



DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
Working Session 15
(Wednesday, 7 October 2009)

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

My delegation would like to share some good practices and policies adopted by the Republic of Cyprus regarding the education of Roma children.

The majority of schools with high registration and attendance by Roma and other non-Greek speaking students operate as “Zones of Educational Priority”. The criteria used for the determination of the “Zones of Educational Priority” are: the large proportion of Turkish Cypriots, Roma and immigrant students, as well as the high rates of school failure and drop-outs. The Government provides additional resources to the vulnerable groups of those schools.

Programs aiming at enhancing the achievement of Roma pupils include:

- Extra tutoring for Roma students who are not fully proficient in Greek, employment of Bilingual Teachers, especially in Elementary schools, and instruction in the native language of Roma students, that allow them to participate in school and to acquire the skills and knowledge covered by the curriculum.
- Free private lessons in Greek are provided to Roma pupils in the afternoon.
- In order to help students acquire more knowledge, books and printed material are being provided free of charge.
- In schools where the percentage of Roma pupils is high, educators have the liberty to adapt the curriculum to their specific needs, in order to give them the opportunity to attend lessons regarding their culture in their mother tongue.

Other measures and strategies for the Roma students include the following:

- Provision of bilingual teachers who facilitates the communication between teachers, students and parents.
- Provision of breakfast to all Roma students.
- Provision of meals for the Roma students who attend the whole-day school.
- Provision of special support and attention to Roma students from the Service of Educational Psychology of the Social Welfare Services.
- Organization of a number of intercultural programs and events.

It is widely acknowledged that the effects of the participating states' policies regarding the education of Roma will be made more evident in the long term. However, in Cyprus, we already have some first positive outcomes, with a significant increasing of the percentage of registration, attendance, and participation of Roma students.