly paved road. It is also necessary to achieve regular removal and disposal of waste, the accumulation and non-disposal of which is a risk factor in terms of health, hygiene and safety.

Global goal

Elimination of inequalities between members of marginalized Roma communities and the majority population of Slovakia in housing and the combating discrimination of Roma in access to housing, including the elimination of residential segregation.

Indicator 1.

Proportion of Roma living in substandard housing.⁹⁵

Default value: 61% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 44%

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Roma living in households who do not have a minimum number of rooms as defined by Eurostat on household overcrowding.

Default value: 84% (FRA, EU MINIS II 2016)

Target value: 60%

Indicator 3.

Proportion of Roma living in households without running water directly in the abode.

Default value: 27% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 5%

Indicator 4.

Proportion of Roma living in segregated settlements in Slovakia of the total number of Roma living in the Slovak Republic.⁹⁶

Default value: 13.5% (Atlas 2019)

Target value: 8%

Indicator 5.

Proportion of Roma over the age of 18 who have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity in their housing search in the last 12 months.

Default value: 8% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 4%

⁹⁵ in particular: apartment too dark, leaking roof, damp walls / floor / foundations or rotting window frames / floors, missing shower or shower in the apartment, missing flush toilet in the apartment / house / dwelling: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2020-portfolio_of_indicators_working-paper_en.pdf

⁹⁶ Note: Living in municipalities included in the Atlas of Roma Communities.

Sub-objectives

Sub-objective 1: Reducing the number of illegal dwellings in MRC settlements.

Sub-objective 2: Improving the access to and use of basic technical infrastructure and civic amenities in MRC settlements.

Sub-objective 3: Increasing the quality of housing in MRC settlements.

Sub-objective 4: Increasing the security of Roma housing.

Sub - objective 5: Reducing the residential segregation of the Roma.

Sub-objective 6: Reducing discrimination against Roma in housing.

EMPLOYMENT priority area

Starting points

Despite the fact that the Slovak Republic has one of the largest Roma populations in Europe (both in terms of absolute numbers and share of the total population), there is not enough information about it regarding their economic integration. Research focused on the experience of people from the MRC environment in the labour market is limited by the low quality of ethnic identifiers in publicly available data. The employment of people from the MRC environment significantly and in the long run lags behind the employment of the majority population, and the differences in the employment of women and men are also more pronounced.

According to a study by the Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI), most of the almost half a million Roma minority in Slovakia live in poverty and face social exclusion. According to sample surveys, almost half (48%) of Roma over the age of 16 are unemployed and only one in five reports employment or self-employment as their main economic activity.⁹⁷ For the people from MRC, aged 20-64, the situation is even more alarming - only 20% are employed.⁹⁸

The Roma population suffers from a high risk of poverty and social exclusion - according to the aforementioned CELSI study, the poverty rate of the Roma in Slovakia reached 87% compared to 13% in the general population. Poverty combined with demographic trends (multiple families with a higher number of dependent household members) and poverty associated with low-skilled or low-paid jobs exacerbates the high unemployment rate.

The Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia⁹⁹ in 2019 assessed progress in key areas of the Strategy. If we look at the employment of youth belonging to NEET, the share of young Roma, and especially young Roma in the total number of unemployed aged 16-25, increased significantly between 2011 and 2016. In its report on the implementation of NRIS in Slovakia in 2017, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (MoLSAF SR)¹⁰⁰ states that there are no mentoring programs that would facilitate the transition of school graduates to the labour market. Although the MoLSAF SR published a call to support the creation of such services, none of the supported projects focused on mentoring, scholarship support or second chance programs. ESF funds financed the National Project "Education of Young Job Seekers", which focused on three activities: retraining (REPAS +); support for the development of key job

⁹⁷ Kahanec, M.; Kováčová, L.; Polačková, Z.; Sedláková, M. (2020) The social and employment situation of Roma communities in Slovakia, Study for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, Luxembourg, 2020, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/Reg-DATA/etudes/STUD/2020/648778/IPOL_STU\(2020\)648778_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/Reg-DATA/etudes/STUD/2020/648778/IPOL_STU(2020)648778_EN.pdf). The study presents data from the sample surveys of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma - Selected Findings (EU-MIDIS II, 2016), available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey-roma-selected-findings>

⁹⁸ The publication "EU SILC 2018 - Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion" is an analytical publication that provides an overview of the basic indicators of poverty and social exclusion, the data source of which is the EU SILC 2018 sample survey, available at: <https://www.minv.sk/?zber-dat-od-ministerstiev-a-ostatnych-organov-statnej-a-verejnej-spravu>

⁹⁹ European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2019) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia: Evaluation of Progress in Key Areas of the Strategy, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-slovakia-2018-eprint-fin-sk.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Ministry of the Interior, Report monitoring the implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration until 2020 in 2017, which the Government of the Slovak Republic took note of on 18 September 2018; available on: <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=27773>. (Report monitoring the application of the NRIS).

skills (KOMPAS +); and direct financial assistance for those NEETs who either started their own business or were able to find work.

The Slovak Republic has so far redistributed significant funding for NEET financial support and also provides direct financial support to long-term disadvantaged jobseekers through contributions submitted by active labour market policy legislation across national projects.

The global target and sub-targets of the 2030 Employment Strategy reflect the most significant obstacles to the employment of people from the MRC, also identified in the final report of the "Value for Money" project implemented by the Ministry of Finance SR.¹⁰¹ SILC_MRK 2018¹⁰²:

- A significant barrier to the employment of people from the MRC is low educational attainment (see above "1st Priority Area Education"). In comparison of the MRC and the majority population, a significant difference can be observed between the results on the labour market according to the achieved education.
- The share of young Roma from the MRC who do not work and are not part of further education (NEET) is 68%, compared to the national average of 10.3%. The worst situation is with young Roma women in Slovakia, of whom 76% are considered NEETs compared to 52% young Roma men.¹⁰³
- Employment of people from the MRC environment is characterized by high volatility, which indicates a more frequent occurrence of shorter and seasonal contracts.
- The system of activation by local municipal services (hereinafter referred to as "activation work") within active labour market measures is not effective in today's setting in terms of direct impact on reducing unemployment. The evaluation of this tool suggests that activation work does not increase the chances of employment in the open labour market, as it contains mostly unskilled activities without further superstructure, such as street sweeping, garbage collection, snow removal, etc. Almost half of the unemployed Roma take part in activation work, which often provides the Roma with the only available state social support income, and this contribution is provided only for a limited period of time, up to a maximum of 6 months. However, these programs do not improve relevant skills for participants who are unable to escape the unemployment trap and find work in the open labour market.
- Support for the employment of residents receiving assistance in material need (including people from MRC) through tools other than activation work is relatively low.
- New opportunities for socially and medically disadvantaged job seekers are provided by Act No. 112/2018 Coll. on the Social Economy and Integrative Social Enterprises and on the Amendment of Certain Acts through the introduction of support for integrative social enterprises. This type of support consists of employing disadvantaged or vulnerable people. Unlike activation work, working in an integration company offers a regular employment relationship and more room to develop skills that are valuable to potential employers. A new tool in the financing of integrative social enterprises is the employer's contribution, which will support its employees in finding employment in the open labour market.

¹⁰¹ Value for Money Unit of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, Institute of Education Policy of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic and Institute of Social Policy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Value for Money: Revision of Expenditures, available at: <https://www.mfsr.sk/sk/financie/hodnota-za-peniaze/revizia-vydavkov/revizia-vydavkov.html>

¹⁰² EU SILC_MRK 2018, publication: OPGSRRC (2020) Income and living conditions in marginalized Roma communities: Selected indicators from the EU SILC MRK 2018 survey, available at: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/EU%20SILC_MRK_2018_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰³ EU SILC_MRK 2018.

One of the other reasons for the poorer performance of MRCs in the labour market is discrimination. According to the aforementioned CELSI study, which refers to data from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), up to 22% of Roma in Slovakia have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity in the last 12 months, and discrimination most often when looking for work.¹⁰⁴ The findings of the above-mentioned Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia¹⁰⁵ show that there has been a long-term lack of support and counselling services after a jobseeker enters the labour market, especially for the long-term unemployed facing specific challenges. In addition, we rarely encounter the activities of employment offices, which are specifically aimed at the unemployed living in MRC settlements, especially women. The evaluation of the updated NRIS Action Plan¹⁰⁶ shows that there is a lack of targeted initiatives that would create opportunities for Roma women facing multiple discrimination in their job search.

A fundamental change is also the amendment to Act No. 7/2005 Coll. on Bankruptcy and Restructuring and on Amendments to Certain Acts effective as of 1 March 2017, when the principle of personal debt relief began to apply, through which natural persons - debtors, can legally get rid of their debts. This adjustment helped debtors from an unfavourable financial situation in a relatively short period of time to eliminate the debt trap, with special regard to the need to provide legal and social advice, protection of basic necessities, especially housing, etc. This change has had a major impact on the employment situation, as it directly promotes legal employment, which has an impact on employment security and later provides security for the state's social network in the event of unemployment, accidents and, later, pensions.

Global goal

Improve the employability and increase the employment of Roma, specifically the MRC, by creating opportunities leading to their employment.

Indicator 1.

Proportion of persons from MRC (men and women) aged 16-24 who are not employed and are no longer in the educational process.

Default value: 68% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 40%

Indicator 2.

Proportion of women from MRC aged 16-24 who are not employed and are no longer in the educational process.

¹⁰⁴ Kahanec, M.; Kováčová, L.; Polačková, Z.; Sedláková, M. (2020) The social and employment situation of Roma communities in Slovakia, Study for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, Luxembourg, 2020, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/Reg-Data/etudes/STUD/2020/648778/IPOL_STU\(2020\)648778_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/Reg-Data/etudes/STUD/2020/648778/IPOL_STU(2020)648778_EN.pdf). The study presents data from sample surveys of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma – Selected findings (EU-MIDIS II, 2016), available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey-roma-selected-findings>

¹⁰⁵ European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2019) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia: Evaluation of Progress in Key Areas of the Strategy, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-slovakia-2018-eprint-fin-sk.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ An updated Action Plan in the field of education for the years 2019-2020, which is part of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the Integration of Roma until 2020, available at: <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Negotiation/963>.

Default value: 76% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 44%

Indicator 3.

Proportion of persons from MRC (men and women) aged 20-64 who are employed (employment rate).

Default value: 20% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 45%

Indicator 4.

Proportion of women from MRC aged 20-64 who are employed (employment rate).

Default value: 12% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 41%

Indicator 5.

The difference in the employment rate between women and men from MRC aged 20-64.

Default value: 16% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 8%

Indicator 6.

Proportion of Roma over the age of 16 who have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity in their job search in the last 12 months.

Default value: 22% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 11%

Sub-objectives

Sub-objective 1: Ensure equal opportunities for the MRC, increase the necessary skills and gain practical experience for the transition from education to the labour market.

Sub-objective 2: To increase the efficiency, quality of provision and expand the availability of public and non-public employment services and active labour market measures for the MRC.

Sub-objective 3: Create conditions for the support of MRC employment with employers, with an emphasis on employers in the social economy.

Sub-objective 4: Reduce labour market discrimination and other manifestations of anti-Roma racism.

HEALTH priority area

Starting points

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is not "only" the absence of illness or disability, but a key determinant of quality of life, a prerequisite for self-realization and productive life. The WHO definition approaches the individual holistically - health is a cross-ministerial value that relates to many sectors, not just health. It cannot be separated from the environment in which it is formed. Therefore, interventions in this area should concern not only individuals but also the environment.

Health is the most important value of human life. Promoting the well-being of all citizens throughout their life cycle from birth to death leads to an increase in life expectancy and longevity, which can bring economic, social and individual benefits. Therefore, supporting measures to significantly improve the health and well-being of the population, reduce health inequalities, strengthen public health and ensure people-centred health care systems should be a priority of government policies. The level of health in the European Union has improved recently.¹⁰⁸

Looking at the relevant results from several analyses, this is the case in Slovakia as well. Although, according to the analysis, Slovakia lags behind the EU average in several areas, such as life expectancy.¹⁰⁹ However, previous studies show that the health indicators are significantly worse, when compared to the majority population. Roma facing social exclusion suffer more from infectious and chronic diseases. Life expectancy at birth from a marginalized Roma population in Slovakia in the years 2006 to 2015 was almost 6 years shorter compared to the majority population. Infant mortality is almost three times higher than the rest of the population (the number of deaths under one year per 1,000 live births is 12.3 compared to 4.2 in the rest of the population). According to analyses by the Institute of Financial Policy, the infant mortality rate in the MRC environment varies between districts. Furthermore, the analyses show that people from the MRC environment use health services by a third less than the majority population.¹¹⁰

Health inequalities are the result of several determinants of health. According to the framework for the assessment of the health component in the national strategies for Roma integration, proposed by the WHO,¹¹¹ it is necessary to address the individual determinants of health. Key determinants of health include the environment, which also advises socioeconomic determinants, lifestyle and access to health care. The main social determinants of health include education, housing, employment conditions, income and social support - the degree of their quality contributes to health inequalities between groups of the population. These areas are interconnected, so solving one does not necessarily lead to effective or sustainable results. If disadvantaged Roma do not receive sufficient education, it will be more difficult for them to find employment. Insufficient care for the health of Roma children will have a negative impact on their development, learning outcomes and school attendance. Inadequate housing can result in poor health, disrupt the

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.who.int/>

¹⁰⁸ State of Health in the EU – Slovakia: Health profile of the country 2019.

¹⁰⁹ State of Health in the EU – Slovakia: Health profile of the country 2019.

¹¹⁰ Institute of Financial Policy (2018) Roma inclusion is also needed in health care.

¹¹¹ Potential Criteria for the Review of the Health Component of the National Roma Integration Strategies, 2012.

education cycle and reduce labour productivity. Low incomes can prevent families from securing good housing, accessing health care and creating an environment in which children can study and develop healthily.

The global goal of the 2030 Strategy for Health priority area is to reduce health inequalities among the Roma and the general population of the Slovak Republic. This goal is based on the new EU Strategic Framework for the Roma.¹¹² In the field of health, it recommends reducing the average life expectancy between the general and Roma populations by 50% by 2030; according to the strategic framework, the difference in life expectancy between the general population and the Roma in Europe is 10.4 (women) resp. 10.2 years (men). Separate sub-objectives are devoted to individual determinants.

Data

The first sub-objective, which has a special position as a prerequisite for measuring the fulfilment of global and sub-objectives, stands out from the structure of determinants. The collection, evaluation and publication of relevant data is needed to monitor the needs and measure the impact of interventions. By fulfilling the first sub-objective, decisions or measures will be taken to compensate for the differences in health status between the MRC and the general population based on evidence.

Material prerequisites necessary from the point of view of public health

Poorer health is the result of poor living conditions and limited access to basic infrastructure - inadequate access to drinking water and sanitation. Effective programs should be focused on improving the living conditions and infrastructure of Roma settlements.¹¹³ Although living conditions - especially access to drinking water, the use of sewers or septic tanks and the non-presence of health threats, such as landfills near dwellings - are key pillars in the health strategy, the objectives associated with them (including indicators to measure the achievement of these objectives), are listed in Priority Area 2 Housing.

Lifestyle and prevention

Poor information and lack of education contribute (in addition to discrimination and self-exclusion) to less frequent use of health services.¹¹⁴ The EU Strategic Framework for the Roma includes several process indicators in its health recommendations: awareness campaigns and programs, participation in prevention screenings with special attention to prevention in pregnancy and in children, or vaccination of vulnerable groups.

Healthcare

Improving the effective availability of health services for the MRC is also part of the current EU Strategic Framework for the Roma. According to reported health care in the public health insurance system, Roma use health services by a third less than the majority.¹¹⁵ In addition to the factors mentioned above, discrimination by some health professionals is a barrier. An

¹¹² European Commission (2020) EU Roma Strategic Framework on equality, inclusion and participation, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_en

¹¹³ Belák A. (2015) Segregated Roma and health policies: ethical and practical contradictions.

¹¹⁴ Belák A. (2015) Segregated Roma and health policies: ethical and practical contradictions.

¹¹⁵ Institute of Financial Policy (2018) Roma inclusion is also needed in health care; Belák A. (2015) Segregated Roma and health policies: ethical and practical contradictions.

additional barrier to accessibility is, for example, travel costs or cultural and linguistic differences. Based on data from the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, only about 53% of the MRC population has access to an outpatient clinic for adults within 2 km. If a paediatric outpatient clinic is available, this is 44%. On the one hand, there is a need to raise health literacy awareness by implementing effective programs and procedures for MRC members, and on the other hand, there is a need to raise the awareness of health professionals to acquire the communication skills necessary for smooth, sensitive and clinically effective health care delivery.

The differences in health status between the Roma and the general population lead to the need to ensure a healthy lifestyle, disease prevention and equal access to health services, thus eliminating discrimination against the Roma in access to health care. With these sub-objectives, the strategy aims to meet the main objective of reducing health inequalities between the Roma and the general population.

The vision of the global goal is to improve the health status of the Roma population by influencing the determinants of health so as to eliminate the differences between the Roma and the general population.

Both the global target and the sub-targets of the 2030 Strategy are based on the targets of the previous 2020 Strategy, which were only partially implemented. Despite repeated ambitions to establish a system for monitoring health inequalities and health conditions, goals of this system have not been met.¹¹⁶ Therefore, these objectives have been reformulated, with the aim to be in line with WHO methodological recommendations.

Global goal

Reduction of health inequalities (in all areas) among the Roma, specifically the MRC, and the general population of the Slovak Republic.

Indicator 1.

The difference in life expectancy at birth between MRC and the general population.

Baseline: based on EU SILC_MRK 2020 survey

Target value: reduction by one third

Indicator 2.

Identified areas of major health inequalities between the MRC and the general population.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of Roma over the age of 16 who found themselves in a situation where they needed a medical examination or treatment and were not provided during the last 12 months.

Starting value: 4.4% (EU SILC_MRC 2018)

Target value: 3%

¹¹⁶ Belák A.: Health in External evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration until 2020, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Charles University, 2019, available at: http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romo-via/np_docs/np_mah/Externe_hodnotenie_Strategie_AP2016_2018.pdf

Indicator 4.

Proportion of Roma over the age of 16 who have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity in accessing health care in the last 12 months.

Default value: 11% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 5%

Sub-objectives

Sub-objective 1: To measure the differences in health status between the MRC and the general population that can be used in setting health policies.

Sub-objective 2: Ensuring the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and disease prevention in MRC settlements.

Sub-objective 3: Ensuring equal access to healthcare provision for MRCs.

COMBATING ANTI-ROMA RACISM AND PROMOTING PARTICIPATION priority area

Starting points

Racism and prejudice against the Roma persist in Slovakia; the people of Slovakia show one of the highest rates of anti-Roma attitudes of all EU countries, and the trend is deteriorating over time.¹¹⁷ Various opinion polls examining general attitudes and individual experiences suggest that discrimination against minorities is still highly tolerated across our society. Even more serious than racism and discrimination at the individual level, we must consider the fact that discrimination or even open violence against the Roma is committed by public authorities such as municipalities¹¹⁸ or the police.¹¹⁹

Manifestations of racism and discrimination are encountered by Roma (or those who are considered Roma, regardless of their subjective identification - typically, for example, foreigners who have physical anthropological traits stereotypically associated with their Roma ethnicity), regardless of their socio-economic status. This priority area therefore concerns not only the MRC, but all those who are or may be victims of anti-Roma racism and discrimination.

The combating anti-Roma racism as well as the promotion of participation were not specified in the 2020 Strategy. The anti-discrimination activities resulting from the 2020 Strategy have in most cases been assessed¹²⁰ as insufficient with the absence of cooperation from the relevant ministries and a sufficient allocation of financial resources. The evaluation also suggests that it would be appropriate to use not only quantitative but also qualitative indicators to assess progress in this area.

The vision of the priority area under the 2030 Strategy is, above all, to reduce cases of anti-Roma racism as much as possible and across all areas of society (education, housing, employment and health). The combating anti-Roma racism can only be more effective if the legislation is applicable in practice and at the same time the public's confidence in law enforcement in this area is strengthened. An important part of the combating anti-Roma racism is the formation of public opinion on the negatives of racism, stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour. Potential victims as well as potential perpetrators need to be informed of the criminality of similar acts. The position of victims of anti-Roma racism also needs to be strengthened.

¹¹⁷ FRA (2018) A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion, pg.18., available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-anti-gypsyism-barrier-roma-inclusion_en.pdf

¹¹⁸ For example, a valid court decision in the case of residential segregation (as a form of illegal discrimination) of the Roma in the town of Sabinov (the so-called "Telek" case): Decision in the case of eight plaintiffs represented by Kristína Babiaková the City of Sabinov and the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development, 25 C 192 / 2007-585, case no. 8107241252 of 15 June 2009, pg. 2. For more information see: European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2019) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia: Assessing Progress in Key Areas of the Strategy, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-slovakia-2018-eprint-fin-sk.pdf>

¹¹⁹ In recent years, there have been several cases of disproportionate police intervention, or even disproportionate violence and ill-treatment against Roma. See for example for more information. European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2018) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia: Focusing on the Structural and Horizontal Assumptions of its Successful Implementation, pg. 37 et seq., Available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-slovakia-2017-eprint-fin-sk.pdf>

¹²⁰ External evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration until 2020. December 2019. Available at: http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/np_docs/np_mah/Externe_hodnotenie_Strategie_AP2016_2018.pdf

Anti-discrimination

The central legal regulation concerning the application of the principle of equal treatment is Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on the Amendment of Certain Acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “Anti-Discrimination Act”). Its essence is to regulate the principle of equal treatment in defined areas, inter alia on the grounds of belonging to a national or ethnic group and national or social origin, as well as the creation of legal remedies in the event of a breach of this principle.

In 2016, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a report from the EU Survey on Minorities and Discrimination (EU-MIDIS II), according to which up to 54% of Roma in Slovakia have experienced discrimination on the grounds of their ethnicity in some areas: 53% of respondents encountered discrimination in finding work, 44% in access to public or private services, 30% in housing and 16% in education.¹²¹ Recent data show a persistent situation and report a high level of discrimination against the population of Roma origin. According to the FRA's 2020 report, almost 49% of Roma in the EU face high levels of discrimination and almost two-thirds of respondents (61%) believe that discrimination against Roma is widespread in their country.¹²² Despite widespread discrimination, victims rarely report such cases. In the 2016 FRA survey, only 18% of Roma respondents said they had reported discrimination.

In the fight against discrimination, existing legislative instruments need to be strengthened so that they are as effective as possible in practice. Care must be taken to ensure that legal mechanisms are properly implemented and that their belief in the enforceability of their rights and their willingness to deal with discrimination in individual cases are addressed, as Roma have to overcome higher barriers to access to justice than the majority population. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen institutions that provide legal assistance to victims of discrimination with special treatment for women and children.

Anti-Roma racism

Anti-Roma racism¹²³ is defined as a type of racist classification of Roma who, through this racist classification, are stigmatized as "Gypsies" in order to fabricate false justification and legitimacy for their dehumanization, discrimination, exploitation and the possibility of perpetrating violence against them. Anti-Roma racism creates non-existent, misleading and negative descriptions, characteristics and characteristics, which are based on:

- Allegedly a common form of physical appearance;
- Homogenising and generalizing social, mental and character traits (anti-social, criminality, high birth rate, poor hygiene, poverty, superstition, primitivism, tribal kinship, nomadism, music / dancing in the blood, detachment, etc.);
- Essentialization of this common form of physical appearance and the mentioned social, mental and character traits for the whole ethnic group.

Thus, anti-Roma racism is not based on real life and negative personal experiences and it is not a consequence of Roma life, but it uses historical forms of discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes and considers a common form of physical appearance and social, mental and

¹²¹ FRA (2016) Second European Union Survey on Minorities and Discrimination, Roma - Selected Results, available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/sk/publication/2020/druh-y-prieskum-europskej-unie-tykajuci-sa-mensin-diskriminacie-romovia-vybrane>

¹²² FRA (2020) Fundamental Rights Report, available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/fundamental-rights-report-2020>.

¹²³The term "antigypsyism" (anti-gypsyism) is also used in international literature and documents.

character traits as essential or innate in every Roma. This means that even if some of the above descriptions or characteristics could be applied to a member of the majority (e.g. crime, poor hygiene, and poverty), the social situation of this member of the majority would not be understood as his innate characteristic, as is the case in the case of the Roma. For this reason, anti-Roma racism is a type of racist categorization, claiming that the Roma collectively share a different racial background that is not influenced by any form of socialization, upbringing and education, or by any social, societal and financial measures. Anti-Roma racism attributes an irreversible biological (racial) fate to the Roma from which it is impossible to escape. At the same time, this form of ideology argues that the Roma are not able to integrate into society precisely because of their innate qualities.¹²⁴

Racist attitudes are very widespread in Slovakia. The research findings of the Slovak Academy of Sciences from 2019 show that 80% of respondents previously agreed with the claims that Roma in Slovakia have undeserved benefits and use the social system, and almost two thirds of respondents tended to identify with openly negative stereotypes about Roma. Less than one third of respondents expressed prosocial emotions towards the Roma, but 51% felt that the Roma posed a threat to Slovakia's national identity.¹²⁵ Equally worrying is a recent survey which showed that some teachers have difficulty distinguishing between trustworthy and manipulative media, which produce false, misleading and hateful information about minorities, including Jews, Roma or LGBTI.¹²⁶

At its worst, anti-Roma racism is a crime - whether in the form of hate speech, such as defamation of the nation, race and beliefs (Section 423 of the Criminal Code), incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred (Section 424 Criminal Code) against ethnic groups or individuals because of their ethnicity, or other hate crimes. The Criminal Code considers hatred towards an ethnic group when committing a crime as a special motive (Section 140 letter e) of the Criminal Code) and to the perpetrators of such motivated crimes also face stricter sanctions in order to emphasize their seriousness.

In addition, with relevance to the combating anti-Roma racism, the Criminal Code also penalizes segregation and widespread and systematic discrimination against a group of persons on the basis of their ethnicity (Section 424a of the Criminal Code - apartheid and group discrimination), as well as the production, possession and promotion of extremist material (Sections 422a-422c of the Criminal Code), establishing, supporting and promoting of a movement aimed at the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms and expressions of sympathy for such movements (Sections 421-422 of the Criminal Code) or the denial and approval of Holocaust, crimes of political regimes and crimes against humanity (Section 422d of the Criminal Code).

Given the persistent state of the society, racism and prejudice need to be combated systematically. It is important to adopt a definition of anti-Roma racism and use it in strategic government documents. At the same time, there is a need to educate children,

¹²⁴ Hund, D. W. (1999) Racism, pg. 91-92; Winckel, Ä. (2002): Antiziganismus. Rassismus gegen Roma und Sinti im vereinigten Deutschland, s. 10, 11, 16, 148; Arad, J. (2006) Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka; Council of Europe Information Office (2007) Enough! Overcome prejudices - meet the Roma !; Haupt G. (2008) Creators of peace in an environment hostile to the Roma. Lecture at the Annual Meeting of the International Catholic Committee for the Roma (CCIT) March 28-30, 2008; Hrabovský, M. (2015) Ant Anticiganism as a barrier to Roma inclusion 'In: Podolinská, T., Hrustič, T. (eds.), Black and white policies ". Discourses, attitudes and opportunities for participation, p. 40-58; European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), General Policy Recommendation No. 13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma, 24 June 2011, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/recommendation-no.13> ; Alliance against Antigypsyism (2017) Antigypsyism – A

¹²⁵ Institute of Social Communication Research SAS (2019) Topics, sources and possible consequences of the political discourse on the Roma: Slovakia.

¹²⁶ European Union / Roma Civil Monitor (2020) Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration in Slovakia: White Space in Roma Inclusion Policy, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-3-slovakia-2019-eprint-sk-fin.pdf>

young people and adults about human rights and Roma history, so that they understand the causes of social exclusion and generational poverty. It is also very important to support the participation of Roma of all ages in decision-making processes at different levels, thus strengthening mutual trust, tolerance and cooperation.

Participation of the Roma national minority in solving matters concerning them

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups the right to participate in resolving matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups. The Slovak Republic is a party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which in Article 15 requires the creation of conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and public affairs, especially those concerning them. Its main aim is to promote real equality between persons belonging to national minorities and to the majority society. In order to create the conditions necessary for such participation by persons belonging to national minorities, the Contracting Parties should act jointly and in particular through the representative institutions of national minorities in the preparation of legislative or administrative measures which directly concern them. In particular, it involves minorities in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of national and regional development plans and programs; conducting research to assess the possible impact of planned development projects on these persons; effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in decision-making processes and in elected bodies at the state and local levels; decentralized or local forms of administration.

Global goal

Eliminating anti-Roma racism, promoting anti-discrimination and participation, and increasing the protection of the most vulnerable groups and individuals.

Indicator 1.

Proportion of Roma who have felt discriminated against in any area covered by anti-discrimination law in the last 12 months on the grounds of their ethnicity, broken down by gender.

Default value: 30% (FRA, EU MIDIS II 2016)

Target value: 15%

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Slovaks who would not like to have a Roma neighbour.

Default: 54% (FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019)

Target value: 20%

Indicator 3.

Proportion of Roma who trust the police, broken down by sex.

Baseline: based on EU SILC_MRC 2020 survey

Target value: 30% more than the initial value

Indicator 4.

The share of Roma who trust the Slovak legal system, broken down by gender.

Baseline: based on EU SILC_MRC 2020 survey

Target value: 30% more than the initial value

Indicator 5.

Proportion of Roma who have experienced harassment and hatred in the last year based on their ethnic origin, broken down by gender.

Baseline: based on EU SILC_MRC 2020 survey

Target value: 50% less than the initial value

Indicator 6.

Proportion of Roma who have been physically attacked on the basis of their ethnic origin in the last year, broken down by gender.

Baseline: will be based on EU SILC_MRC 2020 survey

Target value: 50% less than the initial value

Sub-objectives

Sub-objective 1: Combating discrimination and anti-Roma racism.

Sub-objective 2: Reducing prejudices and stereotypes about the Roma, strengthening human rights education and education for tolerance.

Sub-objective 3: Strengthening Roma participation at all levels.

Monitoring and evaluation

The National Framework for Evaluation and Monitoring of the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030 is based on the draft Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation published by the European Commission on 7 October 2020. The document calls on Member States to set up a functioning monitoring and evaluation system of national strategies to ensure compatibility with the European framework for evaluating and monitoring progress. This is based on monitoring of the progress through a common framework of indicators on Roma equality, inclusion and participation, developed by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

The detailed plan for monitoring and evaluating the 2030 Strategy is the subject of a separate methodological document entitled “Evaluation and Monitoring of the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation”.

The performance of evaluation and monitoring in the Slovak Republic is ensured by the OPGSRRC. The Office acts as the main coordinator of the 2030 Strategy. However, the implementation structure of the 2030 Strategy also includes the relevant state administration bodies, which are responsible for achieving the individual thematic objectives of the 2030 Strategy. The main tool for compliance with the partnership principle is the presence of the so-called Thematic working group of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities for monitoring and evaluation of the national strategic document (Working Group for Evaluation and Monitoring of the Strategy).

Adherence to the principle of independence is strengthened in the process of monitoring and evaluation by the institute of the so-called "Panel of experts" and the emphasis on the participation of external experts in carrying out the evaluation. These play a key role in the process of verifying the data provided in the monitoring reports as well as in the formulation of the objectives and methodology of the specific evaluations.

It is also necessary to create conditions for the full participation of the Roma themselves, whose personal experience in meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy is irreplaceable in the evaluation and monitoring process. A suitable platform is the involvement of Roma and pro-Roma organizations, working at the local level in the Working Group for Strategy Evaluation and Monitoring, as well as in other activities carried out in connection with the evaluation and monitoring of the Strategy. Special emphasis is also placed on capacity building of these organizations in the field of evaluation and monitoring.

Opportunities for quality performance of evaluation and monitoring of progress in meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy are largely conditioned by the availability of quality and relevant data. A robust data collection system is a key to carrying out evaluation and monitoring. The information obtained through the Atlas of Roma Communities and the EU SILC_MRC sample survey is of irreplaceable importance for the implementation of targeted inclusive policies, as well as for monitoring progress towards the goals of the 2030 Strategy. It is therefore more than desirable to focus on the implementation of the new EU SILC_MRC sample surveys, as well as the implementation of the update of the Atlas of Roma Communities. It is also appropriate to strengthen cooperation with selected state administration bodies that deal with data collection in individual competently related topics and to carry out a comprehensive audit of the type, scope and relevance of collected data and assess them in the range of issues related to meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy. Better processing of existing administrative data offers a new source of information on the situation of people from the MRC environment.

The collection, processing and further use of collected data must be approached with the utmost responsibility and strict compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data should be guaranteed and repealed. It is also necessary to respect the recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the compliance of human rights regarding data collection, drawing attention to the principle of free participation of respondents in data collection, self-identification, necessary data breakdown and transparency, respect for privacy and responsibilities in the design, collection and use of data so that they cannot be misused.

When establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework, it is important to distinguish between the methods and the purpose of the monitoring and the methods and the purpose of the evaluation. The monitoring framework is designed specifically to monitor progress towards the set objectives at the level of individual measures or activities. It is a continuous process during which information is evaluated and published on a regular basis. Monitoring focuses primarily on evaluating progress against outcome indicators, and quantitative data are widely used for this purpose. Monitoring outputs are the basic tool for monitoring the achievement of results against set goals. An effective monitoring framework has the capacity to point out shortcomings and delays in achieving the set objectives, on the basis of which timely corrective action can be taken.

The condition for an effective monitoring system is its simplicity, clarity and comprehensibility. The source of data, which illustrates the progress in fulfilling the monitored measure / activity, must also be comprehensible and clear. Monitoring of the fulfilment of the objectives of the 2030 Strategy in the conditions of Slovakia takes place through:

[Annual reports on the implementation of the 2030 Strategy Action Plans](#)

Despite the fact that the European Commission determines the periodicity of submitting national reports for a two-year period, in order to increase the involvement of the ministries, a progress report on the implementation of the 2030 Strategy Action Plans in the Slovak Republic is being prepared.

The annual report is prepared for the needs on the national level, the increased degree of periodicity is to serve in favour of timely provision of corrective measures in cases where the fulfilment of individual measures and objectives is not implemented in accordance with the planned schedule. Information on the status of implemented measures is verified by a panel of experts. The annual report is submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic and its content is also presented in a selected committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

[National reports on the implementation of the Strategy submitted to the EC](#)

According to the draft Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, the Slovak Republic is obliged to submit to the European Commission a monitoring report on the progress in achieving the objectives of the 2030 Strategy on a biennial basis. The OPGSRRC is responsible for submitting the monitoring report. The individual ministries and other partners involved in fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Strategy are actively cooperating in the preparation of the report.

The main goal of the evaluation activities is to assess the quality of the implemented programs and activities through a thorough analysis and to assess their impact on the

fulfilment of the objectives of the 2030 Strategy and the consequent improvement of the position of the Roma in society. An integral part of the evaluation reports is a set of recommendations through which the management of processes leading to the successful implementation of the 2030 Strategy can be streamlined and the fulfilment of objectives accelerated. The evaluation process uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. Through these, it processes and interprets a wide range of information, which is the basis for the situation assessment process.

According to the public policy evaluation standards, it is appropriate that the carried out evaluations focus on assessing the fulfilment of the strategy's objectives from four basic aspects, namely relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

The evaluation of the implementation of the 2030 Strategy in the Slovak Republic is carried out through:

External evaluation of the fulfilment of the objectives of the 2030 Strategy

The evaluation of the fulfilment of the 2030 Strategy objectives is carried out externally, through independent experts. The evaluation questions concern in particular the progress made in meeting the objectives of the strategy. In addition to the implementation in the five thematic areas of the 2030 Strategy (one horizontal objective and four thematic objectives), the external evaluation should assess the institutional and financial provision of the Strategy, fulfil the partnership principle and assess the functioning of the processes to ensure the 2030 objectives. External evaluations are carried out in three cycles, in 2025, in 2028 and in 2031. The last of a series of evaluations also plays a role in the ex-post evaluation in fulfilling the objectives of the strategy. The final reports of individual evaluation cycles are presented in a selected committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

Impact assessment in the thematic areas of the 2030 Strategy

Impact assessments aim to better understand the context in the implementation of sectoral policies (preferably those that are mainstream) and their impact on meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy, as well as the impact of the horizontal theme on improving the situation in relation to the individual thematic objectives of the Strategy.

The performance of impact assessments is anchored as a matter of priority in quantitative evaluation methods, while emphasis is also placed on the use of experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Qualitative methods are used mainly to triangulate and better interpret findings. By 2030, at least one impact assessment will be carried out in each of the thematic priorities of the 2030 Strategy (4 in total) and at least two impact assessments aimed at examining the complementarity of individual activities. The impact of the horizontal objective of the 2030 Strategy needs to be taken into account for all impact assessments.

Case studies on examples of good practice in selected topics

Sharing examples of good practice has the potential to effectively publicize progress in meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy among the general and professional public. The presentation of progress in meeting the goals in a narrative way can also play an important educational and information role and can become an important source of information and inspiration for individual entities involved in meeting the goals of the 2030 Strategy, at the national, international and local levels.

The minimum number of published case studies on examples of good practice is set at five in each of the thematic areas of the 2030 Strategy and five in relation to its horizontal themes. There are a total of 25 case studies on examples of good practice, and these will be published from 2024, with an indicative number of 3-4 case studies per year.

Assessment of the impact of the ESI Funds on meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy

EU funds are the main source of funding needed to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Strategy. It is therefore necessary to measure their impact on the successful implementation of the strategy. In addition to the evaluation of the results of the actual drawing of ESI Funds in favour of the integration of the MRC and the fulfilment of the objectives of the 2030 Strategy, it is also necessary to assess the processes of drawing ESI Funds in connection with the implementation of individual programs.

The assessment of the impact of the ESI Funds on meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy will be carried out twice. The first evaluation is scheduled for 2025, the second for 2029.

The final reports of individual evaluation cycles are submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic and their content is also presented in a selected committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

To ensure the highest possible degree of transparency in meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy, all findings from the monitoring and evaluation process are publicly available. Ideally, the outputs of monitoring and evaluation, as well as data related to the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy, are accessible through a separate web application, linked to the OPGSRRC website. The use of such a solution offers an opportunity to increase the transparency and accessibility of the monitoring and evaluation process. Disclosure of information through web applications is also becoming a standard in disclosure of information regarding the fulfilment of public policy objectives and fully reflects the principles of the so-called "Open government" to which the Slovak Republic subscribes.

It is essential to ensure the necessary financial and human resources for the quality and systematic performance of evaluation and monitoring of progress in meeting the objectives of the 2030 Strategy. Otherwise, monitoring and evaluation will not be possible, thus violating commitments to the EC and leaving the opportunity to improve the implementation of public policies in the thematic and horizontal priorities of the 2030 Strategy untapped. The financial resources necessary for the implementation of activities related to the evaluation and monitoring process, including the performance of statistical surveys and data collection, will be provided through a separate national project implemented by the OPGSRRC.

Annex: Indicators for sub-objectives

EDUCATION priority area

Sub-objective 1: To improve the school results of children and pupils from MRC from the period of early care to employment

Indicator 1.

Level of training of 5-6-year-old children from MRC, trained in compulsory pre-primary school attendance.

Indicator 2.

The level of training of children from MRC aged 3-4 years.

Indicator 3.

Average academic achievements of MRC students in mathematics and Slovak / Hungarian language and literature in the 5th year of elementary school.

Indicator 4.

Average academic achievements of MRC students in mathematics and Slovak / Hungarian language and literature in the 9th year of elementary school.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of pupils from MRC in primary school repeating the year

Indicator 6.

Proportion of MRC students continuing their education in F-departments (lower secondary vocational education).

Indicator 7.

The average number of missed hours per year for elementary school students from MRC

Indicator 8.

Proportion of pupils from MRC who have to walk to the catchment elementary school for more than 2 kilometres.

Indicator 9.

Proportion of children/pupils from MRC receiving a contribution to the costs associated with attending primary school and kindergarten.

Sub-objective 2: To increase the number and quality of pedagogical, professional and auxiliary staff in the education of children and pupils from MRC.

Indicator 1.

Number of children from MRC in kindergarten to the number of pedagogical, professional and auxiliary staff in comparison with kindergarten without the presence of children from MRC.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of employees fluent in the Romani language in kindergartens with representation of children from MRC.

Indicator 3.

Number of pupils from MRC in primary school per number of pedagogical, professional and auxiliary staff in comparison with primary school without the presence of pupils from MRC.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of employees fluent in the Romani language in primary schools with representation of children from MRC.

Sub-objective 3: To ensure sufficient capacity of kindergartens and primary schools with the presence of children and pupils from MRC.

Indicator 1.

Number of municipalities with MRC in which kindergartens are located and their share in the total number of municipalities with MRC presence.

Indicator 2.

Number of municipalities with the presence of MRC with missing capacities to provide pre-primary education and their share in the total number of municipalities with the presence of MRC.

Indicator 3.

Number of missing capacities of kindergartens to ensure the schooling of 100% of 5-6-year-old children from MRC and their share in the total number of 5-6-year-old children from MRC.

Indicator 4.

Number of primary schools with double-shift education with the presence of MRC pupils and their share in the total number of primary schools with the presence of MRC.

Indicator 5.

Number of missing capacities to ensure one-shift school operation in primary schools currently operating in double-shifts with the presence of pupils from MRC.

Sub-objective 4: Systematically prevent, mitigate and eliminate manifestations of segregation in the educational process at all levels of the education system.

Indicator 1.

The number of primary schools involved in desegregation projects in the conditions of Slovak education and their share in the total number of primary schools with the presence of pupils from MRC.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of allocated F-departments of secondary schools located in segregated settlements with MRC.

Indicator 3.

Number of pupils from MRC transferred from primary school to mainstream primary school and their share in the total number of secondary school pupils.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of pupils with mild mental disabilities educated in secondary schools in selected municipalities.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of Roma children aged 6-15 attending a class in which most of their classmates are Roma.

Sub-objective 5: To increase the inclusiveness of schools through systematic and methodical support of individualization of the educational process.

Indicator 1.

The number of schools and school facilities where their inclusiveness is evaluated and their share in the total number of primary schools.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of primary and nursery schools involved in inclusive education programs out of the total number of primary and nursery schools.

Indicator 3.

Number of inclusive teams at primary schools and kindergartens with the presence of pupils from MRC.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of children and pupils from MRC insufficiently mastering the language of instruction, who are provided with support in overcoming the language barrier.

Sub-objective 6: To develop the Roma national identity and to support the realization of the rights of the Roma as a national minority, with special regard to language rights.

Indicator 1.

Number of supported educational and scientific research activities in the field of Romani language, art and culture development lasting at least 2 years.

Indicator 2.

Number of supported cultural events and activities presenting the culture and art of the Roma national minority in Slovakia, of which implemented repeatedly (at least 2 times).

Indicator 3.

The share of Roma national broadcasting, broken down into broadcasting in the state language and in the language of the minority in national broadcasting of public media.

Indicator 4.

Number of non-governmental non-profit organizations implementing projects focused on the development of the language, art, media and culture of the Roma national minority in Slovakia.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of Roma children and pupils whose right to be educated in Romani as their mother tongue is exercised.

Indicator 6.

Existence of a strategic document prepared in a participatory manner, which defines the preservation, development and institutional background of Romani culture and language, including research in the field.

HOUSING priority area

Sub-objective 1: Reduce the number of illegal dwellings in marginalized Roma communities.

Indicator 1.

The share of legal dwellings (i.e. residents have a legal title to use dwellings) in the total number of dwellings in settlements with MRC.

Indicator 2.

Number of settlements with MRC in which all dwellings are located on legally settled land.

Sub-objective 2: Improve access to and use of basic technical infrastructure and civic amenities in marginalized Roma communities.

Indicator 1.

Proportion of persons from MRC without their own connection to a source of drinking water.

Indicator 2.

Number of settlements with MRC, in which more than 50% of households use uncontrolled or unhealthy water sources.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of settlements with MRC, in which no connection to the sewage system or septic tank is available, even though this infrastructure is built in the municipality.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of dwellings in settlements with MRC, which are not connected to public sewerage or septic tanks.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of settlements with MRC without a paved access road.

Indicator 6.

Proportion of settlements with MRC, in which regular removal of municipal waste is ensured (in accordance with the plan for the export of municipal waste in the municipality) in the total number of settlements with MRC.

Indicator 7.

Proportion of settlements with MRC with landfill in public space.

Indicator 8.

Share of municipalities with MRC with built complex infrastructure (public water supply, sewage sewerage, electricity network, gas connection, access roads) up to the settlement with MRC in the total number of municipalities with MRC.

Indicator 9.

Proportion of settlements with MRC without available public transport in a reasonable walking¹²⁷ distance ensuring connection with the population used by public services (schools, shops, municipal office, etc.) and job opportunities.

Indicator 10.

Proportion of settlements with MRC without broadband internet connection.

Indicator 11.

Share of households from MRC with internet connection.

Indicator 12.

Proportion of households from MRC equipped with a personal computer.

Sub-objective 3: To increase the quality of housing in marginalized Roma communities

Indicator 1.

Proportion of persons from MRC living in households that do not have a minimum number of rooms as defined by Eurostat on household overcrowding.¹²⁸

Indicator 2.

¹²⁷It depends on local conditions, type of road, terrain, but also what is the usual density of infrastructure in a given place - e.g. in solitude it is different than in the city, last but not least the age and health status of the child.

¹²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Overcrowding_rate

Proportion of persons from MRC who live in households without toilets, showers or bathrooms inside the dwelling.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of people from MRC who live in substandard housing.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of households from MRC, which moved from inadequate housing to rental housing within the programs supported from public sources.

Indicator 5.

The share of households from the MRC, which, within the programs supported from public sources, self-improved the quality of hitherto unsatisfactory housing by improving the quality parameters of their housing.

Indicator 6.

Proportion of households from MRC, which moved from unsatisfactory housing (uncertain, illegal, low-quality) to owner-occupied housing within the programs supported from public sources.

Indicator 7.

Proportion of MRC households suffering from energy poverty.¹²⁹

Sub-objective 4: Increase the security of Roma housing

Indicator 1.

Proportion of Roma who lost their housing as a result of forced evictions by cities and municipalities or organizations established by them from their homes without the provision of alternative housing.¹³⁰

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Roma children who lost their housing as a result of forced eviction from their home without providing alternative housing¹³¹ in a given year.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of Roma households that do not receive a housing allowance despite being in material need.

Sub-objective 5: Reducing residential segregation of Roma

Indicator 1.

Number of segregated settlements in Slovakia.

¹²⁹According to Section 2 letter o) of Act No. 250/2012 Coll. on Regulation in Network Industries energy poverty is a situation where the average monthly expenditures of a household on the consumption of electricity, gas, heat for heating and the preparation of domestic hot water form a significant share in the average monthly household income.

¹³⁰ Without the provision of alternative housing by the municipality, region, or non-governmental organization.

¹³¹ Without the provision of alternative housing by the municipality, region, or non-governmental organization.

Indicator 2.

Number of households that moved from segregated settlements to an integrated environment thanks to publicly funded programs.

Sub-objective 6: Reduce discrimination against Roma in housing

Indicator 1.

Number of settlements with MRC located in a health and environmentally unsatisfactory environment that poses a threat to life and health (e.g. on site or near a municipal solid waste landfill, old industrial sites, in a place of degraded air quality, natural disasters, floods, etc.).

EMPLOYMENT priority area

Sub-objective 1: To ensure equal opportunities for MRC, increase the necessary skills and gain practical experience in the transition from education to the labour market

Indicator 1.

Proportion of pupils (boys and girls) from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in selected municipalities who do not continue in further education and have found employment within 6 months of leaving school.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of primary and secondary school pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in selected municipalities who do not continue in further education and have found employment within 6 months of leaving school.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of graduates (men and women from MRC) of secondary education (completed by a commission examination pursuant to Section 30 (5) and pursuant to Section 42 (4) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. On Education and on Amendments to Certain Acts in as amended) and who have found employment within 6 months of leaving school.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of graduates (women from MRC) of secondary education (that completed their education by commission examination pursuant to Section 30 (5) and pursuant to Section 42 (4) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll., On Education and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended regulations) and who have found a job within 6 months of leaving school.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (men and women from MRC) for employment from selected municipalities included in education and training programs for the labour market, who found employment within 6 months of completing retraining.

Indicator 6.

Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (women from MRC) for employment from selected municipalities included in education and training programs for the labour market, who found employment within 6 months of completing retraining.

Sub-objective 2: Increase the efficiency, quality of provision and expand the availability of public and non-public employment services and active labour market measures (ALMM) for MRC

Indicator 1.

Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (men and women from the MRC) from selected municipalities who were positioned on the open labour market (excluding jobs created with financial support under the Employment Services Act) through labour, social affairs, and family offices.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (women from MRC) from selected municipalities who were positioned on the labour market (excluding jobs created with financial support under the Employment Services Act) through labour, social affairs, and family offices.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (men and women from the MRC) from selected municipalities who were positioned on the labour market (excluding jobs created with financial support under the Employment Services Act) through non-public providers.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of long-term unemployed jobseekers (women from MRC) from selected municipalities who were positioned on the labour market (excluding jobs created with financial support under the Employment Services Act) through non-public providers.

Indicator 5.

Existence of a system for evaluating the effectiveness of instruments of active labour market measures in relation to the MRC.

Indicator 6.

Proportion of persons (men and women from MRC) from selected municipalities whose entitlement to assistance in material need expired due to successful placement on the labour market in min. 3 months of the total number of recipients of assistance in material need (men and women from MRC).

Indicator 7.

Proportion of persons (women from MRC) from selected municipalities whose entitlement to assistance in material need expired due to successful placement on the labour market in min. 3 months of the total number of recipients of assistance in material need (women from MRC).

Indicator 8.

Proportion of job seekers (men and women from MRC) from selected municipalities with basic or lower education who were placed on the labour market through instruments of active labour market measures, of the total number of registered jobseekers (men and women from MRC) with basic or lower education.

Indicator 9.

Proportion of jobseekers (women from MRC) from selected municipalities with basic or lower education, who were placed on the labour market through instruments of active labour market measures, of the total number of registered jobseekers (women from MRC) with basic or lower education.

Indicator 10.

Number of households from MRC who were relieved of debt, or debt exempted.

Sub-objective 3: Create conditions for the support of MRC employment with employers, with an emphasis on employers in the social economy

Indicator 1.

Number of persons from MRC employed in social economy entities, broken down based on sex.

Indicator 2.

Number of employees from MRC in integrative social enterprises who were employed on the open labour market, broken down by gender.

Indicator 3.

Number of employees from MRC in integrative social enterprises who were employed on the open labour market and remained in the workplace for more than 3 months, broken down by gender.

Indicator 4.

Number of persons from MRC employed by the application of the social aspect in public procurement, broken down by gender.

Indicator 5.

Number of persons from MRC who started a business with public financial support, broken down by gender.

Sub-objective 4: Reduce discrimination in the labour market and other manifestations of anti-Roma racism

Indicator 1.

Proportion of Roma who felt discriminated against at work or in the workplace during the last 12 months experienced other manifestations of racism due to their ethnicity.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Roma women who have felt discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity and / or gender in the last 12 months when seeking employment.¹³²

Indicator 3.

The difference in income from employment between men and women from MRC.

HEALTH priority area

Sub-objective 1: To measure the differences in health status between MRC and the general population, which can be used in setting health policies

Indicator 1.

Existence of a system of collection, monitoring, and regular evaluation of data on differences in the health status of MRC and the general population.

Given that the differences between persons from MRC and the general population of the Slovak Republic in specific health indicators are not yet known, other indicators related to specific individual disparities will be supplemented only after data collection on differences in health status of MRC and the general population.

Sub-objective 2: Ensuring the support of a healthy lifestyle and disease prevention in MRC

Indicator 1.

Proportion of municipalities with the presence of MRC, in which programs aimed at the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases and increasing health literacy are implemented.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of households from MRC whose members have basic health literacy.

Indicator 3.

The degree of participation of persons from MRC in preventive examinations at a general practitioner for adults.

Indicator 4.

Participation rate of children from MRC (in selected municipalities) in preventive examinations at the paediatrician.

Indicator 5.

Participation rate of women from MRC (in selected municipalities) in preventive gynaecological examinations (aged 18 and over, or first pregnancy).

¹³² For the most part, this discrimination is based on the view of women based on prejudices and gender stereotypical expectations, based on perceptions of the role of men and women in society. Gender stereotypes lead to the expulsion of women and men from different spheres of life, depending on the gender role and value attributed to women or men in these areas.

Indicator 6.

Participation rate of women from MRC (in selected municipalities) in preventive maternity care.

Indicator 7.

Vaccination rate of the child population of MRC (in selected districts) in compulsory vaccinations against infectious diseases.

Indicator 8.

Number of reported selected infectious diseases in MRC in selected districts.

Sub-objective 3: Ensuring equal access to healthcare provision for MRCs.

Indicator 1.

Existence of a system for evaluating complaints of discrimination in healthcare facilities.

Indicator 2.

Number of health professionals who have completed training aimed at increasing skills and acquiring competencies in relation to patients from MRC.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of hospitals with staff providing health mediation, specifically for MRC patients, in the total number of hospitals.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of Roma women who have felt discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity in the last 12 months in the provision of health care.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of Roma men and women who in the last 12 months found themselves in a situation where they needed a medical examination or treatment and were not provided for selected reasons (discrimination, financial reasons, counsellor, geographical unavailability).

COMBATING ANTI-ROMA RACISM AND PROMOTION OF PARTICIPATION priority area

Sub-objective 1: Combating discrimination and anti-Roma racism.

Indicator 1.

Proportion of Roma (men and women) who felt discriminated against based on their ethnic origin in the last 12 months but did not report their discrimination to the relevant institution.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Roma women who felt discriminated against based on their ethnic origin or gender in the last 12 months but did not report their discrimination to the relevant institution.

Indicator 3.

Proportion of complaints submitted by Roma to the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR) concerning violations of the anti-discrimination law based on their ethnicity.

Indicator 4.

Proportion of cases filed by Roma concerning violations of the Anti-Discrimination Act based on ethnic origin, which the courts ruled in favour of the injured party.

Indicator 5.

Proportion of complaints received by administrative authorities concerning violations of the Anti-Discrimination Act based on ethnicity, which were investigated and evaluated in favour of the injured party.

Indicator 6.

Number of temporary compensatory measures taken and registered by the SNCHR.

Indicator 7.

Number of valid judgments concerning anti-Roma racism (Sections 421 to 425 of the Criminal Code).

Indicator 8.

Number of cases of ill-treatment and other cases of violation of the law by police forces, including complaints suspected of racial motives.

Indicator 9.

Number of sectoral strategies (or comparable key documents for public policy-making in the sector) that contain and explicitly take into account the fight against anti-Roma racism, including discrimination.

Sub-objective 2: Reducing prejudices and stereotypes about the Roma, strengthening human rights education and education for tolerance

Indicator 1.

Number of textbooks used in the educational process containing information about the Roma minority, its history, culture, and participation in public life in society.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of young people (aged 16-30) who would not want a Roma as a neighbour.

Sub-objective 3: Strengthening Roma participation on all levels

Indicator 1.

Proportion of senior government officials (ministers, state secretaries, general directors of ministerial sections and heads of state institutions), identifying themselves as belonging to Roma ethnicity.

Indicator 2.

Proportion of Roma who were elected to regional and local self-government (chairman of self-governing regions, mayor, mayor, deputies of regional and local self-governments).

Indicator 3.

Number of Roma and pro-Roma civil society organizations working in the field of combating anti-Roma racism and discrimination, supported by public funds.

Indicator 4.

Number of Roma and pro-Roma civil society organizations that participated (by proposals, authorship, co-authorship) in the creation of departmental national policies with an impact on Roma inclusion.

Indicator 5.

Number of activities aimed at capacity building and education of members of non-profit Roma and pro-Roma organizations.

List of abbreviations used

| | |
|---------------|---|
| ALMP | Active labour market policy |
| ALMM | Active labour market measures |
| Atlas | Atlas of Roma Communities 2013 |
| CEILR | Central European Institute for Labour Research |
| Covid-19 | SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus |
| LC | Leisure Centre |
| CSTI SR | Centre of Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic |
| EC | European Commission |
| ESF | European Social Fund |
| ESI Funds | European Structural and Investment Funds |
| EU | European Union |
| EU-MIDIS II | Second European Union survey on minorities and discrimination |
| EU SILC | European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions |
| EU SILC_MRC | EU SILC sample survey specialized in marginalized Roma communities |
| FRA | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights |
| GDP | gross domestic product |
| ISCED | International standard classification of education |
| LGBTI | lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex |
| MoF SR | Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic |
| MoLSAF SR | Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic |
| MRC | marginalized Roma communities |
| NEET | Young people not in employment, education, or training |
| NC SR | National Council of the Slovak Republic |
| NRIS | integrated sets of policy measures |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OP HR | Human Resources Operational Program |
| UN | United Nations |
| PISA | Program for International Student Assessment |
| PRIM | Support for pre-primary education of children from MRC |
| ESL | Early school leaving |
| SNCHR | Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (in Slovak SNSĽP) |
| SR | Slovak Republic |
| SVS | secondary vocational school |
| 2030 Strategy | Strategy for equality, inclusion and Roma participation until 2030 |
| 2020 Strategy | Strategy for equality, inclusion and Roma participation until 2020 |
| SDE | socially disadvantaged environment |
| SCC | School children's club |
| NP SOA | National project A school open to all |
| SEN | special educational needs |
| SPS | special primary school |
| TWG | thematic working group |
| OPGSRRRC | Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Roma Communities |
| V4 | Visegrad group |
| Government | Government of the Slovak Republic |
| HTU | higher territorial unit |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| PS | primary school |

Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030

| Area | Internal Experts | External Experts |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Education | Vanek Barbora | Kosová Ingrid |
| Housing | Šafár Marek | Mačáková Slávka, Hojsík Marek |
| Employment | Kuruc Juraj | Hajtmánková Marcela |
| Health | Kollárová Mária | Szalay Tomáš |
| Non-discrimination | Škrabský Tibor | Havírová Zuzana |