

EMPLOYMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE MEMBERS OF ROMA COMMUNITY IN MONTENEGRO

Legislation, employers' views, good practice



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Introduction – social, political and legal context

Social poverty and problems faced by the states in the process of transition pose significant obstacles to thorough exercising of human rights of Roma members and to the implementation of the measures for the improvement of their status. Lack of sustainable solutions in the area of education and employment leads to generation poverty, which cannot be overcome without the implementation of adequate measures of affirmative action. On the other hand, discrimination and absence of wider societal solidarity constitute an obstacle for the implementation of affirmative measures. The attitudes of Roma community and those of employers, as well as the examples of resolving Roma problems in other local communities, constitute, thus crucial basis for developing comprehensive, economic and effective models of their complete integration.

Crucial problems of Roma population in Montenegro have been recognized by Government strategic document. The following is a list of essential documents by which the Government of Montenegro recognized Roma issues and identified necessary activities for the improvement of their status:

- Strategy for the improvement of the status of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2008 – 2012
- Strategy for the improvement of the status of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2012 – 2016
- National strategy for employment and human resource development 2012 – 2015
- Action Plan for employment and human resource development for the year 2014.

Besides the existing strategies and action plans implemented by the competent institutions, there are serious problems with the evaluation of the effects of measures being implemented. First of all, one of the crucial problems is the assessment of the number of Roma population in Montenegro. These assessments range from 2600 to 20 000 Roma. The comparison of the 2003 and 2011 censuses indicates that the number of Roma population increased from 2601 to 8305. However, this information points out to imprecise (perhaps even biased) recording based on the 2003 Census, rather than to the *demographic explosion* which presumably happened during those eight years. Special problem with recording the number (and numbers) of Roma in Montenegro concerns their legal status. Namely, a large number of Roma are stateless or hold no documents that would qualify them for censuses (and, consequently for any calculation of proportion). However, not insignificant number of researches and assessments, primarily of NGOs, more or less agree about essential data concerning education and employment. It is, thus, emphasized that every fourth Roma child goes to school, while almost every other Roma member is unemployed. It is also underlined that poverty among Roma members is 4 to 5 times more pronounced than among majority population.

Due to big problems related to the assessment of actual numbers by the official statistics, in 2013 CEDEM organized a survey on a representative sample of Roma members aimed at establishing relevant data based on the estimation (which includes relatively small measurement error).

The data from this survey indicate the following:

1. 57 % of Roma living in Montenegro are stateless (consequently, they are unable to exercise a large number of rights)
2. 47% of Roma population live in Podgorica, 37% in Nikšić and 16% in Berane (the number of Roma in other municipalities is insignificant)
3. Roma population in Montenegro is demographically 'young', more precisely, 57% of Roma in Montenegro are below the age of 35.

4. 36% of Roma have no education, and the same percentage failed to finish elementary school, while 22.5% finished elementary school, 3.1% completed the Third degree of secondary education and 2.2% graduated from four-year secondary school. Only 0.3% of Roma members hold college or university degrees.
5. Around 95% of Roma have no designated occupation.
6. Out of all Roma, more than 91% live in segregated Roma settlements
7. 43.6% of Roma children of school age do not attend school (this information tells far more than the official information, which states that ¼, do not enrol any school).
8. As regards housing, all indicators are very unfavourable.
9. 22.7% of Roma households have no income, 5.9% earn less than € 50/month, 18% earn from € 100 to € 150. Around 14% of households earn € 200/month. Then follow those earning from € 201 to € 250 (8%), with less than 5% earning from € 251 to € 300 and from € 301 to € 350. A small number of households earn more than € 350 and € 400 and more (around 2%).
10. Although their economic status is very poor, only 28.6% Roma households receive allowance from the funds intended for Family Social Security Benefits
11. Those receiving the funds intended for Family Social Security Benefits, receive on average € 114/month.
12. More than 85% of Roma households do not receive one-time financial assistance
13. When they do receive one-time assistance, that amount averages € 50.
14. More than 97% of Roma members do not use free meal services provided by the Local Administration.
15. Although the number of children in households is above the average, almost 80% of Roma households receive no child allowance.
16. When they do receive child allowance, the average amount is € 57/month.

Special and one of the biggest problems (besides social status and education) Roma members have is unemployment. In that respect, the research organized by CEDEM in 2013 points out to the following:

1. The assessment is that 88% Roma are unemployed. Of these, 64% say that they seek employment, while 24% of the unemployed say that they do not seek employment. As for the rest, around 8% are employed in public sector, 1.5% in private sector, and around 2.5% are self-employed. Of the employed ones, only 5.9% Roma are permanently employed.
2. Of all Roma members, only 0.7% stated they had received financial assistance for self-employment (thus, this measure from the Action Plan has not been implemented on 99.3% of Roma members)
3. More than 90% of Roma have never been hired for part-time and/or seasonal jobs upon the invitation of the Local Administration and/or Employment Office (therefore, this measure from the Action Plan has been implemented on only about 10% of Roma)
4. More than 90% Roma members have never taken part in vocational training programmes, additional education or any other form of training (this measure from the Action Plan has also been effectively implemented on some 10% of Roma, although the Strategy explicitly states that Roma education is one of the essential problems).

The data obtained by the survey that examined the views of Roma population are not in harmony with the ones provided by the official institutions. Thus, for example, based on the census it is emphasized that there are 1118 unemployed members of RE community in Montenegro. This information is imprecise for the reason that a large number of Roma community members are not registered in Montenegro in any way, including through the number of unemployed recorded by the Employment Office.

Current Strategy of the Government of Montenegro (2012 – 2016) identifies the following as the essential problems related to Roma employment: lack of education and vocational training; lack of personal documents (which is a prerequisite for the access to services in the area of employment); difficult economic and social status due to which they are unable to accept longer education and training programmes; discrimination and rejection by the majority population and employers; life in insecure and non-standardized settlements; lack of securities in the form of real properties and guarantors for obtaining loans; poor information; negative aspects of their own tradition; non-existence of the trust towards the institutions of the system; lack of staff for the education of the members of this population; social isolation and lack of social skills. On the other side, pursuant to the analysis of the NGO “ROM” it is emphasized that the essential problems related to Roma employment are the following:

- Unresolved legal status
- Low level of education/disproportion between the needs of the labour market and the available skills
- Insufficient interest for the inclusion in the Active Employment Policy
- Informal employment (underground economy)
- Limited job offer for Roma and Egyptians
- Employers’ prejudices (19% ready to employ members of Roma or Egyptian community, Survey with employers in 2012)
- System of subsidies for the employment of Roma and Egyptians used solely through public works
- Underdeveloped entrepreneurial initiatives (failure to meet loan-awarding requirements).

The Government Strategy identified 26 uncategorized activities, specified and rendered operational in the function of clear monitoring and evaluation. For example, the activity *support to the development of family business* is mentioned without specific measures involved. On the other side, almost all indicators for the stated activities are defined through quantitative indicators - numbers, which are not, nor can they be sole parameters for the effectiveness of the implemented activities. Most of the activities defined by the Strategy are directed towards Roma themselves (therefore to the unemployed) and a small number of measures focus on employers (those who provide employment).

Of the activities directed towards employers, only two can be explicitly identified:

- Measure no. 20: Implementation of information campaign amongst employers for the overcoming of stereotypes and prejudices during the employment of Roma and Egyptian population.
- Measure no. 21: Stimulation of employers to employ members of RE population, through the system of business and tax reliefs and subsidies for Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs and employers who employ Roma and Egyptian workers;

The number of information workshops and the number of announcements in broadcasting media are established as effectiveness indicators for the activities number 20, while for the activity no. 21 it is the system of established and functioning business and tax reliefs and subsidies, as well as a number of employers using the subsidies. When this activity is concerned (no. 21) there are no specific indications as to kind of tax reliefs and subsidies. Equally so, we have not managed to find relevant information as to whether enterprises have ever been awarded any subsidies, or if they have enjoyed any tax reliefs for the employment of Roma.

The Action Plan which accompanies the Government Strategy was passed in 2013. Due to the weaknesses and inexactness related to the ‘activities’ defined by the Strategy, it was expected

for the Action Plan to define more precisely the instruments and measures to be implemented. Unfortunately, out of 26 activities defined by the Strategy, the Action Plan took simply five of them and identified the objectives and activities (just like in the Strategy). Also, the indicators were copied from the Strategy. The only addition is the column with the name of the sponsor for the stated activities. However, it is interesting to mention that the Action Plan has only five objectives two of which are related to employers (page 8 - AP). Yet, we repeat that the AP failed to eliminate the stated weaknesses of the Strategy, and it is least clear which are the instruments and measures, or which is the mechanism for the monitoring and implementation of the Action Plan.

However, the AP indicates that the regular annual employers' survey implemented by the Employment Office will include the survey on employers' attitudes about prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma, which corresponds to one out of two activities (no. 20) directed towards employers defined by the Strategy. However, the most recent employers' Survey from 2012 includes only one segment (no. 5.1.6, page 53), where it is stated that the total of five Roma members were employed in construction and utilities sectors. This Survey also states, without stating the percentages of employers' responses, that the level of their readiness to employ members of Roma community is 'low'. At the same time, it states that this 'small' number of employers who are ready to employ Roma members, would offer them jobs for which require no specific qualifications. The remainder of this segment of the report is full of identifications of crucial/general and already known problems concerning Roma population (page 54).

Employers' views towards Roma employment – survey design, crucial objectives and methodology

The problem of Roma employment has essentially **three crucial aspects**. The first one concerns the members of Roma population themselves (their education, motivation, qualifications, tradition etc.) while the second concerns the institutional support and coordination between state institutions and NGOs. However, the third aspect, not less important, concerns employers themselves, therefore those who offer employment (to Roma in this case). On the other side, **there are no relevant data about the crucial reasons and their hierarchy as regards to employers' views on Roma employment**, which is a crucial *ratio* for the implementation of this survey.

Basic objectives of the survey implemented in the period from 11th March to 9th April 2015 are the following:

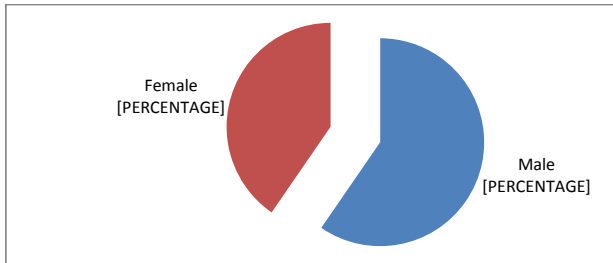
- Identification of crucial problems related to the operation of Montenegrin companies;
- Determining degree of corporate social responsibility;
- Determining employers' views on possible measures that the state should undertake with the purpose of resolving the issue of unemployment;
- Employers' view about Roma population which include the following segments:
 - Views on Roma employment,
 - Views on Roma discrimination,
 - Assessment of Roma status in relation to regional countries,
 - Identification of crucial factors of Roma unemployment,
 - Proposal of measures that the state should undertake with a view of the improvement of Roma employment,
 - Crucial obstacles to Roma employment in companies.

Survey design comprises the following:

- **Method** – the survey covered the total of 151 companies in the territory of Montenegro. The sampling was made using *convenient sampling* method.
- **Instrument** – special Questionnaire was established for the needs of the Survey, containing the total of 12 questions and a large number of items, with 9 questions related to the features of interviewed companies. The operationalization gave us the total of 77 variables. The Instrument/Questionnaire has three essential parts. The first concerns general information on companies, the second examines employers' views on general problems with operations and employment, while the third is directly linked to the views on Roma employment.
- **Measuring** – the Instrument mostly used ordinal assessment scales of Likert's type. There were only a few open type questions.
- For **data processing**, we used a specialized software and univariate statistics.

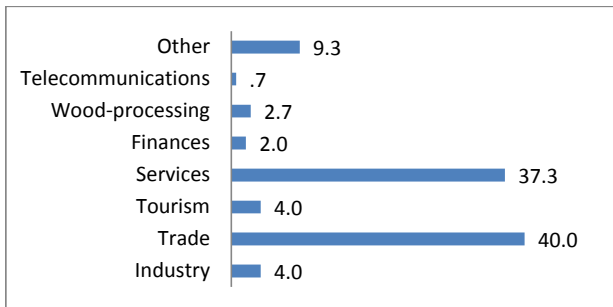
General data interviewed companies

Fig1. Sex/Gender structure of the interviewees (representatives of the companies)



Of all surveyed companies, 60% are of male and 40% of female sex/gender

Fig 2. Sector in which a company performs its activity



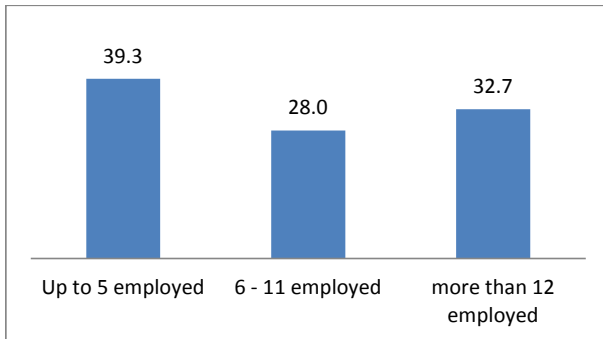
Most of the companies covered by the survey perform the activity in the sectors of commerce and services.

Fig 3. Total number of the employed

N	150
Arithmetic mean	44.19
Median	7.00
Standard deviation	207.47
Skewness	9.610
Kurtosis	100.532
Range	2315
Minimum	1
Maximum	2316
Percentil 25	3.00
ees 50	7.00
75	16.25

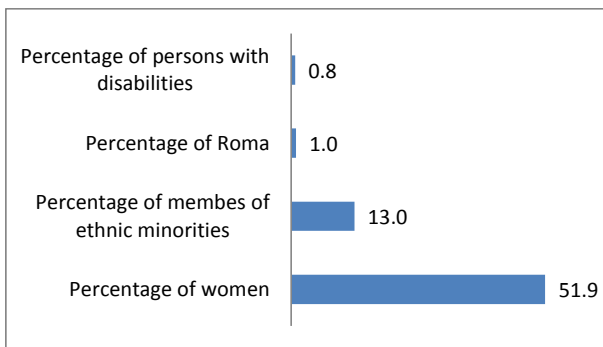
Companies differ very much by the number of employees. The sample also covered the companies with only one employee, as well as the Energy Company with 2316 employees.

Fig 5. Number of employees in companies by category



Due to distinctly asymmetric distribution by the number of employees, all companies covered by the sample were divided in three groups: up to 5 employees, 6 to 11 employees, and more than 12 employees.

Fig 5. Percentage of employees by category of deprivation



Of all the employees in the companies, there is on average 51% of women, 13% members of ethnic minorities, 1% members of Roma population and 0.8% persons with disabilities.

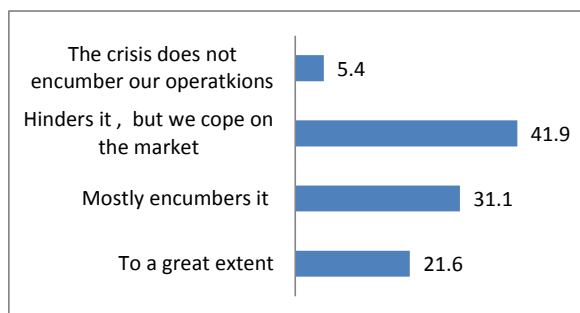
Fig6. How would you assess your company?



The majority of interviewees/representatives of companies assess their companies as relatively successful and successful.

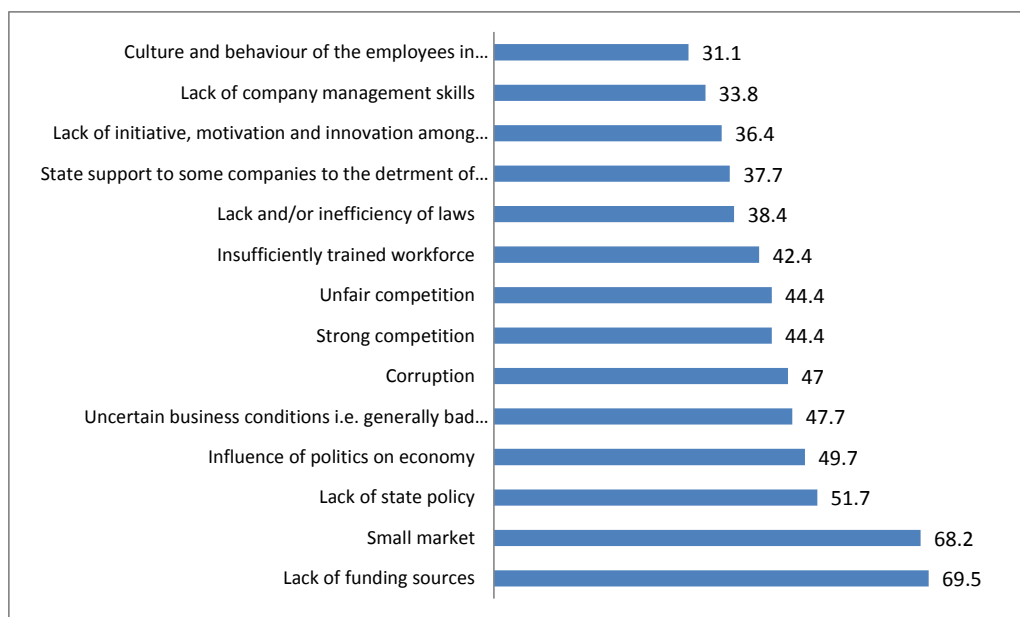
Views on the problems related to operations and unemployment in Montenegro

Fig 7. In recent years, crisis is evident both in the world and in Montenegro. To what extent does the crisis encumber the activity of your company?



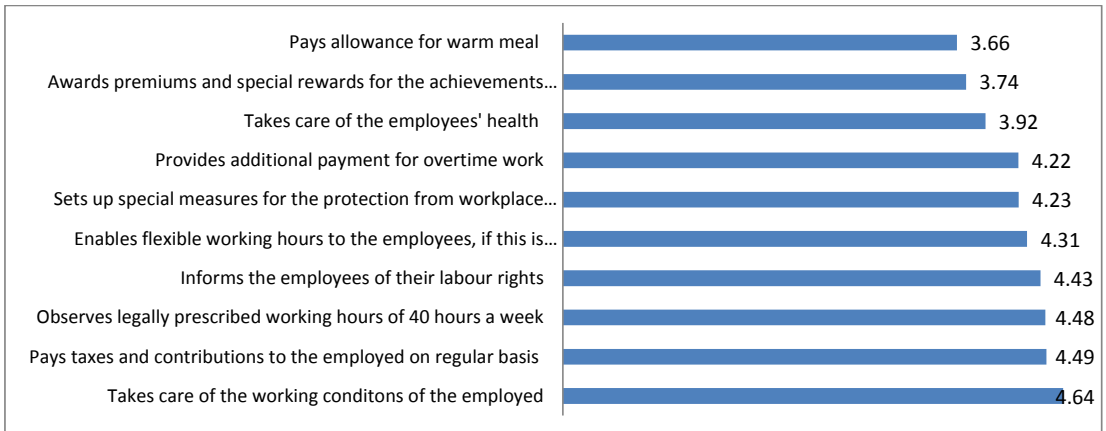
Large number of companies has problems with the consequences of the economic crisis

Fig 8. Crucial problems related to the functioning of the companies: Cumulative % - crucial and distinct problem



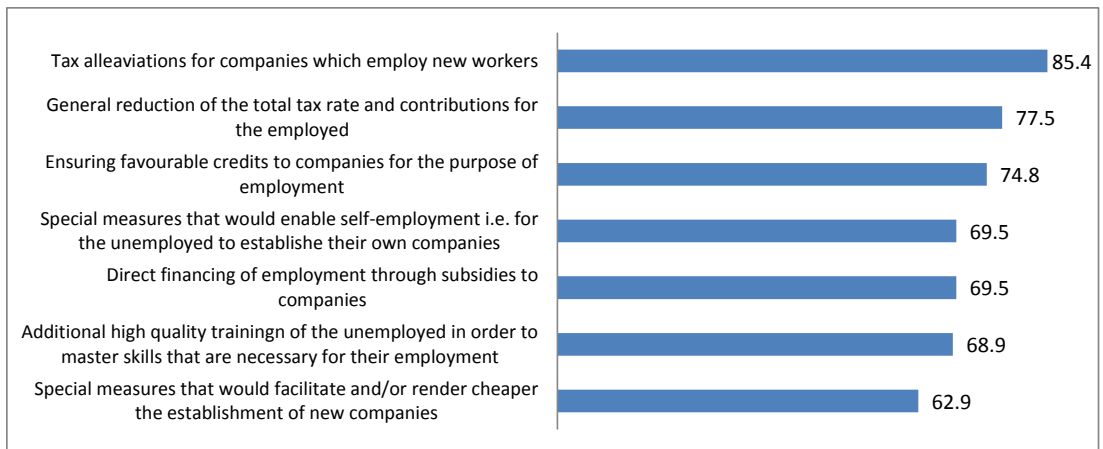
Two most prominent problems related to the functioning of the companies are: lack of funding sources and small market.

Fig 9. Corporate social responsibility – Does the company regularly (arithmetic mean on the scale from 1 – never to 5 – regularly)



The interviewed representatives of the companies largely claim that their companies are socially responsible

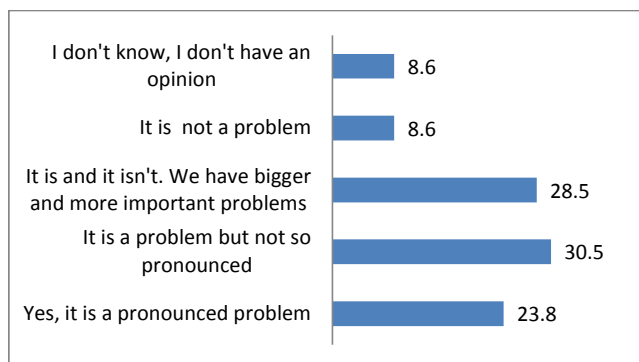
Fig 10. How to resolve the problem of unemployment in Montenegro: Cumulative % - crucial and important measure



Every measure of the state aimed at facilitating/issuing privileges to the companies is welcome. Comparatively, tax and credit policy are the things that the representatives of the companies would largely support.

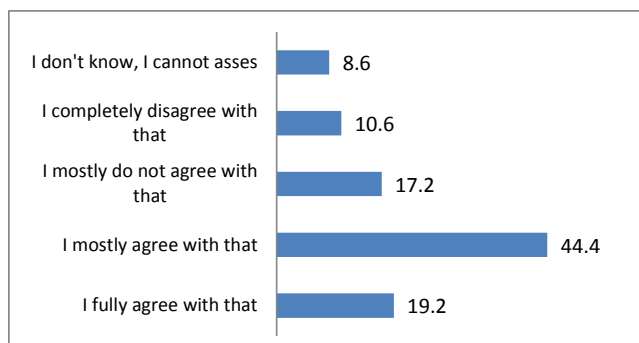
Problems of employment of the members of Roma community

Fig 11. How distinct is the problem of the employment of Roma community?



¼ of the representatives of the companies considers that Roma employment is a distinct with more than 30% of those who flag this as a problem, but not a particularly pronounced one

Fig 12. Are Roma members discriminated against in Montenegro?



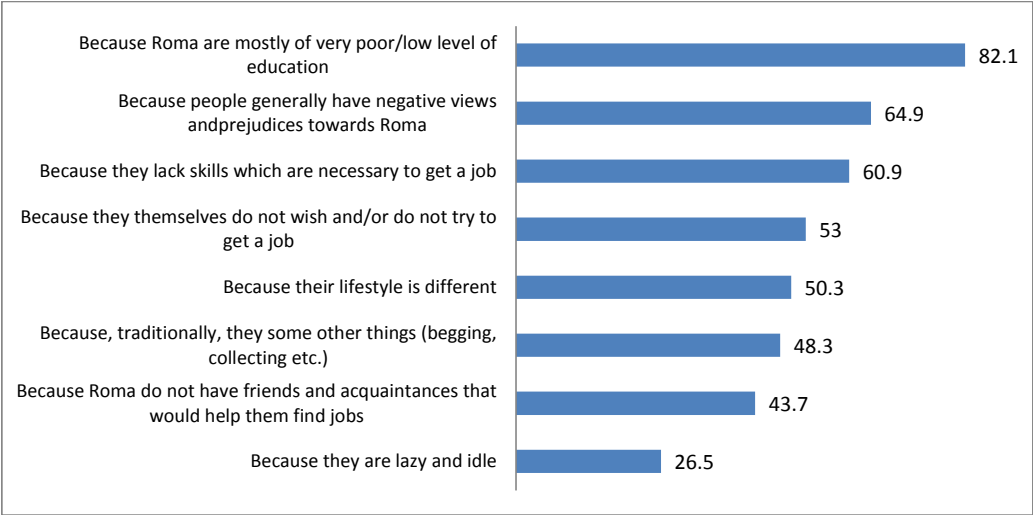
Large number of interviewed representatives of the companies consider that in Montenegro there is more or less prominent discrimination against the members of Roma community

Fig 13. Status of Roma in Montenegro as compared to regional countries:

Country	Better	Same	Worse	Don't know
Serbia	10.6	45.0	14.6	29.8
Macedonia	9.3	41.1	13.2	36.4
BiH	7.3	43.7	11.3	37.7
Kosovo	7.3	35.1	18.5	39.1
Albania	7.9	33.1	18.5	40.4

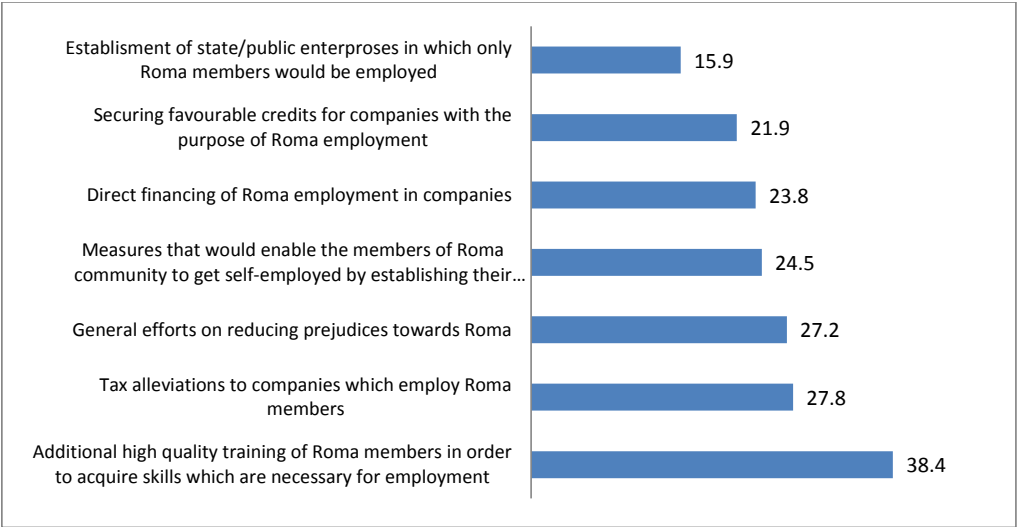
The representatives of the companies assess that the status of Roma in Montenegro is considerably better as compared to the countries in the region.

Fig 14. Reasons because of which it is difficult for Roma members to find a job: Cumulative %- crucial and significant reason



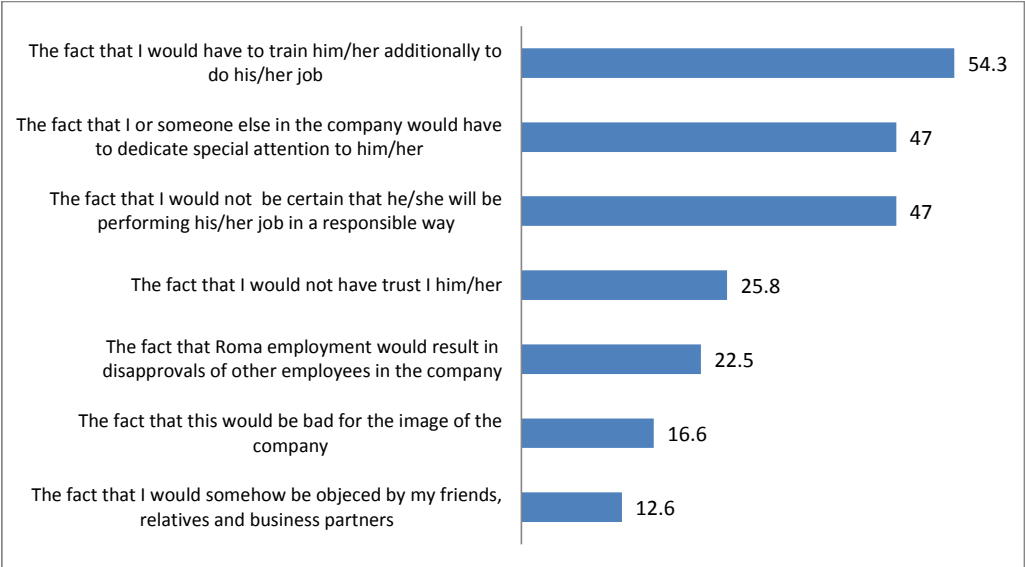
Crucial problem related to employment identified by the representatives of the companies is low level of education of the members of Roma community.

Fig 15. Crucial measures recommended by employers for Roma employment %



Crucial measure that the state should undertake with a view of Roma employment is their education and training.

Fig 16. What are the things that employers are mostly worried about concerning Roma employment – cumulative % crucial and important



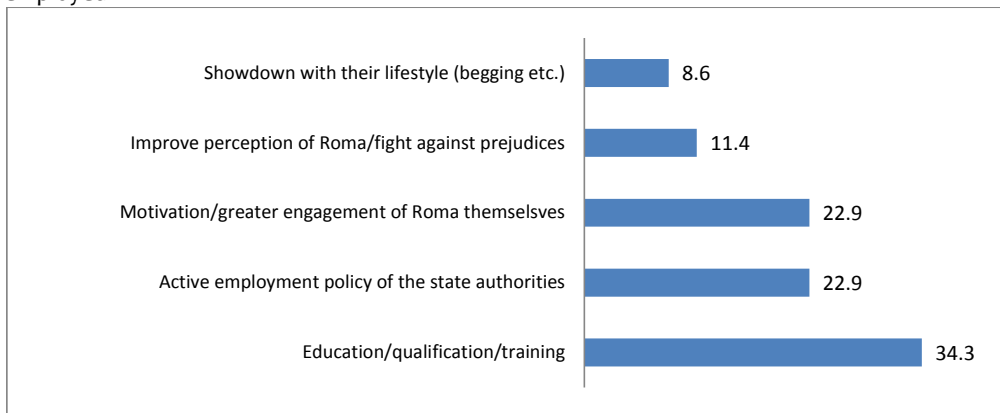
The representatives of the companies identify the problem of additional training of Roma members as the most important reason/concern for their employment in their companies. However, the obstacles that are very often underlined are the following: fact/attitude that someone in the company should have to pay special attention to the employed Roma members, as well as a distinct uncertainty/attitude of the employers as to whether employed members of Roma community would perform their job in a responsible way.

Fig 17. What specific things could competent authorities do to enhance Roma employment?

- To employ them as other people and offer greater opportunities and support to them.
 - To employ them as other people and for the state to offer them greater opportunities for life and education, crediting.
 - To work on hygiene and education.
 - To be engaged in agriculture. They lack education.
 - To fight for the rights they are entitled to.
 - To be more promoted in the media, in order to emphasize their quality.
 - Train them additionally in order to be competitive on the labour market, especially for the crafts they are gifted for.
 - As long as they vote, they do not have to work.
 - The state should invest additional money in their employment, reward the companies that employ Roma members, reduce taxes. Roma are not lazy but discriminated.
 - Besides job offers, Roma are disinterested.
 - Public institutions should employ more Roma serving, thus, as an example to private companies.
 - They are irresponsible, they steal but I hope that their social status will improve.
 - Neither against nor for them. May God give them a long life.
 - Not everything depends on the state. Roma members themselves should become more active. The purchase Roma children to beg for them and these are well developed human trafficking and begging chains.
 - They must be educated.
 - Pay more attention to Roma members, their status in the country and their education
 - Education of Roma members.
 - Work on getting more of them attend regular education.
 - Members of Roma population should pay more attention to themselves, to get educated and do the jobs they are capable of, i.e. to get self-employed and to be assisted by the state to achieve that.
 - The problem is in the prevailing prejudices about Roma.
 - Roma should be educated first, in order to be considered for any kind of employment.
 - Roma members are discriminated against, but those who are willing to work can find jobs.
 - Education of Roma members and establishment of public enterprises with the duty to employ the members of Roma community. More assistance from the state and prohibit begging.
 - Education of Roma members, motivation for education, implementation of antidiscrimination measures, scholarships
 - Things will gradually improve.
-

- The fact that they are Roma should not be an obstacle for their employment, they should be educated and socialized so as to perform different activities.
- More should be done on market perception.
- Prejudices should be reduced and they should be integrated in commercial flows, educate and prepare them for labour market.
- Roma population should be employed and offered support.
- They themselves should fit into the society, not just complain and lament.
- In case they meet the requirements, they should be employed since they are honest and diligent.
- Work on people's awareness through various actions and work on eliminating stereotypes.
- Ensure greater rights and educated them.

Fig 18. Categorization of views about what should be done in order for Roma members to be employed



The categorization of the responses of the representatives of the companies to the open question where employers suggested measures for Roma employment, education/qualifications is again emphasized as a crucial problem of Roma members. As for other views, prominent one is employers' opinion that the state is to conduct active policy in order for the motivation and engagement of the members of Roma population themselves to be increased. Finally, employers insist, to a smaller degree, for public perception with regards to Roma to be enhanced as well as that measures are to be found that would nullify their traditional lifestyle.

Crucial analytical findings of the research/survey

1. **Current Government Strategy, as well as the Action Plan** concerning the employment and improvement of Roma status in general, are not sufficiently precise and specified. By the content and purpose, strategic documents are incapable of meeting the set objectives due to imprecisely defined instruments, measures, as well as implementation monitoring.
2. Montenegrin companies are **burdened with economic crisis** and the accompanying problems related to operations.
3. The biggest problems of more general nature, when talking about Montenegrin companies, are: **small market and lack of funding sources**.
4. According to their own assessment, the companies covered by the survey can mostly be characterized as **socially responsible companies**.
5. Generally speaking, when it comes to resolving the problem of unemployment, the representatives of the companies emphasize that the state should have **more active and more liberal tax policy** towards them.
6. The problems related to the unemployment of the members of Roma population are complex and multi-layered ones. The **problem of employment is not only a problem in itself**, it is an integral part of other problems, like: low level of education, problem of citizenship, specific traditional lifestyle of Roma community, lack of motivation and aspiration of Roma members themselves, etc.
7. The survey showed that **Roma make only 1% of the total number of the employed** in the companies covered by the survey.
8. About ¼ of the representatives of the companies emphasize that **the problem of Roma unemployment is a 'prominent' problem** in Montenegro.
9. About 2/3 of the representatives of the companies consider that in Montenegro there is a **problem with discrimination against Roma**.
10. It is interesting that the representatives of the companies consider that **the status of Roma in Montenegro is considerably better as compared to regional countries**.
11. **The problem of low level of education, lack of skills and prejudices towards Roma** are crucial problems when it comes to their employment in Montenegro.
12. The representatives of the companies identify **the improvement of Roma education and qualifications** as a crucial measure for the enhancement of Roma employment.
13. From a personal point of view, the greatest problems related to potential employment of Roma members in their companies as perceived by the interviewees are the ones of **additional training, additional attention in the companies, as well as the one of responsibility of potentially employed Roma members**.

14. Finally, the representatives of the companies recommend in an open form that the first issue to be resolved is the **problem of education of Roma** in order to enhance their employment. Of other measures, the representatives of the companies hierarchically recommend the following: active Roma employment policy of the Government and competent state authorities, increased level of motivation and engagement of Roma themselves, change of perceptions and prejudices towards Roma, as well as the activities being undertaken aimed at changing the traditional lifestyle of Roma population.

Examples from practice

- Bulgaria: public policy measures and funding sources

Roma community integration policy in Bulgaria is based on the National Roma Integration Strategy. Besides that, other policies, social one in particular, contain the components related to marginalized communities and their problems, Roma and other national minorities in particular. Having in mind multi-generation and structural poverty on the side of Roma community, employment plays a central part in the context of social inclusion, especially concerning the development of measures for increased employment of marginalized social groups.

In Bulgaria, the state is the crucial provider of social services and employment services, while local administrations and NGOs play a secondary part. This is mostly implemented through counselling and participation in the development of policies and programmes intended for the beneficiaries from marginalized communities. Bulgarian model of social policy is based on the neoliberal economic model, which in the period of transition resulted in high unemployment and social segregation which mostly hit exactly the disadvantaged communities, including Roma who officially make 4.9% of the total population of Bulgaria. Despite the fact that poverty rate in Bulgaria (20.7%) has been decreasing, it is still among the highest in European Union, while about 35% of Bulgarians live in difficult material conditions.

The biggest problems Roma population is faced with – just like minority communities in general – are poverty, unemployment and discrimination in approaching employment and education, which clear when one has in mind that the lack of appropriate education leads to the problem with employment. Another specificity in the local context is the fact that Roma very rarely speak Bulgarian. Frequent migrations also affect the extent of their integration; large share of Roma perform seasonal jobs in neighbouring countries and the EU member states. Namely, the data indicate that 80% of Roma immigrants apply for seasonal jobs in agriculture, in Spain and Greece, while 20% of them (mainly Roma coming from Turkey) stay for more than six months in Great Britain, Belgium or France performing temporary and occasional jobs.

Inclusion of Roma in the social and economic life of the country in such circumstances constitutes a challenge *per se*, which is recognized and addressed through public policies to a greater extent than in some other EU member states (in Britain, for instance), which is partly confirmed through a number of documents (more than 30), initiatives and interventions oriented towards this community in particular. Let's say, National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) is accompanied by detailed action plans which rely onto crucial EU strategies in this area, but not onto the Roma Inclusion Decade and the opportunity of using European Structural Funds (ESF).

The problems related to the implementation of these policies derive from inadequate human resources and stable funding sources, but also from poorly developed support coming from majority population, due to the underdeveloped philanthropy and corporate social responsibility.

However, what Bulgaria is known for in its context is good use of EU programmes and funds for the needs of strengthening the employment of Roma community, like European structural funds, Progress Program, Youth in Action Programme, Daphne III programme and Europe for Citizens Programme, then the initiatives like Open Society Institute programme - *Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma*.¹ Having in mind their scope, thematic focus and available funds, there is good reason why these programmes have become one of the crucial funding sources for Roma inclusion projects after Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007.

The operational programme for the development of human resources, developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Government of Bulgaria (*ESF Operational Program for Human Resource Development*)² is intended for the improvement of employment, education, qualifications, social inclusion and equal access to social and healthcare services for general population, for vulnerable groups in particular. Although the programme is based on the principle of equality of all the citizens of Bulgaria, it emphasizes the importance of improved education and formation of Roma children, as well as the improvement of skills of Roma members with a view of greater employability and linkages with labour market.

The *European Regional Development Fund - ERDF* constitutes an operational programme intended for the strengthening of potentials for regional development. As such, this programme offers an opportunity for resolving crucial problems Roma community in Bulgaria is faced with – unresolved housing status, poverty, high unemployment, lack of education, hindered access to social welfare and healthcare. Some of the activities in the area of Roma integration are funded within the Priority 1: *Sustainable and integrated urban development* (Measure 1.1. Development of social infrastructure; Measure 1.2. Social housing) and Priority 4: *Local development and cooperation*.

The *Rural Development Programme - RDP*³ is also relevant for the issue of employment and integration of Roma, especially about the Priority 3 of the programme: Improvement of the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of rural economy, as well as the Priority 4: Implementation of local development strategies. What is interesting about this programme is the fact that it is particularly directed towards marginalized groups, like Roma, as well as the fact that it envisages special measures for the information of these communities about RDP, as to how it can be used and which benefits it brings along. Thanks to this programme, several business start-up initiatives have been started, which have been recognized as good practice examples concerning economic empowering and support to Roma community.

- **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Local authorities for Roma employment – example of Ealing Council, West London**

Institutional support for vulnerable communities in the United Kingdom (UK) has been defined at the level of public policies and it is in accordance with the *European Framework for Development of National Roma Integration Strategies 2020*. However, what is specific for the UK is that it did not adopt an integral document that would deal with the issue of integration of Roma population, i.e. National Roma Inclusion Strategy, but addressed this matter through a set of individual documents tailored according to Roma needs. Such policies, i.e. documents exist at the level of education, healthcare, social welfare, housing and anti-discrimination policy, which offers greater

¹ <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/making-most-eu-funds-roma>

² <http://www.eufunds.bg/en/page/11>

³ [http://seerural.org/1documents/Strategic_Documents2/Bulgaria/RURAL%20DEVELOPMENT%20PROGRAMM E%20\(2007-2013\).pdf](http://seerural.org/1documents/Strategic_Documents2/Bulgaria/RURAL%20DEVELOPMENT%20PROGRAMM E%20(2007-2013).pdf)

flexibility to the drafters and enables the creation of specific measures for the elimination of inequality between Roma and non-Roma within a broader social inclusion policy.

However, there are no specific policies or measures dedicated to market inclusion. In practice, this gap is overcome through the functioning of special working bodies at the local levels, thought out with a view of contributing to the strengthening of social mobility and better approach to employment for Roma community. One of such bodies is Ealing Council in West London, within the framework of which there is the Department for Economic Development and Reconstruction, which, generally speaking, is entrusted with the improvement of local development, including urban development, commercial turnover and wellbeing of local population. The most important function of this body is reflected in what it strategically does on resolving the issue of unemployment at the local level through reducing discrepancies between supply and demand in the market, but also through the analysis of the effects of the implementation of certain policies and development of appropriate solutions focused on the persons that are faced with the biggest obstacles in the area of employment.

Partnership and coordination are crucial for the functioning of this body, primarily in the context of networking with the organizations that provide local services and employment skills, but also with other relevant bodies at the level of local administration, say with the bodies entrusted with childcare and work with families). This form of partnership includes the exchange of information and data, as well as the development of joint projects and ideas related to mediation in employment and development of personal skills and knowledge. One of crucial projects of the Ealing Council is entitled *New Pathways to Work in West London* the intention of which is to show that the solution for work with marginalized communities, with Roma in particular, should not be sought solely in the creation of new jobs, but also in developing new systemic approach to the process of employment and development of skills. One of specific steps on that 'path' is development and implementation of the programmes of education and training which will ensure for these persons to develop skills required by the labour market, then the establishment of multidisciplinary teams for the support to employment, as well as networking with other services that are unavoidable in the area of integration of marginalized communities, like housing, education and healthcare. Besides that, the project strongly advocates the strengthening the links with the organizations from non-profit sector that work with vulnerable groups, like ethnic communities, persons with disabilities or refugees.

Besides the Ealing Council, in the territory of London there are other centres/organizations, which operate in similar way: Jobcentre Plus, then academic level institutions and the institutions for the education of adults, mental health protection agencies, agencies that offer support in learning to the persons with mental and/or physical disability. What can be noticed as a potential problem here is a lack of systemic and consistent communication and cooperation due to the lack of continuous funding sources and limited human resources.

- **Spain: Social policy in the function of resolving Roma status**

Despite the lack of precise data, it is estimated that the size of Roma community in Spain is around 750.000 and that it mostly consists of urban and relatively young population. Although Spain undertakes certain measures for the improvement of status of this community, like granting citizenship to Roma, economic and social conditions in which Roma members live are still unfavourable in comparison to the rest of the population. Although economic crisis badly hit Spain as a whole, its effects are mostly felt by the representatives of the marginalized communities. For the sake of illustration, the unemployment rate in 2013 was 20.9% at the level of the entire population of Spain, while at the level of Romani population it was 36.4%. Besides that,

Roma are mostly engaged on temporary and occasional jobs or the jobs with shorter working hours. Almost 8 out of 10 Roma households live in relative poverty, 14.5% of Roma population are illiterate and 30.6% do not have formal education (in comparison to 9.7% at the level of general population).⁴

KAs it has been mentioned above, the specificity of Spain is in the fact that ‘full citizenship model’ for Roma population enables integration of social policy systems with targeted policies in special areas of Roma integration, following the principle of *explicit, and not exclusive targeting* of Roma. This principle is incorporated in the majority of social programmes directed towards vulnerable groups, including the ones in which Roma population is explicitly mentioned. For example, Women’s Institute uses the funds from the ESF for resolving the issues of gender discrimination and violence, including also the issue of double discrimination suffered by women Roma members both as females and as the members of national minority. Even other programmes based on such principle, like ACCEDER programme, which is related to the improvement of the access of Roma to labour market, give positive effects. This programme is funded through European structural funds and implemented by the Government of Spain in cooperation with the foundation “Roma Decade Secretariat”. Other programmes are directed more towards Roma women and they also proved successful in addressing the problems and needs of this part of Romani population (SARA and CLARA).

However, it is problematic that besides well developed social programmes and projects, the funds from the European structural funds are used by a small number of NGOs which are closely profiled for the issues of Roma inclusion, with the exception of the Roma Decade Secretariat and the organizations of humanitarian character, like Spanish Red Cross or Caritas, which have Roma integration in their strategic focus. Thus, for instance, the umbrella organization of Roma NGOs, Roma National Council in Spain, has not had access to European structural funds so far. With such approach in mind, it can be said that the issues of Roma have been recognized in a high quality way through social policy instruments. However, the prerequisite for their successful implementation is certainly a developed Romani social movement which is well integrated in the processes of social changes and which should make sure for versatile Romani population in the country to be covered by public policies and their instruments in an adequate and effective way.

In relation to that, it is important to work on capacity building in Roma organizations in order to enable their greater access to EU funds when one has in mind that the concentration of funds and activities in individual organizations can be an obstacle to capacity building in civil sector as a whole and act restrictively to the opportunities of Roma organizations to take effective part in decision making processes.

- **Serbia: institutional framework for resolving Roma issues – role of the Office for Roma Inclusion of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina**

Roma Inclusion Office was established in 2006 with the purpose of the improvement of Roma status in the area of education, employment, healthcare, housing, human and other rights, as well as with a view of creating conditions for Roma inclusion in all spheres of social, public and political life in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. It is financed from the Budget of the Province. The Office deals with the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma of the Republic of Serbia and with the implementation of the action plans in the territory of the Province; coordinates different projects for the integration of Roma where provincial departments take part entrusted with the issues of national and ethnic minorities; exercises the cooperation with the National Roma Council and the Roma Integration

⁴ www.gitanos.org/upload/60/99/empleo_e_inclusion_social.pdf

Council in the AP Vojvodina, as well as with appropriate organizations and bodies at the national and regional level, prepares programmes of activities with regards to Roma integration in the Province and organizes seminars, counselling and round tables on the issues related to Roma community. The main objective of the Office is to resolve the problems that Roma community is faced with, primarily through the model of their economic empowerment and full social inclusion.

As regards specific activities related to increased Roma employment, the Office, in cooperation with the Provincial Secretariat for labour, employment and gender equality and National Employment Office, issues self-employment announcements and offers professional and financial assistance to Roma to start economic activity based on which they will operate independently. When publishing announcements in which Roma are encouraged to become entrepreneurs, the Office makes detailed analysis of the needs and conditions that candidates should meet. Based on these conditions, measures of affirmative action are applied, which are reflected in the fact that the members of Roma nationality who respond to the announcements need not place high material and financial guarantees for the starting of business, nor provide guarantors for that. Instead, the Office itself vouches for them, i.e. undertakes the responsibility, in case their idea fails, to recover the obtained funds through the sale of purchased real properties. At the initiative of the Office, the Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality established a special department the tasks of which are focused on Roma employment. The results of the work of the Office on economic empowerment of Roma have been recognized in the territory of the entire Vojvodina and they are reflected in over 50 companies established in Vojvodina owned by the members of Roma community with the employees coming from the same community.

Conclusions and recommendations

Roma communities in the country, in the region and at the level of the EU and wider, still face multiple obstacles and problems related to social exclusion. In concrete terms, the problems concerning employment are closely related to broader issues like lack of education, uncertain housing, unsatisfactory healthcare status and discrimination.

In preceding chapters, we have showed, irrespectively of the fact that different countries have different inclusion policies and different democratic structures for their implementation, that almost certainly all these countries face similar challenges concerning Roma integration. This is particularly relevant for employment, having in mind that this segment of integration policy changes fast due to economic changes and dynamics of general reforms. Nevertheless, although the specificities of various vulnerable groups are in principle similar, the practice in various countries addressing these specificities are rather different, due to the effect of numerous political, legal, economic and cultural factors, which are the basis for the building of the practice. According to that principle, the basis of various working approaches and Roma inclusion practice, which have been identified, say in Bulgaria, cannot be fully applied in Great Britain.

On the other hand, there are clear points of convergence, which are reflected in the need for efficient communication and inclusion of marginalized communities, promotion of equal treatment of these communities and regular exchange of experiences between relevant partners. As such, these practices constitute useful point of reference, both for the creators of public policies and for those who implement them, irrespectively of the fact whether they are directed in their work only to Roma community or to marginalized communities in general. Pat that, it is important to have in mind the sustainability of certain practices and the capacities for their implementation, which differ at the level of countries themselves, but also at the level of various local communities in every individual country.

This is particularly important when one has in mind the fact that the measures and programmes of active employment most often do not last during a period, which is sufficiently long for the development of new skills, change of behavior and attitudes of the majority population, or for the change of the organizational culture of employers towards inclusive practice. In that sense, every project, programme and policy must be based on achievements, which requires the development of institutional memory and learning, especially the improvement of evaluation and monitoring, organized and regular record keeping or fora for learning from different experiences.

Crucial lesson for the improvement of Roma employability, based both on the analysis of strategies/action plans and attitudes of employers in Montenegro, as well as on practical examples from Bulgaria, Great Britain, Serbia and Spain, is the need to develop an integrated approach, which would ensure sustainability and at the same time help resolve a series of other social needs in the area of education, healthcare, housing, civic and political participation and fight against discrimination. Besides that, attention should also be paid to multidisciplinary work, which can enable practical implementation of such integrated approach.

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