

**2008 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING  
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**Working Session 6, Tolerance and non-discrimination I  
2 October 2008**

**Written Contribution by the Delegation of  
the Republic of Macedonia  
on Roma integration**

**Mr. Moderator,**

According to the census in 2002, Roma community presents 2,66% of the total population of the Republic of Macedonia. Roma are recognized as an ethnic minority in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia. The protection of all the minorities' ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious rights are guaranteed by Article 48 (2) of the Constitution. Recent years have marked evident progress in elaborating and implementing specially designed national policies which target the Roma population in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Government has taken positive steps towards improving the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma by adopting the National Strategy for Roma in 2005 along with a series of Action Plans in four priority areas- education, health care, housing and employment. Within the activities of the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005-2015, the Government joined the Central and South-Eastern Europe regional network. The implementation of the Action Plans from the National Strategy for Roma has been followed by the introduction of indicators connected to the three main themes of the Decade: discrimination, poverty and gender issues. Training has been conducted for the personal of the newly established bodies and institutions tasked with the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma i.e. with operational activities of the Action Planes. The objectives indicated in these documents are incorporated into the annual programmes of competent ministries and other state institutions at central and local level.

What are the concrete actions taken by the Government and by the respective Ministries within the implementation process?

The inclusion of Roma children in preschool education has been assessed by the Roma Education Fund as one of the most successful projects. In addition, the initiative for opening first Roma High school was promoted on the occasion of 8<sup>th</sup> of April last year, which has been established as Roma holiday, according to the new Law on holidays. The Ministry of Education allocated resources for the construction of the High school in Suto Orizari municipality, which is predominantly populated with Roma. The construction of the High school is planned to be finalized by the end of 2009.

Another measure from the wide range of measures of positive discrimination which promotes Roma education is the enrolment of at least one Roma pupil per class in the High schools throughout the country. Furthermore, facilitated enrolment of Roma students at Universities has been introduced too. The Universities have been obliged to provide enrolment for at least two Roma students per Faculty.

The Ministry of Health has implemented several activities within the policy for upgrading health-care for Roma. Without going into too many details, let us mention that in certain municipalities large scale immunization and health-checks have been conducted free of charge.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications has allocated resources for upgrading the infrastructure in certain Roma municipalities.

Special Projects have been designed and measures adopted in regards to employment of Roma. Training courses and contracts with private entrepreneurs for employment of Roma are some of the actions taken in order to improve Roma employment. There are total of 95 Roma (68 men and 27 women) who are beneficiaries of the active measures implemented by the Employment agency. 416 Roma have participated in professional-orientation courses organized by the Centers for employment.

With intention of strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy a special department has been established, tasked with the observance of the implementation of activities within the Decade and the National Strategy for Roma. This Department is the first of its kind among the Participating States of the Decade on Roma inclusion. Its role, too, is to coordinate the activities between various institutions.

Information dissemination among the Roma community on their rights derived from the Decade of Roma and from other important national documents and policies is one of the most significant activities. This is being dealt by the Roma Information Centers. So far, eight Centers have been established for that purpose throughout the country.

Recently, the Macedonian Government started with the elaboration of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation which takes into consideration the need to eliminate various forms of discrimination against the most marginalized groups in the Macedonian society.

Certainly, there are more things to be done to improve the integration of the Roma community in the Republic of Macedonia, but the engagements in this field already give results. It's the Government's intention to intensify these engagements further.