



Republic of Serbia
GOVERNMENT
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights

“Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015”
Serbian Presidency
July 1, 2008- June 30, 2009

“Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005- 2015” was initiated by agreement of high officials of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia reached at the conference “Roma in Expanded Europe: Challenges for the Future”, that was held in Budapest in June 2003 with the support of the World Bank and Open Society Institute.

Decade goals are to **close the unacceptable gaps** between Roma and the rest of society and to work toward elimination of discrimination through development and implementation of National Action Plans in the areas of **education, housing, health and employment**. Main principle is to support **full participation and involvement of national Roma Communities** in achieving the Decade’s objectives.

While focusing on priority areas of education, housing, health and employment, each participating Government shall in addition take into account the other core issues of **poverty, discrimination and gender mainstreaming**.

Serbia is holding the Decade Presidency in the period of July 1 2008 to June 30 2009.

Priority areas of Serbian Presidency are:

- Housing
- Combating discrimination in education
- Development of monitoring and evaluation system
- Development of European Roma Policy and access to European Union funds for non EU countries for programs aiming at improvement of Roma position.



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Housing

Housing is one of four priority areas of “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. Signing Decade Declaration participating countries agreed to implement National Action Plans in four priority areas taking into account three cross cutting issues- antidiscrimination, poverty reduction and gender equality.

Topics that we will address in the area of housing are legalization and improvement of Roma settlements, relocation, low cost housing and combating discrimination.

Roma settlements are studied thoroughly in Serbia and relevant literature is available. Documents adopted on all levels are interrelated and can be feasibly implemented.

There are around 600 Roma settlements with different legal regulation, infrastructure, individual housing conditions and locations. Common for all these settlements, no matter if they are new built or old is poverty.

Ministry of Infrastructure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia had adopted Guidelines for Improvement and Legalization of Roma Settlements.

In 14 municipalities in Serbia process for development of urban planning documentation for Roma settlements has started, which presents base for improvement of housing conditions.

These activities may serve as a model for improving Roma settlements in other countries of the region.

Combating discrimination in education

Antidiscrimination is one of the three cross cutting issues that should be addressed in Decade priority areas and all National Action Plans have measures for combating discrimination. During its Presidency Hungary initiated survey on segregation in education and housing. Based on country reports the following types of segregation were



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identified: placement in special schools and/or special classes for children with special needs, placement in Roma-only schools/classes, placement of children in adult education schools.

During the Presidency Serbia will focus on improving the participation rate and the quality of Roma education, and will address the following issues: Reducing the number of Roma children enrolled in special schools, socio-economic support to Roma families and pedagogical support to children for attending regular schooling, the roles of teachers, psychological and pedagogical services, and the education inspection in the full integration of Roma children.

Development of systems for monitoring and evaluation

The lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation systems is an issue in all Decade countries. Problems stem from insufficiently reliable data, derived from different sources, inconsistently collected, and are not systematized. We will focus on monitoring and evaluation issues in the areas of education and housing. We will also support the work previously done by the United Nations Development Program and Open Society Institute.

European Roma Policy and access to EU funds

During the Hungarian Decade Presidency, the call for developing a European Roma Policy was signed, and it will be complemented by an analysis of the effects of hitherto implemented measures and utilized resources.

Engagement in these issues will be continued, in close cooperation with Hungary and Slovakia.

Activities in the Roma Decade Presidency Year

1. **13 International Steering Committee Meeting of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (ISC)**, Budapest 24-25
 - Press Conference- Formal Handover of the Presidency of Decade of Roma Inclusion
 - Introduction of the Serbian Decade Presidency Program



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2. **Press Conference of the Minister of Human and Minority Rights**, Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, July 30, 2008
3. **Decade of Roma Inclusion Presidency Plan Presentation**, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Roma National Strategy Secretariat, UNDP, Open Society Fund, World Bank, OSCE Mission to Serbia, UNICEF, Belgrade, August, 2008
4. **Roma Education Round Table**, Presentation of the finding and recommendations of the Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma, Monitoring Reports, OSI, Belgrade, September 2008
5. **Adoption of the Strategy and Action Plans for Improvement of Roma Status**, September 2008
6. **14 International Steering Committee Meeting of the Decade of Roma Inclusion**, Belgrade, September 4-5, 2008
 - Official Opening
 - European Roma Policy and EU Funds
 - New Decade members (countries and international organizations)
 - Operation of the Decade Trust Fund
 - Housing, including data, indicators and monitoring issues
 - Cultural event
7. **Meeting with the countries from ex Yugoslavia**, Belgrade, October 2008
 - Development of the project proposal for the DTF-potential topics- access to EU funds for non member countries, position of the IDPs, returnees based on the readmission agreements, access to personal documentations, common approach to the European Roma Strategy
8. **Meeting of the Roma NGOs from Decade Countries**, Open Society Fund with the Support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Belgrade, October 2008



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- Role of the Roma NGOs at National and International Level

9. Housing workshop, Belgrade, November 2008

- Improvement and legalization of Roma settlements
- Relocation
- Low cost housing
- Combating discrimination
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Best practice

10. 15 International Steering Committee, Belgrade, February 2009

- Combating discrimination in Education
- Development of the Monitoring and Evaluation System
- European Roma Policy and EU Funds

11. Workshop-Development of Monitoring and Evaluation System, Belgrade, March 2009, UNDP with the support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights

- Development of the National Working Groups for Evaluation and Monitoring
- International Working Group for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Statistical and analytical data and data gathered by the Roma communities
- Comparable data and data used at national level

12. Workshop- Antidiscrimination in education, Belgrade, April 2009

- Schools for children with special needs
- Primary school enrollment test and procedures
- Preparatory pre school program
- Socio-economic support for participation in the mainstream education
- Pedagogical support to children in mainstream education
- Role of the teachers, pedagogues and psychologists, school inspection



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- Monitoring and evaluation system

13. World Roma Day Celebration

**14.16 International Steering Committee Meeting of the Decade of Roma,
Belgrade, June 2009**

- Serbian Presidency Report
- Handing over Presidency to Slovak Republic

Invitation to new countries and international organizations to join the Decade

Bearing in mind rich experience and knowledge of the UN- Habitat and specially long lasting cooperation with our Government and respective institutions, particularly in the field of alternative housing solutions for Roma settlements and the fact that housing is, as a complex topic, priority of our Presidency, we have invited UN- Habitat to join the Decade.

During the Hungarian presidency Albania joined the Decade, Slovenia decided to have the observer position, while Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain are in the joining process. Serbia will during it's Presidency invite Turkey, Greece and Italy, as well as all other interested countries to join the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015".