



european network against racism

ENAR Shadow Report 2007

The Situation of Roma in Europe

ENAR SHADOW REPORT 2007

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Racism is a reality in the lives of many ethnic and religious minorities in the EU. However, the extent and manifestations of this reality are often unknown and undocumented, especially in official data sources, meaning that it can be difficult to analyse the situation and to establish solutions to it. Even where there is extensive official data, NGOs offer a vital alternative data source that comes directly from experiences of those individuals and communities experiencing racism on a daily basis.

The ENAR Shadow Reports are produced to fill the gaps in the official and academic data, to offer an alternative to that data and to offer an NGO perspective on the realities of racism with the EU and its Member States. NGO reports are, by their nature, based on many sources of data, official, unofficial, academic and experiential. This allows access to information which, while sometimes not backed up by the rigours of academic standards, provides the vital perspective of those that either are or work directly with those affected by the racism that is the subject of the research. It is this that gives NGO reports their added value, complementing academic and official reporting.

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Message from the President



2007 has been a year of renewed focus on the Roma minority in Europe at a number of levels.

For the very first time the European Council, 'conscious of the very specific situation faced by the Roma across the Union'¹, invited the EU and member states to improve their inclusion and to examine all means and instruments to achieve progress. Indeed, the difficulties that the Roma face in all areas of life, coupled with a widespread negative attitude and prejudice from the general population across Europe, makes this community extremely vulnerable and leaves them at the margins of society.

In contrast, at the national level, overt expressions of racist sentiments against the Roma increasingly find their way from the margins of politics into the mainstream by using the media as a tool to fuel extreme right-wing nationalist ideas and perspectives. Many incidents of racially motivated crime against Roma and visible minorities across Europe indicate a distressing trend that is on the rise.

In times like these, it is vital that civil society raises its concerns and demonstrates that manifestations of racism continue today and that some extreme forms of racism are coming to the fore. The European Network Against Racism wishes to contribute to the efforts of civil society to raise the voice of the vulnerable, and presents its special Shadow report on 'The situation of the Roma in Europe'.

Racial discrimination and anti-Gypsism evident throughout the report demonstrates the importance of a common European approach on the social and economic inclusion of the Roma and the importance of the role ENAR plays in monitoring these developments from a civil society perspective.

¹ Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council (14 December 2007), point 50.

Executive summary

Racism is a phenomenon that is contrary to the values of the European Union. In the last seven years, the European Network Against Racism has monitored racial discrimination and related intolerance in the member states of the European Union across Europe. Communities vulnerable to racism have been identified, including, amongst others, Roma, Sinti and Travellers.

A focus on Roma

This shadow report aims to capture the experiences of Europe's largest minority, the Roma. It consolidates available data and information on the basis of findings related to Roma, Sinti and Travellers from the 2007 national shadow reports on racism in Ireland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the UK. It reveals an alarming picture and urges for renewed focus and a collaborative approach to combat anti-Gypsism and Romaphobia and to secure real change.

Manifestations of Romaphobia and anti-Gypsism

The report discusses manifestations of racial discrimination and anti-Gypsism in key problem areas, namely in employment, housing, education, health, policing and racial profiling, racist violence and crime, access to goods and services and the media including the internet.

Lack of data is a recurring theme that appears in all sections of the report. On the basis of limited data available however, ENAR members have highlighted major issues in key areas and drawn attention to the **intersectionality** of issues. **Multiple discrimination** is also recognised, Romani women are referred to as having particular difficulties in essentially all areas of life.

Discrimination, entrenched stereotypes and anti-Gypsism in the area of **employment** is experienced by the majority of Roma in Europe. A large proportion of the issues documented in the Shadow reports relate to access. Experiences of Romaphobia while in employment, lack of career progression, insecure and dangerous working conditions, overrepresentation in the non-formal sector and compounded experiences of discrimination of Romani women are also of concern to NGOs. Despite the positive results that the transposition of the Race Equality Directive into national law has yielded, cases and complaints on the grounds of racial discrimination in the area of employment are still missing or are exceptional.

High levels of unemployment and discrimination in employment contribute to the low levels of home-ownership among the Roma. This leaves them more

dependent on social housing and private renting, and more vulnerable to spatial segregation. National shadow reports draw a worrying picture as regards **housing** conditions of Roma across Europe: segregation, urban 'ghettos', low and sub-standard living conditions, forced and illegal evictions are the key issues that remain highly problematic in countries examined.

High illiteracy levels, low levels, or lack of qualifications, a considerable low level of educational attainment and early drop-out rates illustrate the effect of indirect and structural forms of discrimination in the area of **education** and reduce the employment opportunities and prospects for higher education and attendance in formal and non-formal vocational courses of Roma. The landmark ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the *D.H and others vs. Czech Republic* (the 'special schools') case brings new focus on the overrepresentation of Roma pupils in schools with curricula for the mentally disabled.

Roma, Sinti and Travellers have a considerable poorer **health** status than the majority of the European population. They have a lower life-expectancy and higher infant mortality rate than majority populations in all national Shadow reports examined. Issues that are of particular concern relate to access to healthcare, segregation and coercive sterilisations.

Reports examined reveal a very worrying trend towards a rise of right-wing extremism and an increase of **racist violence**. Roma, Sinti and Travellers are targets of **racial profiling**² in a number of countries, which is based on police stereotypes which associate the Roma with criminality and drug abuse. Key problem areas relate to police harassment and ill-treatment of the Roma; insufficiently independent supervision of prosecutions of police officers accused of crimes.

Problems with **access to goods and services in the public and private sector** remain. Key problems identified include the lack of publicly available information on how to access goods and services and on available mechanisms and structures in cases of denial of access. In the private sector financial services, the hospitality sector and public transport are the area reported as being particularly difficult for the Roma minority to access.

There is worrying evidence that the role of the **media** acts as a tool for disseminating racist ideas and perspectives and fuelling anti-Gypsism and Romaphobia. A rise in extremism in the media is reported. Problem areas include distribution of anonymous, violent, anti-Roma racist messages via SMS and the internet, real-time encouragement of television viewers or internet users to participate in racist exchanges. Roma are frequently portrayed as criminals, thieves, beggars and drug users.

²Racial profiling is understood as 'the use by police, with no objective or reasonable justification of grounds such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin in control, surveillance or activities' as defined by ECRI General Policy recommendation No 11. On Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in Policing, adopted on 29 June 2007

Conclusion

Institutional forms of racism, spatial and educational segregation, forced evictions and coercive sterilisations are worrying issues that remain a problem in 2007. The increase of the number and popularity of extreme right-wing nationalist and neo-Nazi groups and the many incidents of racially motivated crime against Roma across Europe indicates a distressing trend that is on the rise.

ENAR members call for a common comprehensive European approach that secures real change in the lives of the ten million Roma in Europe by empowering Roma communities and recognising the contribution made by NGOs; by providing basic rights for quality education, adequate and affordable housing, effective health and social services and by challenging extremist groups.

I. Introduction

The European Network against Racism Shadow reporting mechanism monitors racism throughout Europe. In the last seven years six hundred member organisations of ENAR – non-governmental, grassroots, and civil society organisations - have been reporting on racism as a persistent and pervasive issue in the member states of the European Union and have urged for renewed focus in this area.

Shadow reports have revealed the complexity of racism as a phenomenon but also identified commonalities in the experience of racism. They have also demonstrated the complexity of the communities vulnerable to racism and identified those particularly vulnerable, like, among others, the Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities.³

This special Shadow report on the situation of Roma in Europe brings together the findings related to Roma, Sinti and Travellers from the 2007 national shadow reports on racism in Ireland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the UK. The report consolidates available data and information on the situation of Roma in the areas of employment, housing, education, health, criminal justice, access to public services and media and supplements this information with views of NGOs and the Roma community on policies and legislation.

Section two of this report gives an overview of the political and legal context and explains the rationale of compiling a special Shadow report on the situation of Roma in Europe. Manifestations of Romaphobia and anti-Gypsism in key areas of employment, housing, education, health, criminal justice, access to public services and the media are outlined in section three of the report. Examples of good NGO experiences are included under each heading. A synopsis of key recommendations is offered in section four, final conclusions are presented in section five.

³ Roma, Sinti and Travellers share a common tradition of nomadism and a common experience of racism. Depending on the context, they are described as national minorities, established minorities or new minorities. In some instances do not have a nationality and are amongst the groups of 'stateless persons', where in other countries Roma have come through, or are undergoing the asylum process and are referred to with the term 'asylum seeker'. The report generally refers to the experiences of 'Roma', and in times, when necessary to reflect the different contexts of member states, uses the terms 'Roma, Sinti, and Travellers'.

II. A focus on Roma

The ENAR comparative European Shadow reports⁴ produced on the basis of ENAR national Shadow reports have demonstrated that racism is not a fixed entity but is something that changes over time, in new and different contexts. Therefore, while there is a commonality in the experience of racism, it can be experienced in different ways by different groups depending on context and time.

This special shadow report aims to capture the experiences of Europe's largest minority, the Roma.⁵ With a higher concentration in Central and Eastern European countries, representatives of the Roma minority are dispersed across the continent. Roma, Sinti and Travellers also represent a particular group that have consistently experienced discrimination and prejudice in Europe over centuries and have been identified by the ENAR Shadow reports as being the most vulnerable minority group in essentially all areas of life.

Despite lack of comprehensive and comparable data within countries and across Europe, ENAR member organisations have collected limited data available, described legal cases and analysed policies and legislation and good practices. The result has drawn an alarming picture over the years, which has not shown notable improvements in the last seven years. Roma score high in all social exclusion indicators: extremely high unemployment and poverty rates, high levels of illiteracy and very low levels of educational attainment, poor housing conditions, higher rates of infant mortality and lower life expectancy rates than the rest of society, including other ethnic minorities.

Prejudice, stereotyping, and institutional discrimination against the Roma is widespread in Europe. National Shadow reports have continuously referred to the increasingly negative attitude of the general population towards the Roma. Roma are denied their human rights leaving Roma children in segregated schools, pregnant women in 'Gypsy rooms' in hospitals, entire families and communities in segregated, low-standard housing conditions.

2007 saw the increase of the number and frequency of public gatherings of extreme right-wing nationalist and neo-Nazi groups. In the Czech Republic and in Hungary the paramilitary organisations 'National Guard' and 'Hungarian Guard' have grown in popularity, in particular among the youth, which were found to display alarming tendencies towards racism. Leading Czech politicians continued making racist remarks at the expense of the Roma, and in the UK, local politicians have been seen to use local Traveller issues to stir up tensions for their own benefit. In Italy, a change has been observed in terms of the target groups of racism: in previous years, non-EU citizens and Muslims were the groups mostly targeted, while in 2007 Romanian citizens, Roma and Sinti

⁴ See: http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294&la=1&langue=EN

⁵ Estimated number of the Roma population in Europe is 10 millions. European Commission, 'The situation of Roma in an enlarged Europe', Brussels: DG Employment and Social Affairs, 2004, p.6.

populations, and in some cases Italian citizens belonging to the Roma and Sinti were the most visible victims. Cases of crime committed by a non-Roma Romanian teenage girl and a Romanian Roma, resident in one of the unauthorised camps around Rome, were manipulated and used to amplify the perception of a sense of insecurity and fear.

The majority of EU member states have transposed the Race Equality Directive⁶ but issues remain in terms of some member states' delay in transposing it into national law and/or weaknesses in the transposition. Cases alleging discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity are generally very rare. In 2007 the European Court of Human Rights delivered a landmark ruling in the case *D.H. and others v. the Czech Republic*, bringing a new focus on the over-representation of Roma in special schools for children with mental disabilities. A number of cases are also highlighted offering some indication of precedence being set by outcomes of legal cases. The collective complaints filed by the European Roma Rights Centre with the European Committee of Social Rights against Italy, Greece and Bulgaria, in particular, on violating the right of family unity by discriminating Roma communities in their access to housing were successful. In Lithuania, the Vilnius regional administrative Court ruled that the demolition of Roma dwellings in Kirtimai suburb by the Vilnius municipality was illegal.

Anti-discrimination legislation, the transposition of the Race Equality Directive, and policy initiatives have had some positive impact, but has not changed the vicious cycle of social deprivation that Roma find themselves in, at the margins of European society. Through providing an overview of the situation of Roma in Europe and through the assessment of policy and legislation, this report contributes to the substantive foundation of further debate on a common European approach to fight racial discrimination against the Roma minority.

⁶ EU Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin

III. Manifestations of Romaphobia and Anti-Gypsism

National shadow reports provide an overview of the manifestations of racism in key problem areas. This section includes references of the national shadow reports, which relate to Roma, Sinti and Travellers, who were consistently highlighted as being particularly vulnerable to racism in the areas of employment, housing, education, health and criminal justice across Europe.

Lack of data disaggregated by ethnicity and access to comprehensible, reliable and comparable data makes it difficult to draw an accurate picture of the situation of Roma in Europe, and to develop appropriate policy and legislative responses and to measure the effectiveness and impact of existing initiatives. This has been highlighted by all reports examined, and lack of data is a recurring theme that appears in all sections of the report. On the basis of limited data available however, ENAR members have highlighted major issues in key areas and drawn attention to the intersectionality of issues. Multiple discrimination is also recognised, Romani women are referred to as having particular difficulties in all areas of life.

Relevant developments demonstrating Romaphobia and Anti-Gypsism during 2007 are highlighted in each area and examples of good practice are also included.

Employment

Discrimination and anti-Gypsism in the area of employment is experienced by the majority of Roma in Europe. A large proportion of the issues documented in the Shadow reports relate to access. Experiences of Romaphobia while in employment, insecure and dangerous working conditions and compounded experiences of discrimination of Romani women are also of concern to NGOs.

Due to entrenched stereotypes Roma experience particular difficulties in the area of employment. According to a qualitative research on Roma unemployment and the attitude of employers towards the Roma undertaken in Lithuania in 2007, the myth of the Roma being lazy and not willing to work is unfounded: 73% of surveyed Roma were willing to work or were looking for a job. 82,4% of the surveyed Roma identified prejudice and negative attitude of employers as one of the main reasons for their unemployment. This reason was justified by the survey, which revealed that almost half of the surveyed employers, 47% believed that the Roma would probably not be offered a job in their company, and 44% believed that the Roma could hardly adjust to the working environment of their company.⁷

⁷ Socialinių tyrimų institutas, Etninių tyrimų centras, Romų ir darbdavių nuostatos dėl Romų integracijos į darbo rinką 2007, <http://www.ces.lt/downloads/structure/files/>, accessed 23 March, 2008.

In addition to prejudice and Romaphobia, low qualifications or lack of qualifications also hinder members of the Roma community in access to and progression in the labour market. The same research in Lithuania pointed out that most Roma lack education and professional skills: every fifth person who participated in the survey had no education at all, 17,6% had basic education, 83% had no profession at all and the level of illiteracy is very high. Consequently, as highlighted also by the reports from the Czech Republic and Romania, those Roma who are employed mostly have unskilled jobs. In Romania, around 73% of the Roma population is employed in activities that do not require qualifications or require only very low qualifications, as opposed to 33% of Romanians who are employed for the same type of activities.⁸

Despite the lack of professional competences, surveyed Roma in Lithuania were realistic about their possible careers, most of them indicated jobs that do not require particular professional skills, such as cleaning, housekeeping, dishwashing etc. Nonetheless, Roma experience strikingly high unemployment rates across Europe. In the Czech Republic statistics are particularly worrying; revealing that 70% (80% for both genders) of Roma are unemployed, while the national average is 6%.⁹ The estimated unemployment rate in the approximately 300 poorest Romani localities, in which an estimated 80 000 people reside, is between 90 and 100%.¹⁰ The report from Slovakia shows that the employment rate for Roma men between the ages of 15-59 is only 10,5%, while the national average for unemployment is 11,2%. The report from Hungary points to the relation between geographical segregation and access to the labour market; since the great majority of Roma are settled in rural areas, chances of finding employment are further diminished.¹¹ This is confirmed by the Slovakian report, which points to a survey that revealed 6% employment rates in segregated settlements for the general population compared to 13% of employment rates of Roma who live in segregated settlements or in dispersion.

Roma minority women and in particular those, who live in segregated settlements have extreme difficulties in finding employment and are particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination. The report from Latvia reports on a case which was filed by a Roma woman against her employer on the basis of ethnic discrimination. Unfortunately, as reported by the national shadow reports, cases of employment discrimination related to ethnicity or race are very rare, even in countries like Estonia, where employment is considered as an area properly regulated by legislation and where discrimination is prohibited by law.

⁸ National Institute of Statistics, 2002 National Census, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/index1.htm>, accessed 5 July 2008.

⁹ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, Information on unemployment by December 31, 2007 <http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/4967/textangl1207.pdf>, accessed 29 April 2008

¹⁰ http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451604, accessed 29 April 2008

¹¹ Written Comments by the ERRC Concerning Hungary for Consideration by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women p19

In the **Czech Republic**, the two-year project 'Support for Roma in Prague', which was halfway through its cycle in October 2007, has helped 100 Prague Roma find work. Out of 11 who attended the project's journalism course, eight were subsequently employed by the media. More than 1 100 clients enrolled in the project, administered by the NGOs Slovo 21 and ROMEA in cooperation with the City of Prague. The project features an internet job board with more than 320 users and 60 firms posting job offers, as well as computer training courses¹².

In **Italy**, Baxtalo Drom is a project carried out by Opera Nomadi Roma, 'Don Milani' Association and Lazio Region, aimed at the integration of Roma women workers. The project provided a group of 16 Roma and Sinti women training on sewing and ironing and on how to run small businesses. The project lead to the creation of a cooperative which started off with the sixteen women but is also open to other Roma and Sinti women especially those coming out of prison¹³.

Housing

Housing is highlighted by a number of reports as the main site of anti-Gypsism and direct discrimination towards Roma, Sinti and Travellers. Issues referred to by ENAR members include poor and substandard quality of housing, spatial segregation, lack of social housing and negative attitudes of the general population of living in the same neighbourhood with Roma. Discrimination in the area of housing is of particular concern given the effect that poor, inadequate or lack of accommodation has on the well-being of members of the Roma communities across Europe. There is a clear link between health status and substandard accommodation and between living in segregated areas and access to employment, education and public services.

The majority of Roma, Sinti and Travellers live in substandard and inappropriate housing conditions across Europe, mostly in segregated rural settlements or in the urban 'ghettos', which many reports refer to as a term describing social deprivation and segregated accommodation. In the UK, a considerable shortage of land allocated for Roma and Travellers is reported. The report from Romania reports recent relocation plans of the government whereby members of the Roma community were moved to environmentally dangerous sites, which are exposed to natural disasters. As highlighted by the reports from Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, sub-standard housing, where the majority of the Roma live in these countries lack running cold water, electricity or gas and adequate sewerage, and are cut off from main roads which makes access to health services and schools

¹² http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_3275, accessed 29 April 2008

¹³ <http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/news/baxtalo24apr2007.htm>, accessed 21 May 2008.

very difficult. In Hungary, 34,7% of Romani households do not have access to cold running water, and 13,2% have at least one member of the family sleeping on the earthen floor.¹⁴

In addition to deplorable living conditions, Roma face forced evictions. The report from Italy refers to the number of widely debated events in 2007 that further highlighted the dramatic living conditions of the Roma minority. In August 2007, four Roma children aged between 4 and 10 years died in the fire of a shack where they lived with their parents under a motorway in the vicinity of the municipality of Livorno. The death of these children gave rise to a nation-wide debate on the living conditions of the Roma, but no significant measures have been taken. In May 2007, the Ministry of Interior signed the so-called “security pacts”¹⁵ with the local authorities of some major cities, which were said to be aimed at improving security in these major cities. Many of these pacts provided for specific repressive measures against both unauthorised and authorised Roma camps. In Bologna the pact provided for police controls of the camps and, in Milan, it proposed the appointment of an “Extraordinary Commissioner with special powers for the “Roma emergency”, and in Rome, the pact provided for the closure of all Roma camps situated between the city centre and the ring road and the construction of four “solidarity villages” outside the ring road around the city.

Forced evictions are an issue in other countries as well. In the Czech Republic, the eviction of Roma from Vsetin to substandard housing in city outskirts and in outlying localities evoked debates in the Czech society with some pledging to repeat such mass evictions in their own towns. In Slovakia, a number of cases are reported when illegal evictions were undertaken by private owners or by local governments against tenants, who were paying their rents. A private safeguard company in Kremnica evicted five Roma families from a private house. They evicted 26 people including one disabled man in a wheel-chair who had paid all the rents and all his bills. Part of the property belonging to evicted families was damaged by members of the private safeguard during that eviction which happened in October 2007.

Access to and availability of quality social housing is also an issue for the Roma. Because of the lower socio-economic status and high unemployment rates, Roma are unlikely to be eligible for mortgages and have lower levels of home ownership. In the private rental sector lack of protection against discriminatory practices and the negative attitudes towards Roma makes them particularly vulnerable. In Hungary, it is not uncommon to find rental notices stating that the premises are for rent to ‘only Hungarians’ or that ‘Blacks, Arabs and Gypsies should not call for information’. In the Czech Republic, where the housing law does not explicitly prohibit racial discrimination, private real estate agents claim

¹⁴ World Bank Report: *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Circle*, p34

¹⁵ The complete versions of all Pacts are available at:

<http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/temi/sicurezza/sottotema010.html>, accessed 21 May 2008.

that landlords do not want Romani tenants so they make a 'pre-selection' on the basis of physical appearance or by asking direct questions on the ethnic origin of a client. Czech NGOs report discriminatory and illegal practices when it comes to municipal flats too, including evaluations of the 'social adaptability' of a prospective tenant left to be decided by officials. In Bulgaria, where the European Roma Rights Centre has been successful in lodging collective complaints on violations of housing rights of Roma, forced evictions continue in 2007 although on a lower scale than previously, and in some cases compensation or substitute accommodation was provided.

In **Romania**, the Human Association "God is Love" from Curtea de Arges keeps records of two Roma families. One of the cases they were dealing with in 2007 was the case of the Baiasu family who has 2 boys, who are four and nine years old, and two girls, who are six and 10 years old. They live in an 8m² self-made room, an ex-wagon canton from the Romanian national railway company, with no water, no electricity. On the association's initiative, the father got a job with a construction firm, with a minimum legal salary per month, as an unqualified worker. The mother of the children is a housewife. Because of the family's financial problems, the children were taken under foster care by the General Direction for Social Services and Child Protection, on an emergency court order issued in April 2008. Currently, the NGO is launching a campaign of petitions and memoirs to the local council, in order to get a piece of land where they can build social apartments for approximately 140 persons that are in need.

In **Italy**, The project '*Il Villaggio della Speranza*' (Village of hope), promoted by *Opera Nomadi* of Padova in collaboration with the Municipality of Padova, aims at facilitating access to housing for Sinti families and creating concrete job opportunities. In particular, Sinti beneficiaries will build their own houses under the supervision of experts, in an area owned by the Municipality of Padova. This activity will enhance the creation of a vocational building training centre for Sinti that will improve their professional skills¹⁶.

Education

The 2007 Shadow reports demonstrate that direct and institutional forms of discrimination in the area of education continue to be a problem. Issues that are of particular concern for pupils from the Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities include access to education, segregation, lack of provision of appropriate education that accommodates Romani language and culture, lack of positive role models and low parental involvement, low educational attainment and lower expectations, stereotyping and racist bullying.

Segregation is highlighted as a major and persistent problem across Europe that limits access to education, both as a result of spatial segregation in housing and as institutional segregation within the education system. In a landmark ruling on

¹⁶ Municipality of Padua, Town Council Decision no. 2006/0885 of 28/12/2006.

educational segregation in November 2007, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of the plaintiffs and stated the violation of their rights committed by the Czech authorities. The *D.H and others vs. Czech Republic* (the 'special schools' case) draws attention to the overrepresentation of Roma pupils in schools with curricula for the mentally disabled, which is unfortunately also a practice that is followed in Hungary. Segregation of Romani children in 'special classes' is documented by the reports from Latvia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and in Romania where educational segregation is expressly forbidden by law. The Italian report highlights a resolution by one of the district councils in Rome, which requires the councilor for education to consider separating Roma children from the others on school buses.¹⁷

In terms of educational attainment, Roma, Sinti and Travellers are documented as having the poorest educational results across Europe. In the UK it was reported that in 2006-2007 all ethnic minority groups had improved in their educational performance except students from Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy Roma groups. According to the statistics available, at the age of 10-11 only a third of children from Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma backgrounds achieve the expected level in English subject tests compared to at least three-quarters of all pupils nationally.¹⁸ The same pattern can be observed in Latvia, where earlier studies and statistical data show that educational indicators for the Roma minority are dramatically lower than for representatives of other groups, and suggesting low enrolment and early dropout rates¹⁹. While the Roma population has a natural positive increase, the number of ethnic Roma in general education schools actually decreased from 1494 in 2004 to 1333 in 2007²⁰ - a trend that could reveal the failure of mainstream schools to integrate Roma.²¹

Factors leading to poorer educational outcomes include lower expectations by teachers and peers, the lack of role models and parental involvement, and the requirement to speak only the national language. Indeed, the report from Lithuania points to a very high illiteracy rate - as many as 31 illiterate persons per every 1000 Roma aged ten and over with 38% of Roma who do not speak the national language. Education in Romani language is rare, new initiatives include recruiting Roma teacher assistants in Lithuania and in Slovakia through the 'pre-school zero classes' programme. The reports from Slovakia and Romania highlight the link between the low educational level of the parents' generations and the low attainment level and early drop-out rates of the new generations.

¹⁷ "Scuolabus separati per bimbi rom", *Corriere della Sera*, 12 January 2008.

¹⁸ Department for Education & Skills, *National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE & Equivalent Attainment & Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2005/6* (London: DfES, 2006). Available at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000693/SFR46-2006.pdf>, accessed 30 June 2008.

¹⁹ See: Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (2003), *The situation of Roma, 2003*, p.68 and Centre for Education Initiatives (2005), *Roma Identity in a Multicultural School*

²⁰ Statistical data of the Ministry of Education and Science, available at: <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/registri-statistika/statistika-vispareja/2007.html>

²¹ Lukumiete Dace, Latvian Centre for Human Rights, *Racism in Latvia*, ENAR Shadow Report 2005, http://www.enar-eu.org/en/national/latvia/Latvia_2005.pdf, accessed 6 July 2007, p.19.

A survey reported in Czech Republic revealed the increasingly negative attitudes of school children aged 12-20 towards their Roma peers. 75% of those surveyed had a negative relationship toward the Roma, and almost 50% believe the state should establish 'special schools' for the Roma. 30% want to deport the Roma from the country altogether.²²

In the **UK**, the Leeds Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service (GRTAS) has been working with Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, who live on official sites, private sites, the roadside and in housing across the city since 1975. GRTAS works to help raise aspirations by running course and programmes for parents and children. GRTAS has developed successful inter-agency partnerships, which have helped extend the range of services available to these communities. Giving Travellers and Gypsies the opportunity and access to education is the primary motivation of the GRTAS. The organisation is organised into three teams:

- *Early Years*: pre-school and receptions provisions, monitoring attendance and progress and encouraging the development of home-school links.
- *Access*: users, teachers and support workers in a mobile classroom that can be used for new families in the area.
- *Attainment*: advice and support to schools to help increase the attainment of pupils.²³

In **Latvia**, according to information provided by the Centre for Education Initiative, eight Roma were trained as teacher assistants. Three of them were working in 2007/2008 academic year – two as teacher assistants in kindergartens, while one became a kindergarten teacher²⁴. Other Roma teacher assistants do not work, due to lack of funding. In 2006/2007 eight Roma teacher assistants were employed in seven general education establishments²⁵. The National Programme „Roma in Latvia” envisages that until 2009, 12 Roma teacher assistants will be trained for kindergartens²⁶.

Health

Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities are reported as having poor health status – lower life-expectancy and higher infant mortality rate than majority populations in all national Shadow reports examined. In the UK, these communities also suffer from respiratory problems compared with the general populations, the asthma and bronchitis prevalence is significantly higher than for the rest of the populations. Increased drug abuse is reported in Italy and the Czech Republic. The risk of higher incidence of HIV is documented in the reports from Latvia and the Czech Republic.

²² http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_3540, accessed 25 May 2008

²³ More information on GRTAS is available at: <http://www.grtleeds.co.uk>

²⁴ Information provided by the Centre for Education Initiatives on 20.09.2007

²⁵ Information provided by the Centre for Education Initiatives on 20.09.2007

²⁶ State programme Roma in Latvia 2007 – 2009, available at [http://www.integracija.gov.lv/doc_upl/valsts_programma_Cigani_\(romi\)_Latvija.pdf](http://www.integracija.gov.lv/doc_upl/valsts_programma_Cigani_(romi)_Latvija.pdf) (26.09.2007)

The basic issue of entitlement to access the healthcare system is evidenced in the reports from the UK, Slovakia, Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria. The fact that Roma are amongst the groups at highest risk of experiencing poverty greatly affects their ability to access and choose from healthcare options, which is further accelerated by experiences of discrimination in other areas, including employment, education and poor living conditions. Lack of identification documents and proof of employment are pointed out by the reports from Bulgaria, Lithuania and Hungary as further factors preventing members of the Roma community from accessing quality health care. Health reforms introduced in Hungary and the Czech Republic, which foresee an expansion of private health insurance schemes, are likely to negatively impact the health situation of the Roma, most of whom will not be able to afford the costs associated with private insurance.

Roma minority women experience particular issues. The report from the Czech Republic documents that the matter of coercive sterilisations of Romani women remains unresolved. It quotes a series of cases on illegal coercive sterilisations which had not resulted in full prosecutions; proposals made by Roma representatives to the government to apologise for the illegal sterilisations of Romani women and compensate them were not adopted. The report from Hungary reveals 44 cases of so called 'Gypsy rooms' – segregated maternity wards.²⁷

In the **Czech Republic**, the Ostrava-based Group of Women Harmed by [Coercive] Sterilisation continued its advocacy work during 2007, assisted by other domestic and international NGOs (the European Roma Rights Centre, the League of Human Rights, Life Together [Vzajemné soužití], and Peacework Development Fund). In August, members of the Ostrava-based group met with Romani women who had been coercively sterilised in Most to encourage them to join the campaign. In December, two members of the Group spoke at the Amare Glasura Ashunde ('Our Voices Heard') Romani Women's Rights Conference in Stockholm, convened by the Council of Europe, the Fundamental Rights Agency, and the Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality²⁸.

In **Bulgaria**, two projects were introduced in 2007 aiming to facilitate access of health services of Roma. One of the projects surveyed Roma access to the national health care system and made an analysis of the situation²⁹. One of its goals was to facilitate the implementation of the healthcare strategic policies of the Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society.

Policing and racial profiling

²⁷ Source: Ambulance Not on The Way: The Disgrace of healthcare in Europe: www.errc.org

²⁸ <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/10507/a/102428> Accessed 26 May 2008

²⁹ Final Report, *Educational and Medical Integration of vulnerable minority groups with a special focus on Roma, Component 3: Health (1.6.2006 – 31.01.2008)* (Sofia: CEEN, GSP, ECO, 2007). Project summary available at: <http://www.roma.ceen-consulting.com>, accessed 18 July 2008.

Roma, Sinti and Travellers are targets of racial profiling³⁰ in a number of countries. This is reported in particular in Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania and is based on police stereotypes which associate the Roma with criminality and drug abuse. Key problem areas relate to police harassment and ill-treatment of the Roma; insufficiently independent supervision of prosecutions of police officers accused of crimes. Racially motivated violence committed by off-duty police officers or former police officers is also an issue, as is the question of neo-Nazi or right-wing extremists on police forces and in the army.

Opinion polls conducted in police academies in the Czech Republic show that 90% of officers in training would not be willing to help a Romani girl if she was a victim of violence on the street. Other statistics show an alarmingly high percentage of members of the police force and Czech army sympathise with extreme-right movements.³¹ In the UK, a 2007 citizenship survey revealed that 23% of ethnic minority groups considered that the organisation most likely to be discriminatory on the ground of race was the police, an increase of 7% since 2001.³²

Roma complaints/cases on abuse by the police:

In the ***Czech Republic***, the Appeals Court in Hradec Králové indefinitely adjourned the civil suit of a Romani family, three members of whom seek a written apology and compensation from two former police officers who broke into their flat in 2003 and attacked them. Both men were given suspended sentences as a result of criminal proceedings in 2005; their lawyers claimed the men had been sufficiently punished. The criminal proceedings did not succeed in demonstrating racist motivation for the attack.³³

In ***Slovakia***, the case of Roma Karol Sendrei's death was still not judged by the court in 2007. Karol Sendrei was detained, attached to the radiator, brutally and physically attacked and severely wounded by several police officers and died the same day attached to the radiator in the police station in Revúca in 2001. Seven policemen are culprit for torture and others for severe crimes. The trial continued in April 2007, and the judgment was postponed to February 2008.

In ***Italy***, the most significant event of the year as regards ethnic profiling was certainly the harsh reaction of the government and police forces to the murder of

³⁰Racial profiling is understood as 'the use by police, with no objective or reasonable justification of grounds such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin in control, surveillance or investigation activities' as defined by ECRI General Policy recommendation No11. On Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in Policing, adopted on 29 June 2007

³¹http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdf/fr/ENARgy_01_2008_version_ENfinal.pdf, accessed 25 May 2008

³² Department for Communities and Local Government, *Statistical Review: Citizenship Survey April/June 2007 England and Wales* (London: DCLG, October 2007) p.10. Available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/citizenshipsurveyapjun2007>, accessed on 30 June 2008.

³³ One received a 20-month prison sentence, suspended for four years, and the other received one year in prison, suspended for three years.

an Italian woman by a Romanian Roma on 31st October 2007. On 1st November, the police demolished two unauthorised Roma camps on the banks of the *Tevere* river in Rome.³⁴ Identifying all inhabitants and many other similar actions were carried out by the Police and the *Carabinieri* in other cities (Milan, Florence, Turin, Naples). On 4th November, one of the biggest camps in Rome was dismantled and more than 70 shacks were destroyed³⁵. By 19th November 2007, Prefects had issued 187 expulsion orders against Romanian citizens, in accordance with the decree on expulsion of EU citizens, issued by the national government immediately after the murder.³⁶

Later in May 2008, an attempted kidnapping of a child allegedly committed by a young Roma in Ponticelli, a neighbourhood in Naples, led to serious acts of violence against Roma in Naples and many other areas of Italy.³⁷ The Government immediately decided to introduce a specific legislation to address criminality through a 'security package' that included measures to control, in particular, Roma people.³⁸ At the end of May, the Minister of Interior announced the intention to carry out a census of Roma and Sinti living in the camps of three Italian regions and a month later started the fingerprinting of Roma people, including children.³⁹

On 27 July 2007, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the **Romanian** government in a 1999 case filed by a Romani man, Belmondo Cobzaru. The court determined that police officers treated the plaintiff in an inhuman manner and that the investigation was biased and incomplete⁴⁰.

In several cities in the **Czech Republic**, NGOs and local police forces have been working together to develop positions for Romani police assistants, members of the Roma community who accompany police officers during their interactions with members of the community. Unfortunately, funding for such programmes is not stable.

Racist violence and crime

2007 saw a rise of right-wing extremism and an increase of racist violence across Europe. The report from the Czech Republic documents marches by extreme right-wing nationalists, some preceded or followed by racist violence, which according to the report were held throughout the country to an unprecedented degree during 2007 and were followed by varying degrees of police response.

³⁴ Luglio M. 2007 'Giù le baracche ma i rom non se ne vanno', *La Repubblica*, 2 November, p. 4.

³⁵ Viaggio M. 2007 'Demolita la "bidonville" di Ponte Mammolo', *Il Giornale*, 5 December.

³⁶ De Florio A. 2007 'Scontro sulle espulsioni, niente voto bipartisan', *Il Messaggero*, 22 November, p. 15.

³⁷ See for example: 'Napoli vendetta anti-rom "Via chi rapisce i bambini"', *Corriere della Sera*, 13 May 2008 and M. Solani, 'Molotov e spranghe, vendetta contro il campo nomadi', *L'Unità*, 14 May 2008.

³⁸ http://www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/Dossier/pacchetto_sicurezza/index.html, accessed 21 August 2008.

³⁹ 'Impronte nomadi, Maroni insiste "Non recederò di un millimetro"', *La Repubblica*, 29 June 2008.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Extremist paramilitary organisations were also formed in Slovakia and Hungary. In Hungary, the 'Hungarian Guard' has staged regular demonstrations against 'Gypsy crime', including a uniformed march through a Roma-majority village. They rallied in the Hungarian capital to protest against the so-called rising crime rate, but which critics said was a veiled attack on the country's Roma community. State President László Sólyom called the Hungarian Guard's demonstration 'anti-Gypsy' and rejected the 'Nazi ideology' expressed by a speaker from Jobbik, the far-right party behind the guard, which formed at the end of the summer 2007.⁴¹

The report from Lithuania points out that recent research and unofficial data indicates that extreme right-wing movements have been gaining strength in recent years⁴², which is approved by members of right-wing movements themselves, who claim that the number of persons willing to support their ideas and join their movement is remarkably high.⁴³

Roma complaints/cases on racist violence and crime:

In the **Czech Republic**, a 36-year-old Romani man in Zlonice na Kladensku lost both arms and legs trying to remove a burning bottle packed with explosives from in front of his house, where the graffiti 'He steals' had been freshly painted⁴⁴.

On 13 May, members of the 'National Party' demonstrated during the memorial ceremony for Romani victims of the Holocaust at the former concentration camp at Lety by Pisek⁴⁵. On 17 May, 26-year-old Ján Tóth, a Romani man, was surrounded by four drunken men in Hodonín who beat him, took the toluene he had been sniffing, poured it over him, set him on fire, and photographed the incident. Tóth died.

In **Italy**, many cases of racist violence occurred after the murder of an Italian woman in Rome by a Romanian Roma in October. The brutal murder had been witnessed by a Roma woman who, with the help of a bus driver, alerted the police and helped them to identify and arrest the alleged aggressor. After the incident, a palpable climate of racism and xenophobia downed on the whole country and many Roma and Romanian citizens fell victim of serious racist abuses. On 3 November, three Romanian boys were attacked with sticks and knives by a group of masked men identified by the police as part of the far-right

⁴¹ The chief prosecutor in Budapest made a court application for the banning of the Magyar Garda. This followed a statement from Csanad Szegedi, the group's founder and vice-president of the Movement for a Better Hungary, who said, "The Magyar Garda will be the gendarmerie of the 21st century." This was seen as a challenge to the functioning of a state based on the rule of law. The prosecutor also points out that the Garda's open anti-gypsy sentiment is in violation of the Constitution and numerous international agreements.

⁴² Kiaulakis, Giedrius, "Dešinysis ekstremizmas Lietuvoje", in Socialinių tyrimų instituto etninių tyrimu centras, Etniškumo studijos 2006/1 (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2006), 76.

⁴³ Degutis Gintautas, Skustagalvius garsina smurtas, *DELFI*, December 8th 2007, <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=15255369>, accessed April 15, 2008.

⁴⁴ http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=servis/z2007_0063 accessed 20 May 2008

⁴⁵ The demonstrators held signs saying the deaths of the ethnic Czech camp guards, who succumbed to the typhus epidemic that caused the camp to be closed, should be commemorated as well. This action must be understood in the context of other remarks by the National Party that the Roma who died at Lety died as a result of their own 'filthy habits'.

group known as 'Forza Nuova'⁴⁶. In the days following the attack, the same group organised some torchlight processions in various areas of Italy asking that Roma camps should be dismantled and the resident Roma expelled from the country. In Rome, a 22-year old Romanian boy was stabbed in the shoulder by some unidentified Italian boys for no obvious reason⁴⁷ and in another case, a bomb exploded in front of a shop offering typical Romanian products and a *swastika* was painted near the shop together with threatening graffiti⁴⁸. Newspapers reported also a number of verbal attacks against Romanian immigrants and their children⁴⁹ and racist graffiti were found in many Italian cities⁵⁰.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Committee for the Redress of the Roma Holocaust opened an exhibit at the National Gallery entitled 'A Vanished World' about the interwar lives of the Roma minority in the former Czechoslovakia and their fate during the Holocaust. The exhibit was opened by Czech President Vaclav Klaus.⁵¹

Access to goods and services in the public and private sectors

Despite the positive impact of the transposition of the Race Equality Directive into national law, problems with access to goods and services in the public and private sector is reported by the majority of the national Shadow reports examined. Key problems identified include the lack of publicly available information on how to access goods and services and on available mechanisms and structures in cases of denial of access.

The areas reported in the private sector that are particularly difficult for Roma to access are a) financial services, including banks and access to personal credits and mortgages, b) the hospitality sector and c) public transport. As the report from Poland notes, Roma on public transport are often treated as potential beggars. The report from Estonia explains the behaviour of shop assistants and security personnel, who often without any reason pay special attention to people of Roma origin with the stereotypes that are attached to Roma as being thieves and criminals⁵².

The report from Bulgaria highlights the negative impact of the amendments of the Social Assistance Act, which introduced a limitation of 18 months for receiving social allowances for the unemployed. The provision applied even when individuals met the social assistance criteria, and despite its neutrality,

⁴⁶ Isman G. 2007 "Ci hanno aggredito con i bastoni, è una vendetta per Tor di Quinto", *La Repubblica*, 3 November, p. 3.

⁴⁷ 'Rumeno ferito: "Mi hanno accoltellato tre italiani"', *L'Unità - Roma*, 27 November 2007.

⁴⁸ 'Bombe carta e sputi, romeni nel mirino', *Il Manifesto*, 6 November 2007.

⁴⁹ See for example 'Cesena: Minacciata una donna perché rumena', *Corriere di Romagna*, 7 November 2007; 'Bimbi rumeni insultati a scuola', *L'Unità*, 12 November 2007.

⁵⁰ See for example 'Razzisti imbrattano il centro di accoglienza', *Il Firenze*, 3 November 2007, p. 21.

⁵¹ http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_3079 Accessed 18 May 2008

⁵² "Roma women within their community", research by M. Tali, K. Kollom, M-L. Velberg, EHI Civil Society Research and Development Centre, Tallinn, 2007

disproportionately affected the Roma and evoked tensions within the Roma community. In Hungary, a case was reported where 39 Roma families were denied regular social benefits by the local council, because they did not accept the jobs offered to them by the local government.⁵³ Other local governments followed this practice.

The fact that Roma mostly live in segregated settlements, at the outskirts of urban and rural areas, makes it more difficult for them to access basic public services. In the Czech Republic, in particular in the aftermath of evictions in Vsetin, Romani communities have become increasingly vocal about being underserved by state social services, especially as concerns the social-legal protection of children.

In Ireland, a high profile incident in 2007 highlighted the “grey area” in which EU citizens from Romania and Bulgaria find themselves; this was the case of Roma from Romania who were residing in a camp on a roundabout of a motorway, the M50 with no services and dependent on the charity of NGOs. The EU citizens who were also Roma, found themselves homeless and unable to access services despite being EU citizens. Traveller NGOs called for a humanitarian response to ensure provision of goods and services to the families on the roundabout. The outcome for the families eventually was that they were deported back to Romania. There was a negative response by a number of politicians to NGOs offering support and the Minister for Justice called for a review into the role played by support groups.⁵⁴ Because of special conditions for Romania and Bulgaria, people from these countries cannot work automatically in Ireland (although citizens of other the other 24 Member States may). Romanian and Bulgarian nationals resident in Ireland prior to accession have also found themselves in an unclear position and report to NGOs that in practice, they experience difficulties accessing services.

In the **Czech Republic**, the civic association Český západ assisted the Roma community in the ‘settlement’ of Dobrá Voda by Toužim in creating their own administration and in negotiating with the local council of Toužim regarding better public transportation services to their part of town⁵⁵.

In **Ireland**, a brochure on services to the Roma Community has been developed through a collaboration between Pavee Point, St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) Crosscare. Aimed at the Roma Community in Ireland, the purpose of the leaflet is to inform the Roma Community of where they can go to get information and support from the community/voluntary sector. The leaflet is also to encourage more engagement by community/voluntary sector with the Roma Community⁵⁶.

⁵³ The Jászladány local government claims that these people intentional do not want to work. Do not look for jobs and/or work on the black market

⁵⁴ See *Irish Independent* newspaper article, “Lenihan warns M50 Roma support groups”, 27/07/2007.

⁵⁵ http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_2205 Accessed 17 May 2008

⁵⁶ The leaflet is available at <http://www.emigrantadvice.ie/documents/RomaLeaflet-Englishversion04.2008.pdf>

Media, including the internet

There is worrying evidence that the role of the media acts as a tool for disseminating racist ideas and perspectives and fuelling anti-Gypsism and Romaphobia. A rise in extremism in the media is reported in the national Shadow reports examined.

Problem areas identified in the reports include distribution of anonymous, violent, anti-Roma racist messages via SMS and the internet, real-time encouragement of television viewers or internet users to participate in racist exchanges. Roma are frequently portrayed as criminals, thieves, beggars and drug users.

Over Christmas, many Czech mobile phone users received this anonymous SMS: 'Every time you read this message a Gypsy dies, pass it on and let's conjure up a White Christmas!' The report from the Czech Republic also revealed practices of politicians, who posted anti-Roma incentives on their websites. It also pointed out the inability of the police to detect such practices, as they frequently lack the necessary technology and knowledge needed to investigate racist crimes committed on the internet⁵⁷.

In the Irish context the negative role of the media has included scapegoating and inciting hatred against ethnic minority groups through scaremongering, biased and inaccurate reporting. There was extensive reporting on the situation of Roma from Romania who found themselves homeless in Ireland as they are not allowed work or access basic services despite being EU citizens. Some of the media reports, however, were sensationalist using headlines such as "Roma invasion". The reporting of this high profile incident seems to have opened up a space for sensationalist reporting on the part of some journalists and the airing of anti-Roma sentiments on the airwaves and print media. Headlines read for example, "Rain beat Roma plan for welfare 'invasion'"⁵⁸ and "trafficking gangs plan to flood Ireland with Roma"⁵⁹.

In Italy, Roma are increasingly associated with 'crime'. In general, when a migrant is allegedly involved in a crime as perpetrator, his/her nationality is very often emphasized through alarming headlines while the same does not happen when a migrant is the victim. The media 'lynching' of the Roma and Romanians peaked firstly on the occasion of the death of an Italian girl caused by a Romanian girl in the underground in Rome, and after the already cited murder of an Italian woman by a Romanian Roma.

In fact, the media is a key mechanism for bringing our attention to racist incidents and crime. It is also a powerful mechanism for the promotion of positive images

⁵⁷ http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_2833 ,accessed 18 May 2008

⁵⁸ Sunday Independent, 29 July 2007.

⁵⁹ Independent.ie 22 July 2007

of ethnic minority groups. As the report from Estonia points out, one of the main mistakes of the local Media is that it completely fails to present the views of the Roma community and to inform the public about their lives, traditions, and problems. Sharing this information could significantly improve the situation of the community and contribute to erasing existing stereotypes⁶⁰.

In **Slovakia**, the project 'Slovak Code for Internet Safety Awareness and Helpline' is coordinated by the eSlovensko NGO. The official partners of the Project are the Slovak Council of UNICEF, who is going to run the Helpline and the Slovak Ministry of Interior who intends to implement the findings into national legislation. The project started in August 2007 and will run until April 2009. The plan of action raises awareness amongst children, teenagers, parents and teachers about the safer use of the Internet. The project is targeted against pedophilia, dependency, discrimination, racism, violence, internet fraud and similar threats.

⁶⁰ Roma women within their community", research by M. Tali, K. Kollom, M-L. Velberg, EHI Civil Society Research and Development Centre, Tallinn, 2007

IV. Summary of recommendations from national shadow reports

This section provides a brief synopsis of the recommendations made in the 2007 national shadow reports with relevance to the Roma minority, and highlight trends in the NGO identification of areas of concern across Europe.

General

National shadow reports recommend that policy and actions be taken to ensure:

- Policies should **acknowledge the diversity of ethnic minority groups**. Responses to racism should be targeted depending on the groups and types of discrimination suffered.
- **Engagement of Roma communities** in developing and implementing policies.
- Recognition of the **role of the whole society** in fighting Romaphobia and Anti-Gypsism.
- Recognition of the **specific roles and responsibilities** of certain stakeholder groups including politicians and the media.
- Engagement of all political actors, and social actors and civil society, in supporting **awareness campaigns** and debates on the enriching value of differences and the fight against prejudice, among the youth and in all spheres of society: employers, landlords, administrations, health professionals and all citizens.
- Social inclusion policies should include **information initiatives** taken by government to investigate how discrimination might lead to social exclusion in areas outside of the labour market.
- Carry out **equality impact-assessment** for any anti-poverty and social inclusion policy.
- Require the collection of **data disaggregated by ethnicity**, with due regard for personal protections, in the areas of education, employment, housing, health care, social services, and the justice system.

Anti-discrimination and combating anti-Gypsism

- **Multiple discrimination** should be addressed, through effective legislation and policy.
- **Children** should not be excluded from the scope of any future legislation on equality.
- Extend and strengthen **positive action measures** to ensure fair and equal participation of Roma in society.
- **Encourage victims** of discrimination and anti-Gypsism to make use of all available legal protection and victim support services.
- **Train** all involved in the education and health care systems, social workers, government representatives (at local, regional and national level), and police on their legal and specific professional obligations with regard to anti-discrimination.

- **Support and motivate Roma** to be active in addressing their situation through motivational means and forms of employment that are culturally sensitive.
- **Employment policies for Roma** must take into account the reality of the Roma communities, improving access to qualification courses for those who do not have proof of graduating from the mandatory education system.
- Develop and implement **desegregation measures** in education and housing.
- **Engage Roma residents** to actively participate in improving their living and housing conditions.
- Clarify to municipal and regional-level leaders where the use of **forced evictions** becomes a human rights violation. A legal definition of social housing should be adopted as soon as possible and social housing should be put into operation.
- Support **engagement of parents, children and NGOs** in formal and non-formal education and provide higher quality education for Roma children.
- **Recruit Roma** and other ethnic minorities into the social service sector.
- Urgently address the issue of **coercive sterilization**.
- Ensure that the Roma enjoy **access to adequate health care and pensions**.
- Encourage **positive portrayal of Roma** culture and values in the media

Criminal justice system

- The media should **refrain from inaccurate and inflammatory reporting** of crime that stigmatises Roma communities.
- Improve on the **collection of data on racist violence and anti-Gypsism**.
- Provide medical and psychological **care to victims**.
- **End labelling** organisations, persons without proper evidence as a threat as well as attempts to discredit them on national and international level.
- Increase resources to the anti-extremist units specifically for the prosecution of right-wing extremists.
- Demonstrate improvement in the performance of promptly and impartially investigating and prosecuting allegations of **police ill-treatment and misconduct** towards persons belonging to minority groups, in particular the Roma.

V. Conclusion

By synthesising references on Roma, Sinti and Travellers of selected 2007 national Shadow reports, this report demonstrates that Roma are particularly vulnerable in fundamentally all areas of life. They score high in all social exclusion indicators: extremely high unemployment and poverty rates, high levels of illiteracy and very low levels of educational attainment, poor housing conditions, higher rates of infant mortality and lower life expectancy rates than the rest of society, including other ethnic minorities.

Institutional forms of racism, spatial and educational segregation, forced evictions and coercive sterilisations are worrying issues that remain a problem in 2007. The increase of the number and popularity of extreme right-wing nationalist and neo-Nazi groups and the many incidents of racially motivated crime against Roma across Europe indicates a distressing trend that is on the rise.

A couple of cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights or based on measures introduced by the transposition of the Race Equality Directive into national law set important precedence, but more cases and strong political will is needed to fight racial discrimination and anti-Gypsism. Overt expressions of racist sentiments not only on the margins of politics but increasingly within the mainstream and within government that uses media to disseminate racist ideas and to fuel anti-Gypsism are causing serious concerns.

ENAR members consequently call for a common comprehensive European approach that secures real change in the lives of the ten million Roma in Europe by empowering Roma communities and recognising the contribution made by NGOs; by providing basic rights for quality education, adequate and affordable housing, effective health and social services and by challenging extremist groups.

ENAR Shadow Reports

ENAR Shadow reports are available at:

http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294&la=1&langue=EN

Shadow Report Bulgaria 2007, Svilen Ocharov, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

Shadow Report Czech Republic 2007, Gwendolyn Albert

Shadow Report Estonia 2007, Julia Kovalenko, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights

Shadow Report Hungary 2007, Anita Novák, International Law Research and Human Rights Monitoring Centre

Shadow Report Ireland 2007, Catherine Lynch

Shadow Report Italy 2007, Camilla Bencini and Sara Cerretelli, COSPE

Shadow Report Latvia 2007, Boris Koltchanov, Latvian Centre for Human Rights

Shadow Report Lithuania 2007, Gediminas Andriukaitis, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights

Shadow Report Poland 2007, Balli Marzec, Association Wspolnota Kazachska

Shadow Report Romania 2007, Mihaela Cazan & Ana Maria Nita
Institute for Social Policies, Ioana Niang "Culture of Peace" Association

Shadow Report Slovakia 2007, Peter Tatár, Permanent Conference of Civic Institute

Shadow Report United Kingdom 2007, Sarah Isal and Sharon Yemoh, UK Race & Europe Network



european network against racism

ENAR Shadow Report 2007

