



Report of the OSCE-ODIHR Roundtable

Organized in co-operation with the Serbian Ministry of Human and Minority Rights

**Sustainable Solutions for Displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians and Policies
to Improve the Reintegration of Repatriated Roma**

Belgrade, 16 April 2010

Introduction

More than a decade after the Kosovo¹ conflict, many Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians are still seriously affected by its consequences. Of an estimated pre-conflict population of some 100,000 - 150,000, only around 35,000- 40,000 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians live in Kosovo today. Thousands remain internally displaced or seek protection and refuge elsewhere, including in South-East Europe and EU Member States, and many are at risk of becoming stateless due to the fact that they do not have or cannot obtain personal documents. Serbia hosts about 40,000 - 50,000 Kosovo Roma Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), about half of them not registered as IDP's², many of them lacking any documents (birth certificate, residence papers, property titles or IDs). Tens of thousands are thus unable to claim the assistance provided for IDPs and cannot, therefore, access basic rights and services.

The return of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians to Kosovo is a complex process, both for those who face such a prospect and for the authorities responsible for their integration. Kosovo refugees may not even be returned to Kosovo: many have been sent to Serbia. From 2000 to December 2009, there were 19,827 voluntary minority returns³ to Kosovo, only 2,760 of them Roma, and 5,171 Ashkali and Egyptians.⁴ Given ongoing changes in the region's political context, members of these communities who have been living elsewhere under temporary protection are at risk of being forcibly returned to their place of origin.⁵

The international community recognizes the right of a person who was, as a result of conflict, forced out of his or her territory and dispossessed or deprived of property or harmed in other ways, to return and to reclaim property. Moreover, according to international standards, the return process of refugees and IDPs should be voluntary and based on informed decisions.

There are, however, concerns among international organizations that the forced repatriation of a high number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians would currently

¹ There is no consensus among OSCE participating States on the Status of Kosovo and, as such, the Organization does not have a position on this issue.

² See <http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/>

³ The term "minority returns" indicates the total number of Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Bosniaks, Goranis and Albanians who had been living in an area of Kosovo where their ethnic group is a demographic minority.

⁴ See UNHCR OCM Pristina, 2009: Statistical Overview, Update as of end of December 2009.

⁵ In 2008, following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, a number of western European countries which had granted temporary protection to refugees started to negotiate bilateral readmission agreements directly with the relevant Kosovo authorities. Those countries which do not recognize Kosovo's independence conduct the readmission of refugees in co-ordination with the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). With regard to Serbia, an EU Readmission Framework Agreement came into force on 1 January 2008 and subsequently, as of 19 December 2009, Serbian citizens have enjoyed visa liberalization in the Schengen area. Both the Pristina and Belgrade governments have adopted strategies for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. The international community, especially the EU, has been increasing its focus on the Roma (e.g. EU summits on the Roma), including their situation in the western Balkans and Turkey as countries aspiring towards admission to the EU.

overburden Kosovo, and that the local authorities there are not prepared to assist them with reintegration at local level, even by providing housing. Moreover, large scale returns would probably increase inter-community tensions due to, among other things, the general lack of economic opportunities in Kosovo. Some governments are, however, determined to pursue readmission agreements and to send significant numbers of Roma back to their places of origin in Kosovo, despite the UNHCR position⁶ that conditions are still insufficiently safe for some categories of refugees to be sent back.

Concerned about the vulnerable position of Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, ODIHR has supported a series of roundtables discussing the return process and sustainable integration of members of these communities. In so doing, ODIHR has been following the provisions of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area, chapter VII on Roma and Sinti in Crisis and Post-crisis Situations, which recommends among other things, to “(...) promote informed choice regarding the decision of Roma and Sinti refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) concerning durable solutions to their situations, including the exercise of their right to safe, decent and sustainable return (...)”. It further tasks ODIHR to “(...) respond effectively to crisis situations by, inter alia, co-operating with relevant governments, intergovernmental bodies and international organizations, in particular the UNHCR, to ensure protection of Roma communities at risk.”⁷

The first two roundtables, in Vienna and in Pristina respectively, were carried out by the Project on Ethnic Relations, an international nongovernmental organization with extensive experience in the former Yugoslavia.⁸ Their aim was to foster discussion between IDPs and returnees, the relevant authorities and governments of host and sending countries, and NGOs. Further, they worked to formulate a number of recommendations regarding long-term and sustainable solutions to the serious problems these communities have faced over nearly a decade.

Participants at the Vienna roundtable reached the general conclusion that although the violence in Kosovo has ended, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians should not be forcibly repatriated. They recommended that returns from host countries to Kosovo should be undertaken on a strictly voluntary basis and that those who choose to return should be accorded full rights and provided with an opportunity to earn a living and to enjoy decent housing. Western host countries were asked not to force anyone to return and to conduct only carefully planned voluntary returns. These must, moreover, be carried out in a dignified manner and respect the rights and opportunities of returnees as for all people in Kosovo.⁹

⁶ See UNHCR (November, 2009): Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo.

⁷ See Chapter VII, OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area. MC Decision No. 3/03, Maastricht, December 2003.

⁸ For more information see the Project on Ethnic Relations website: www.per-usa.org

⁹ The full report from the Vienna roundtable can be found at: www.per-usa.org/Reports/RAE%20Returns.pdf.

The Pristina roundtable enabled participants to examine and assess the conditions for return and integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, and the challenges facing that process in Kosovo. Their main conclusion was that despite political will to aid the integration of these communities and notable improvements in security, much more remains to be done on the ground to ensure viable conditions for return. Most participants agreed that while serious threats to personal safety continue only in some regions, there are still many formidable obstacles to successful return throughout Kosovo, primarily in the form of persistent problems involving personal documents, restitution of property, the reconstruction process, and opportunities for making a living. For any successful return to take place, projects must be well prepared, adequately funded, provide job opportunities, and be co-ordinated with local authorities. Serious concerns were voiced that the forcible repatriation of a significant number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians would, under current conditions, definitely overburden Kosovo and that local authorities are not prepared to assist them with reintegration or even to provide them with housing. Moreover, large-scale returns would probably increase inter-community tensions due, among other things, to general lack of economic opportunities. Few return projects can be considered success stories.¹⁰

The third roundtable, in Belgrade, this time jointly organized by the ODIHR and Serbia's Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, brought together officials from national and local levels, as well as leaders and representatives of the Roma community, NGOs and the international community. It was opened by Mr. Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Dr. Svetozar Čiplić, Minister of Human and Minority Rights, Ambassador Dimitrios Kypreos, Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Mr. Douglas Wake, First Deputy Director of OSCE ODIHR, and Ms. Livia Plaks, President of the Project on Ethnic Relations.

The Belgrade roundtable provided a forum for discussing, among other things, current governmental policies in Serbia towards addressing the needs of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian displaced communities as well as the prospects for their return or local integration. The agenda also included issues of ensuring these persons' rights and access to services, conditions for the successful reintegration of repatriated persons, and the role the EU and European sending countries can play in supporting sustainable solutions for these communities. This report summarizes the discussions that took place during the Belgrade roundtable.

Background

According to the official census (2002), there are 108,193 Roma in Serbia (excluding Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 of 10 June 1999), comprising 1.44% of the total population; some estimates put the actual number of Roma as high as 450,000. Serbia still hosts a large number of IDPs from various conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the majority of whom (210,145¹¹) were displaced as a result of the Kosovo conflict. This figure includes

¹⁰ The Pristina report can be found at: www.per-usa.org/Reports/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Final%20Pristina%20Report%20edited.pdf

¹¹ See <http://www.kirs.gov.rs/articles/onama.php?lang=ENG>

some 23,000 Roma from Kosovo registered as IDPs in Serbia proper; informal estimates include an additional 20,000 - 25,000 unregistered. The overwhelming majority (75%) of registered IDPs in Serbia today are ethnic Serbs, with Roma at 10.80%, Egyptians 0.36% and Ashkali 0.04%.

According to a survey carried out in 2002, there are 573 illegal settlements inhabited by Roma scattered throughout the country, with major concentrations around Belgrade, Vojvodina and in southern Serbia. Some 300 of these (over half) are in urban areas, with the remainder in suburban or rural areas. Nearly half (44%) of all such settlements can be categorized as slums lacking basic infrastructure, and only 11% are considered “developed”, that is, providing any of the basic amenities such as electricity, running water, or street lighting. Many Roma IDPs are living in these illegal settlements, and striving to legalize their status.¹²

Roma in Serbia are significantly poorer than the majority population or other ethnic groups there. According to World Bank assessments, 60% of the Roma population in Serbia are considered “very poor” as compared to 6% of the general population.¹³

Serbia continues to receive persons being repatriated from abroad, some of them Kosovo Roma returned from EU countries in line with the EU - Serbian Framework Agreement. A uniform readmission agreement between Serbia and the European Union came into force on January 1, 2008. Signing this agreement was a precondition for Serbia's admission to a visa-free regime with EU Schengen-zone countries.

Issues both of the status of Kosovo Roma and of their social inclusion into Serbian society have remained unresolved for over a decade. Being a displaced person or forced returnee poses particular disadvantages: as citizens of Serbia (originating from Kosovo) they should enjoy full rights under Serbian law, but many are restricted in this enjoyment due to fact that (being displaced) they have no registered residence and/or lack the necessary documentation; during the conflict, many records were destroyed, making it difficult to prove claims and reissue documents that have been lost.

Many displaced Kosovo Roma do not wish to go back. Government officials have declared that IDPs can choose whether to remain or return, yet many are stuck in a kind of limbo situation, unable to acquire permanent, appropriate accommodation in either Serbia proper or Kosovo. They are also politically weak and therefore unable to pursue

¹² The following information was provided to ODIHR by the Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights on 3 February 2011: “According to a survey carried out in 2002, there were 593 settlements in Serbia with more than 100 Roma inhabitants or 15 families, in which lived 201.353 Roma and 46.238 Roma IDPs. These settlements are in both rural and urban areas, some exclusively inhabited by Roma, some are ethnically mixed with full, partial or no infrastructure. Some of the settlements are informal while others were built in accordance with urban plans. The survey ‘Roma Settlements, Life Conditions and Possibilities for the Integration’ was conducted by the Federal Ministry of National and Ethnic Communities and the NGO Center for Ethnicity Research, Belgrade, 2002”.

¹³ World Bank, 2005: Poverty, Social Exclusion, and Ethnicity in Serbia and Montenegro: The Case of Roma, page 14.

their interests and objectives, or to get support from the majority. All of these raise concerns among the international community and NGOs.

Serbia's aspiration to join the EU, as a result of which it is subject to ongoing EU scrutiny, is another important factor to be taken into account. Part of the assessment process relates to the human and minority rights situation and therefore also the situation of Roma, in accordance with the Copenhagen political criteria. Some of Serbia's recent efforts point in the right direction. These include adopting the Strategy and Action Plans for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia¹⁴ and participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015 for which national action plans in the priority areas of education, housing, health and employment have been developed.

Serbia's legal and policy frameworks in addressing the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs and repatriated persons

Representatives of the Serbian government outlined the legal and policy frameworks relevant to the displaced population and repatriated persons. Both the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Human and Minority Rights underlined that Roma issues, including Roma IDPs and returnees, are among the priorities of the present government, which adopted a comprehensive Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia on 9 April 2009, along with an Action Plan (2009 - 2011) for the realization of the Strategy. The National Strategy and Action Plan cover thirteen areas: education, health, employment, housing, social care, culture, media and information, political participation, access to personal documentation, gender equality, the position of IDPs and returnees based on readmission agreements, and antidiscrimination. As a party to the Decade of Roma Inclusion, Serbia was in charge of the initiative in 2009, and has carried out a number of activities in connection with it.

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights co-ordinates all Roma inclusion policies and initiatives in Serbia, monitors their implementation, and proposes measures to improve their effectiveness. Responsibility for implementation in the relevant sectors, however, lies with the respective ministries and local authorities.

In connection with the implementation of the Strategy, the government adopted a financial plan for 2009, with budget projections for 2010 and 2011. The total amount foreseen for 2009, following a budget rebalance in March of that year, was approximately €5.6 million; however, no system was put in place to monitor how much money has actually been spent for this purpose. It was stressed that progress is being made towards improving co-operation with local stakeholders. There are seventy-six Roma co-ordinators (permanent and temporary) employed by local authorities in Serbia; there are also Roma healthcare and school mediators.

Since 1992 the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees (SCR) has been responsible for policy and assistance towards displaced persons and refugees, and as of 1999 a limited

¹⁴ See <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/dokumenti/roma/strategija%20za%20web%20en.pdf>

responsibility for IDPs, i.e. registering them, providing refugee or IDP ID cards, and accommodating them in collective centers (CCs)¹⁵. Further, the SCR coordinates and implements part of the readmission policy. Government ministries are also involved. These include the Ministry for Labour, Employment and Social Policy (access to social services), the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (registry books) and the Ministry of the Interior (residence and partly readmission policy). The Kosovo Co-ordination Center (KCC) was set up in 2001 to facilitate and co-ordinate the return process to Kosovo. Serbia adopted a National Strategy on Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2002, and the Protocol on Voluntary and Sustainable Return was signed by Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Provisional Institution of Self- Government in Kosovo, and the Government of Serbia in 2006. However, in June 2008, in response to the remit of the Kosovo Property Agency (KPA) being transferred to the International Civilian Office (ICO), the Serbian authorities suspended the operations of KPA outreach offices,¹⁶ putting 3,500 property claims on hold and making it almost impossible to process claims.¹⁷

Government policy and practice regarding Roma IDPs: issues and concerns

Legal and policy frameworks are a necessary but insufficient condition for solving outstanding issues, as these policies need to be implemented. Representatives of the Serbian government, Roma communities and NGOs expressed different views in this regard.

As explained at the roundtable, the current mandate of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees (SCR) does not cover those internally displaced persons who are not registered as IDPs and who live in illegal settlements. Therefore, a large number of Roma IDPs who for a variety of reasons are not registered as such, cannot claim SCR assistance. SCR representatives stressed that Serbia is host to some 4,000 registered displaced persons in forty-three collective centers (CCs) which the government intends to close down. A rapid decrease in the number of CCs is counterbalanced by an increase in informal or illegal settlements made up of displaced Roma. The representative of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights underlined the particularly vulnerable position of Roma IDPs who lack the civil registration documents required to access rights and services, adding that healthcare is one of the most burning issues for these IDPs¹⁸.

¹⁵ Since recently the SCR is responsible for IDP matters in displacement, while the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija is responsible for IDP returns and the survival of those that remained in Kosovo

¹⁶ Serbia does not recognize the International Civilian Representative.

¹⁷ In consequence, the KPA does not have access to displaced cadastral records and faces obstacles in delivering decisions to displaced persons concerning their property claims.

¹⁸ The following information was provided to ODIHR by the Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights on 3 February 2011: "On 23 June 2010 the Ministry of Health adopted amendments of the Rulebook on the Method and Procedure for Realizing the Rights from Obligatory Health Insurance which entered into force on 17 July 2010. According to these amendments Roma living in informal settlements can obtain the health card if she/he has two witnesses who will state this. According to Article 2 of the Rulebook the procedure to register a person of Roma nationality to health insurance is simplified, in case a person does not have registered residence it is sufficient to state where the temporary residence is".

There was broad consensus in identifying key issues: documentation and registration; access to rights and services; issuance of residence permits; legal residence; living and housing conditions; social inclusion in general; repatriation and prospects for integration or reintegration, and the respective roles of the State and of sending countries in this regard.

Lack of documentation and civil registration, especially in the aftermath of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, is a chronic issue affecting many people, in particular members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The UNHCR, in co-operation with local NGOs, runs an ongoing project on civil registration for (mainly IDPs from) these communities in Serbia and elsewhere in the Balkan region. Some results have been achieved, but the general view was that there is a need for systemic solutions in this regard.¹⁹ These would require the State to bear some of the costs for issuing documentation for those who lack it; such a step would require a parliamentary act to ensure that the process could be carried out in a legal manner. A representative of the UNHCR stressed the need for improved co-ordination and consultation in order to provide for concrete results.

Several participants expressed concerns regarding the extent to which Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs benefit from SCR assistance, as there are no data available on the ethnic breakdown of recipients. Similar concerns were expressed regarding Kosovo Roma repatriated to Serbia who were not, according to NGO representatives, eligible for IDP registration there.²⁰ In addition, concern was raised that there is no adequate provision for the reception of repatriated persons; little effort has been made to ensure their effective access to rights and services. Government representatives, by contrast, maintained that forced returnees were generally economically better off than IDPs who had not been abroad, and usually had relatives to whom they could return.

According to the NGO representatives, the majority of displaced and repatriated Roma face particular difficulties due to lack of income or employment, appalling living conditions, lack of effective access to certain basic rights and services (medical care, unemployment benefits, pension, education) and being excluded from registering as IDPs in Serbia, and thus from alternative means of accessing a number of socio-economic rights. Repatriated persons often have no access to housing and no realistic prospects for economic reintegration. NGO representatives, especially Roma, were critical of what they see as a lack of genuine political will on the part of the authorities to come up with sustainable solutions, especially for Roma IDPs who do not intend to go back to Kosovo.

¹⁹ According to UNHCR thousands of documents have been provided to Roma through the UNHCR projects implemented by Praxis and approximately 1.500 persons were registered into birth registries through the process of subsequent registration, while another 1.800 persons were registered through the process of re-registration. However, yes, there remain legal gaps related to the process of subsequent registration that make it extensive, costly and a serious obstacle for Roma to understand and go through in order to be registered at birth.

²⁰ According to research conducted in 2008, based on interviews with 1,105 repatriated persons, around 6.5% of returnees to Serbia originate from Kosovo (Grupa 484: Research on Returnees in Serbia. I Working Version. November, 2008 [unpublished]).

A particular problem has been identified by some NGOs regarding so-called “invisible people”, an issue not fully recognized by the Serbian authorities. According to this view there are several thousands (so far some 2,000 have been identified) of de facto stateless individuals in Serbia. They are also the most marginalized of the IDPs, subject to various forms of discrimination in all areas of life and especially vulnerable to human trafficking. To solve the problems of these people, procedures for determining the facts surrounding place and date of birth and for subsequent registration and the issuance of documents to this effect, require regulation. A Model Law on the Procedure for Recognition of Persons Before the Law has been drafted by the Center for Advanced Legal Studies and the Praxis NGO with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, UNHCR and other organizations, and submitted to the Serbian government. According to a participant representing an NGO, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs are all supportive of the model law, but the key player, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, is not.²¹

Roma inhabitants of illegal settlements face similarly complex problems: they cannot register as residents because they cannot provide an official address and do not possess documents proving a legal basis of residence. As a result, they lack security of tenure; illegal settlements characteristically lack adequate infrastructure and are often unhealthy, hazardous environments. The relevant authorities apply the Law on Permanent and Temporary Residence (adopted in 1970) and refuse to register the residence of people living in such settlements. At the moment a Draft Law on Permanent and Temporary Residence of Citizens is being drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior but to date no public hearing on the draft law has been conducted. NGO representatives stressed that they should be consulted in preparing the draft law, to ensure that it offers solutions for homeless people and for persons living in informal settlements.

Accommodation represents a serious concern for a large segment of the Roma population throughout Serbia. Several hundred informal settlements marked by poverty and lacking basic infrastructure are spread across the country. Efforts by the authorities to legalize such settlements and upgrade their infrastructure to acceptable standards have been few in number and largely ineffective. To date, a housing initiative covering the

²¹ The following information was provided to ODIHR by the Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights on 3 February 2011: “On 26 August 26 2009 the MPALSG has established ,a special working group on access to personal documentation (the working group is chaired by the Assistant Minister of the MPALSG and includes further two advisers from the same Ministry, representatives from the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health and the National Council of the Roma National Minority). The working group agreed with the Ministry of Health that the Roma health mediators should collect data on all persons without personal documentations and that the Ministry will provide these data to the MPALSG. In the years 2009 and 2010 a number of 2.394 personal documents and 4.330 health cards were issued. References to the collected data exist in the ‘Collection of Work’ Roma Health Mediators Seminar publication, issued by the Ministry of Health and the OSCE Mission in Serbia. Further, this information was presented by the Ministry of Health on the 6th session of the Council for Improvement of the Status of Roma and the Implementation of the Roma Decade”.

regularization of ten informal settlements (1,774 housing units and approximately 12,300 Roma) in eight local authority areas has not brought visible results, as it remains at the planning stage.²² Those living in illegal settlements are under constant threat of eviction, as they have no claim to the land they occupy; this threat is rising in tandem with an increasing political will to eliminate such settlements, as illustrated by the destruction of the Gazela settlement in Belgrade on 31 August 2009. Calls were made by several participants for a sustainable solution to be found to this issue, as it affects Roma across Serbia.

The government representatives recognized that the high number of undocumented Roma remains a challenge for Serbia, particularly in view of the population census planned for 2011. They underlined that existing data do not show the real situation of Roma, and acknowledged that more must be done to address the challenges for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs from Kosovo in particular as regards personal documents, housing, economic and educational integration, and access to social services. The need for a multi-sectoral policy approach to effectively improve the situation of Roma was highlighted, and solving the issue of personal documentation was identified as a government priority area.

Local authority efforts and policies towards Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs: examples and challenges

The National Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia is being implemented through related action plans, especially the so-called Local Action Plans (LAPs). According to the representative of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees, some seventy LAPs have been prepared and adopted by local authorities throughout Serbia, to date; four integration projects and one on IDPs and returnees are being financed with EU Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) assistance funds. Additional EU pre-accession funding is being earmarked for LAP implementation. Local authorities have a responsibility to develop Local Action Plans for the integration of IDPs; they are also charged with covering 5% of project costs out of their own budgets. However, IDPs whose status is not officially recognized, most of them living in illegal settlements, cannot benefit from SCR funded projects.

A number of local authority representatives spoke of their efforts to deal with and manage the needs of IDPs as part of these Plans. In Kragujevac, for example, the municipality is addressing the social exclusion of Roma under its LAP by building 170 apartments for 300 Roma IDPs and taking steps to support the educational and economic

²² The following information was provided to ODIHR by the Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights on 3 February 2011: "According to the data from the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning from July 2010 two out of eight municipalities adopted urban planning documentation for Roma settlements. See also 'Guide through the Legalization of the Informal Roma Settlement' published by the Ministry and the OSCE Mission in October 2010".

integration of Roma. In addition, 150 persons have been issued with civil registration documents with the support of the municipality.

The Požarevac municipality identified Roma as a particularly vulnerable community in its 2009-2012 LAP. Out of 75,000 inhabitants, 6% are IDPs. Housing has been identified as a priority for improving their living conditions; there are plans for the construction of temporary housing for the relocation of Roma IDPs, including some twenty-five families who currently live in an illegal settlement. The municipality also offers free legal advice to IDPs with regard to obtaining personal documentation; to date 130 Roma IDPs have been effectively assisted with personal documents. The Požarevac LAP is co-financed by the EU (€250,000) and the municipal budget (RSD 11 million – approximately €103,000).

The Prokuplje local authorities are providing support for tenant purchase of houses and constructing new ones for IDPs on municipal land; there are, however, problems in connection with land issues. Illegal dwellings are also problematic; efforts have been made to legalize some of them. Some positive changes are reported: for example, the number of children from the Roma IDP community enrolled in schools has grown from fifty to about 300, and there are also seven university students. Subotica, a city which has achieved a high level of enrollment of Roma IDP children into schools, is a similarly positive example of integration in the field of education.

On the other hand, everywhere there are Roma IDPs, their needs are much greater than provision being made to meet them. For example in Kragujevac, where 150 persons have been issued with civil registration documents, there are many more who still face immense problems in accessing health services and welfare as they face restrictions regarding registration. The Roma Co-ordinator explained that he had registered twenty-four IDPs at his home address to circumvent these restrictions. It was stressed that there must be an institutional response to the issue of persons without resident status, including changes to existing law on the status of residents. It was also claimed that, although the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia is a key policy document, the human resources and funding for its implementation are lacking.

Roma IDP representatives from CCs and illegal settlements provided testimonies of their experience and living conditions, which have not improved since they fled Kosovo in 1999.²³ For example “Salvatore”, one of the biggest Roma IDP CCs in southern Serbia, is

²³ There has been little or no improvement in living conditions for Kosovo Roma IDPs in collective centers and illegal settlements in Serbia visited by ODIHR's Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues earlier this year. For example:

Bujanovac municipality hosts one of the biggest Roma IDP **collective centers**, “**Salvatore**” with about 196 registered displaced persons, mainly from the Gjilan/Gnjilane region. Additional displaced persons are accommodated in the technical school and in private accommodation throughout the town. Bujanovac also has five illegal settlements inhabited by local Roma. Although the introduction of cargo containers, toilets and running water are all improvements on the original provision of tents only, “Salvatore” remains a makeshift camp without adequate infrastructure.

Up to 16% of the population of the **municipality of Kraljevo** are believed to be IDPs, including Roma IDPs. They are accommodated both in illegal settlements and in collective centers (three official, five

virtually indistinguishable from an illegal settlement, its residents still living in shacks in totally inadequate conditions, many without civil registration documents. The SCR and Bujanovac local authorities share the costs of humanitarian assistance (meals, utilities). However, the local authorities lack the financial means to provide adequate assistance and favour the IDPs returning home. Spokespersons for the displaced, by contrast, stressed that they would prefer to stay, but with better housing and job opportunities enabling their sustainable integration. A number of Roma IDPs stressed that they fear to return to Kosovo because of security concerns. On the other hand the Serbian authorities continue to insist that return to Kosovo is the only option. Some local Serbs and Albanians allegedly oppose Roma IDPs being permanently resettled in Bujanovac because they fear that changes in local demography that could impact on local politics.

Some participants underlined that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs from Kosovo who live in illegal settlements are in an even worse position than their Serbian Roma neighbours. The Ashkali, who are Muslim and speak Albanian, are in a particularly

unofficial/illegal). Many Roma IDPs live in deplorable conditions without access to rights or services. Access to adequate housing and education as well as enhanced inter-community co-operation are identified as key challenges here.

The **“Stari Aeroport” collective center** administered by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees offers official accommodation in twenty-four cargo containers to some 139 Roma IDPs (around thirty-nine families) from Kosovo. There is no adequate infrastructure, sewage system or proper access to water. The children do not attend school nor are they adequately covered by humanitarian assistance.

The **“Trmbas” collective center** (administered by the SCR) is subcontracted to a private company who formerly ran it as tourist accommodation. Its residents – officially 187, actually over 250 – are Serb and Roma IDPs from Kosovo. They enjoy decent housing conditions in wooden holiday homes, and regular meals.

Block 61 (Belgrade municipality) is an illegal settlement with around thirty-five displaced Kosovo Roma and Ashkali families. It lacks water, sewage and adequate infrastructure in general, though some of the huts are illegally connected to electricity supplies. Reportedly, children from only two families attend school. Residents earn a meagre living from collecting scrap metal, paper and other materials; they are in dire need of health services, documents and water.

An **illegal settlement** has sprung up alongside the **“GRMEC” collective center** (Zemun municipality); together they have a total population of fifty-two displaced Roma families from Kosovo. The center is named after the “GRMEC” company whose land it occupies. The municipality wants to sell the company (and the land) and has offered residents relocation into cargo containers. This offer has been refused on the grounds that children attend the nearby school, and families that have invested in building huts are reluctant to abandon them for inferior provision. The center and settlement have running water but no sewage system. For a time, the company supplied residents with industrial electricity but, as this is very expensive and since the municipality has plans to sell the land, it has been cut to put pressure on the IDP community to accept an alternative solution.

“Cukaricka Padina” is an **illegal settlement** in the Belgrade municipality. Located in a forest next to a highway, its two hundred residents (sixty families) are Roma IDPs from Kosovo. The settlement has no water, sewage or electricity; the huts are, however, illegally connected to electricity from the streetlights on the highway. According to a community spokesperson, residents hold personal IDs but have problems with accessing health services.

The **“Meminac” illegal settlement** in Pozarevac, comprising huts erected near an established residential area, is inhabited by twenty Roma IDP families from Kosovo. At the time of the ODIHR visit, there were plans to relocate them to social housing units by the end of the year 2010. The families’ applications for social housing have been supported by the social welfare office.

difficult position, since their Albanian names and language often spark discrimination on the part of Serbian service providers.

A Kosovo Roma IDP from the former Gazela settlement in Belgrade stated that he had to leave his home in the “Moravska” Roma settlement in Pristina back in 1999 because he was threatened by Kosovo Albanians. He and his family found shelter in the illegal Gazela settlement in Belgrade where, as registered IDPs, they received humanitarian assistance. When the Gazela settlement was dismantled by the authorities, they were given cargo containers for housing and the children were enrolled in schools. He stressed that he would not go back to Kosovo unless escorted there by the Serbian police.

With respect to the Gazela eviction, several participants raised critical voices regarding both the way it was carried out, and statements made in connection with it by the mayor of Belgrade. As a representative of the Belgrade municipal authorities explained, fifty dwellings were demolished in Gazela. Their inhabitants were transferred to five different local authority areas, where they were accommodated in cargo containers. The city of Belgrade has some obligations regarding their integration, including the provision of identity documents, vaccinations for children, and ensuring education and employment for one adult member per household. Further efforts to relocate IDPs from illegal settlements, ensure their registration, and enroll their children in schools are ongoing in Belgrade. Altogether some 400 apartments are to be built for relocated IDPs, to be allocated in response to applications.

NGO representatives pointed out that the Action Plan for the Resettlement of Unhygienic Settlements in the Territory of Belgrade (approved by Belgrade City Council on 28 May 2009) has not been published, nor has it been publicly discussed. They recommended that the authorities conduct resettlement in a transparent manner after appropriate advance preparation. Public debate and the role of NGOs in the preparation phase for resettlement are of crucial importance. It was stressed that the Action Plan should be shared with NGOs and that those to be affected should be actively involved.

In Belgrade, special housing programs are available, but only for those who can prove eight years of registered permanent residence in Belgrade; thus, many Roma IDPs are excluded.

Conditions and challenges for sustainable reintegration of repatriated Roma

A government representative confirmed that although the number of forcibly repatriated persons is not very high, the majority of those forcibly repatriated are Roma. In 2009, 285 of a total of 405 repatriated persons were Roma; from 1 January - 31 March 2010, out of eighty-three persons, forty-five were Roma. The Serbian Ministry of Human and Minority Rights runs an Office for Readmission²⁴ and co-ordinates activities geared towards the reintegration of repatriated persons; it has also prepared an information

²⁴ The airport team consists of four employees from the Office of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees (SCR) and one from the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

booklet for returnees. A reception team based at Belgrade airport is on duty sixteen hours a day, providing returnees with information and referral to municipalities. There are two emergency shelters (each for twenty people) providing forced returnees who have nowhere to go with accommodation for up to two weeks.²⁵ According to another government official, only a minority can be classed as extremely vulnerable. The Ministry has begun to compile a centralized database on refugees and returnees.

It has been acknowledged, however, that many repatriated persons arrive with only a *laissez passer*, as they have no personal documents. The Office for Readmission keeps a data record on repatriated persons, including nationality, age, gender and country of origin. Repatriated persons are interviewed by the police and the Office for Readmission and provided with information leaflets. There has been no significant increase of numbers in the repatriation process recently. However, many repatriated children do not speak Serbian and their families lack the money for the translation of their children's school-related documents. The Commissariat for Refugees also supports training for civil servants with regard to assisting IDPs.

The NGO representatives claimed that the majority of repatriated persons receive no assistance on return, highlighting that various countries temporarily sheltering refugees from the area have submitted 28,000 repatriation requests to the Serbian authorities since 2003. The situation of repatriated members of minorities is of particular concern. For example, since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, a number of Roma from Kosovo have been forcibly returned to Serbia by western European countries²⁶ on the grounds that those who fall under international protection and cannot be repatriated to Kosovo would have national protection in Serbia. In fact, forcibly returned Kosovo Roma do not qualify for IDP registration with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees. No data on the current socio-economic situation or demographic profile of repatriated persons are available.

According to NGO representatives, return is not a one-way process; many try to get back to their former host country. It has been highlighted that sustainable return depends on the willingness of the individuals concerned, and that many forcibly repatriated persons lack the motivation to reintegrate in their place of origin. The State must create conditions facilitating sustainable integration, in particular with regard to housing, employment, education and access to public services. Decent accommodation is the biggest challenge facing forcibly returned persons. Without adequate conditions for reintegration, they will migrate again.

One NGO spokesperson noted that the term "sustainable return" has different meanings for different actors. For western Europe it signifies "no repeat emigration" while for a

²⁵According to the airport team, the SCR has the responsibility to provide housing/accommodation to repatriated persons. In 2008, 620 persons were repatriated to Serbia.

²⁶UNHCR raised concern about relocation of Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians to Serbia because it may not meet the reasonableness test. See: UNHCR'S Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo, November 2009. http://www.unhcr.no/Pdf/Positionpaper_2009/Kosovo_finalcopy_09Nov2009.pdf

repatriated person it means “the attainment of satisfactory living conditions”. This representative called upon the Serbian authorities to (i) develop a reintegration strategy and action plan,²⁷ (ii) set up a reintegration council, and (iii) provide the necessary financial means and engage in co-operation with relevant actors. They went on to stress that co-operation between western European countries and country of origin in a spirit of solidarity is crucial for sustainable return by either definition, and that sending countries could be supportive partners in the reintegration process.

Several participants criticized the fact that some ministries do not carry out the tasks within their remit and that a number of repatriated persons are left without sustainable solutions. Returnees are effectively left to achieve their own integration, while in many cases local authorities fail to provide them with adequate information about accessing services. The need for co-ordination between government departments and better co-operation with local authorities and NGOs was also raised. Participants demanded that more must be done by the Serbian government, particularly the relevant ministries, to provide adequate conditions for the reintegration of repatriated persons.

Issues relating to visa liberalization, migration and asylum-seeking in EU countries were also raised. Some participants expressed the view that visa liberalization should not be a backdoor for emigration. Misgivings were expressed that many, including Roma, will try to use it in this way.

Some participants underlined that the repatriation process must be carried out with a view to protecting the best interests of the child. Concerns were raised about children being repatriated during the school year, interrupting the education process. The German authorities, in particular, were called upon to refrain from repatriating families whose children are enrolled in schools, at least before the end of the school year. In addition, it was noted that there is a need for a special budget line to support repatriated persons in obtaining personal and education-related records and other documents. Attention was drawn to the fact that repatriated persons who are also divorced sometimes have particular problems with regard to establishing a child's identity and/or obtaining a birth certificate.

Several participants claimed that Roma returnees or repatriated persons are not high on Serbia's political agenda and therefore little funding is available to assist them. The need for positive media attention in order to raise awareness on the plight of Roma returnees and counter prejudices against them was also stressed.

²⁷ The following information was provided to ODIHR by the Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights on 3 February 2011: “The Government adopted in February 2009 the Strategy for the Reintegration of the Returnees Based on the Readmission Agreements (http://www.kirs.gov.rs/docs/Readmission_strategy.pdf), and subsequently set up the Council for the Strategy Implementation. Members of the Council are representatives of the relevant ministries at the level of assistant ministers or state secretaries and the Commissariat for Refugees. Members of the team are from the same institutions but at the level of civil servants”.

The international community and Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian displaced and repatriated persons

The international community has been much involved in Serbia, including with Roma issues there, especially since the end of the Kosovo conflict; the OSCE and UN are among the most visible of these bodies. Recently, in conjunction with Serbia's EU approximation process, the European Commission is also getting involved, including in Roma issues. The Open Society Institute and Project on Ethnic Relations are among the international NGOs that have been making commendable efforts to address issues affecting the Roma, including Roma IDPs, in Serbia.

The OSCE Mission to Serbia has supported the Serbian government in integrating its Roma population and provided assistance to the SCR in finalizing the National Strategy for the Resolution of Refugee/IDP Issues. Further, the Mission has supported municipalities in developing LAPs geared towards the local integration of IDPs. In 2009, fifty-three such LAPs were adopted and a further twenty are expected to be approved this year. The Mission intends to strengthen the capacity of the SCR for managing the repatriation process in line with international human rights standards, and is strongly committed to supporting Serbia in enhancing the rights of Roma, particularly Roma IDPs.

An OSCE ODIHR representative stressed the important role of support from the OSCE and the international community as a whole in assisting Serbia to build strong democratic institutions and a multiethnic society, including the social inclusion of minorities and displaced persons. The ODIHR representative further encouraged the Serbian authorities to address the challenge of unregistered persons in the upcoming census in 2011, and the need to develop sustainable solutions for the most vulnerable who lack adequate housing, economic integration or personal documents, and for whom the OSCE stands ready to provide its assistance.

The UNHCR plays a major role in protecting and assisting refugees and IDPs in Serbia. It also supports the development of durable solutions and provides information to IDPs. The UNHCR representative also stressed that the organization's mandate encompasses monitoring the repatriation process, and recommended, as did UN Special Representative Walter Kälin,²⁸ establishing a database on IDPs, including data on their needs.

Preventing statelessness is part of the UNHCR's core mandate. The UNHCR representative informed roundtable participants about the implementation of an EU-funded regional program in the western Balkans supporting the civil registration of Roma with an awareness raising program. To date this program has identified over 1,000 persons who lack both documents and citizenship rights. The UNHCR believes that many Roma in Serbia - both IDPs and local - are at risk of becoming stateless. Processes around the registration of legally invisible persons are very cumbersome and costly. The

²⁸ Report of the Representative of the Secretary General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Walter Kälin, to the Human Rights Council, on his follow-up visit to the mission to Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo) in 2005. Presented at thirteenth session GE.09-17505 (E) 040110.

UNHCR also supported the development and drafting of a model law on legal subjectivity.

The representative from the European Commission (Directorate General for Enlargement) highlighted a number of different EU initiatives which could be of benefit for improving the situation of Roma, as well as giving examples of financial and technical assistance provided to Serbia. In early 1990 the EU provided humanitarian aid subsequently followed by financial support through the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization (CARDS) program, with projects in the areas of housing, education and health protection. In 2008, under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), €3 million were given specifically to support the inclusion of Roma children in the mainstream school system, in addition to funding for mainstream programs which can also potentially benefit Roma. The latter included €4.5 million to establish a Functional Adult Education System (“second chance” education for early school leavers) and €5.5 million to support the de-institutionalization of children and adolescents.²⁹ During the 2007 - 2009 period, under the IPA, €18.65 million were spent for projects on refugees and IDPs, including on housing and income generation activities, and on legal aid.³⁰

In 2010 the European Commission supported Serbia with €1.8 million from IPA funds for capacity building of institutions involved in migration management and the reintegration of IDPs. In addition, the EC representative emphasized that the EU takes special note of the situation of minorities by monitoring accession countries’ fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria. EC progress reports also monitor the level of implementation of national Strategies for Improvement of the Status of Roma. The EU expects pre-accession countries to engage in Roma inclusion before negotiations for EU accession start, for example by making use of European pre-accession funding instruments such as the IPA.

Conclusions and identified challenges

The following issues have been identified as key to ensuring enhanced access to rights and services for Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs:

- o Personal documents: The need to ensure that every individual can obtain personal civil registration documents. The Center for Advanced Legal Studies, the Praxis NGO, the UNHCR and the OSCE Mission to Serbia jointly prepared a model “Law on the Procedure for Recognition of Persons before the Law”; however, it lacks the support of the relevant Serbian authorities, in particular the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government.

²⁹ However, no figures were given as to what extent Roma did in fact benefit from these programs.

³⁰ Again, there was no indication as to what extent Roma were among the beneficiaries of supported activities. In the course of his field visit in December 2009, the ODIHR CPRSI could find no evidence of EU “best practice” guidelines being implemented.

- o Registration of residence: A number of rights and services (e.g. healthcare) are available only to registered residents of a given catchment area. However a large proportion of Roma in Serbia, including Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs, live in illegal settlements and do not therefore qualify for registration. Alternative solutions, e.g. registering directly with the city council, at the address of an NGO, etc., must be found for such individuals.
- o Discrimination: Roma IDPs and forced returnees remain among the most vulnerable populations in Serbia, suffering from discrimination and a lack of access to rights and services in the areas of education, employment, health and housing. There has been little improvement in their situation since the end of the Kosovo conflict.
- o Lack of implementation and funding for policies: Serbia is a participant in the Decade of Roma Inclusion and has developed a Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia which includes action plans. Nevertheless it appears that, five years on, Serbia (as well as other participant countries) is only beginning implementation, and funding remains a major challenge.
- o Adequate housing: Housing represents a serious concern affecting a large segment of the Roma population throughout Serbia. Several hundred illegal settlements marked by poverty and lacking basic infrastructure are spread across the country. Efforts by the authorities to legalize such settlements and upgrade their infrastructure to acceptable standards have been few in number and largely ineffective.
- o Unresolved property claims: Since 2008, Kosovo Property Agency outreach offices have ceased operations in Serbia, which impedes the process of property restitution and case procedure.
- o Lack of adequate assistance for repatriated persons: Following the EU - Serbian Readmission Agreement, Serbia is receiving substantial numbers of forcibly repatriated Roma without having adequate assistance in place to facilitate their local integration.

Recommendations

To the Serbian government and the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees

- o Ensure that existing strategies, action plans and relevant policies for Roma IDPs and returnees are effectively implemented at local level, their progress monitored and adequately funded.
- o Phase out existing CCs as residents acquire standard, secure local authority accommodation or return to their place of origin; provide practical support towards these ends.

- o Ensure that the SCR develops a strategy for improving access to rights and services for Roma IDPs who live in illegal settlements and have not been registered as IDPs due to lack of documents.
- o Ensure regional co-operation and co-ordination of all relevant stakeholders for sustainable solutions for Roma refugees and IDPs, taking into account their specific vulnerability.
- o Develop and adopt a legal framework enabling the registration of legally invisible persons to avoid statelessness and ensure their access to rights and services.
- o Offer a window of opportunity for all Roma in Serbia to obtain civil registration documents without administrative fees, with the support of free legal assistance programs.
- o Develop and adopt, in consultation with NGOs, a law to ensure the residence registration of all residents in Serbia, including Roma living in illegal settlements.
- o Provide adequate conditions for repatriated persons to enable their sustainable integration, including in particular educational and economic integration and adequate housing conditions ensuring a life in human dignity.

ANNEX I

AGENDA

8.30 *Registration of participants*

9.00-9.30 *Opening*

Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior

Dr Svetozar Čiplić, Minister of Human and Minority Rights

Ambassador Dimitrios Kypreos, Head of OSCE Mission to Serbia

Douglas Wake, First Deputy Director OSCE ODIHR

9.30-10.00 *The Perspective of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs– a Hearing*

Vedat Isljami, internally displaced person, resident of an informal settlement

Orhan Kurteši, internally displaced person from the collective center in Buajnovac

Dia show on the situation of displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians

10.00-11.30 *Session I: Serbia's Policies for Sustainable Solutions and Access to Rights for Displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians*

Introduction: Petar Antić, Assistant Minister of Human and Minority Rights

Presentations by Ms. Jun Shirato, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Serbia

Vladan Đukić, Secretary, Secretariat for Social Care, Belgrade

Milun Jovanović, Assistant to Mayor, Kraljevo

Do these policies address the needs of the displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians? What are the prospects of displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians for their return or local integration?

11.30-11.45 *Coffee Break*

11.45-13.00 *Continuing Session I: Serbia's Policies for Sustainable Solutions and Access to Rights for Displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians*

Svetlana Velimirović, Commissariat for Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Serbia

Presentation by Ivanka Kostić, Director of the NGO Praxis

Zoran Pavlović, Coordinator for Roma Issues, Kragujevac

Nebojša Selistarević, Member of the City Council, Vranje

How to improve access to rights (e.g. education) and services (health and other social services) of displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians? To what extent do current housing policies support/provide for sustainable solutions for IDPs (governmental plans/implementation) at local level? What is the impact of local action plans for the integration of refugees and displaced persons? What is the status of the Model Law on Legal Subjectivity and solutions for Roma in illegal settlements as regards the residence status (amending the Law on Temporary and Permanent Residence);

13.00–14.00 *Lunch Break*

14.00-16.00 *Session II Conditions for Sustainable Integration of Repatriated Persons from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities*

Introduction: Danilo Rakić, NGO Grupa 484

Presentations by Zoran Simić, Belgrade Airport Monitoring Team

Svetlana Velimirović, Deputy of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and

Petar Antic, Assistant Minister, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights

What are the provisions offered at central and local level to support the integration of repatriated persons? What should be done to provide adequate conditions for return and reintegration in Serbia at central and local level?

16.00-17.30 *Session III: The International Community's Perspectives on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Refugees, IDPs and repatriated persons with regard to Serbia's prospects for joining the EU*

Presentation by Mr. Thomas Gnocchi, Political Adviser, European Union Delegation to the Republic of Serbia.

How can the EU and European countries support the sustainable integration of repatriated persons at local level in Serbia. How can the international community support Serbian authorities in their efforts to provide for sustainable solutions for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities?

17.30-18.00 *Concluding Remarks*

Petar Antić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights

Andrzej Mirga, OSCE ODIHR Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti

ANNEX II

List of Participants at the Belgrade Roundtable: Sustainable Solutions for Displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians and Policies to Improve the Reintegration of Repatriated Roma:

Representatives of the Serbian Government, Central Authorities and Administration

Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior
Dr Svetozar Čiplić, Minister of Human and Minority Rights
Petar Antic, Deputy Minister of Human Rights and Minority Rights
Svetlana Velimirovic, Deputy Commissioner for Refugees
Vladan Đukić, Secretariat for Social Care, City of Belgrade
Ljuan Koka, Head of the Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights
Slavica Vasic, Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights
Anne-Maria Ćuković, Office for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma, Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Rights
Zoran Simic, Airport Monitoring Team

Milun Jovanović, Assistant to the Mayor, Kraljevo

Roma Representatives and NGOs

Komina Sejdo, CEREZ
Miroslav Veljković, URBO
Nenad Tairović, Udruženje Roma Pčinjsko jablaničkog okruga
Đurđica Ergić, RWC Bibija
Jelena Jovanovic, Roma Researchers, Novi Sad
Orhan Kurtesi, “Salvatore” collective centre from Bujanovac
Vedat Isljami, Roma IDP
Bajram Haliti, Roma Diaspora
Srdjan Sain, Council for Integration of Roma, Vojvodina; member of Serbian National Roma Council
Cerim Gasi, Roma IDP from Kosovo
Slavko Markovic, Odbornik, Municipal Council Kraljevo
Nebojša Selistarveić, member of the Vranje City Council for National Minorities
Metija Kadrijević, Roma coordinator, Chukorica municipality
Zorica Šerifović, Roma coordinator, Municipality of Bujanovac
Đulijeta Šulić, Roma coordinator, City of Smedervo
Dobriła Nikolić, Roma coordinator, City of Zrenjanin
Zoran Pavlović, Roma coordinator, City of Kragujevac
Safet Sušica, Roma coordinator, City of Prokuplje
Jovan Damnjanovic, Roma Member of Parliament
Vitomir Mihajlovic, Roma Member of Parliament
Sofka Vasiljkovic, Vice-president of the Roma National Council
Slavko Jovanović, National Council of the Roma National Minority

Representatives of NGOs in Serbia

Ivana Kostic, Praxis, Executive Director
Jasmina Mikovic, Praxis, Deputy Executive Director
Ivana Stankovic, Praxis
Miodrag Shrestha, Grupa 484, Executive Director
Danilo Rakic, Grupa 484, Policy Officer

Participants from the International Community

Thomas Gnocchi, Political Adviser, European Union Delegation to the Republic of Serbia
Detlev Boeing, European Commission, DG Enlargement, Principal Administrator, Brussels
Patrick Schmelzer, European Commission Liaison Office, Pristina

Roque C. Raymundo, UNMIK, Senior Human Rights Officer, Pristina

Jun Shirato, UNHCR, Senior Protection Officer, Belgrade
Davor Rako, UNHCR, Associate Protection Officer, Belgrade
Sonja Barbul, UNHCR, Roma Assistant, Belgrade

Livia Plaks, Project on Ethnic Relations, President
Herbert Heuss, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Germany, Heidelberg
Sebastian Ludwig, Diakonisches Werk der EKD e.V., Germany

The following embassies were represented at the round-table: Austria, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and US.

OSCE Participants

Dimitrios Kypreos, OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador, Head of Mission
Daiana Falloni, OSCE Mission to Serbia, Head of Democratization Department
Madis Vainomaa, OSCE Mission to Serbia, Human Rights Program Co-ordinator
Douglas Wake, OSCE ODIHR, First Deputy Director
Andrzej Mirga, OSCE ODIHR, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues
Mirjam Karoly, OSCE ODIHR, Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues