

EURODIACONIA ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES

A CONTRIBUTION FOR THE 2014 COMMISSION PROGRESS REPORT ON ROMA INTEGRATION

NOVEMBER 2013

Introduction

Eurodiaconia is a network of organisations, institutions and churches providing social and health services and education on a Christian value base in over 20 European countries. A number of our members are actively working with Roma communities to improve their living conditions, education, employment and health and overall working to foster the social inclusion of Roma.

In 2012 we carried out an initial [assessment](#) of the NRIS among our membership, and more recently in April 2013, one year after the NRIS were adopted, we gave a short contribution based on our members' experiences concerning the planning and initial stages of the implementation and the progress made in setting the necessary preconditions for a successful implementation of the national Roma integration strategies ([read here](#)). Then in October 2013, DG Justice invited Eurodiaconia to carry out a further assessment on the progress made in the implementation of the NRIS. This assessment is our response to this invitation and as important stakeholders in this field; we hope that our input will be taken into account in the European Commission's official progress report to be published in 2014.

Executive Summary

In this report members of Eurodiaconia have assessed steps taken in implementing the NRIS and the impact they have had so far, namely regarding education, employment, healthcare and housing, discrimination, funding and dialogue with civil society. In most cases, our members have been able to identify good practices and have been able to make policy recommendations for each of the specific policy areas.

In this report we have country specific information from our members in Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania and Serbia who gave detailed feedback on the NRIS. Our Danish and German members however were unable to answer our survey as they say that their respective governments see the inclusion of Roma as covered by the general social system and inclusion strategy, therefore there are no special measures taken. (In Denmark there is not much in the public sphere about the Roma who are Danish citizens. They mostly hear about asylum seeking Roma from Serbia. The Roma are still connected to a bad image in general often combined with little knowledge and stereotypes about Roma). Answers in this report reflect a varying degree of progress made in the implementation of the NRIS. In most countries some positive action has been taken, although civil society participation seems to be a weakness in most countries.

In terms of **education**, according to our members in Finland, the government has been active in implementing a number of positive policy measures, in particular in the area of education, however the longer term impact of these measures are yet to be seen. In Serbia the new programme for Pedagogue Assistants seem to be a positive initiative according to our members. The Hungarian government has also implemented a number of positive education initiatives in particular to reduce early school drop outs and increase scholarship programmes. However, making the link between education and employment for Roma is still identified as a challenge in several countries.

Regarding **employment** members in Finland stress the need to intensify and strengthen the work of the public employment services in Finland to help Roma integrate in the labour market. In Hungary a number of positive work integrating programmes have been identified such as micro-credit programmes as well as vocational training programmes, in particular for Roma women. However the long term impact of such programmes are yet to be seen.

In terms of **funding** our members in Romania and Serbia say that access to national funding for their projects and services is difficult and often focuses on short term interventions. In Serbia, our members say that the main barriers to the implementation of the NRIS are lack of proper mechanisms and instruments for comprehensive work with Roma, lack of adequate planning and budgeting, lack of human capacity and resources and too many ad-hoc actions, without impact and sustainability. However in Finland Roma are mentioned as a vulnerable and key group by almost all funding instruments providing good opportunities to apply for funding.

In Hungary good examples of **housing** investment is evident with financial resources dedicated to a complex slum/micro district program for the social inclusion of people living in slums through individual and community development. However Roma migrants in Finland are not provided with any form of housing and they encounter structural discrimination in regards to private housing. In Serbia, a revised Action plan for Housing Conditions is underway however the State is starting with soft components such as data collection, surveys and analysis.

In terms of **civil dialogue and participation**, members in the Netherlands are discouraged in particular with civil society participation including Roma themselves. However dialogue with governmental bodies has been noticeable with our members in Serbia who do seem to have been consulted on their new action plans for the NRIS for 2012–2014. Another positive example is our Hungarian members who are members of the Roma Coordination Council of the Inclusion State Secretariat and who have been involved in partnership consultations in the planning phase of the EU 2020 program.

To improve the process of the NRIS, we have made some key recommendations to the European Commission below. However below are more country specific answers referring to progress made in each of the policy areas and more specific policy recommendations. Eurodiaconia will continue to monitor the implementation of the NRIS. Furthermore, if the new Recommendation on effective Roma Integration Strategies is adopted at the end of the year, we will also monitor the commitments made by the Member States laid out in the Recommendation.

Key recommendations to the European Commission:

- ❖ Monitor more closely the use of EU funds (e.g. ESF, ERDF) as well as national funds being used to promote Roma inclusion, give positive feedback to those governments using funds effectively and (publicly) question those which are not.
- ❖ Contact NCPs and or relevant government departments who are not working effectively with civil society and Roma communities and urge that they immediately engage all relevant stakeholders in genuine dialogue and participation to speed up the implementation and improve effectiveness of the NRIS.
- ❖ Collect and share good practices identified by the Member States *among* Member States, NCPs and civil society. Member states must then consider how they improve their own policies and consider replicating good practice taking into consideration their national/regional and local context. Mutual learning must not stay on paper, it must be used to reform policy where needed.

- ❖ Carry out a full evaluation of the Decade for Roma Inclusion to ensure mistakes are not repeated and learning points are taken into account in policy reforms.
- ❖ Ensure Member States report on the inclusion of Roma in their NRPs as part of the wider European Semester process.
- ❖ Whilst we respect the Chatham House rules of the meetings with the National Roma Contact Points, and we trust these meetings are fruitful, we would also encourage the Commission to increase communication about what the Member States are doing on a more regular basis. The Commission can share the good practice by the MS in order to put peer pressure on the others.

Quick links to country specific answers:

- ❖ [Finland](#)
- ❖ [Hungary](#)
- ❖ [The Netherlands](#)
- ❖ [Romania](#)
- ❖ [Serbia](#)

Finland, answers from Helsinki Deaconess Institute (HDI)

"Inside the European Union, there should really be a consensus on the policies regarding migrant Roma. Right now the local and national actors in the destination countries try to behave as Roma migrants don't exist, while the authorities in the countries of origin cannot involve them actively in their own local and national policies. They fall in between, benefiting of none of the inclusion services and policies".

➤ EDUCATION:

Steps taken: The government has developed practices and models for improving the knowledge of teachers on supporting the educational process of Roma students and have strengthened the cooperation between schools and families.

Impact: It is generally believed that there has been a positive impact, but we are not familiar with the concrete evaluation indicators.

Good practices: Training and hiring Roma as school assistants to support the Roma students and the others. Supporting Community work and family work at the grass roots level.

Policy Recommendations:

- ❖ In regards to the Roma migrant children there are still not clear policy guidelines and the practices vary among different municipalities. Besides the fact that the right to education is universal, the fulfilment of the right is still dependent on each municipality. There should be clear guidelines in regards to the Roma migrant children and school registration and education.

➤ EMPLOYMENT

Steps taken: Most of the Employment and Economic Development Offices, under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy have acquired Roma job counsellors to specialize and support particularly the Roma users. They have also developed a pilot project to work on a specialized training on job-counselling and support for Roma.

Impact: It is generally believed that there has been a positive impact, but we are not familiar with the concrete evaluation indicators.

Good practices: Initiatives of the diaconia and other organizations which are in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy develop outreach programmes among Roma youth for example.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ Once again the main recommendation will be in regards to Roma migrants, since there is a complete lack of counselling and support services for labour integration among them. Basically they would have the right to use the services of the same Employment Offices, but the reality is that the offices lack the time and the specialized services to address them. So, more clear guidelines and services for the support of Roma migrants.
- ❖ Secondly, work with the employers and private sector should be intensified.

➤ HEALTHCARE

Steps taken: The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs is conducting a big research project on Roma's health and wellbeing in Finland (and increasing the resources in social work at the municipal level).

Impact: It is generally believed that there has been a positive impact, but we are not familiar with the concrete evaluation indicators.

Good practices: Involving the Roma in the planning processes, such as planning services. Carrying out research that would guide services, for example just recently a big piece of research on gender based violence was conducted in spite of the sensitivity of the subject due to the Roma involvement in the whole process.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ Grass roots level work and community work should be strengthened.

➤ HOUSING

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ In regards to the Roma migrants, the authorities continue to keep a blind eye and provide any form of housing. Moreover the Roma migrants encounter structural discrimination in regards to the private housing market and are harassed by the police if they use informal places. Guidelines, decisions and policies should be taken by the government in regards to the housing challenge of the Roma migrants.

➤ DISCRIMINATION

Steps taken: Working groups and Roma Forums have been established which could support Roma activism which and which could work on anti- discrimination measures. There has also been training conducted by the Ombudsman Office among different officials, such as police forces.

Impact: It is generally believed that there has been a positive impact, but we are not familiar with the concrete evaluation indicators.

Good practice: The ombudsman office conducted a large piece of research in the area of discrimination and daily racism aiming Roma, so there has been a crucial data collection process which could guide further practices and policies.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ The data collection and measures should be extended to Roma migrants as well.

➤ FUNDING

Steps taken: European Social Funds are being used to boost employment. National funding is addressing education, employment, housing and health and wellbeing.

Good practice: Roma are mentioned as a vulnerable and key group by almost all funding instruments. This gives a great opportunity to apply for funding.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ Roma migrants are such a narrow group, which means that it makes it difficult to apply for the specific instruments working either in the area of migrant work or Roma work at the national level. So there should be a possibility either to apply for Roma programmes which include local and migrant, or to have more transnational-approach programs.

➤ DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES

It has been improving in the last years. However, HDI's services and work with migrant Roma are treated as a distinct area, which is not related to the Finnish Roma Policy.

Hungary, *answers from the Reformed Church in Hungary*

➤ EDUCATION

Steps taken: According to the national action plan, the number of after-schools will increase from 60 to 300. Instead of the present 3-4000, 5-6000 students will be able to study in after-schools and 1200 in "second chance" programs. (We don't see how it progresses in implementation, but in September 2013 many after schools started out of which 4 are run by the Reformed Church.)

A national strategy to decrease school-dropout is being worked out. The main goal of the project is to provide a professional base and background to policies regarding drop-out. However the expansion of Roma dorm-colleges and the improving of its legal environment as well as the development of inclusion teaching programs have been delayed.

The field services are being developed to help the school success of special needs children. Services are being monitored with a special focus on how the target group meets the career orientation system.

Scholarship programs to help students into secondary studies, to graduation, to profession, to tertiary education have been established. The János Arany Talent Program helps disadvantaged children reach graduation and tertiary education with individual development. In 2011/12 3000 children participated, 80% of students got into tertiary education.

Impact: In 2011/12 890 students participated in the János Arany College. The grade point average of the participant grades was better than or as good as that of the school's. The János Arany College Trade-School Program's results were much below the national school drop-out rate, 13%. In 2011/12 630 students participated. As a result of the project 300 teachers will undergo qualification exams, 3000 teachers take part in e-learning based training, training 400 advisors will be possible, the training of 4000 trade school teachers will be realized, the development of 450 schools and 800 preschools will be possible.

33 sports establishments are opening for disadvantaged and Roma youth.

Good practice: "Giving Chance" project, implemented by the Tiszai Reformed Diocese. The project aims to facilitate service provision, community empowerment, awareness raising, information sharing or outreach. The goal of the project is to change the trend of low employment rate and high inactivity rate in Hungary in the direction of EU standards and to improve the educational level in the inactive group and to provide them with competitive knowledge.

Good practice: "Sure Start"; Program Dencsházai Children's House (Almáskert Children's House) implemented by Reformed Mission Centre.

➤ EMPLOYMENT

Steps taken: The target number of beneficiaries participating in job training is 13000, with the actual number of participants 6000, and those completing training successfully are 4500. The country employment centres are keeping their undertaking in proportion with the timing of April 2013.

The supported training of 1000 women is realized from the first quarter of 2013 in the project started in autumn of 2012. Out of them about 750 are expected to complete it successfully.

During the year 585 enterprises received 7.3 billion HUF in non-refundable grants from the National Employment Fund. The enterprises received support for establishing 4012 new workplaces and employing 3292 (200-250 Roma) job-seekers for minimum 2 years in these workplaces. The support contributed also to keeping 6234 workplaces. The measure allows for the preferential employment of 1 million people.

The development of a program preparing the establishment of employment cooperatives has resulted in the training of at least 1000 disadvantaged jobless people, involving 1800 beneficiaries in competence development in connection with social economy and forming at least one employment cooperative. Starting social land programs has helped the subsistence of 2657 families, and 1401 people can benefit of employment.

Micro-credit programs have been set up with non-refundable support and preferential credit which should together help micro-enterprises to develop their business technologically.

The programme "Way to choosing profession" has received about 6000 7 or 8th graders who can benefit from scholarships and mentoring. Between 1st Feb and 30 March 2013 13547 students received the scholarship.

The "Learning again" program aims to allow low educated adults or adults without a vocation to participate in training so their position in the labour market would improve.

Good practice: "Increasing Chances - Training of 1000 Roma Women" (by Türr István Training and Research Institute and the National Roma Government). Among the general goals of the program is to increase their capacities to be employed, social integration and the improvement of the social inclusion of Roma women. The aims of the program are to train Roma women for social and children's welfare jobs, get them employed in social and children's welfare institutions, appraise and develop their communities and their inclusion.

The target group is the presently disadvantaged Roma women in the job market who are job seekers or inactive, their professional qualification is outdated or they have a minimum of 8 grade education. The indirect groups are their families and the social and children's welfare workplaces and their employees. The program involves 1000 Roma women in education, out of whom 750 will get a certificate.

➤ HEALTHCARE

Steps taken: Methodological and infrastructural development of early childhood check-ups has been carried out as planned, results expected in 2015.

With the involvement of the National Addictology Centre, the relevant departments of the Healthcare Profession College and the National Health Insurance Office started the need-based capacity assessment and on its basis the formation of new children-addictology spaces (38) and children-psychiatry services (3) have been established.

A project started in 2013 for forming new Health Communication Centres; as a result 300 national and 700 local communication actions have taken place.

Good practice: "Way for life" screening and mission program, Reformed Mission Centre. The project aims to address the problem of poor health status in deprived, segregated Roma communities. The goal/purpose is to carry out an analysis of health status among deprived, segregated Roma population, providing information, guidance, information on social opportunities, food, purity pack, health care. Website: www.rmk.hu

➤ HOUSING

Steps taken: The revision of the social rental apartments and of the housing benefit has taken place by the 31st December 2012. The number of the people who are eligible for the benefits has considerably extended thanks to the following measures: expanded the limit of income per consumption unit (with 80% compared to the same period in

2011); a wealth test has been introduced, which helps to ensure that those most in need will be supported; introduction of in-kind support, which helps the intended use and this has contributed to the abolition of housing costs in excess of price income ratio.

To help the implementation of the two target areas (to avoid micro districts becoming ghettos and in urban districts to stop segregation) the government has launched project proposals from a 21 billion Ft of European sources. The first call for proposals on "social-purpose urban rehabilitation" appeared in august 2012 with a budget of £ 5.016 billion Ft accompanied with two other projects proposals. Two other urban rehabilitation pilot programmes and priority project has been launched in December 2012 and January 2013.

The aim is to carry out a complex slum/micro district program for the social inclusion of people living in slums which can be achieved through individual and community development. Additionally the project announcement has been made "to support housing investments" where 1,5 billion Ft is available which allows not just to develop the apartments but to also establish community sites such as playgrounds or parks. This project will step into its second round in December 2013 but the housing strategy has not been finished yet.

Good practice: There is an urban rehabilitation program in Budapest's 8th district which stepped into its 3rd period this year. In January 2013 the "Magdolna Quarter" program has won 3,8 billion Ft. With this support the council will renew 28 building (1200 apartments) and two main squares too. The project will run for two years when they will continue to run the social programs in the area and they will also extend the security camera system of the quarter. The main part of the finished two periods was that the residents took part in the works and that they also refurbished the community areas (yards, balconies etc.). As a result the life quality of the residents has changed and they started to form a community.

➤ DISCRIMINATION

Steps taken: The county government offices are responsible for giving training and for continuously providing information for the minority governments. One of the aims is to have at least one Roma per local government to attend training. 1500 representative have taken part in different trainings at 40 county events.

Through the Management Partnership funded by the European Commission 10 young Roma journalists took part in the program from March-October 2012. They expanded their knowledge about the European Union and social integrity and they were also interns at different national media. As a result of the program 200 articles have been published. In February 2013 there was a big campaign when 400 billboards and numbers of posters, TV spots and interviews were shown.

The support of the Roma cultural initiatives came from the national budget. They supported 159 Roma programs (mostly cultural programs and camps) from 118,3 million Ft. 76 Roma NGOs received 44,7 million Ft operational support.

The churches have to be supported in their mission and pastoral activities amongst the Roma, especially in the start and operation of their awareness-raising program. Two project proposals were made, supporting church diaspora programs and helping the improvement of the disadvantaged communities with a complex church program.

A Roma multifunctional centre is planned by 30th June 2013. This centre would represent the Roma culture and would also have educational and training responsibilities. The process needs to be started again because the minority government which would have offered the place for the centre has stepped backed.

They are developing a mentor network's accreditation and curriculum. The 50 previously trained mentors will help to realize this local equal opportunity programmes programme until 15th December 2013 from 800 million Ft.

In 9 counties they were recruiting Roma volunteers. During their service at their county they also had training where 9 Roma volunteers attended. There will be no possibility to support and train new volunteers but the volunteers who took the training in 2012 will continue their work.

Good practice: One good practise is the "Erzsébet" camps, where both Roma and non-Roma disadvantaged families can go on holiday for free together. This can result in the decrease of prejudices.

➤ DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES:

The Roma Special Talent Colleges are the result of a common will. Churches may apply for EU or government grants e.g. afterschool or Sure Start Children's Houses. We are also members of the Roma Coordination Council of the Inclusion State Secretariat. Many of our Roma mission congregations cooperate with local authorities and stakeholders on the local level according to needs (infrastructure, financial support, education institutions). Our pastors and teachers hold Religious Education classes in state education institutions for Roma and non-Roma children. We have been included into the partnership consultations in the planning phase of the EU 2020 program.

The Netherlands, *answers from Kerk in Actie*

Steps taken (overview): No new action has been witnessed; the policy on education for Roma children is the same as more than thirty years ago, so no new developments in education or other areas. However, people of the Roma community in the Netherlands have been very active for a number of years and suggested good ideas in order to improve their situation in society; still none was taken into account (yet). It remains to be seen how this will develop. We stress the need to reduce discrimination and stereotyping in society. We also want to see the position of stateless Roma dramatically improved. Stateless persons who Kerk in Actie support are in a very difficult position and are particularly vulnerable.

➤ FUNDING

Our members fear that appropriate financial resources have probably not been allocated for the implementation of the NRIS because there is no specific Dutch policy on ethnic minorities. Roma are not acknowledged as a national minority in the Netherlands. Only law enforcement projects on Roma are being funded. Roma are not involved in these projects.

➤ DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES

Dialogue exists, but until now no action is being taken yet which could result in real improvement of the situation on Roma as for education, employment, healthcare, housing and anti-discrimination. If people of the communities themselves are not being involved, it is not possible to make effective policy measures. As this point there is no structural, professional framework of the Roma communities in the Netherlands. The Dutch Institute of Sinti and Roma was the only official professional representative. Due to several reasons this institute broke down in 2012.

Policy recommendations

- ❖ Our members suggest that the process of implementation and monitoring could be improved by developing a broad professional independent organisation with Roma representatives/individuals of the diverse groups who are united to take on issues (Kerk in Actie is willing to facilitate such an initiative).
- ❖ Our members also suggest working together with different parties on a common policy involving the national government, the local authorities, the networking parties and most importantly the professional participation of the Roma communities themselves.

Romania, answers from Fundația Creștină Diakonia, Episcopia Reformata Din Ardeal

➤ EDUCATION

Steps taken: In January 2011 Romania adopted the law on national education. It provides the legal framework for all levels of education: The educational system is organized in ante-pre-scholar education, pre-scholar / kindergarten, primary school (0-4 grade), lower secondary / gymnasium (5-8), secondary and professional education, lyceum, post lyceum. The new law stipulates equal access to education and equal chance for all. The law makes specific reference to requirements and need of minority groups. New tools (at least in a “can” formulation) were introduced, e.g. after school classes or other forms of support for vulnerable groups, but they were not specified or put into practice yet.

Impact: There are some national and regional projects trying to insure access to education, inclusive pre-school education for disadvantaged children, multifunctional day centres, summer kindergartens, development of after school classes, promotion of intercultural education, training for didactic staff in this field, training and further extension of the system of Roma school mediators, involvement of the parents in the educational process of their children.

There are already various initiatives realized, namely after school classes, mentoring, scholarships, Roma mediators. But these actions are at the time being short-term actions, sporadic, not yet harmonized and not or only partly institutionalized in the educational system. Funding at the moment is provided mainly by ANR (re-financed by EU and state fund), EU structural funds, the Roma Education Fund (REF), and state and private institutions

Good practice: There are consultations among partner institutions acting in the field of Roma integration. Projects financed by different sources expect collaboration among all the stakeholders. A good opportunity to receive funding for the social inclusion and improvement of living conditions for Roma and other vulnerable groups was the call launched by the Swiss Contribution.

Policy Recommendations:

- ❖ We recommend defining the target group in various calls for applications not only for Roma, but to also include other vulnerable groups. There are also non-Roma vulnerable children and young people who need to be integrated into the educational system. Many projects designed only for Roma create discrepancies and enlarge the gap between these categories even more.

➤ EMPLOYMENT

Steps taken: Not only as matter of discrimination but also due to low level of basic and professional education, Roma - especially youth with no particular vocational skills – are not competitive on the job market. Through different strategic projects many Roma benefited from training and professional advice. The intervention stops unfortunately with the training. The wished integration on the labour market does not happen.

Impact: Many Roma benefit of positive discrimination. If they participate in professional training, they are paid for this period. This is the only motivation for many of them to participate in the training. Afterwards they are not eager to search for a job and work legally. On the other hand illegal und unqualified work is usually offered to them.

Good practice: Through a financing of the Swiss Contribution the company FAER promotes and encourages entrepreneurship among Roma, provides professional advice and develops a distinct financial mechanism to support income generating activities for Roma. Diaconia hired already 12 Roma in the social programs run in different locations.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ To offer training and jobs specially designed for Roma.

➤ HEALTH CARE

Good practice: Diaconia works in the following fields and considers their work good practice.

- ❖ Awareness raising and information on health issues in the families having children in the social children programs run by Diaconia, - improving access to health services through its own network of home care service
- ❖ Vocational training and employment of Roma in the health and social sector, through hiring Roma carers in the locations where home care service is provided also to Roma communities
- ❖ Inclusion in health insurance system, through helping in obtaining identity cards
- ❖ Health protection measures.

➤ FUNDING

Regarding their main field of activity (day centres for Roma children) our members face problems every year in obtaining the state subvention to support the running of these centres. Sustainability of inclusion actions are essential and must be backed by funding resources.

➤ DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES

Diaconia participates only in consultations at local level and mainly in the topic of educational and social assistance for Roma children.

Serbia, *answers from EHO, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation*

➤ EDUCATION

Steps taken: 178 pedagogue assistants continued to work in the elementary schools and thus more direct support to Roma pupils has been documented.

Impact: A small decrease in the dropout rate and a small increase in Roma pupils' completion of the 8 grades of the elementary school.

Good practices: Instrument of Pedagogue assistants (PA) serve as a good practice.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ More PA's in the elementary schools. Better programmes/more relevant for PA 's capacity building. Less administrative tasks and more mentoring support for Roma pupils. PA"s work more intensively with parents of Roma pupils.

➤ HOUSING

Steps taken: A revised Action plan for Housing Conditions. EHO continued to play active role in sanitation and house upgrading. The State is starting with soft components - data collection, surveys and analysis. In terms of general Roma policy, there has been an adoption of a new revised Action plan, 2013 - 2014, to support the NRIS.

Good practice: The only and relevant intervention is EHO's work with Roma to improve living conditions in Roma settlements and neighbourhoods. EHO hope their successful model can be replicated in other regions.

➤ FUNDING

EU fund have not been used effectively. Regarding national funds, only few funding opportunities have been available for short term interventions. Our members say that the main barriers to the implementation of the NRIS are lack of proper mechanisms and instruments for comprehensive work with Roma, lack of adequate planning and budgeting, lack of human capacity and resources and too many ad-hoc actions, without impact and sustainability.

Policy recommendations:

- ❖ The State budget should allocate funds to support the implementation of NRIS. It should not be solely international funding to fund the implementation of the NRIS.

➤ **DISCRIMINATION**

There is a specific action plan on anti-discrimination but that it is too early (as its implementation at the very beginning) to measure if there has been any change in public perception of Roma.

➤ **DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES**

Consultations are taking place with civil society. The Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (EHO) does have contact with the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights (GOMHR), which is the National Roma Contact Point. EHO has participated in several relevant consultation sessions, as well as in working groups to revise National Action plans. GOMHR is the lead agency for the NRIS. Line ministries are given responsibilities, depending on the field of intervention.

EHO was engaged in the process of revising the existing strategy and planning the NRIS for 2012– 2014. EHO has participated in working groups and consultation sessions, thus has had a direct voice in decision making.