

INTEGRATION OF ROMA THROUGH EDUCATION

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Introduction

1. This report emphasizes on the desegregation of Roma education and its impact on the Roma community and the integrated school environment in the town of Vidin. The desegregation process started in June 2000 and its basic idea is to transfer Romani children from the all-Romani segregated school in the “*Nov Pat*” Roma quarter to the mainstream schooling system. “Organization Drom” (henceforth called *Drom*), which is the NGO that runs the activities, uses variety of incentives in order to change the attitude of the social groups involved within the framework of the process. The Vidin initiative progressively increased in the past five years the number of integrated Roma children to over 700 and became the most widely publicized education initiative, launched in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)². As quoted by Mr. George Soros on a ministerial conference, the Vidin project gave the impetus for the start of the most important inter-governmental coalition targeting the integration of Roma into mainstream societies in the CEE region - Roma Decade Initiative 2005-2015³.

2. The report is comprised of three parts. *Section 1* identifies the problem about segregated schooling system in Bulgaria and the ghetto culture and reveals the major goals of the desegregation project, which at present is spread in eight Bulgarian towns and across Central and Eastern Europe. *Section 2* presents *Drom's* results from its efforts of integration through education of Roma by studying the attitude of Roma children and parents, teachers in mixed classes and school directors⁴. *Section 3* discusses major breakthrough in the educational reform for ethnic minorities in Bulgaria and sheds light on important international initiatives that encourage integration of Roma through education. The conclusion summarizes the major findings and puts forward recommendations that need to be included in the advocacy plans of governments across the CEE region.

Section 1

Segregation of Roma in education and ghetto mentality

¹ This community impact study report has been prepared in the framework of project financed by Minority Rights Group International (September 2004-September 2005). The author of the report is Executive director of NGO “Organization Drom”.

² The international Media presence of *Drom* first began with Nancy Durham’s report about the first desegregation school day shown by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in September 2000 and a full-page article- „Bulgaria Opens School Doors for Gypsy Children”- written by John Tagliabue for the *New York Times* on June 12, 2001, which also appeared in the *International Herald Tribune* two days later. Regular news updates, interviews, and documentary features, debates in the newspapers, on television, and on the radio were presented regularly.

³ On 2 February 2005, Mr. George Soros gave a speech in the presence of eight prime-ministers from Central and Eastern Europe, who signed a memorandum for launching the Roma Decade Initiative (for more information about the initiative, please visit www.romaeducationfund.org).

⁴ The report draws upon a survey of randomly selected sample of 200 Roma family cells (parents and children) from the “*Nov Pat*” quarter. The face-to-face interviews were taken by eight supervisors from the team of NGO „Organization Drom”, who conducted the survey in the period between 15 April and 15 May, 2005. Eight school directors of integrated schools in Vidin and twenty teachers in mixed classes were also interviewed. The author would like to thank for the consultancy work of Mr. Hugh McLean, who under the supervision of MRC staff helped with the research tool and methods used for the survey.

3. The rates of impoverishment in the Roma community have unthinkable dimensions in Bulgaria. Over 30 % of the members of Roma communities in Bulgaria fall in the range of long-term unemployed. The Roma are also territorially segregated in both, villages and urban areas. The children grow up illiterate in closed circles and develop ghetto mentality. This ghetto capsulation produces a specific culture of protest against the world and represents a severe barrier for those families who would like to escape from the ghetto, find a job and give an education to their child.

4. Segregated education of Roma has become a significant barrier for the integration of Roma within Bulgarian society. About 70 per cent of school age Romani children in Bulgaria attend all-Romani schools located in segregated Romani quarters throughout the country⁵. The schools were established from the 1960s to the 1970s and were officially labelled “schools for children with inferior lifestyle and culture”. In 1966, the Ministry of Education established primary schools with vocational training and their special vocational curricula was not altered until 1992.

5. The schools in the Romani quarters initially were perceived as positive development since they integrated Roma to the educational system. Eventually, the quality of teaching in these schools degraded as a result of continuous under-funding for school facilities and unqualified teaching staff. After 1992, the Ministry of Education introduced standard curricula for the Romani schools, thus eliminating the focus on the vocational training component. However, this measure did not improve the quality of education. High drop-out rates, poor attendance of students and drastic disparity in the education results of Romani children compared to their peers in the mainstream school system, persist to date.

Drom started activity in June 2000 to ensure equal access of 100 Romani children from “Nov Pat” to the mainstream school system in town⁶. *The objective of the project*, which runs for fifth consecutive year, is to provide free access of Roma children (6-13 year-olds) to all schools in Vidin. The organization laid down the following *tasks*:

- To achieve an equitable distribution of Roma children in classes of all Vidin schools;
- To provide busing free-of-charge for the students from the Roma neighbourhood to the schools in the town;
- To provide those children from the most impoverished backgrounds with free school textbooks and stationery and a daily breakfast;
- To provide extra tuition for those students who perform below grade-level;
- To prepare those outstanding students who wish to apply to specialized secondary schools for languages, mathematics and sciences;
- To sponsor integration incentives such as "most ethnically tolerant" competitions between classes.
- To recognize and reward students who regularly attend school and achieve high marks;
- To run regular training courses and seminars for teachers working in ethnically mixed classes.

Section 2

Drom's work and results for the past five years

⁵ For more information about the Romani schools in the country, you may go to www.osi.hu/esp/rei/romaschools.bg.osf/en/data/index.html

⁶ “Nov Pat” is the Roma quarter, situated on the periphery of Vidin. It has approximately 15 000 Roma, 1/3 of the town's population.
Organization Drom, Vidin

6. Founded in 1997, *Drom* began work as human rights advocacy NGO in three main fields of activity: legal aid, media and education. It has a strong record of representation in court for cases of discrimination of Roma. Before *Drom* initiated desegregation of Roma education in Vidin, it had already established itself as a massive grassroots NGO with strong links with the Roma community and the local authorities. Moreover, its success was heavily publicized in the local and national press Media, while reporters from national and local television stations have often visited for interviews representatives of *Drom*. Moreover, *Drom* took part in the public debate between Romani NGOs and the Bulgarian government in 1998-1999 along the issue of equal access to education for Roma by giving a start in Vidin to the campaign that led to the adoption of "Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society" in April 1999⁷. This program instigated the launch of desegregation as a pilot project in Vidin, financed by the Budapest based Roma Participation Program of the Open Society Institute. The initiative received opposition primarily by Romani parents, who did not believe that their children would be able to integrate in outside-the-ghetto milieu but also by local authorities, who did not want to take part in this "revolutionary step". In spite of this suspicion, *Drom* managed to achieve excellent results with the performance of children at school, as the table below shows.

Education results of Roma children in the Vidin Desegregation program

Table 1

Grades	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Excellent	6 %	9 %	16 %	7 %	9 %
Very good	38 %	27 %	34 %	24 %	20 %
Good	44 %	44 %	45 %	37 %	45 %
Satisfactory	12 %	21 %	4 %	32 %	26 %
Poor	0	0	1 %	0	0
Total	460	611	420	430	612
Preparatory group (without grades)	0	0	0	71	112
Total	460	611	420	501	724
Annual change	0	+ 25 %	- 31 %	+ 16 %	+ 31 %

Source: Drom's annual report.

7. Since the barrier of the Schengen agreement was officially lifted for Bulgaria in April 2002 and no visas were required for travelling to Western Europe, Roma became economic emigrants. Fostered by the poor living conditions and no future perspectives, whole families from the Vidin Roma Neighbourhood headed towards countries from the European Union. This process had a severe

⁷There is one section in the Framework document, which states: "A long-term strategy of desegregation must be developed for removal of segregated Roma schools in Roma areas and decisive measures taken to assure free admission of the Roma children to the "normal schools" and prevent segregation of Roma children into separate classes"...

negative impact on the desegregation as many children signed in *Drom's* program had to leave Vidin. As a result, the program *lost* 31 % of its children in 2003. In the following year, some returned and others signed in order to reach an increase by 16 %. As a whole, the number of Roma children in the desegregation program increased on an annual base (except for the emigrant boom in 2003), as the highest annual growth is observable in 2005 (by 31 %).

8. Contrary to teacher's expectations and pessimistic expert opinions, Roma children from the desegregation program performed relatively well in the mainstream school system. As the table above shows, the percentage of poor graders is insignificant (1 %, recorded only in 2003), while the most important range is of good graders (between 37 % - 45 %). On average, around 30 percent of all Roma students have excellent or very good grades in the past five years, which is a significant success of the program. This is confirmed also from the interviews with parents from our recent survey. 85 % of the interviewed Roma parents indicate that the knowledge of their children at the Roma school was poor, while the same children increased their knowledge substantially when they were transferred to the integrated school, as 45 % of the parents say that their children have good knowledge, 20 % have very good knowledge and 15 % are excellent. Disciplined participation of the Roma children in class, free of charge textbooks and school materials, extra tutor classes in math, Bulgarian language and foreign languages, essay and arts competitions, provided by *DROM* are among the major factors that motivate Roma children to perform better at school.

9. The emotional state of Roma children in an integrated school environment was the main concern of many opponents of the desegregation process before the project started. The concern was related to the inability of Roma children, once they go out of the Roma ghetto, to be able to adapt to the new school environment because of stress and humiliation. Due to *Drom's* supervisors, based at each school, and the efforts of teachers and school directors, it soon became clear that the children enjoyed the new learning environment and accepted well the change.

10. The children that study in the segregated school in the Roma quarter were asked whether they want to attend an integrated school in town and be bused there every day. 42 % of the schoolboys and 34 % of the schoolgirls responded positively, as our survey indicates. This is a result of the interaction between Roma children that study in the Roma School and Roma children that study outside of the Roma quarter. They play together and often hear about each others experience at school. In fact, our survey shows that 80 % of the Roma children (under 10 year-olds) confirm that they like the new integrated school in which they study and they all know the name of their school. "It is a nice school" is their most frequent response and they do have a friend (Roma/non-Roma), with whom they often play at school, but they mostly dislike the fact that they do not know all the children at school (as this is not the case in the Roma school). 80 % of the children (under 13 year-olds) have a very positive attitude of their studies at school and 100 % of the children confirm their intention to continue education. Majority of the children (above 80 %) underline that it is the mixed class, which improves their performance at school. The children quickly adapt to the new school environment, which is also an observation of their teachers. Only 10 % of the teachers indicate in the survey that it seems that the Roma and non-Roma children do not communicate at all. On the opposite, 75 % of the teachers confirm that the non-Roma and Roma children do play together at school and that they communicate well.

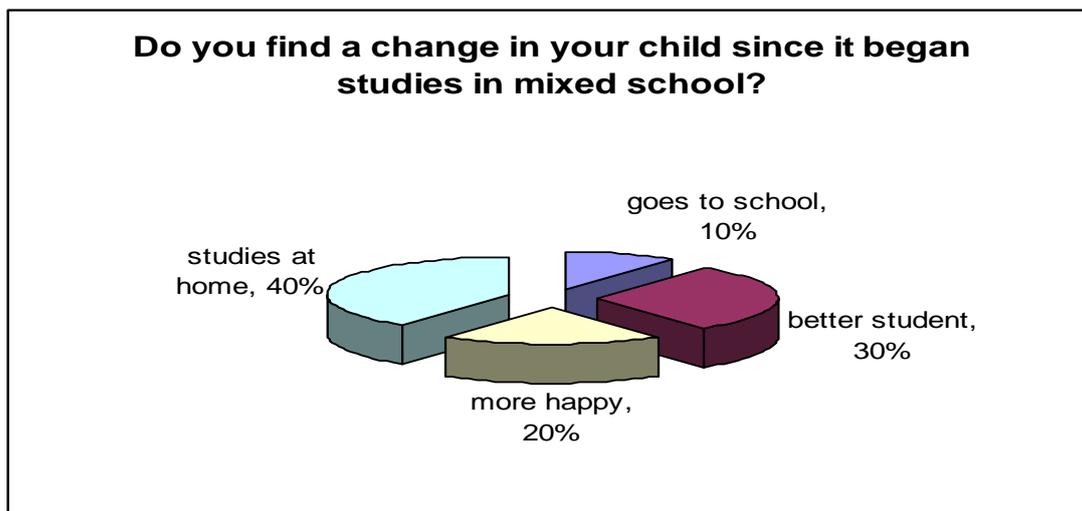
11. The socio-economic level of the Roma community from the Vidin Roma neighbourhood was studied in order to find the link between the following four criteria: Illiteracy rates of adult Roma; employment of Roma; education of Roma children; and participation of Roma children in the desegregation project.

12. Unemployment is a big issue. The results from our survey show that 82 % of the adult Roma population in the Roma Neighbourhood is unemployed at present. On average, the number of unemployed Roma women is slightly higher compared to Roma men (between 2%-4%). The age group 30-39 is characterized with the highest number of employed Roma (around 30 percent of total in their age group), while the age group 20-29 is the one that suffers most because only 12 % of Roma men and 8 % of Roma women in that age group are employed. This has a negative impact on the formation of new Roma family cells. Interestingly enough, those Roma men and women who have responded that they have a job at present have indicated between 6 and 11 years of spending in the labour market without a job. This speaks of long-term unemployment existence of great majority of the Roma families in Vidin. It is argued by experts that if members of a given community are unemployed for longer than two years, the community itself degrades.

13. The level of impoverishment is very high and it is deteriorating. As we see from the survey results, the situation in the “Nov Pat” neighbourhood is disturbing since most Roma families live in impoverishment. This is confirmed also by the relatively high rate of our respondents who count only on monthly social payments (between 23 % and 39 % of total), which is estimated at around 1 USD per day. This is relevant to extreme poverty, as defined by the Millennium Development goals of Donor multilateral institutions. The highest number of Roma, who receive social payments are found in the age group 20-29 (44 % of male respondents and 60 % of female respondents), which is the group with the highest number of children in the desegregation program. Moreover, the Vidin Bureau of Labour reported that 62 % of the adult Roma at present are not insured for medical services, which is another strong criterion that speaks of high rates of impoverishment of the Roma community in Vidin.

14. The low level of education of the Roma adults is striking too. Every third Roma in the Vidin Roma quarter is illiterate as our survey shows. The young generation of Roma male, age group 18-19, indicates very high illiteracy rates – 22 % of total in the same age group. Furthermore, the survey results demonstrate that 68 % of the Roma children from the Neighbourhood attend the mainstream schooling system thanks to Drom. As mentioned above, the most vulnerable group of parents (20-29 age group) generates about half of the children in the desegregation program, as our survey shows. 40 % of the parents indicate that their children have already started to study at home, which is a criterion for the better performance of their children at school.

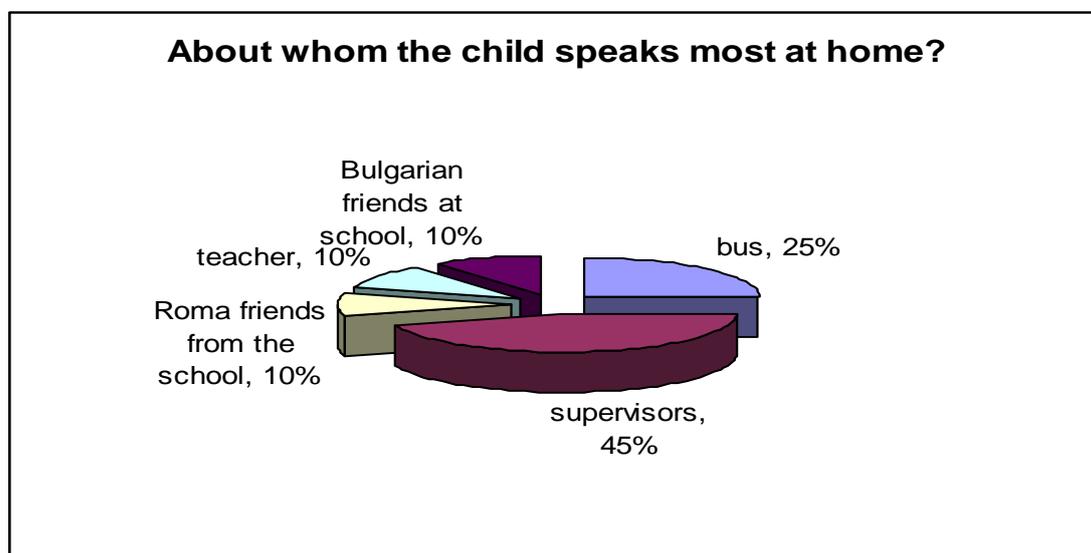
Fig.1



Source: own data.

15. Going to school improves the educational level and the child is even happier than before. 30 % of the parents say that their child has become a better student, while 20 % say that their child is happier than before. Moreover, 65 % of the parents evaluate the behaviour of their children as positive, while 30 % as very positive since the child began studies at the integrated school. 85 % of the parents are positive when they are asked whether their child likes the new school and clarify that Drom’s supervisors are the most frequent topic for the children to discuss at home, or their experience in the bus that drives them every day from the Roma quarter to their school. The children partly speak at home about their teachers, or Roma/non-Roma friends at school.

Fig.2



Source: own data

16. On the whole, the willingness of Roma parents and Roma children for desegregation is highly accepted. Five years after the process started, majority of the Roma community in Vidin accepts the fact that quality education is provided solely in integrated school environment as our in-depth interviews indicate.

17. The survey also studied the attitude of teachers from mixed classes towards the desegregation process. Large majority (90 %) of the teachers find the initiative as a good one because of several advantages: the children get to know different cultures, which gives them a chance to develop; the teaching material is taught in a better, more interactive way; the children improve their studies when they are in mixed classes. A primary teacher at the Vidin based "Hristo Botev" school notes that the Roma children entered their new school environment with large drawbacks in the education level, inherited by the all-Romani school. However, the Roma children visit the classes in their new schools extremely motivated to learn more. Another teacher from "St.St.Cyril and Methodius" school confirms that the Romani children are very concentrated in the extra classes for individual work, organized by *Drom*. In addition, she says "I use Roma fairytales in my Bulgarian language classes", thus making the classes more interesting". "I could acknowledge - continues the teacher - that the class became more tolerant and the Roma children helped the whole class to become even more motivated to achieve high education results". In fact, all interviewed teachers confirm that the Roma and non-Roma children sit and study together in class, which has proved how easy the adaptation of children and their social inclusion could be.

18. However, there are several disadvantages pointed out by the teachers: the teachers do not have experience in intercultural learning and that is why they face difficulties in teaching; the Roma children are very impulsive; it is difficult to contact directly the Roma parents. Every 3rd out of 4 teachers thinks that there should be more extracurricular classes for the Roma children. This is because Roma children are simply lagging behind as a result of their studies at the segregated Roma school since only for 20 % of the teachers Roma children are not serious with the teaching material. Large majority (90 %) of the teachers think that the Roma children experience positive development because of their participation in the desegregation program. They believe also that this comes as a result of the work of NGO "Organization Drom" which motivates parents, teachers and Roma leaders and organizes variety of school competitions that unite non-Roma and Roma children. It is interesting to point out that the interaction between Roma parents and the teachers is not limited, since the survey shows that 80 % of the teachers meet the Roma parents once in a month, while 15 % meet them once in every three months. This is primarily a result of the monthly parents' meetings which DROM organizes in the Roma quarter to facilitate the meeting between teachers and Roma parents. The direct contact of teachers with parents, however, is very limited. One of the strong reasons for that might be the distance of the Roma quarter from the school which prevents the Roma parents to come more frequently to school. This is a huge difference compared to the interaction Bulgarian parent-teacher, who meet once in a month at least, but primarily through direct contacts and not through parents meetings. Our survey shows that 70 % of the Roma parents meet regularly with Drom's supervisors, who act as liaisons between the teacher and the parent. In this way, Drom additionally provides day-to-day information to the Roma parent about the performance of their child at school.

19. The teachers confirm that DROM helped the work at school by organizing different types of teacher seminars for methodological issues and intercultural learning in order for them to adapt to the new environment of mixed classes and understand better the Roma culture. Interviews with the teachers from Vidin indicate that these *multicultural learning programs* are extremely necessary in their practice. The fact that teachers do not speak the *mother language of Roma* is not a problem for Roma parents and children, as we also understand from interviews.

20. The school principals are also very positive about Drom's work, as they find that the NGO is the main engine of the desegregation program in Vidin and they all believe that there is a positive impact of the desegregation project upon the school environment. They give the following examples: social inclusion of Roma children is easy; the classes which involve Roma children are more tolerant; schools started to participate more frequently in inter-school competitions; school teachers are offered trainings; teachers in mixed classes are more motivated to teach; Drom offers extracurricular classes by using local teachers and partnership with Drom brings new ideas for school projects. In fact, 80 % of the school directors are very positive, while 20 % are positive about the results of DROM's work in the course of the last five years since the schools became partners in the desegregation project. As we understand from the school authorities, *there is no any significant shift of non-Roma children from one school to another school in Vidin because of the desegregation program.*

21. As far as local authorities are concerned (Municipality and regional government), Drom has often heard declarations for support from these public bodies, which have been only passive observers of the process. Drom has many times taken steps for cooperation with them but failed to receive such. One of the last notable initiatives of Drom was the *proposal* for the Vidin Municipality Plan for integration 2005-2010. The program envisaged strong cooperation between local authorities and NGOs for more efforts towards improving the inclusion of Roma into the Bulgarian society. As a result, already at the end of September 2004, Drom started a campaign for the introduction of *Municipality Strategy for Educational Integration of Roma children in Vidin*⁸. The team of DROM prepared a draft of the strategy and organized two working meetings with school directors and local institutions. The strategy document and the plan for action received wide discussion in the public environment between September and December of 2004. Moreover, Drom organized presentation of the document in the local media. Finally, the commission for education of the local government discussed the strategy document in January 2005. Representatives of *Drom*, school authorities and other local institutions took part in the final discussions. On 2 February 2005, the draft of the strategy document was recommended by the commission to enter the time table of the local government session. Since then, the document has not yet received attention by the local government.

Section 3

Major breakthrough on Education reform for ethnic minorities in Bulgaria and the international context

22. On September 9, 2002, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science issued an Instruction for Integration of Minority Children and Pupils. The strategic tasks identified for integration of Roma include ending the placement of children in segregated schools in the Roma neighbourhoods by creating opportunities for equal access to quality education; and halting the existing practice of enrolling Romani children into schools for the mentally retarded. As a matter of urgency, the instruction, referring to the "Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society," adopted by the Bulgarian government in 1999, stated that the following problems must be resolved:

⁸ The accent of this document was the Desegregation of the Roma education in Vidin, which required also 2 % of the Municipality budget to be dedicated.

(1) The *de facto* isolation of Roma children in so-called Gypsy schools and special classes, and the low quality of education they receive, compounded by general discrimination, poverty, and the lack of programs to compensate for lack of fluency in Bulgarian;

(2) The high number of students of Roma origin being directed to "special" schools or included in "special" study programs as a consequence of being diagnosed as mentally handicapped. The Instruction clearly describes this practice as deeply discriminatory and "a violation of the right of Roma children to equal access to education." Further, it calls for an immediate end to "these processes of social exclusion."

(3) Racism in the classroom is identified as one factor contributing to non-attendance of Romani children.

23. Although a major breakthrough on education reform, this instruction had only a consultative and not a binding effect. Drom, as well as all other NGOs, which dealt with the desegregation issue in Bulgaria, continued to be the driving engines for maintaining the desegregation process. Neither local authorities nor regional education inspectorates changed their role and perception about desegregation of Roma education.

24. International donor cooperation in increasing. In the summer of 2003, the Open Society Institute in co-operation with the World Bank organized the conference "*Roma in an Expanding Europe, Challenges for the Future*". This event brought to the international forum prime-ministers from eight Central and Eastern European countries, representatives of international organizations (European commission, Council of Europe, UNDP, OSCE, etc.) and many NGO leaders from the representative countries across the region. NGO leaders used this international platform and managed to put on the agenda important problems of the Roma communities, which are identical across the region (impoverishment and high unemployment, low education, ethnic discrimination and social exclusion). As a result, the Bulgarian government took a step forward by adopting a strategy for educational integration of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, approved by the Minister of Education and Science on June 11, 2004. It clearly defined the specific problems in the Roma education, such as segregation, putting large number of normally developed children in specialized schools, acts of discrimination in kindergartens and schools, insufficiency of qualified teachers, acquainted with the Roma culture. Moreover, it specified as first strategic objective: *To ensure the right of equal access to qualitative education to the children and pupils from ethnic minorities.*

25. NGOs set the priorities in the political agenda of Eastern European countries. The strategy for educational integration of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria was a partial success of the efforts of NGOs to set the problems of the Roma community as a priority in the political agenda of Eastern European governments. In fact, it transformed the Bulgarian government into a fore-runner in the CEE region in the process of Roma inclusion. As a result, Bulgaria became a host for the launch of the Decade of Roma Inclusion on 2 February 2005, when eight governments from the region signed a declaration, which ensured that they will design and implement policies in the period 2005-2015 that will break the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion. The *Roma Education Fund* was created to additionally finance programs that help to close the gap of quality education between Roma and non-Roma

children and assist the formation of education policies and improving the educational status of Roma in Central and Eastern European countries⁹.

26. National Action Plan was developed as a result of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The plan was developed with concrete initiatives, which are envisaged to be led by governmental institutions, NGOs, regional and local authorities. These initiatives will be financed by the governments, as well as by external donors. In Bulgaria, the regional action plans which refer to the national plans are developed in close cooperation between NGOs, local and regional authorities. Although the action plan represents an important accomplishment, there is still much to be done as there is a need to move from words and paper work to deeds.

The situation is similar to other CEE countries, as we understand from a recent article by Valeriu Nicolae, Deputy Director of the European Roma Information Office. The author takes a critical stance by arguing that there is a failure in the attempt of the Decade of Roma Inclusion to become a turning point. The author explains that national governments from the CEE countries, five months after the launch of the Decade failed to enter into coalition with the Roma movement and very few accomplishments are visible as a result¹⁰.

Section 4

Conclusions & Recommendations

27. Desegregation in Vidin has proved to be a successful process, which created positive practice that spread across Bulgaria and Central and Eastern Europe in spite of the resistance and suspicions at the beginning. Political will for support of this process was explicitly demonstrated by several CEE governments at the Budapest conference “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future”, organized in June 30 - July 01, 2003 by the World Bank and Open Society Institute, which guaranteed also the successful launch of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in February 2005.

28. But, especially now, governmental actions are needed and not only declarations. Xenophobic and nationalistic political coalitions grow in Eastern Europe, as well as in Bulgaria where “ATAKA” entered the Bulgarian parliament with 400,000 votes (9 % of total votes) after the elections from June 25, 2005. This coalition, which progressively gained support by many others, speaks of “privileges” for the Roma community when it talks about the integration of Roma in the Bulgarian society. As a result, *Drom* already faces more challenges to combat the opinion of supporters of “ATAKA” and bring back the European human rights values of many Bulgarians.

29. Integration of Roma through education is the necessary first step. The survey results in this report prove that majority of the Roma families in the town of Vidin are poor and rely on social payments, large portion (30 percent) of Roma adults are illiterate and only a small share of them are able to find a job and support their families. These gloomy facts are only illuminated by the desegregation process, which involves majority of the children of families from the Roma ghetto in Vidin. The desegregation process gives the Roma children the only chance in life - to study in

⁹ For more information about the Decade of Roma Inclusion, please visit www.worldbank.org (Roma program section), while for more information about Roma Education Fund, please go to www.romaeducationfund.org

¹⁰ The article of Mr. Valeriu Nicolae is published on www.eumap.org/journal/features/2005/romadec

competitive school environment and receive qualitative education that would help them oppose social inequality and social exclusion.

30. The report also identified national actions and described the international context, which is still not able to address urgent matters for integration of Roma. The last eight months since the Decade was launched produced neither any substantial results, nor publicity. There is concentration of efforts by governmental institutions to complete their action plans, as required by the Decade of Roma Inclusion. These action plans necessitate the development of regional plans for integration of Roma as well, but still the important changes have not come.

31. The World Bank reports approximately 6 million Roma live in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with nearly 5 million in the new member states of the European Union. 7 out of 10 Roma living in Romania do not have access to running water. In Kosovo, only 1 out of 10 Roma aged 12 and above has finished primary school. Around 70% of Roma are unemployed in the Czech Republic. These are only small facts from a long list of problems of the Roma community in Eastern Europe. These problems need immediate actions on behalf of CEE governments and great concern by the European commission to oversee the accomplishment of the work performed by these governments.

32. The analysis of this report carries few important recommendations. The report could help national governments and international institutions find policy objectives that would improve Roma educational integration.

- The desegregation idea is highly positive for Roma children and represents an important step in the social inclusion of their parents into the mainstream society. Hence, wide spread of desegregation of Roma education and abolishment of all-Romani schools is a must;
- Improving school facilities by providing free textbooks for Roma children from impoverished backgrounds; offering extra classes in maths and foreign language; providing multicultural training courses for teachers and offering supervisors, who act as liaisons between Roma parents and teachers are necessary factors for the successful conduct of the desegregation process.
- Knowledge of the Roma language for the successful work of the teachers in multi-cultural environment is not compulsory.
- Extensive awareness-raising work with Roma and non-Roma parents and school authorities is necessary;
- NGOs have to be the driving engines in the desegregation process but they shall work in close cooperation with local authorities and the school system (school boards, regional education inspectorates);
- Municipality budgets have to dedicate certain financial support for the desegregation initiatives because this is considered investment in the future for the region.