

# Croatia

## 1. INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

### 1.1 Decade Action Plan Drafting and Adoption

The drafting of the Croatian Decade Action Plan (hereinafter, DAP) began in September 2004, during a series of four workshops (one for each focus area) organized by the Office for National Minorities in the Croatian government. The four workshops involved a good range of stakeholders, with representatives from the relevant ministries and government offices, research institutions, regional authorities, and international and domestic nongovernmental organizations, including Roma activists. There was some imbalance, however, in terms of the relative attention granted to each focus area. Thus, while the education workshop lasted for two days and was attended by 27 participants, and the housing workshop lasted a full day and was attended by 22 participants, the other two focus area workshops were compressed into half a day each. There were only eight participants for the health section and six for the employment section, and out of these attendees, four were Roma NGO representatives who belong to the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Program for Roma and who attended both workshops.

Following the drafting workshops, the DAP was finalized inside the various ministries in charge of specific focus areas, and, later, in various expert groups

within the Office for National Minorities. According to the head of the Office for National Minorities, the expert groups included some Roma representatives, alongside officials from various ministries and government agencies. The exact number and identity of the participants is not known, as the reports of the proceedings have not been made public. The head of the Office for National Minorities declared that the primary role of the expert groups was to bring the drafts resulting from the workshops in line with the recommendations of the International Steering Committee of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and in line with Croatian law. In December 2004, the draft DAP was brought before the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Program for Roma, which approved it. The draft was then forwarded to the Coordination Committee for Social Affairs and Human Rights, a standing body within the cabinet whose members are ministry officials. Upon the recommendation of the Coordination Committee, the DAP was passed by the government on March 31, 2005. The text of the DAP was published online in English and Croatian, and in hard copy in Croatian, but not in Romani or Bajas, the two languages spoken by Roma in Croatia.

In the time between the initial focus area workshops and adoption by the government, the draft DAP appears to have undergone significant modifications. A comparison of a September 2004 draft and the final text of the DAP, both available online, reveals major differences. It is not clear where and when these modifications took place, and the reports from the draft-

ing workshops provided by the Office for National Minorities do not make reference to how the drafting and amending of the DAP proceeded once the document left the workshops.

The DAP was officially launched on May 2, 2005, in a much-publicized ceremony at the Croatian National Theatre. It was attended by the Prime Minister and Jadranka Kosor, the Vice Prime Minister and national coordinator for the Decade, who also serves as Minister of Family Affairs, War Veterans, and Intergenerational Solidarity, as well as chair of the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Program for Roma. In her speech, Vice Prime Minister Kosor evaluated the DAP as very clear and concrete. She said that every year reports will be submitted on the implementation of DAP goals. Roma NGOs and National Minority Councils were present, but were not included among the official speakers at the event. Roma were officially featured only as part of the cultural program of the event, which consisted of a Roma folklore interlude.

## 1.2 Decade Action Plan Content

The reading of both the English and the Croatian texts of the DAP is complicated by translation issues: The English terms “goal” and “target” can both be translated into Croatian using the same word, *cilj*. The Croatian-language version of the DAP tries to distinguish between the two by using *cilj* to stand for the broadest goals, and the word *mjera* (“measure”) to stand for targets. To make matters even more confusing, the English translation of the Croatian DAP translates *cilj* back into English as “target” and *mjera* as “goal.” Moreover, both concrete measures and broader goals are listed in the same column, in the English version of the DAP, under the heading “goals,” rendering the reading of the DAP even more confusing.

Contrary to the recommendations of the International Steering Committee of the Decade, the Croatian DAP mostly lists absolute indicators, which do not compare the situation of Roma to that of the non-Roma population. Many of the indicators measure progress in terms of the number of beneficiaries or the number of actions carried out toward a specific goal, rather than in terms of outcomes or results. This is

hard to remedy as long as a number of Croatian government officials maintain, as they have done to date, that data collection by ethnicity is not permitted under the current regulations on the protection of personal data. Even though the law allows for exceptions precisely for the purpose of designing public interest policies, the Croatian government has been reluctant to generate the type of disaggregated data, broken down by ethnicity, that would make it possible to accurately assess gaps between Roma and non-Roma in all sectoral fields.

Another shortcoming of the DAP is that the deadline column for 48 out of 57 measures is listed as “in the course of the Decade,” sometimes adding “more intensively” in one of the early years of the Decade. This makes it hard to assess how various measures will be phased in relation to each other. The lack of intermediate deadlines also makes it difficult to measure implementation progress at specific moments in the course of the Decade. Moreover, some of the measures for which the DAP sets a specific deadline in 2005 were not included in the 2005 action plan, an oversight that casts doubt on the consistency with which deadlines are understood and monitored by the government.

The DAP states that cost estimates for actions under the Decade are hard to make. Still, the estimated budget for the whole Decade is HRK 60,845,700 (around EUR 8.2 million). A total of HRK 2,852,000 (around EUR 385,000) of this has been secured from the state budget for implementation in the year 2005. For 2006, funding has been increased by 430 percent to HRK 11,886,670 (around EUR 1.6 million). Two European Union PHARE grants (EUR 1,300,000 for 2005 and EUR 2,500,000 for 2006) have also been listed under the project “Providing Support for Roma” on the government’s Decade website. The government is supposed to match 30 percent of each of these two amounts, but, as of this writing, it is not clear what amount of government funding will go toward DAP implementation or toward the implementation of the National Program for Roma and the DAP combined.

### 1.3 Decade Coordination and Implementation Mechanisms

The official government website providing information on the Decade lists Vice Prime Minister Kosor as the national coordinator for the Decade. Vice Prime Minister Kosor also serves as chair of the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Program for Roma (hereinafter, the Monitoring Commission), but is not listed as a member of the Working Group for Monitoring the Implementation of the Decade Action Plan (hereinafter, the Working Group) on the official website.

Much of the day-to-day work relating to the coordination of the Decade, however, is done not by the coordinator's office, but rather by the Office for National Minorities, an expert service of the government. The Office for National Minorities has five employees, none of whom are Roma. It is headed by Milena Klajner, who is also the head of the Working Group monitoring the implementation of the DAP and a member of the Monitoring Commission. Indeed, the Office for National Minorities fulfills day-to-day administrative and technical functions between the regular meetings of both the Working Group and the Monitoring Commission, which are made up entirely of volunteers. The Office for National Minorities, thus, holds powers beyond those of a mere administrative or expert body. It also receives some of the funding allocated from the state budget to Roma programs, and, as of 2006, EU PHARE funding, under a project entitled "Providing Support for the Roma" began to be administered through the Office for National Minorities.

The Office for National Minorities can also recommend members of NGOs and/or National Minorities Councils for membership in the Working Group and the Monitoring Commission. The head of the Office for National Minorities said the members that his office recommends are supposed to reflect the geographical and cultural diversity of Roma communities and the suggestions of Roma NGOs themselves. As a result, the current membership of the Working Group includes four Roma representatives. One problem with the selection process for both the Working Group and the Monitoring Commission is that there are no official, publicly available criteria for choosing the Roma representatives who are approved by the government.

On the government side, the current membership of the Working Group is spread across a wide, apparently random range of seniority and decision-making powers within governmental structures. It consists of one assistant minister, two heads of departments within ministries, one senior expert consultant and one expert consultant. According to the government decree establishing the Working Group, ministers in each relevant line ministry appoint a person who is in charge of Roma issues and, as part of the Working Group, monitors the implementation of the DAP. Relevant ministries include: the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports (hereinafter, the Ministry of Education); the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (hereinafter, the Ministry of Health); the Ministry of the Economy, Labor, and Entrepreneurship (hereinafter, the Labor Ministry); the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning, and Construction (hereinafter the Ministry of Environment); and the Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport, and Development. With the exception of the Ministry of Education, which created a Roma unit in June 2006, each of the five line ministries represented in the Working Group have added Roma-related tasks as an additional responsibility for ministry employees who have other duties to fulfill as part of their job description. None of these ministries have employed Roma in these positions, and there have been no measures to promote the employment of Roma.

The first meeting of the Working Group was held on July 18, 2005. While the decree governing the establishment and functioning of the Working Group, published on the government's Decade website, does not specify how often the group should meet, it appears that, to date, the group has been meeting on a fairly regular basis, about once every two months. The Working Group is subordinated to the Monitoring Commission, which is a body charged with overseeing the implementation of the national strategy on Roma. Much of the membership of the Monitoring Commission overlaps with that of the Working Group. But the Monitoring Commission is wider in that it also includes representatives of additional ministries (Internal Affairs, Justice, and Culture), local authorities from the heavily Roma area of Medimurje County, and authorities from the capital of Zagreb. Many of the attributes of the Monitoring Commission overlap with those of the Working Group, as do the above-described

procedures for appointing Roma NGO representatives. Both bodies have a merely advisory role. Government ministries and agencies, which are vested with actual implementing and reporting powers, are assigned the bulk of the Decade-related funding from the state budget. The little influence the advisory bodies have comes from decisions relating to the distribution of Office for National Minorities funding through the Monitoring Commission, though this mechanism is not clearly spelled out in any regulations. The Working Group and the Monitoring Commission can also leverage influence upon local authorities informally. This may explain why both bodies focused efforts on addressing individual issues on a local level, bypassing the development of systemic plans and reforms to address the goals of the DAP.

An annual priority plan was adopted in 2005, but it included cost estimates for only a small proportion of the listed measures. Since the adoption of the DAP and the yearly action plan for 2005, no action plan was developed, for either 2006 or 2007. When interviewed for the purposes of this report, the head of the Office for National Minorities indicated that a plan for 2007 was in the works, but the deadline for its finalization or adoption by the government was not clear.

Several ministries appear to have submitted draft reports on DAP implementation to the Office for National Minorities but, as of this writing, no official report on Croatia's progress under the Decade has been made public.

## 2. FOCUS AREAS

### 2.1 Education

Some data on Roma education is available in the 2001 national census, but, as the number of persons declaring themselves Roma to official pollsters is less than one-quarter of the generally accepted estimates, this data is not considered reliable. According to the census, 32.6 percent of Roma more than 15 years of age have no schooling at all, only 18.8 percent have completed elementary school, and only 5.9 percent gradu-

ated secondary schools. For women, the figures are even more alarming, as 44.2 percent have no schooling at all. As compared to Roma, only 2.9 percent of the non-Roma population has no schooling at all. Literacy rates among Roma are very low, and a significant proportion of Roma children apparently never attend school. Those who do go to school tend to drop out before completing their primary education.

Primary and secondary education for Roma is offered only in Croatian. According to independent reports, Roma students in areas with larger Roma populations, such as Medimurje County, are sometimes placed in segregated classes that follow a remedial or simplified curriculum (Roma Education Fund, *Needs Assessment*; European Roma Rights Center, *Shadow Report*; Amnesty International, *False Starts*). This curriculum is often modeled after the special curricula developed for students with intellectual disabilities, and it does not provide a quality education that would allow students to graduate to secondary school. The number of such segregated classes in Croatia is relatively small, and NGO reports indicate that they are mostly found in those counties with larger Roma populations. No desegregation policy was adopted by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, in a recent ruling on a case of educational segregation in Medimurje County, the Croatian Constitutional Court ruled that the establishment of separate classes for Roma students in primary schools is not discriminatory, provided that these classes follow a modified curriculum that aims to assist students in developing the necessary language skills to be included in regular Croatian-language classes. The establishment of similar classes in the later grades, however, is, in the Court's opinion, unconstitutional (HINA, "Posebni").

Some measures aimed at facilitating access to quality education for Roma students are in place in Croatia. For instance, Croatia has a free preparatory program of approximately 250 hours as part of its preschool education system. Preschools offer one warm meal a day and some transportation, where necessary, in cooperation with local authorities and schools. A relatively small number of Roma children participate in the preparatory program—partly because Roma children do not attend preschool education to begin with, and partly because Roma parents are often not aware of the existence of this free program. Some Roma minority

education preschools, as well as local government preschools that have Roma students, receive state, Roma Education Fund and Open Society Institute funding, but their number and capacity is far lower than that of the state system. Moreover, attendance of these NGO-run programs, which range from day-care to regular 10-hour kindergartens, is usually shorter-term and does not substitute for attendance in the state-run two-year preschool system (Roma Education Fund, *Situation*). According to the Office of National Minorities, there were 707 Roma children enrolled in eight preschool programs in 2006-2007, up from 345 in 2005-2006.

Primary education in state schools is free, and the government announced free textbook provision beginning with the 2006-2007 school year. Funding is available for transportation and school transfers, and the implicit understanding among some school administrators is that this provision is intended to prevent segregation. In practice, however, integration does not appear to happen, as school administrators often succumb to pressure from non-Roma parents and place Roma in separate classes (Roma Education Fund, *Situation*).

Few measures to encourage school attendance are in place, other than free tuition and textbooks, and there is no detailed strategy to prevent drop-outs. Some enrolment data is available: According to the Ministry of Education, 3,010 Roma children were enrolled in school at the beginning of the fall 2006 term, a substantial increase from 1,013 in 2005. But the Ministry does not currently collect data on school drop-outs or non-attending enrolled students.

Funding is available for Roma teaching assistants through the Ministry of Education. However, teaching assistants are mostly employed as translators or discipline enforcers in the classroom, and they do not spend much time cooperating with teachers on course planning and delivery. The status of these assistants is still unclear, as there is no legal framework for their work, and they are consequently employed only on one-year contracts. No training for teaching assistants is available. Currently there are about 20 teaching assistants in Croatia, most of them employed in schools with higher Roma populations in Medimurje County (Roma Education Fund, *Situation*).

Affirmative action measures in secondary schools include preferential scoring for Roma seeking admis-

sion and more intensive vocational guidance. Moreover, in the 2005-2006 academic year, the Ministry of Education provided up to 74 scholarships to Roma, as well as free accommodation in dormitories. The vast majority of Roma students in secondary schools, by the ministry's own account, are enrolled in three-year vocational schools, and only a handful of Roma students in four-year high schools have received scholarships. This indicates that most Roma in secondary schools are in three-year vocational schools that offer lower qualifications than four-year programs. Vocational school graduates who want to receive equivalent qualifications must subsequently attend a degree program in a community college (Roma Education Fund, *Situation*).

Similar measures are taken at the university level, where Roma students begin receiving a stipend throughout the course of their studies. There is no quota system in Croatia, but there is a practice according to which Roma students can submit additional recommendations to the deans' office. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these recommendations, often provided by Roma organizations, do carry weight during the admissions process. Still, the number of Roma university students in Croatia is very low: According to the Ministry of Education, only six Roma students receive the mentioned stipends as of this writing.

There are no minority language curricula developed for Roma in Croatia, and no education whatsoever is available either in Romani or in Bajas, the two languages spoken by the Croatian Roma community. Little information on Roma is included in mainstream curricula, and it is mostly in relation to World War II. Where such information is included, independent reports have noted that it often tends to convey a negative image of Roma and to play on stereotypes (European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, *Third Report on Croatia*).

One other measure worth mentioning is a government-funded adult literacy program that started in 2002 and provides adults with the possibility to complete primary education through elementary schools and open universities (Ministry of Education, *Za Hrvatsku pismenost*). Unfortunately, many Roma in Croatia are not aware of the existence of such second-chance programs. In the 2005-2006 school year, 83 people were reported to be included in the literacy programs. This number is very small, especially

given that 23 of them are inmates in the Turopolje juvenile detention center who participate in the literacy classes as part of a continuing education program (Ministry of Education, *Report 2005-2006*).

The DAP does not adequately address many of the problems that Roma face in the area of education. For instance, no clear understanding of desegregation measures emerges from the DAP. Some sections are merely vague on this issue: One action calls for reducing the number of Roma-only classes by providing the same enrolment conditions for all children, without specifying what “same” means and how “same conditions” can lead to desegregation. The logic of other sections is simply unclear: Desegregation appears only as means for developing multicultural education, a construction that indicates some confusion between cause and effect. Moreover, the indicators used to assess progress are the number of children in desegregated classes and the number of desegregated classes. Without comprehensive data on the ethnic breakdown of school children in each class and the scale of segregation in Croatia, and without a clear definition of segregation and integration based on specific thresholds, the indicator cannot provide a measure of even relative progress on desegregation, much less on the loosely related development of multicultural education. Finally, the fact that no funding is associated with any actions relating to desegregation only raises further concern as to their actual implementation.

## 2.2 Employment

There is no reliable, periodically produced data on Roma employment in Croatia. The Croatian Employment Bureau began producing data disaggregated by ethnicity in 2005, but it only covers those Roma who are officially registered as unemployed. Assessments are further complicated by the fact that many Roma in Croatia do not identify themselves as Roma for the purposes of the census. Thus it is more accurate to refer to estimates (unofficial as well as government-produced) that place the Roma population somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000 (Kusan and Zoon, *Report*; Liegeois and Gheorghe, *Roma/Gypsies*). For instance, in 2003, the National Program for Roma said that Croatia has

21,381 Roma receiving social assistance. This number is more than double the total number of Roma declared in the 2001 census (9,463), and it can be assumed to represent at least half of the estimated Roma population. Indeed, 74 percent of Roma interviewed for a government-funded survey by the Ivo Pilar Institute mentioned social assistance as one of their most important sources of income (Stambuk, *How Do Croatian Roma Live?*). Furthermore, research conducted by the Croatian Office for Protection of Family, Motherhood, and Youth in 2002 (Uzelac, *Struktura romskih obitelji*), indicated that more than 89 percent of Roma households do not have a single member with regular permanent income. According to the study, only 6.5 percent of Roma are permanently employed, while more than 57 percent are registered as unemployed with the Croatian Employment Bureau. The study also found that 18 percent of Roma are neither working nor looking for a job, and 13 percent are working in the gray economy, either occasionally or on a regular basis. Researchers and independent observers agree that unemployment is even higher among Roma women, mostly because they are generally less educated than men, and also because of labor divisions along traditional gender lines in the family (Kusan and Zoon).

There is evidence that discrimination against Roma seeking employment is widespread in Croatia (Kusan, *Report*; European Roma Rights Center, *Shadow Report*). Activists report that Roma face many discriminatory practices, such as employers claiming that jobs are “already filled” when Roma appear for an interview (Kusan). An Open Society Institute-commissioned study revealed that 79 percent of non-Roma believe that they have a better chance at being hired over a Roma with the same qualifications (Strategic Marketing Research, *Draft Research*). Amendments to Croatian labor law in 2004 included some anti-discrimination protections in line with the EU standards on employment, but a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that would protect against racial discrimination in all sectoral areas has yet to be adopted in Croatia. Although an anti-discrimination strategy has been in the works since 2004, as of this writing, the document had not been adopted by the government (European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance).

The employment section of the DAP consists of a mere seven actions, many of them of a very gen-

eral nature. A clearer picture about the mechanisms for implementing the goals under the Decade can be gleaned only by stepping outside the framework of the DAP: As six out of the seven actions listed in the employment section of the DAP overlap with similar measures in the National Plan for Roma, one can extrapolate the more detailed descriptions from the National Plan to the DAP. Additionally, in 2006 the Croatian Employment Bureau published on its website a detailed description of measures taken under three of the actions listed in the DAP (Croatian Employment Bureau, *Measures*). These descriptions further clarified the manner in which the general outlines of the DAP are interpreted in practice.

Where available, the financing is calculated per person. Thus, totaling the per year number of people encompassed by three of the DAP measures which are further described in a separate Croatian Employment Bureau document, one reaches the conclusion that about 2,150 persons are envisaged as beneficiaries of the employment action plan for the entire duration of the Decade. This is obviously insufficient to address the chronic unemployment problems of the Roma population in Croatia, especially since almost half of the beneficiaries of the DAP are supposed to be engaged in short-term public works (for which usually the term of the contract does not exceed nine months), which represent a merely temporary, palliative measure.

The figures presented on Croatian Employment Bureau web pages indicate that a total of 220 Roma were employed or trained through these measures by the end of November 2006. This exceeds the 215 people originally envisaged per annum in the DAP. However, 194 of the 220 were employed in short-term public works programs, which means that only 26 people were included in long-term training and employment programs. The DAP financing column indicates that, each year, 100 persons were supposed to be hired for public works, 100 more were supposed to undergo vocational training, and at least 15 were supposed to enter subsidized employment. But the figures provided by the Croatian Employment Bureau indicate that 12 people entered subsidized employment and that vocational training measures included altogether 14, less than 20 percent of the originally planned number of beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the number of Roma hired for short-term public works was double the amount

planned, possibly because funding became available as the other measures were not implemented.

Many of the activities presented as falling under the goals of the Decade are in fact part of the regular workload of the Croatian Employment Bureau. The services described in these activities are permanently available to—and are sometimes mandatory for—all registered unemployed, regardless of ethnicity. It is not clear whether any specific adjustments in service delivery and outreach need to be made, and are indeed being made, to make these mainstream activities work for Roma. For instance, reports of the Croatian Employment Bureau to the Office for National Minorities indicate that the first action listed in the employment section of the DAP, “training and employment of Roma in all branches of industry (especially young people and women),” is carried out by means of group and individual counselling, job-search and self-presentation workshops (Croatian Employment Bureau, *Report*)—activities that are part of the regular workload of the Employment Bureau and are not targeted specifically to Roma.

Finally, government reports on measures to improve on the employment situation of Roma reveal at times a curious understanding of what such measures may be. For instance, government reports (though not the DAP) list professional orientation for students graduating elementary schools among the measures benefiting Roma. Roma undergoing such orientation receive certificates that give them certain advantages when competing for secondary school enrolment. However, in order to receive these certificates, they must first be evaluated as disabled—either physically or intellectually, according to the Head of the Croatian Employment Bureau’s Department for Mediation and Active Employment Measures, who was interviewed for the purposes of this report. It is not clear, therefore, why this was reported as an activity in support of Roma employment. The Croatian Employment Bureau reported to the Office for National Minorities that such orientation courses were held for all Roma pupils in Medimurje County (the total number is not known), and that 20 of them received such certificates (Croatian Employment Bureau, *Report*).

Other measures included in the DAP, despite the fact that they have high potential for success, and despite having detailed, functioning implementation mechanisms detailed by the Croatian Employment Bureau,

have not been utilized. Training for a known employer, for instance, is an active employment measure which matches job candidates to potential employers, facilitates the training of candidates and new employees, and provides subsidies for salaries for a determined period of time. Unfortunately, the Croatian Employment Bureau reports that no job-seekers have been placed through this program to date (Croatian Employment Bureau, *Report*).

### 2.3 Health

Apparently, no reliable data on the health situation of Roma is collected regularly in Croatia. Reports by NGOs and intergovernmental bodies, however, indicate that the health outcomes of Roma are significantly worse than for non-Roma (European Roma Rights Centre, *Ambulance*). In addition, a significant number of Roma in Croatia do not have access to basic health insurance. Health insurance regulations preclude unemployed persons who fail to register changes in their employment status within a specified time frame from accessing health insurance (Kusan and Zoon). Lack of citizenship or other documentation also seems to preclude a certain number of Roma from accessing health insurance (European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance; Kusan and Zoon). Meanwhile, independent reports have pointed out discriminatory practices against Roma in access to health services, including: discriminatory attitudes and practices of medical personnel, failure of community nurses to visit Roma settlements, problems in access to emergency care, and denial of medical documentation to victims of police brutality and racially motivated violence (European Roma Rights Centre, *Ambulance* and *Shadow Report*). The authors of this report have also been informed that segregation in obstetric-gynecological and pediatric care is still a practice in some healthcare facilities in Medimurje County.

The health section of the DAP contains only five areas of action. The indicators are specific enough, though, for the most part, they are still phrased in absolute terms. One exception is the indicator on vaccination rates, which compares vaccination rates among Roma and non-Roma children. The deadlines are more specific, but, like other sections of the DAP,

many deadlines in the health section are listed as the whole course of the Decade. Three out of five actions have set financing associated with them. Local authorities are the sources for most of the financing listed in the health section of the DAP. This could be a major implementation obstacle: Previous experiences show that this system is not likely to work in practice, as local authorities are not eager to allocate funding to Roma programs, and the central government does not have enough leverage to push them to do so.

One important suggestion was made at the DAP drafting workshop: that healthcare should be provided to those who are otherwise not entitled to basic health insurance. But this idea was not adequately translated into the official DAP. The fact that the 2005 action plan mentions that healthcare is provided through “basic health insurance”—which is only available to those who qualify and is not available to many Roma for a variety of reasons—gives further cause for concern that the item did not retain its original meaning during the transition from draft DAP version to official document. This wording means that the most vulnerable groups of Roma population, those who for various reasons do not fulfill legal requirements for basic health insurance, will not be able to obtain adequate access to health protection as part of the Decade implementation process.

While it is commendable that the health section of the DAP foresees some data collection on the health situation of Roma, the implementing plan for this action indicates that the results will be far from reliable. The financing column mentions that one county will be surveyed per year. Even assuming that the seven counties with higher Roma populations will take priority—a fact not explicitly mentioned in the DAP—this means that more than half of the Decade will pass before relatively representative data will be available. Moreover, some of the data collected in the early years of the Decade will have already become obsolete. The chances of following even this flawed plan are already slim: It appears that, due to lack of funding, data collection has been conducted only in selected localities, rather than entire counties. This situation further calls into question the accuracy of the results.

Most of the activities undertaken to improve the health situation of Roma to date consist of locally conducted surveys and studies, as well as information

drives in particular localities. Some pilot projects have also been funded, but the outcomes of these projects are still unknown. Immunization efforts have also been conducted in areas with higher Roma populations, as evidenced by an immunization campaign conducted in 2005 in the Roma settlement Rujevica near Rijeka. But progress assessment is difficult in the absence of adequate data collection and information about other, similar campaigns. According to information provided by the Office of National Minorities for the purposes of this report, 84.8 percent of Roma children enrolled in preschool programs are immunized, 3.8 percent are partially immunized and 11.4 percent are not immunized. Overall, most children in Croatia are immunized by the time they enter primary school, sometimes right at the entry point, by the school itself.

Another measure whose implementation is problematic is the training of Roma health professionals. It appears that nothing has been done in this direction as of this writing. No government reports mention any activities in this regard, and representatives of the Ministry of Health and the National Institute for Public Health interviewed for the purposes of this report could not present any information, either on past actions or on future plans to implement this measure. The authors of the report are aware of four young Roma training in a vocational secondary school in the Zagreb area to become medical technicians and nurses. But their education is facilitated by a scholarship scheme of the Ministry of Education, not by the Ministry of Health.

## 2.4 Housing

Roma in Croatia frequently live in segregated settlements, in houses that were often built illegally, on private or public land at the edges of larger towns and municipalities. As a result, they often do not have access to public utilities, such as electricity or running water, and are denied basic services, such as garbage collection or telephone connections (UNDP, *Human Development Report*; European Roma Rights Centre, *Shadow Report*).

While the government has commissioned studies on the housing situation of Roma, these studies have not gone beyond counting Roma settlements and urban neighborhoods (Stambuk). The studies develop a typol-

ogy of Roma housing, but fail to investigate the causes and patterns of housing rights violations. Independent reports, however, have helped develop a clearer picture. According to a recent United Nations Development Programme study, almost 50 percent of Roma families live in less than 35 square meters, and 11 percent of these live in less than 10 square meters. Roma occupy 0.66 rooms per household member, compared to the majority population, which occupies 1.25 rooms on average. Ten percent of Roma live in “slums,” but the same is true of only 2 percent of the majority population. Sixty percent of Roma households do not have indoor plumbing, while 4 percent of non-Roma live in such conditions (UNDP).

Social housing is not available to Roma in practice. The system for awarding social housing in Croatia is extremely complicated and non-transparent, and official criteria indirectly discriminate against Roma. Applicants for social housing are awarded points for years in permanent employment, and they are required to prove continuous residence. Neither criteria is typically available to unemployed Roma, who often live in unregistered housing in illegal settlements (Zoon). The authors of this report know of only one instance in which the government developed social housing for Roma: The Donja Dubrava settlement, which, after being struck by a flood, was relocated in integrated housing bought with local and central financing in neighboring villages.

Some measures to improve the housing situation of Roma are already in place. For instance, a PHARE program co-funded and administered by the government in 2005 and 2006 invested in infrastructure reconstruction in four settlements in Medimurje County. Almost EUR 4,000,000 has already been allocated for this purpose, but this represents less than the absorption capacity expected in Croatia. Indeed, the Ministry of the Sea, Tourism and Transportation (hereinafter, the Ministry of Transportation) has publicly stated that local authorities need to be more proactive in developing infrastructure projects and asking for central co-financing on such projects. The Ministry of Transportation itself has co-financed two infrastructure projects for the course of the Decade.

Meanwhile, measures regarding the legalization of settlements have registered some progress in implementation. For instance, a total of 12 counties (out

of the 14 that were required to do so) have developed plans for improving conditions in Roma communities. The plans include detailed financing estimates and potential sources of funding. Specific locations are also being targeted: Before Croatia joined the Decade, only two locations where Roma lived fulfilled all conditions for legalization—including the drafting of physical zoning plans by local authorities, with funding from the Ministry of Environment—but, as of this writing, 11 locations had fulfilled all the conditions. According to the Office of National Minorities, nine out of 13 settlements in Medimurje County have been legalized.

The housing section of the DAP was drafted during a one-day workshop attended by representatives of most stakeholders and relevant government agencies. It is much more specific than other sections of the DAP and contains a detailed narrative part that describes all measures. It divides larger, long-term goals into short-term measures that contribute towards the achievement of the larger goals. It often lists the role of each implementing institution in relation to the other implementers, not just the names of the implementers in no particular order, as is the case with other sections of the DAP.

The indicators, however, are set in absolute terms, and usually measure inputs, such as funding or land allocation, rather than outputs. Deadlines are usually non-specific and are set by default to the entire duration of the Decade. Furthermore, no specific funding is listed for any of the activities. Instead, the funding column of the DAP merely lists potential sources for financing—such as local authorities, who have, to date, proven reluctant to allocate funds to housing programs benefiting Roma—or it says that funding sources are to be determined at a later date.

In contrast, the Ministry of Environment has set an example of good practice by allocating increasingly large budgets for urban planning in the areas inhabited by Roma over the first three years of the Decade. In 2005, the Ministry of Environment reported spending approximately EUR 43,000 towards developing urban planning projects for Roma under the Decade. The funding came from dedicated budget lines for Roma areas, as well as from supplemental funds obtained from regularly budgeted activities. By 2006, the Ministry had more than doubled the sums secured from various sources for the same purpose. For 2007, the Ministry of Environment estimates its expenditures for urban planning in mostly-Roma areas at EUR 137,000.