

**REPORT ON STEPS TAKEN BY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER
BODIES TO IMPROVE THE POSITION OF THE ROMA MINORITY IN THE
CZECH REPUBLIC**

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The main aim of Czech government policy for Roma integration is the full involvement of Roma in society and the improvement of the standing of Roma in all aspects of life. The government is striving to achieve this improvement particularly in the areas of education, employment, housing, health, social protection and in the safety of Roma. The social integration of Roma is accompanied by efforts from the Czech Republic government to conserve and develop the cultural heritage and the history of the Roma, and to preserve the Roma language. A comprehensive assessment of the position of Roma in the Czech Republic is contained in a government document entitled *Report on the Position of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic* for 2009, which was approved by the government on 14th June 2010 in its decree No. 461¹

1. Changes to the institutional arrangements for securing Roma integration

At the end of March 2010 Michael Kocáb, the Minister for Human Rights resigned his post as the Minister for Human Rights and from that date the post of Minister has been empty, while the departmental agenda has been transferred in its entirety to the Governmental Commissionaire for Human Rights, a position again occupied by Michael Kocáb. In setting up the new government the coalition parties in the end abolished the office of the Minister for Human Rights, the highest body for the promotion of human rights in the Czech Republic now being the Governmental Commissionaire.

In respect of the *institutional arrangements for Roma integration*, the membership base of the *Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs* was strengthened via approval of its new statute, in decree No. 254 dated 29th March 2010. Thanks to this positive change the implementation of the Roma Integration Concept for 2010 - 2013 will be made easier, as will promotion of further measures leading to equalisation of opportunities for disadvantaged Roma within the policies of other ministries and public institutions. Once more, the Chairman of the Council will be the Czech Prime Minister, and the membership consists of ministers from ministries with an interest in Roma integration (i.e. the Minister of Culture, the Minister for Regional Development, the Minister of Education, the Minister of the Interior), with other important Ministries being represented by a Deputy Minister (i.e. Deputy Minister of Finance, Deputy Foreign Minister, Deputy Minister of Health). The civic part of Council membership is made up of 15 representatives acting for the regional coordinators for Roma affairs, Roma representatives from civic society working actively on improving the standing of Roma in society or contributing significantly to their integration. The new statute brings about closer interconnection between the work of the Council and the work of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities. The involvement of representatives of the Association of Regions and Union of Towns and Villages in the work of the Council will permit greater participation of the regions and towns and villages in the development of Roma integration policy. An anticipated positive effect will also be the more efficient implementation of inclusion policies at regional and local level.

During 2009 it proved possible to achieve a stable personnel position at the *Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities*, and in addition an individual Agency project entitled "*Support for Social Inclusion in Selected Romani Localities through the Work of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities*" was approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as a result of which it received grant aid to the value of 44.850 million CZK for its continued work in excluded Roma localities. At the beginning of 2010 the Agency went into

¹The full wording of the document is available on the website of the Office of the Government at <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komuniti/dokumenty/zprava-o-stavu-romskych-komunit-v-ceske-republice-za-rok-2009-73886/>

its third year of operation, where it currently operates in 23 localities, with the expectation that its work will be extended to other Czech localities during 2011.

2. Financial backing for Roma integration

For the purposes of the Czech government there is an annual determination of the value of financial support from the state budget which is targeted specifically at members of Roma communities. In 2009 the government allocated state budget finances for improving the position of the Roma minority to an overall value of **157,383,278 CZK (6 379 541 EUR²)**. The table below contains a comparison of the value of finances specifically³ invested in the integration of Roma communities from 2004 - 2009. From these data it follows that in 2009 the largest volume of finances was allocated from the state budget for the whole of the last decade.

Table 1. Financial support for Roma integration from the Czech state budget from 2004 – 2009

Department	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Ministry of Education	14 700 000	24 700 000	27 500 000	25 000 000	25 519 400	22 161 200
	595 865 EUR	1 001 216 EUR	1 114 714 EUR	1 013 377 EUR	1 034 430 EUR	898 306 EUR
Ministry of Culture	2 000 000	2 000 000	2 000 000	2 000 000	20 525 760	21 843 524
	81 070 EUR	81 070 EUR	81 070 EUR	81 070 EUR	832 013 EUR	885 429 EUR
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	16 245	34 185 000	59 715 000	42 000 000	0	0
	658 EUR	1 385 691 EUR	2 420 551 EUR	1 702 473 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR
Ministry of the Interior	5 000 000	5 000 000	0	0	0	0
	202 675 EUR	202 675 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR
General Treasury	55 000 000	35 000 000	5 250 000	7 100 000	0	0
	2 229 428 EUR	1 418 727 EUR	212 809 EUR	287 799 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR
Ministry for Regional Development	0	0	0	0	0	1 704 000
	0 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR	69 072 EUR
Office of the Czech Government	0	10 000 000	27 000		71 648 530	55 244 054
	0 EUR	405 351 EUR	1 094 EUR	0 EUR	2 904 278 EUR	2 239 321 EUR
TOTAL	92 945 000	110 885 000	121 465 000	76 100 000	117 693 690	157 383 278
IN EUR	3 767 531 EUR	4 494 730 EUR	4 923 591 EUR	3 084 718 EUR	4 770 721 EUR	6 379 541 EUR

² Exchange rate 1 EUR = 24,67 CZK (14th September 2010) source www.cnb.cz

³ In addition to this grant support which is demonstrably aimed at improving the situation of members of Roma communities, bodies also draw funds for Roma projects from other grant-aid programmes which do not however disburse grants on the basis of the ethnic principle, but support projects helping people in specific life situations or with specific needs (e.g. support for projects aimed at the long-term unemployed, disadvantaged children, pupils and students with social disadvantages, etc.). Data on grants disbursed for Roma in this way are not in the table above because there are no data on the targeted allocation of funds to members of the Roma minority.

Summary Total 2004 - 2009	676,471,968 CZK = 27,420,833 EUR
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An important source of financial support to implement Roma inclusion measures are grants from European structural funds. For 2007 - 2013 calls are in place for the submission of projects as part of the *Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme*, the managing body for which is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In relation to Roma a key priority for the programme is Priority 3.2 *Support for the Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities*. In 2009 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs showed concrete support from European structural funds for Roma integration projects to the value of 332,771,473 CZK (13,488,912 EUR), while also declaring further calls for towns, villages and other social programme providers to submit projects aimed at the inclusion of disadvantaged Roma.

A further important ministry for the improvement of the position in Roma localities is the Ministry for Regional Development, as the managing body for the *Integrated Operational Programme*. Projects to support Roma education are also drawn from the *Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme*, whose managing body is the Ministry of Education.

3. Education

In 2009 the Ministry of Education initiated further positive changes towards improving the educational opportunities of Roma children. In the first instance it implemented research studies on analysing the use of diagnostic tools in relation to Roma children and mapping the proportion of socially disadvantaged Roma children in schools which teach in accordance with the Framework Teaching Programme for the Elementary Education of Children with Slight Mental Disability. The results of these pieces of research serve to set up a suitable model of inclusive education within the Czech education system so as to permit the teaching of the largest possible proportion of children with special educational needs inside the educational mainstream, including Roma children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

With the aim of increasing the degree of inclusivity of the Czech school system the Ministry of Education has developed two strategic documents - *An Action Plan for the Concept of Early Childhood Care for Children from Socio-Culturally Disadvantaged Environment* and *A National Action Plan for Inclusive Education*. *The Action Plan for the Concept of Early Childhood Care* defines a framework for activities implemented with the aim of preventing the establishment of social handicaps, as a consequence of which children are socialised in, and later continue to live in, a socially disadvantaged background, thanks to which they do not reach their full educational potential and terminate their schooling prematurely. The aim of this document is to develop the prerequisites for improving their success in school, for extending their school career and for subsequently obtaining qualifications, from the earliest and pre-school years of disadvantaged children.

The National Action Plan for Inclusive Education contains measures whose aim is to secure equal access and equal opportunities for all in relation to education. Part of this is introducing necessary measures to terminate continuing segregation practices in the Czech school system and simultaneously to prevent any kind of discrimination that Roma children may encounter. The basic aim of the plan is to increase the level of the inclusive sense of

education in the Czech education system and its final aim is thus to act preventatively against the social exclusion both of individuals and of entire social groups. The National Action Plan for Inclusive Education has 12 pillars going through the whole education system from pre-school to tertiary education in universities and higher education establishments. The measures proposed relate to areas which are important for the overall concept of the Czech education system, such as changes in legislation, specialist preparation of teaching staff, diagnosis and counselling, as well as research support, PR and publicity for the topic. The document has already been approved by the Czech government (15th March 2010) in its decree No. 206. If both strategies are consistently applied in practice they will also have a number of positive impacts on the position of socially disadvantaged Roma children. In July 2010 the first meeting took place of the expert working groups whose task it is to turn these individual pillars into specific measures. The Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs also has its Roma representatives in the working groups.

In addition to developing and applying the strategic documents the Ministry of Education has begun a number of legislative changes concerning the education of children with special educational needs. These changes lead to the legislative treatment of the education of socially disadvantaged children and elaborate tools which help children to cope with the teaching at normal schools. Of fundamental importance are the planned changes in the regulation dealing with the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and the regulation dealing with counselling services provided in schools and school advisory services. The Ministry of Education is further continuing in curricular reform and in extensive changes to the system of teaching staff training for those working in the school system and of counselling workers from school advisory services.

The ministry has maintained long-term grant support for the Teaching Assistants for Socially Disadvantaged Children, Pupils and Students Programme. In 2009 it provided financial support - through the Financing of Teaching Assistants for children, pupils and students with social disadvantages development programme - for the work of 451 assistants in schools run by the regions, towns, villages, by private and church schools, to the value of 75 million CZK. For Roma secondary school pupils in the same year the Ministry of Education provided a grant through the Support for Roma Secondary School Pupils programme, to an overall value of 10,825,400 CZK (438 808 EUR). Of great benefit was the setting-up of a new grant programme for Support for Schools Implementing Inclusive Education, which acts as a certain stimulus for schools where there is large proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils to continue in efforts for their inclusion. Within this programme in 2009 the sum of 46,817,885 CZK (1 897 766 EUR) was allocated to implement inclusion measures.

4. Employment

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Section for Employment Policy was concerned with support for Roma employment, as were Labour Offices in the various regions as part of the public employment services offered by them, and as were non-governmental non-profit organisations implementing projects financed by the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme (ESF) and from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs budget.

In 2009, according to estimates from Labour Office staff⁴, more than 3000 Roma were placed in *active employment policy tools* and a further 2 850 Roma placed in employment

⁴ The data come from a questionnaire survey in 2010, carried out in 2010 by the Employment Policy Section of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

support programmes implemented as part of the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme (ESF). Individual Action Plans (IAP) were agreed with more than 26 thousand Roma; these are offered as standard to applicants with unemployment records longer than five months. As part of these IAPs job offers are intensively organised for these Roma, and a higher standard of care provided. Through targeted programmes, the so-called *Regional Individual Projects* (RIPs), financed from ESF and implemented by the accredited Labour Offices at the level of the individual regions, help is provided to improve the motivation, qualification and subsequent search for work of difficult-to-place groups of job applicants, which also includes members of the Roma minority.

Table 2: Placement of Roma in active employment policy in 2009

Measure	TOTAL	Of which women
Number of Roma applicants included in active employment policy tools	2 708	1 165
Number of Roma users of counselling programmes	1 779	913
Number of Roma users of ESF programmes	2 581	1 139
Number of Roma applications with Individual Action Plans	26 578	12 773
Number of Roma successfully placed in the job market	5 106	2 081
TOTAL	38 804	20 521

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs supports the *linkage of employment services with social services* in such a manner as to achieve a comprehensive solution to the situation of disadvantaged Roma. In this sense it has also trained 75 trainers in the planning of the development of social services using the community planning method. In the planning of the development of social services these operate as so-called methodologists, who during their efforts focus inter alia on linking up social services with other activities such as public employment services at local level. The trainers help not only the regions, who have a legal obligation to develop medium-term social service development plans, but also towns and villages who have joined community planning at their own initiative. The linkage of public employment services with social services supporting the integration of Roma is also the focus of the *Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities* which when developing local inclusion strategies for social inclusion cooperates within local partnerships with the Labour Offices and links up their work to social services providers.

Non-governmental non-profit organisations try through their projects to increase the number of Roma who are successful in the labour market. These projects focus on employment and employment-legal counselling, the aim of which is to improve awareness and develop the skills of disadvantaged Roma in looking for work, to enable their access to telephone and internet for their own job searching and contacting of employers, also the provision of an anti-discrimination service and support for discussions with employers.

Within the Czech Republic one may take as an example of best practice the work of those bodies (non-profit organisations and private companies) dealing with the *social economy* on behalf of Roma with low employment rates. Social entrepreneurship is one of the ways to ease entry for them to the open labour market and to enable their social inclusion (particularly for those without the necessary qualifications, work habits and experience). Important financial support for the establishment of new business activities targeted at social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic is offered for the programme period 2007-2013 by the *Integrated Operational Programme* under the priority axis *Improving the Quality and Accessibility of Public Intervention Services 3.1c) Investment Support for the Providers of Social Services* as well as by the *Prague - Adaptability Operations Programme and the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme*.

5. Housing

Greater interest was noted at local level in 2009 from towns and villages in *more comprehensive revitalisation of excluded areas* and in systemic resolution of the housing situation of excluded groups of the population. They were incentivised in these efforts in particular by grant aid from European structural funds. Local authorities began a more focused debate on the topic of social housing for those who are immediately threatened with social exclusion. One of the preferred forms of housing for this target group is *subsidised housing using the progressive system of housing*⁵.

In 2009 staff from the Sociology Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, in conjunction with the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities, published a study entitled *Support for access to housing for people immediately threatened with social exclusion - an international perspective and proposed measures for the Czech Republic*, the author of which is an expert in the field, Martin Lux. The study develops the concept of subsidised housing and presents foreign experience with the implementation of a progressive system of housing for people threatened with social exclusion. It presents for the first time the so-called guarantee insurance system which offers participants - private, local authority or NGO landlords - a certain guarantee of rent payment in the event that tenants are unable to pay their rent themselves. The guarantee system reduces the risks associated with the operation of social housing. In connection with spreading the concept of subsidised housing the Agency for Social Inclusion organised two meetings where the concept was discussed; the first in April 2010 with non-profit organisations and then in June 2010 with representatives from housing owners, financial institutions and key government departments. These debates will

⁵ One of the pioneers of the system of progressive housing is the Ostrava association Centrom, which is implementing a project entitled *Housing with Accompanying Social Programme*. The association has developed a three-stage bilaterally accessible housing system. The III stage of housing indicates a situation where tenants are living in unsuitable conditions in apartments, accommodation blocks, as squatters or on the street. To improve their housing position they are offered II stage housing with a subtenancy agreement and an agreement for the provision of social services. At this stage the user does not have his/her own tenancy agreement, but on signing the subtenancy agreement undertakes to take part in the social programme. If a tenant in II stage housing turns out to be successful, he transfers to stage I housing with the best housing conditions, in which he lives for a year on the basis of a subtenancy agreement with the pledge of his own tenancy. At this stage tenants are offered a limited range of services, but there is still the requirement to work with a field social worker and make use of professional social counselling. Apartments which are provided for tenants are the property of the local authority or a private landlord. The accompanying social programme includes field work performed by Roma employees of the organisation and provided both to clients placed in the project and to people not placed in the project. Tenants also had the option to take part in an economic cookery and healthy eating course, a maintenance and masonry work course and educational activities for children. In 2009 the project took place in the town districts of Vítkovice, Radvanice and Bartovice, Slezská Ostrava, Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz.

give rise in the very near future to a pilot model for subsidised housing and work will begin on a legislative proposal to bring this concept into the relevant Acts.

With the aim of improving the position of excluded Roma in the housing area, the Ministry for Regional Development provides grant support for regions, towns and villages using resources from European structural funds, targeted at limiting the spread of social exclusion in Roma localities. The Ministry is the managing body for the *Integrated Operational Programme (IOP)* and as part of its work implements several measures enabling the integration of excluded Roma communities. Within the IOP there are two intervention areas offering investment support for the integration of socially excluded Roma communities:

- Intervention area 3.1 *Services in the area of social integration* - help is focused on establishing social services and centres which will help towns, village and regions successfully to resolve problems in socially excluded Roma localities and thus allow the return of users of these services to the labour market and into society. The aim is to secure linkage of investment needs with activities which will be supported as part of the European Social Fund (the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme).
- Intervention area 5.2 *Improving the Environment in Deprived Neighbourhoods* - within selection criteria cities were incentivised to include and resolve a socially excluded Roma locality as part of an Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) zone. Pilot projects made up a special group of IUDPs. Their aim is to verify the options for linking the regeneration of buildings in deprived neighbourhoods populated in part by socially excluded Roma households to activities in the area of social inclusion, human resources and employment.

In total 19 of the 41 cities which requested financial support as part of priority 5.2 included a socially excluded Roma locality in an Integrated Urban Development Plan zone. 6 cities applied for the pilot project (specifically: Most, Brno, Kladno, Přerov, Ostrava, Orlová). Of the remaining cities points were awarded to 8 cities which took account in their plans of solutions in socially excluded Roma localities. In these cities there will be ongoing monitoring particularly on their activities in social inclusion.

The Ministry for Regional Development has set up the *PILOT working group* for more effective coordination, cooperation and sharing of experience between all parties interested in the resolution of the Roma issue using structural funds. This group is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which manages the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme, as well as from the Ministry of Education as the managing body for the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme, representatives of the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities, the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs and managers from the Integrated Development Plans for those cities included in the pilot project.

In 2009 the Ministry for Regional Development provided grants from the state budget for households which could not make a financial contribution to the acquisition of a flat, or where one of the members of the household was also otherwise disadvantaged (e.g. for health or other social reasons). In relation to Roma households, where their housing need is threatened, this is mainly the award of grants to build flats as part of the *Support for the Construction of Subsidised Housing* sub-programme (protected and entry-level flats). Of significance in the context under discussion is the *Entry-level flats* grant heading; these are intended as social housing for those with low incomes in an unfavourable social situation caused by the social circumstances in their lives and who do not have access to housing, even when using all the current tools of social and housing policy. For this programme to be more accessible for

socially excluded Roma, the Ministry for Regional Development, in conjunction with the Concept for Roma Integration, is preparing an amended definition for the target group of support recipients, to also include people from socially excluded Roma localities and families who are threatened with having a child taken into care for lack of adequate housing. The table below presents the value of grant support for the construction of entry-level flats for 2009.

Table 13: Grant support for the construction of entry-level flats

Year	Number of entry-level flats whose construction commenced in 2009	Total construction funding in million CZK
2009	130	67.058

In 2009, Government Decree No. 333/2009 Coll., was approved, on conditions for the use of funds from the State Housing Development Fund to cover part of the costs associated with building social housing in the form of a grant to private persons and legal entities. The form of support is an investment grant, the recipient of which may be any kind of legal or private person undertaking to take on social housing built with a grant in accordance with the conditions of the government decree. Social housing is intended for recipients of repeated subsistence benefits, for people limited by their net income in relation to the size of their household and also for people who have other further social or health handicaps which disadvantage them in access to housing. This decree finally opens the way for new social housing providers - it now makes it possible for private persons and non-governmental non-profit organisations to obtain a grant. This measure also reacts to the specific needs of poor Roma households in the area of housing.

A positive view may also be taken of the start of a new Ministry programme in 2009; this is aimed at improving the position of Roma. This is grant heading No.5 as part of the *Support for Renewal of the Countryside* programme, entitled *Support for the Involvement of the Roma Community in the Life of their Town/Village and Society*. Villages up to 3000 inhabitants, which have at least 4% Roma population in their cadastral district, may apply for a grant. Before this, these villages had very few opportunities of obtaining grants to improve the position of local Roma. In 2009 the sum of 1,704,000 CZK (69 072 EUR) was allocated to villages.

6. Health

A significant breakthrough was made on the issue of the performance of sterilisations on Roma women, when the Czech government noted in its decree No. 1424 dated 23rd November 2009 the comments of the Government Council for Human Rights on the sterilisations of women in the Czech Republic performed in contravention of the law. Part of the decree was a public expression of regret at the established individual errors of health personnel in conducting sterilisations in contravention of a Ministry of Health directive from 1971. The decree also charged the Minister of Health with the task of taking measures which would make it easier to highlight the practice of illegal sterilisations and prevent in future the repetition of similar cases.

Systematic attention was paid in 2009 to identifying inequalities in the health and access to healthcare of Roma. A national report The Roma Population and Health - the Czech Republic was published as one of the outputs from the international SASTIPEN comparative study *Health and the Roma Population*, which was coordinated by the Spanish foundation Fundación Secretariano Gitano. The results of the national study were presented in both the

Czech Republic and in Madrid in Spain. The aim of the research was to analyse the health situation of the Roma population and subsequently to propose specific strategies and activities in the health area for this target group in the population. Through the research, very important information was obtained, on the basis of which positive changes can be initiated to improve the position of socially excluded Roma in particular, the health status of whom is worse than that of Roma who are not social excluded.

A fundamental programme in the area of health prevention and improvement for Roma is the *Health and Social Help* programme. The key supraregional provider of this in the Czech Republic is the Drom⁶ organisation which in 2009 employed 8 health/social workers operating in 10 locations of 4 regions within the Czech Republic, specifically in the Olomouc, South Moravian, Moravia-Silesian and South Bohemian regions. The programme was used in 2009 by 317 users (96 men and 221 women), with whom there were 3 044 interventions, most concerning counselling (34%) and negotiating on behalf of the user (26%). These health social assistants were successful with their interventions, succeeding in concluding 73% of client cases and in 46% of clients succeeding in positively influencing their attitudes towards health. Programme users came most often to their health social assistants with problems relating to registering with doctors (GPs, paediatricians, dentists and other specialists); and also with requests for help with arranging social benefits, invalidity benefit, medical support devices and institutional care associated with poor health. Another area was replacing missing or damaged insurance cards and not least changes of health insurance company.

In the summer of 2010 the Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs became actively involved in resolving the problem of the spread of Hepatitis A in socially excluded Roma localities. In July 2010 it organised the first meeting of the Czech Republic's Chief Medical Officer, MUDr Michael Vít, and of regional medical officers with Regional Roma Affairs Coordinators, at which the parties involved sought the best possible solution to preventing an epidemic and discussed coordination of the course of action proposed by them. During the meetings it was agreed to develop government materials which would secure a more efficient free system for inoculation against Hepatitis A in the event of an epidemic; the institutions also agreed on the method of coordinating these activities and on the involvement of other partners in the resolution of the problem, such as non-profit organisations operating field social workers and health social assistants. A strategy for the dissemination of information on the prevention of the disease was also discussed.

7. Resolving the position of socially excluded Roma

With the aim of improving the position of socially excluded Roma, the Czech government has prepared several strategy documents. A document of some significance in respect of Roma is the *Concept for Roma Integration for 2010 - 2013*, adopted by the government on 21st December 2009 in its decree No. 1572. This is a strategic document which contains measures aimed at evening out the opportunities and starting disadvantages of Roma, which prevent them from taking a full part in the cultural, social, economic and political life of society as a whole. Part of the material is the *Roma Integration Concept Implementation Plan 2010 - 2013*, which gives a total list of the tasks for individual departments and recommendations for other bodies arising from the individual measures. Regions, towns and villages are also included as implementers for the measures, but these are only recommendations and the tasks are not binding on them since the legislation on local

⁶ Information on the Health Social Support programme is based on data provided for the Report on the Status of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic for 2009 by the Drom organisation.

authorities does not allow the government to do this. These reflect proven approaches and examples from best practice leading to an improvement in the position of Roma communities.

The position of the socially excluded and those threatened with social exclusion is dealt with by the *National Action Plan for Social Integration 2008-2010*⁷ (NAPSI). 2010 will be a year for updating the NAPSI for ensuing periods. One significant activity, the aim of which is to invite the public and get it involved in developing the National Action Plan for Social Integration is the *NAPSI Together!* initiative, started up in January 2009 by five non-governmental non-profit organisations which have been dealing long-term with the issues of poverty and social exclusion in the Czech Republic. The IQ Roma Servis civic association, together with the organization Člověk v tísní (People in Need), the Socioklub, the SKOK association and the EAPN Czech Republic civic association, will try over the next two years to improve the process of social integration of people who for various reasons find themselves on the fringes of society⁸. One of the separate target groups to be addressed during the initiative are socially excluded Roma.

During 2009 the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs became involved in the *European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion*, the national coordinator of which is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Its priorities are:

- a. The prevention of social exclusion arising from indebtedness
- b. Access to the labour market for people who are not close to it - the concept of active integration
- c. Mobilisation of local public administration in developing and assessing national and local action plans for combating poverty and social exclusion
- d. Improving the education level and thereby the competitiveness in the labour market of the poor and socially excluded
- e. Support for appropriate housing for socially threatened groups and solving homelessness

As part of this initiative the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has announced the EY 2010 Grant Programme. In view of the nature of the projects submitted during calls, the target groups include all those threatened by the risks addressed by the EY 2010 priorities, including socially excluded Roma.

The *Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities* is also dealing intensively with resolving the position of socially excluded Roma localities. The Agency supports such measures as help local authorities in the process of social integration of those inhabitants threatened with social exclusion and in the development of socially excluded localities in the context of the town/village as a whole and of all of its inhabitants. The basis for the Agency's project⁹ is cooperation with towns/villages/regions based on setting up *local partnerships*, which are developed by town/village leaders and other relevant players in the field of social integration, i.e. also by representatives of non-governmental non-profit organisations,

⁷ The priority aim of this document is to support the integration of disadvantaged population groups through a wide range of measures in the social services, education, employment support programmes and programmes to support prevention of socio-pathological phenomena. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs prepares a *National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Integration* on the achievement of these aims and meeting this plan; this Report is submitted by the Czech Republic to the European Commission.

⁸ Source: <http://www.eapncr.org/view.php?cisloclanku=2009020001>

⁹ The key activities which occur as part of the project are: support for the establishment of cooperation with communities and the establishment of local partnerships, the development of situational analyses, the development of local social integration strategies, implementation of measures planned as part of the social integration strategies, evaluation of the work of local partnerships and supervision, the work of the concept and analyses department, training of local consultants and methodological support, PR presentation of the project, management and coordination of the project.

government offices/departments, schools, the Czech Police and so on. In 2009 the Agency worked within local partnerships with 139 institutions from 13 pilot locations¹⁰. At the beginning of December 2009 the Minister for Human Rights announced a call for towns/villages to take part in selection for cooperation with the Agency from 1st April 2010. In March 2010 the Agency's Monitoring Committee selected a further 10 locations from towns and villages applying, in which the Agency began to operate from May 2010¹¹. Memoranda of cooperation for these locations have already been signed. Up to August 2010 the Agency has worked with 269 local partners on developing and implementing local strategies for social integration.

The local consultant plays a key role in the work of the Agency at local level. First of all at the beginning of his or her work he arranges for a situational analysis of the excluded Roma locality, which should provide local partners with expert information for developing targeted joint strategies for social integration. In this manner situational analyses were developed in 2009 in Cheb, Most, Ústí na Labem, Broumov, the Šluknov area, and an analysis of the situation in Chomutov was prepared taking account of the confiscation of subsistence benefits there. Following completion of the situational analyses and any supplementary subject-specific research, the local consultant initiates a dialogue between the local partners and supports them in developing a targeted local social integration strategy to resolve the position in excluded Roma localities.

At the end of August 2010 the strategic planning process in six of the Agency's locations reached its goal - the creation of the Strategic Social Integration Plan concept document. In these six locations the strategies have been completed and adopted by the local partners and subsequently approved by the local town councils¹². The plans identify the needs of these locations in the areas of housing, employment, education, social services and other needs. They contain proposals for specific projects and those who are to implement them. As part of strategy implementation the Agency is ready to provide local partners with methodological support and help in developing and implementing these projects so that the needs of excluded Roma can be met. Support on the part of the Agency consists of the dissemination of information on suitable grant headings, of initiating the establishment of deeper analysis of the needs of the inhabitants of excluded localities, of measuring specificity and assessing the effectiveness of existing integration measures.

In 2009 local partners, in conjunction with the Agency, prepared a total of 72 projects, most of which were established in the Šluknov area (14), Most (13), Cheb (8), Přerov (7) and in Ústí na Labem (5). During 2009 16 projects were implemented in conjunction with the Agency, most of these in the Jeseník region. Within these projects in 2009 there were a total of 17 889 support recipients from socially excluded localities, most of these being from the Šluknov area (3200 recipients), Most (2950), with Přerov in third place (2900). From the beginning of January to the end of June 2010 the Agency was involved in the preparation of a further 67 projects (6 of which are now in the implementation phase). For successful applications these projects allow the use in these locations of funds of the order of hundreds of millions of crowns to support social integration. Further projects are in preparation

¹⁰ The Agency operated in 2009 in 13 pilot locations, specifically in Brno, Broumov, Břeclav, Holešov, Cheb, in the Jeseník region, in Most, Přerov, Roudnice nad Labem and Slezská Ostrava. In addition to these towns it also worked with Litvínov, where cooperation with the town was begun supplementally based on decree No. 62 dated 12th January 2009.

¹¹ The members of the monitoring committee chose for the Agency's work locations in the towns of Ornice, Bruntál, Toužim, Trmice, Jáchymov, Bílina, Havířov, Kutná Hora, Jirkov and Chomutov.

¹² Most (23.2.2010), Cheb (6.4.2010), Broumov (16.6.2010), Jesenícko (9.6.2010), Roudnice nad Labem (28.5.2010), Slezská Ostrava (3.6.2010)

following on from strategic plans both completed and still in preparation, arising in new localities. The table below gives examples of projects under preparation.

MOST

On the basis of a strategic plan developed as part of a Local Partnership the city of Most has introduced a very innovative instrument. Every public contract issued by the city of Most as part of the integrated urban development plan will fill at least ten percent of the jobs with long-term unemployed from the Labour Office register.

JESENÍK REGION

Projects included in the strategic plan should bring to the region: Easy-access facilities in the village of Mikulovice, reconstructed community centres in the villages of Vápenná, Uhelná, Bílá Voda and Kobylá nad Vidnavkou, as well as the establishment of a supported employment agency in Jeseník. Tied housing will also be arranged, especially for the clients of refuge homes, as well as "start-up" flats for those with a drug- or crime-related past.

ŠLUKNOV AREA

The Cedar civic association has obtained a grant for its Mám práci (I have a job) project. Over two years this will secure requalification for 24 people from the Labour Office register. Requalification for the position of community service worker will take 6 months. For the 17 most successful there will be 6 months' work in a subsidised job. In the Šluknov area an anti-debt campaign took place linked to an exhibition, and the Varnsdorf Social Services Centre also expanded its field social work programmes into the neighbouring villages of Jiřetín pod Jedlovou, Dolní Podluží and Chřibská, which would not otherwise have been able to implement them.

BROUMOV

In Broumov the Masaryk Elementary School has prepared, in conjunction with the Agency, a project focused on improving work with pupils from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds. In the event that this project is successful in the selection process and is implemented, there will be, for example, an increase in the number of teaching assistants at the school. The school is also developing the concept of individual equalisation plans and will work with this with several selected pupils.

In addition to local strategies for social integration which have arisen in cooperation with the Agency, every region prepares a *medium-term social services development plan*, and some of the regions in addition more comprehensive *regional strategies for the integration of socially-excluded Roma*, which go beyond the area of social services and also contain measures in the areas of employment, housing and education, which can be taken as a positive step in the right direction. From their budget several regions also support with targeted grants the implementation of social services aimed at the integration of Roma. A number of villages are taking the initiative on the process of community planning with varying degrees of attention to the needs of socially excluded Roma. One may also note favourably the growing network of providers of social programmes focused on the social inclusion of Roma.

The Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs is also supporting the transfer of government concepts and the professional resolution of the current problems of the Roma minority at regional and town/village level. It takes place through methodological support provided to Regional Coordinators for Roma affairs, who implement an agenda targeted at Roma integration at regional level. For these the Office organised a number of coordination meetings, workshops and seminars in 2009 and 2010, where they could discuss together the key topics of Roma inclusion (e.g. the topic of public administration as one of the

instruments for help on subsistence, the topic of inclusive education, the employment of hard-to-place Roma, Roma migration, etc.). Some of these meetings are also attended by the Commissionaire for Human Rights, who ascertains from the Coordinators their current needs and important information on the current situation of Roma communities in individual regions.

The list of activities should not omit *research projects*, the results of which should be used to develop strategy documents. An example of such a project is the *Long-term monitoring of the situation of Roma localities - Czech locations*¹³, ordered from GAC, s.ro. by the Office of the Czech Government with the involvement of the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities. The aim of the project was to monitor the situation of five Czech socially excluded localities in which the Agency for Social Integration in Roma localities operates. Since August 2010 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been preparing, in conjunction with the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs and the Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities, a comprehensive piece of research whose aim will be to map the situation of socially excluded Roma localities. Based on the outputs of the analysis, follow-up grant support should be arranged in the next programme period for social integration programmes financed by European structural funds.

8. The security position of Roma

In 2009 the Ministry of the Interior submitted to the government a comprehensive *Strategy to Combat Extremism*, which was approved on 4th May 2009. In the same year there was intensive implementation of a whole series of measures from the Strategy in conjunction with other concerned government departments. In the second half of 2009 the Czech Police began extensive and long-prepared national actions against right-wing extremists, the result of which was the crippling of the movement in its organisation of neo-Nazi concerts and other public events. In the second half of the year, significant effort was put by the Ministry of the Interior into its attempt to have the Workers' Party dissolved, which was achieved through a judgement by the Supreme Administrative Court on 17th February 2010.

The Office of the Czech Government became involved in implementing the Strategy for Combating Extremism through its *Campaign against Racism 2009*, where a number of the project supports were aimed at objective information and PR on the nature of the neo-Nazi scene and its public activities, other projects were aimed at practical help for the victims of extremism or at improving the awareness of public administration staff of this social problem. A whole set of information materials were also developed for teachers, training events took place for schools and for the Czech Police, a manual was developed for towns and villages on how to prevent hate meetings occurring on their territory. Associations such as Romea, o.s., In IUSTITIA, o.s., Člověk v tísni, o.p.s. (People in Need) and Tolerance and Civic Society were involved in the implementation of these projects.

A number of towns and villages in the Czech Republic agreed to the development and implementation of *crime prevention strategies*, in conjunction with the Czech Police and other interested parties, which also contributes to an improvement in the position of excluded Roma, who are more subject under threat from risk forms of behaviour. One resource for implementing the strategy priorities is the Ministry of the Interior annual grant programme entitled *Crime Prevention Programme*. Its aim is to eliminate or at least alleviate the social exclusion of Roma communities, the consequence of which is also an increased danger of

¹³ This research is available on website <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/dokumenty/dlouhodoby-monitoring-situace-romskych-lokalit--ceske-lokality-70628/>

racial and extremist feelings. Through it in 2009 a total of 22 prevention projects were supported, with grant aid to a value of 3,398,000 CZK (137 738 EUR). A condition of support for a project is financial participation on the part of the town or village and the active involvement of the target group in project implementation.

Established good practice in crime prevention is the *Programme of Help in Dealing with the Police and other public bodies*, which ran in some socially excluded Roma localities. This is a specialised form of field social work aimed at helping the socially excluded who have become victims of, or witnesses to, crime. Within the programme, the aim of field workers is the extension of the law and the principles of civic society into environments of social exclusion. Field workers mediate contact between inhabitants of socially excluded localities and the police and other bodies, thus contributing to the development of conditions which will give people living in this environment easier access to services and help from these institutions. Thanks to counselling from these workers, programme users are better informed about their rights and obligations, and are thus able to manage their situations using standard institutional means. The programme operated in 4 of the Czech regions, where 17 assistants were placed.

A significant improvement in the security position of Roma was also achieved in 2009 through the *Association for Probation and Mediation in the Czech Republic*, which initiated several crime prevention projects to prevent repeat offending by Roma. The most important project is *Roma Mentor*, which is of particular help where there is a greater number of Roma clients for the Probation and Mediation Service. The service contributes to a reduction in the risk of re-offending by socially excluded Roma clients, leads to improved awareness of alternative punishments and improved incentives to the use of alternative punishments. A special target group for this are members of the Roma minority who have been given alternative punishments or measures. The Roma mentor - a trained Roma who works with the Czech Probation and Mediation Service, makes contact with convicted Roma and thereby improves the prerequisite for the use of alternative punishments, in particular the use of publicly beneficial work and the imposition of supervision by a probation officer. In 2009 the project was implemented in 4 Czech regions, where 22 mentors were in place. A second important project for the Association was the *Strengthening the Family* project which endeavours to improve the level of family care as opposed to institutional care in the case of children and youngsters from socially excluded Roma families in the provision of counselling, preventative care and other services aimed at their stabilisation. As part of the project there is verification of the prevention service of Roma mentors aimed at supporting and accompanying Roma families where there is a risk that a child or youngster may be taken into institutional care.

9. Anti-discrimination measures

In December 2009 the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights* presented the results of its survey on the observance of minority rights in member states of the European Community in its *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey* (EU MIDIS). This is the first integral survey within EU member states in which immigrants and members of ethnic minorities have been questioned about their experiences of discrimination and victimisation in everyday life. The Czech government welcomed the results of the research as a further important guideline in the implementation of policies aimed at eliminating discrimination and feelings of discrimination on the part of Roma.

A promise of positive changes is the adoption of Act No 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and the Legal Means for Protection against Discrimination and changes to certain

laws (the Anti-discrimination Act), in 2009. Before the adoption of this Anti-discrimination Act the legal treatment of discrimination was fragmented across several legal regulations, nor did it deal in more specific terms with the complexity of this problem - which is not only socio-legal - of present-day society. The Anti-discrimination Act incorporates in a comprehensive manner the relevant regulations of the European communities and further to the Charter of Basic Rights and Freedoms and international treaties which are part of Czech legislation, defines more closely the right to equal treatment and the ban on discrimination in the matters of the right to work and access to work, access to an occupation, business and other gainful employment, social security, access to education and its provision, access to goods and services, including housing, where these are offered to the public or in their provision, etc. An individual who enters into legal relationships in these areas thus has, on the basis of the Anti-discrimination Act, the right not to be discriminated against.

In December 2009 the Ombudsman began to act on the implementation of the Anti-discrimination Act in practice; as part of his office, he set up a separate Equal Treatment Department, where 6 staff handle specific cases of the application of discriminatory practices to Czech citizens. Some of these cases refer to discrimination against Roma (at an estimate, 20% of the department's workload). The department's staff offer methodological assistance to discrimination victims; make legal assessments of cases of discrimination and offer the most appropriate options for next steps; as needed, they advise or offer cooperation in obtaining evidence; conduct research on discrimination; publish reports and issue recommendations on questions relating to discrimination; arrange for the exchange of information with European institutions for equal treatment and determine whether government offices, as required to by law, actually detect and take action against discriminatory behaviour. In 2009 alone the department resolved 15 cases, and by the end of May 2010 there have been 110. Thanks to this step undertaken by the Ombudsman a new universal body has been established which contributes significantly to combating discrimination in the everyday lives of Czech citizens.

10. Roma gender equality

The Czech government is concerned overall with the subject of gender equality and is conscious also of the significant role of Roma women in implementing a policy of Roma integration. Roma women determine a family's life style, secure the everyday needs of its members and the upbringing and education of their children. Many women from excluded Roma families take on themselves at their own initiative the resolution of the difficult circumstances of the family, which they approach pro-actively seeking out sources of help. But for them the responsibility which Roma women take on means an excessive burden which does not give them adequate opportunities for self-expression and their own personal development.

From 2010 - 2013, during the Implementation Plan of the Concept for Roma Integration, a part of which is the task of supporting equal opportunities for Roma women, the Czech Government Commissionaire for Human Rights will be acutely concerned with levelling out the disadvantages of Roma women and girls, where they often face double discrimination - as members of a minority and as women within their own community.

With the aim of evening out the disadvantages of Roma women in Czech society, the Czech Republic has joined an international initiative entitled the *Roma Women Initiatives*¹⁴, grouping together some 135 organisations from Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldavia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia.

¹⁴ Source: <http://romove.radio.cz/cz/clanek/20092>

The Roma Women Initiatives project was established in 1999 as part of the Open Society Institute's programmes. Its aim is to support the Roma women's movement in Central and Eastern Europe and to train young female Roma activists. A number of Roma women in the Czech Republic are endeavouring to improve their conditions and opportunities for obtaining high-quality training in the labour market.

An opportunity for discussion and seeking ways to even out the disadvantages of Roma women is also offered by the *Czech Chairmanship of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015*, where the position of Roma women is taken into account in the "*Roma women looking at integration policy in all its areas*" subject area. The Roma women's group *Manushe*, which has operated since 2000 as part of the Slovo 21 civic association, has joined the implementation of this priority. Since 2005 this group has been a member organisation of the *Czech Women's Lobby* and the *European Women's Lobby*, and groups together more than 170 Roma women and men, without regard to age or gender. The main aim of this women's group is to improve the position of Roma women both within the Roma minority and within Czech society. During the Chairmanship the group will organise activities not only for Roma women, but also for politicians and the professional and wider public.

11. Support for Roma Culture and Language

In 2009 there was a significant shift in *dignified remembrance of Roma victims of the Holocaust*. First of all, the Czech government approved the landscaping of the memorials at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu with its breakthrough decree No. 589 dated 4th May 2009 *on implementing the plan to create dignified conditions for securing remembrance of the victim of the Roma Holocaust on the site of the former concentration camps at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu*. This step was the culmination of many years of effort to achieve dignified remembrance of the victims of the Roma Holocaust, fought for by the *Working Group on the Roman Holocaust* and the *Committee for Compensating Victims of the Holocaust*.

The landscaping of the memorial site at Lety u Písku was entrusted to the Ministry of Culture, using the state-supported organisation Památník Lidice (Lidice Memorial), which in 2010 succeeded in making a major improvement to the memorial site. The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the Museum of Roma Culture will manage the construction of an international education and conference centre for the Roma Holocaust at Hodonín u Kunštátu. Specifically, at Lety u Písku there has been a legal property settlement with the owners of the land where landscaping of the memorial is taking place, and at the same time the greenery around the site and the memorial on the site have been tended, information boards have been prepared in the Lety area and a project approved for the construction works in preparation, while a tender for selection of the reconstruction contractor has been completed. At the end of 2009 it was possible to buy the site of the recreation centre at Hodonín u Kunštátu from its private owner, which is a fundamental step towards upgrading the memorial site.

Research was done in 2009 entitled *Options for work with the Romani language in Czech elementary schools*, completed by the Institute for South and Central Asia. The aim was primarily to identify the factors which might affect teaching work with Romani. Specifically the project was focused on the options for using Romani in Czech schools as a voluntary teaching subject, on identifying the possible methodological and socio-cultural problems associated with teach Romani in schools and in cooperation with teachers, pupils and their families to propose solutions to these problems. The research also verified the quality of existing and newly derived teaching materials and Roma texts in practice, their possible

modification and reflection on this practice on the part of teachers, pupils and - of major importance - their parents. It also mapped attitudes to Romani and its teaching in the groups mentioned.

12. Czech Republic involvement in international activities supporting Roma inclusion

The Czech government is involved in international activities supporting Roma inclusion. A positive note should be made of the contribution of the Czech Republic to the development of the *Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion* during the meeting of the *European Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion*, which took place during the Czech Presidency of the EU Council in the spring of 2009.

These principles include:

Principle of Roma inclusion with the European Community	
Principle No. 1	A constructive and pragmatic non-discrimination policy and legislation to secure equal opportunities.
Principle No. 2	An explicit, but non-exclusive policy aimed at Roma (non-exclusive in the sense that it does not add other, additional privileges and rights, but strictly secures equal opportunities for Roma)
Principle No. 3	An inter-cultural approach (combating stereotypes and prejudices, inter-cultural education with full acknowledgement of the affairs of Roma, their culture and their history)
Principle No. 4	The focusing of all policies within states' policy mainstreams - particularly to secure inclusion in the open labour market, education and housing, services for Roma etc.
Principle No. 5	Attention to gender equality and correctness; for Roma specifically the issue of gender equality must be worked with as a multiple discrimination topic.
Principle No. 6	Policies always developed on the basis of thorough data analysis
Principle No. 7	Use of community instruments (the community plan for social services development, medium-term outlook..) at both the regional and national level as well as the community, in the areas of administration, legislation and access to justice
Principle No. 8	Involvement of all levels of government and administration
Principle No. 9	Involvement of civic society
Principle No. 10	Active participation by Roma in the process of integration and the development of inclusion and other policies.

A further session of the *European Platform for Roma Inclusion* was organised in the autumn of 2009 by the Swedish presidency. The Spanish presidency move the agenda of Roma integration forward thanks to the II. Roma Summit organised in Cordoba, Spain in April 2010, where the participating states agreed on the elaboration of the Common Principles

into a so-called roadmap. This roadmap was first discussed at the third session of the Platform in Brussels in June 2010.

In addition to this activity the Czech Republic is involved in the *EU Roma Network*, a European network linking together 12 EU member states with the aim of supporting the use of structural funds to achieve social integration of the Roma population. The Council's Office is the partner institution from the Czech Republic. During 2009 three sessions of the management committee took place in Spain, Hungary and in Sweden. During the meetings discrimination topics were debated, as well as the search for ways to resolve it, Roma employment, there was also a re-assessment of the priorities EU Roma Network with respect to the setup of the European Social Fund, as well as the topic of the Roma community and European structural funds.

Representatives of the Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs also took part in meetings of the *Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*, which in 2009 organised an annual implementation meeting of the Human Dimension devoted to the integration of Roma into society, focused on inclusive education. A representative of the office also took part in a Conference on Roma migration and freedom of movement.

The Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs also took part in a meeting of *MS-G-ROM*, which was founded by the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe and is responsible for regular audits of the situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe. The meeting in this group was focused on the results of the research on Roma employment undertaken by the World Bank, and also on the question of housing and better access to health care for Roma and Travellers in Europe.

A meeting of the *Visegrad Four (V4)* was an opportunity to promote Roma inclusion¹⁵. Within the V4 the office of the Council took part in the commentary phase of the Central European Roma strategy, whose aim is to strengthen cooperation on Roma integration between the V4 countries using experience gained from the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Of fundamental importance in particular is the exchange of experience and proven approaches at regional level, just as the drawing up of joint proposals with the aim of providing positive inputs for EU decision-making on this question.

The Minister for Human Rights and other interest departments such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Regional Development and the Ministry of Health were involved on an ongoing basis in implementing activities as part of the *Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015*. At the present time the Czech Republic is chairing the Decade for the period 1st July 2010 to 30th June 2011. Preparations for the chairmanship are handled by the *Committee for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015*, which has operated since 2004 as one of the committees of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs.

The priorities of the Czech chairmanship of the Decade were the outcome of a broad discussion between government departments and non-profit organisations. The debate on priorities also involved representatives from the Decade Secretariat, the World Bank, the Open Society and the Roma Education Fund. The outcome of all of these meetings was the establishment of five priority areas on which the Czech Republic will focus its activities thematically as part of its chairmanship:

¹⁵ The Visegrad Four is a grouping of four Central European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, set up in 1991. The mutual cooperation activities of the V4 countries were initiated by the common interest of the post-communist bloc in integration into the developed democracies of Western Europe.

1. Inclusive education - development of an inclusion policy based on empirical data and the possibility of gathering and using ethnicity data
2. The life situation and rights of children
3. Roma woman - looking at integration policy in all their areas
4. Implementation of integration policies at local level with reference to local authorities
5. The media and the image of Roma

These priorities were submitted in June to the government, which approved them on 7th June 2010, in its decree No. 448, on the Czech Republic Chairmanship of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Accountability for implementing the priorities of the Czech chairmanship will be borne by the Prime Minister in conjunction with the Government Representative for Human Rights, with the involvement of the Ministry for Regional Development, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, i.e. those government departments collaborating on implementing the Action Plan for the Decade in the Czech Republic and with representatives in the Committee for the Decade.

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