

**Delegation of the Republic of Serbia
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
Rule of Law in the Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
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Strengthening the Rule of Law in the Promotion and Protection of Civil, Political, Social and Cultural Rights

On 27 June 2013, the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. This document is dedicated to the promotion of the status of nine vulnerable groups (women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly, LGBT population, national minorities, refugees, internally displaced persons and members of other vulnerable migrant groups, persons whose health conditions may be the cause of discrimination and members of religious groups) which suffer discrimination the most. The drafting of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2013-2018 is expected to commence in the upcoming period.

It should be noted that civil society organisations made special contribution in the drafting of the Strategy by sharing their field experiences with persons of vulnerable social groups and victims of direct discrimination. By taking into account the realistic state of human and minority rights, the civil society organisations proposed measures, the implementation of which ought to prevent discrimination and improve the position of persons belonging to vulnerable social groups. There were 11 workshops organised all around Serbia to enable all interested parties to become familiarised with this Strategy drafting process and be able to give their comments and make their suggestions. The Draft Strategy was made available to citizens during the public hearing, who were thus able to share their views and propose adequate solutions via the official website of the Office for Human and Minority Rights.

The remaining key problems faced by the Roma population in the Republic of Serbia are education, housing conditions, employment and health care. Roma women are a particularly vulnerable

population group bearing in mind their exposure to violence, low level of education and economic dependence.

The Republic of Serbia has made significant progress in improving the status of Roma people by introducing inclusive education, facilitating access to health services, starting Roma employment programmes, regulating social housing and facilitating access to personal documents. The Roma child mortality rate has been reduced by 50% compared to 2005, yet the percentage is still twice above the average rate. The introduction of health mediators and pedagogical assistants has given certain results. Over the past five years, 25% more children have enrolled to the first grade of elementary school.

Action Plan for the Implementation of Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma for the period 2012-2014 was adopted in June 2013. The measures, i.e. activities defined by the Action Plan essentially apply Strategy recommendations and priorities for improving the status of Roma in the following areas: education, health care, employment, securing adequate housing, issuing personal identification documents, social welfare, gender equality, anti-discrimination, information, culture, political participation and representation, the position of internally displaced persons and returnees according to the Readmission Agreements.

In June 2013, the Government of the Republic of Serbia formed the National Minorities Council that would monitor and review the extent to which national minorities are exercising their rights, as well as the state of intra-national relations within the Republic of Serbia. The Government also formed a Council for the Improvement of the Status of Roma and the Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, with the aim to create a comprehensive and consistent policy on the improvement of the status of Roma and implement the Decade of Roma Inclusion.