

# **EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA IN SERBIA AS A PRIORITY FOR IMPROVING THEIR POSITION**

**Author**

**Dragoljub Acković, PhD**

**Deputy Director, Office for Human and Minority Rights**

**Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2**

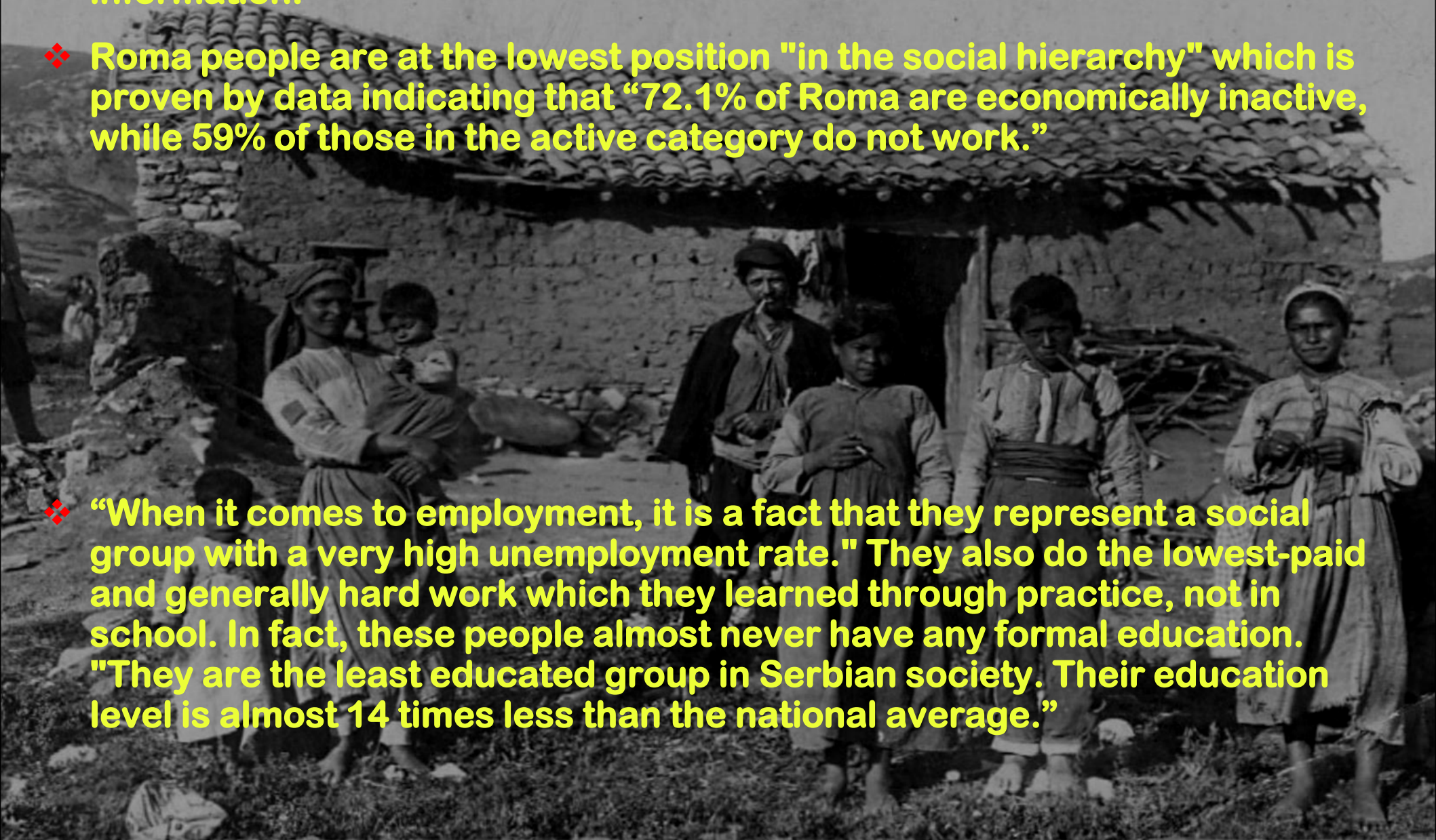
**Telefon: 063/280-075**

**[dragoljub.ackovic@ljudskaprava.gov.rs](mailto:dragoljub.ackovic@ljudskaprava.gov.rs)**

❖ There are around 550,000-600,000 Roma people in Serbia, claim the field experts. According to statistics, they are much fewer. All research done on the basis of the Census or information provided in government documents is therefore mostly inaccurate, as it is based on incorrect information.

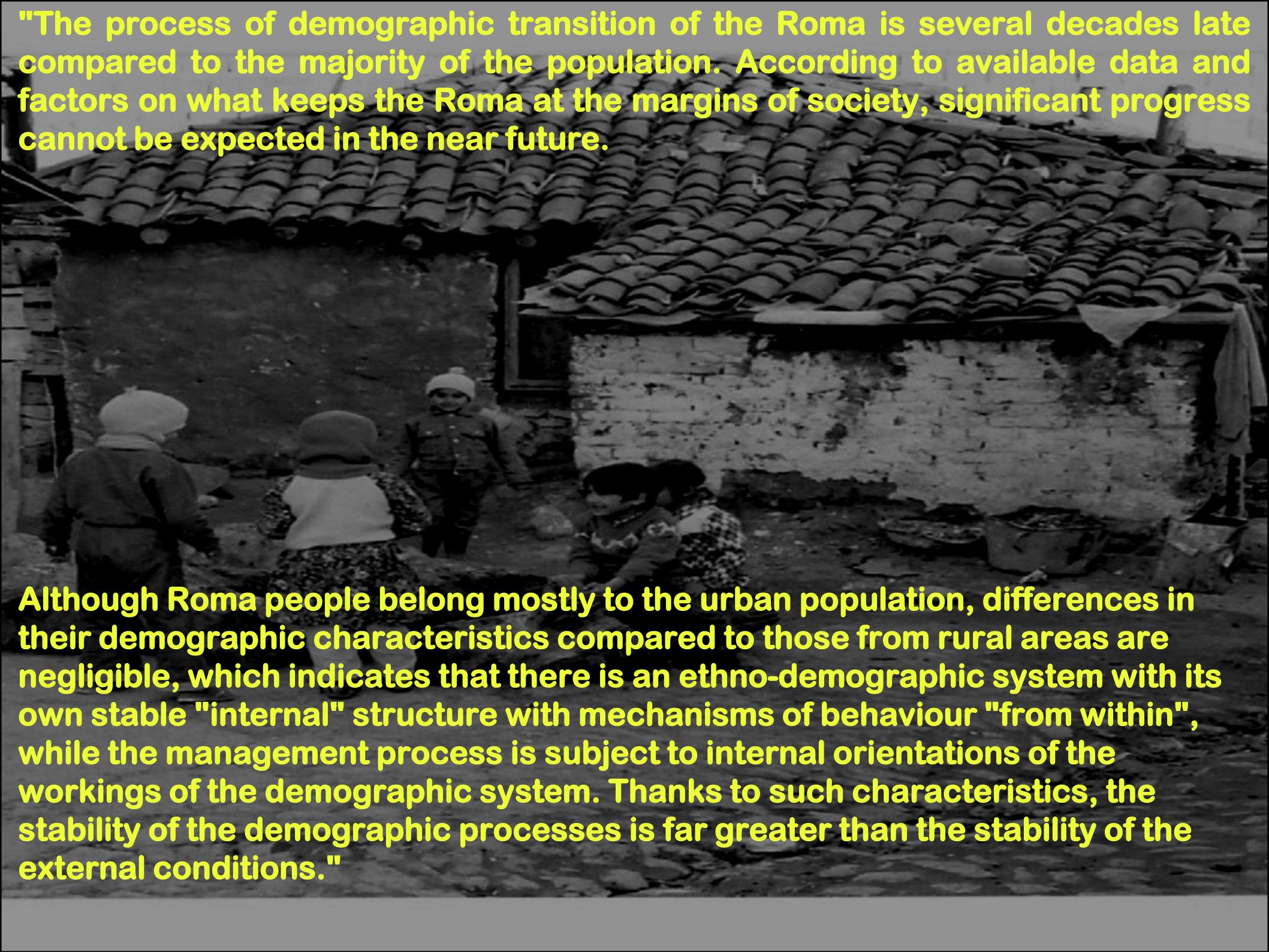
❖ Roma people are at the lowest position "in the social hierarchy" which is proven by data indicating that "72.1% of Roma are economically inactive, while 59% of those in the active category do not work."

❖ "When it comes to employment, it is a fact that they represent a social group with a very high unemployment rate." They also do the lowest-paid and generally hard work which they learned through practice, not in school. In fact, these people almost never have any formal education. "They are the least educated group in Serbian society. Their education level is almost 14 times less than the national average."



**"The process of demographic transition of the Roma is several decades late compared to the majority of the population. According to available data and factors on what keeps the Roma at the margins of society, significant progress cannot be expected in the near future.**

**Although Roma people belong mostly to the urban population, differences in their demographic characteristics compared to those from rural areas are negligible, which indicates that there is an ethno-demographic system with its own stable "internal" structure with mechanisms of behaviour "from within", while the management process is subject to internal orientations of the workings of the demographic system. Thanks to such characteristics, the stability of the demographic processes is far greater than the stability of the external conditions."**



❖ The strategic framework for employment policy in Serbia is presented in the National Employment Strategy for the period 2011-2020, which sets the basic goal of employment policy in Serbia until 2020.

❖ The National Employment Action Plan for 2014 sets out employment policy objectives, which are aimed at:

-improving labour market conditions and labour market institutions,

-promoting employment and social inclusion of the “hard-to-employ”, development of social entrepreneurship and supporting regional and local employment policy,

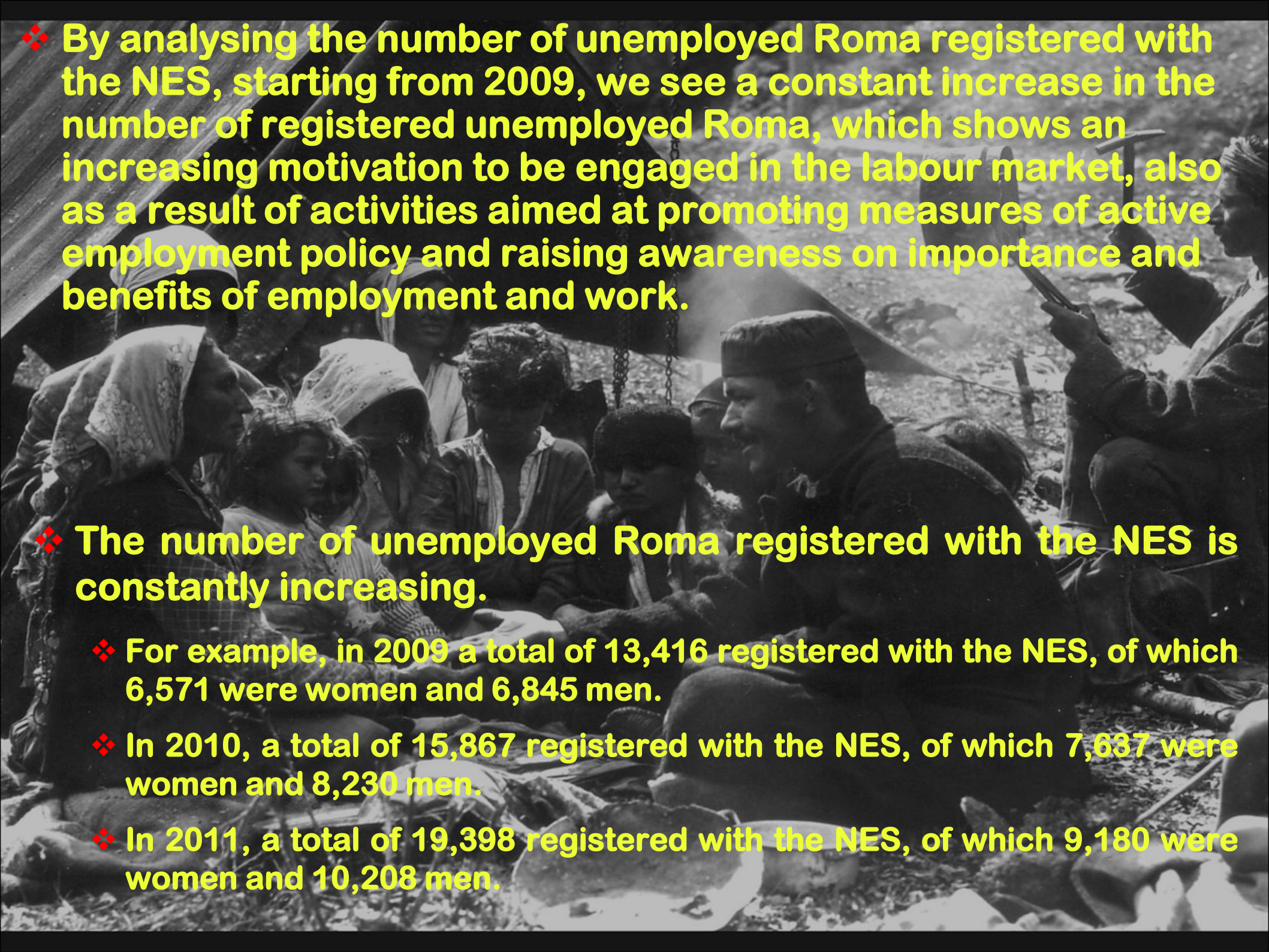
-improving quality performance and investing in human resources.





**These documents establish a category “hard-to-employ”, which includes the Roma people.**

**Unemployed persons in this category are prioritised in active employment policy measures, but at the same time, for certain categories such as the Roma, there are special employment programmes.**



❖ By analysing the number of unemployed Roma registered with the NES, starting from 2009, we see a constant increase in the number of registered unemployed Roma, which shows an increasing motivation to be engaged in the labour market, also as a result of activities aimed at promoting measures of active employment policy and raising awareness on importance and benefits of employment and work.

❖ The number of unemployed Roma registered with the NES is constantly increasing.

❖ For example, in 2009 a total of 13,416 registered with the NES, of which 6,571 were women and 6,845 men.

❖ In 2010, a total of 15,867 registered with the NES, of which 7,637 were women and 8,230 men.

❖ In 2011, a total of 19,398 registered with the NES, of which 9,180 were women and 10,208 men.

❖ In 2012 a total of 20,342 registered with the NES, of which 9,513 were women and 10,829 men.

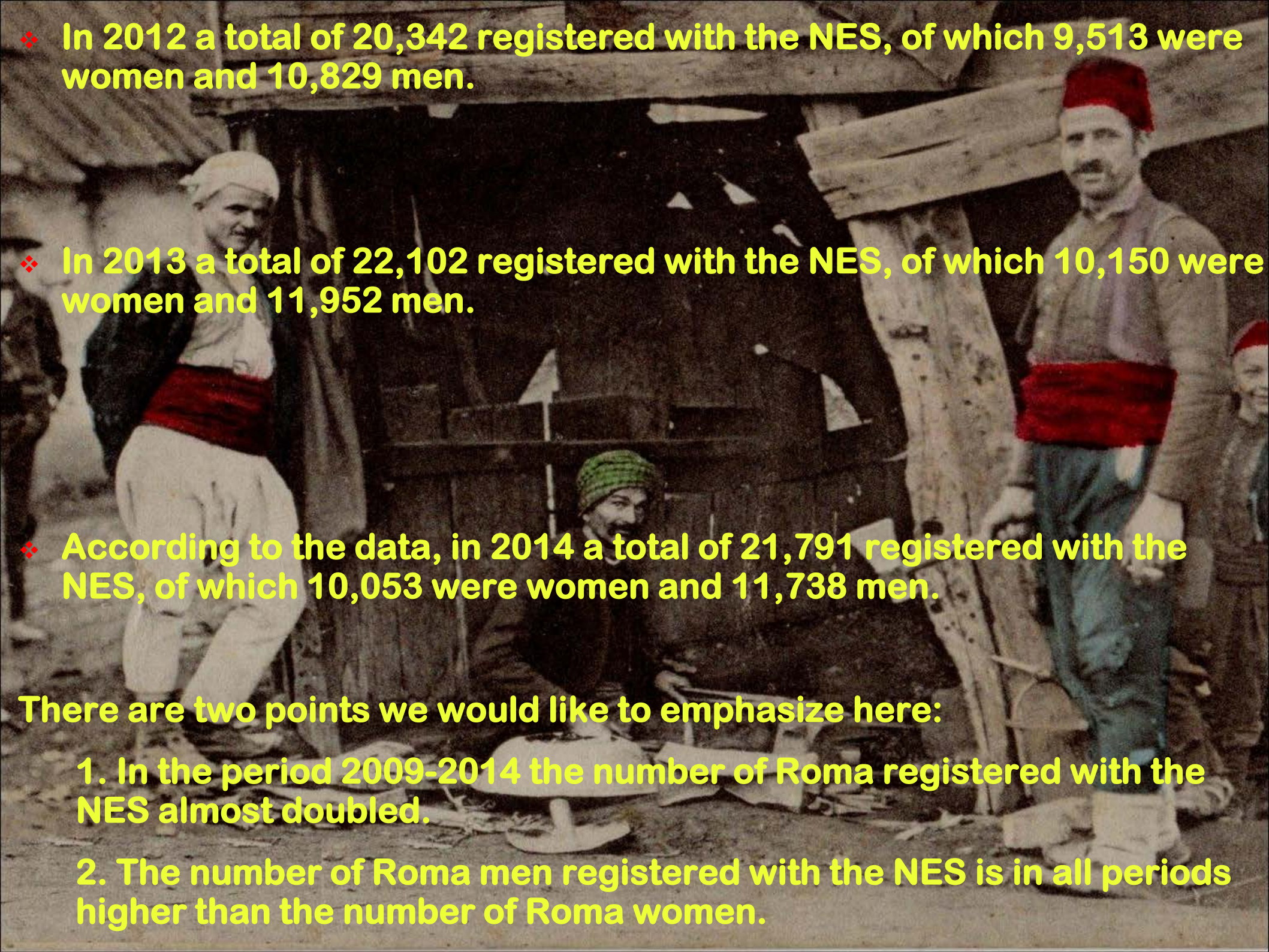
❖ In 2013 a total of 22,102 registered with the NES, of which 10,150 were women and 11,952 men.

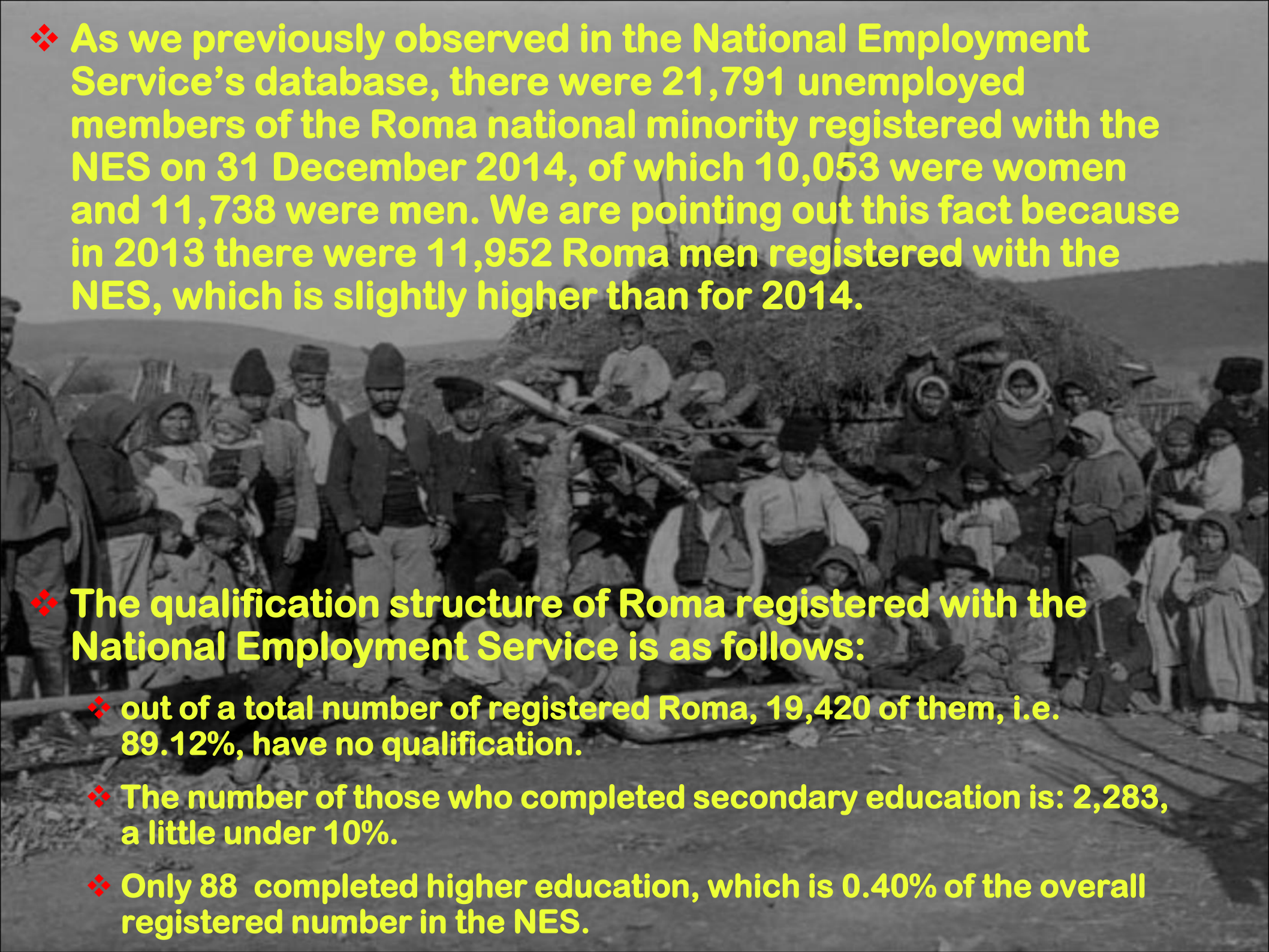
❖ According to the data, in 2014 a total of 21,791 registered with the NES, of which 10,053 were women and 11,738 men.

There are two points we would like to emphasize here:

1. In the period 2009-2014 the number of Roma registered with the NES almost doubled.

2. The number of Roma men registered with the NES is in all periods higher than the number of Roma women.



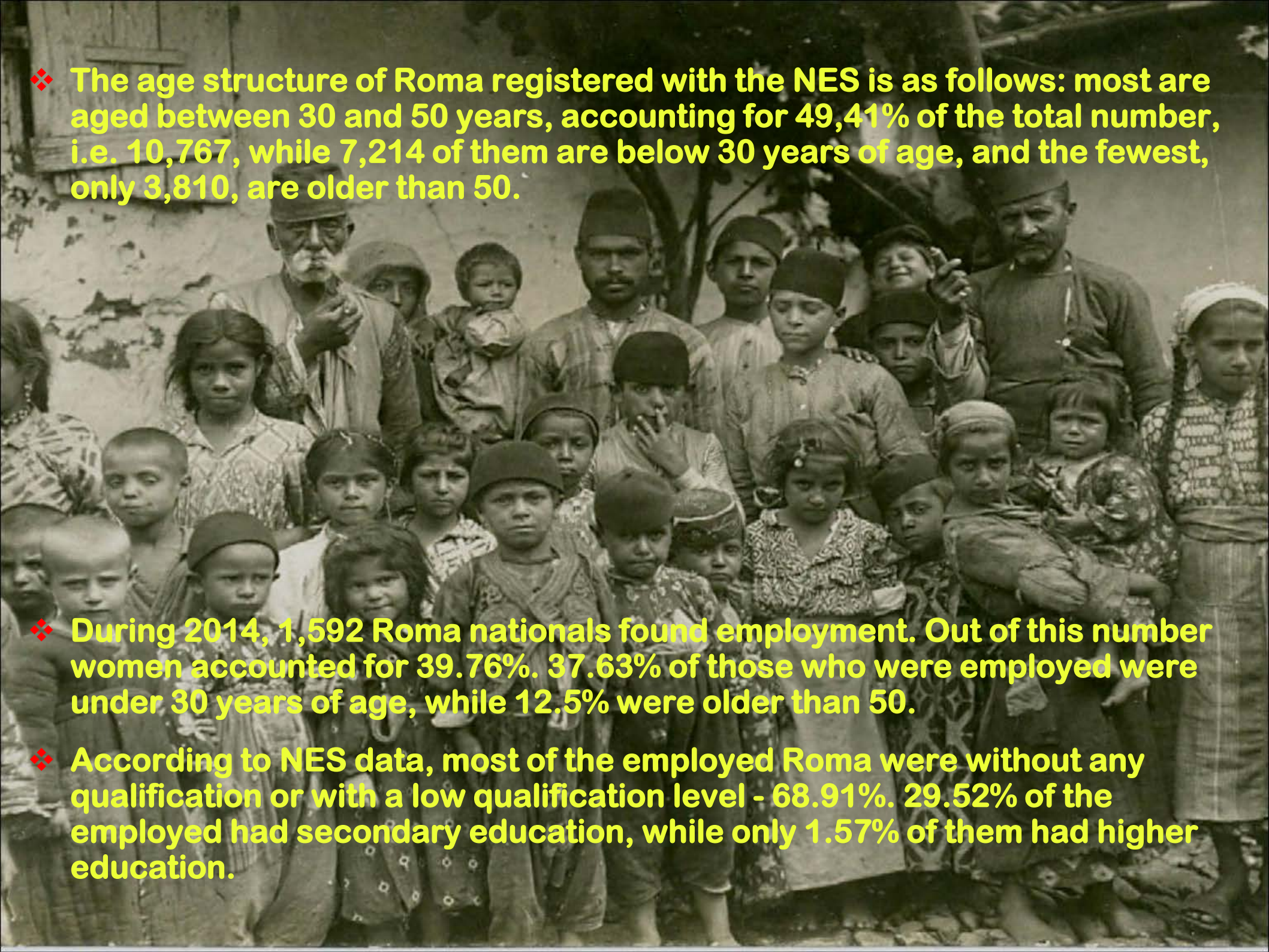


❖ As we previously observed in the National Employment Service's database, there were 21,791 unemployed members of the Roma national minority registered with the NES on 31 December 2014, of which 10,053 were women and 11,738 were men. We are pointing out this fact because in 2013 there were 11,952 Roma men registered with the NES, which is slightly higher than for 2014.

❖ The qualification structure of Roma registered with the National Employment Service is as follows:

- ❖ out of a total number of registered Roma, 19,420 of them, i.e. 89.12%, have no qualification.
- ❖ The number of those who completed secondary education is: 2,283, a little under 10%.
- ❖ Only 88 completed higher education, which is 0.40% of the overall registered number in the NES.

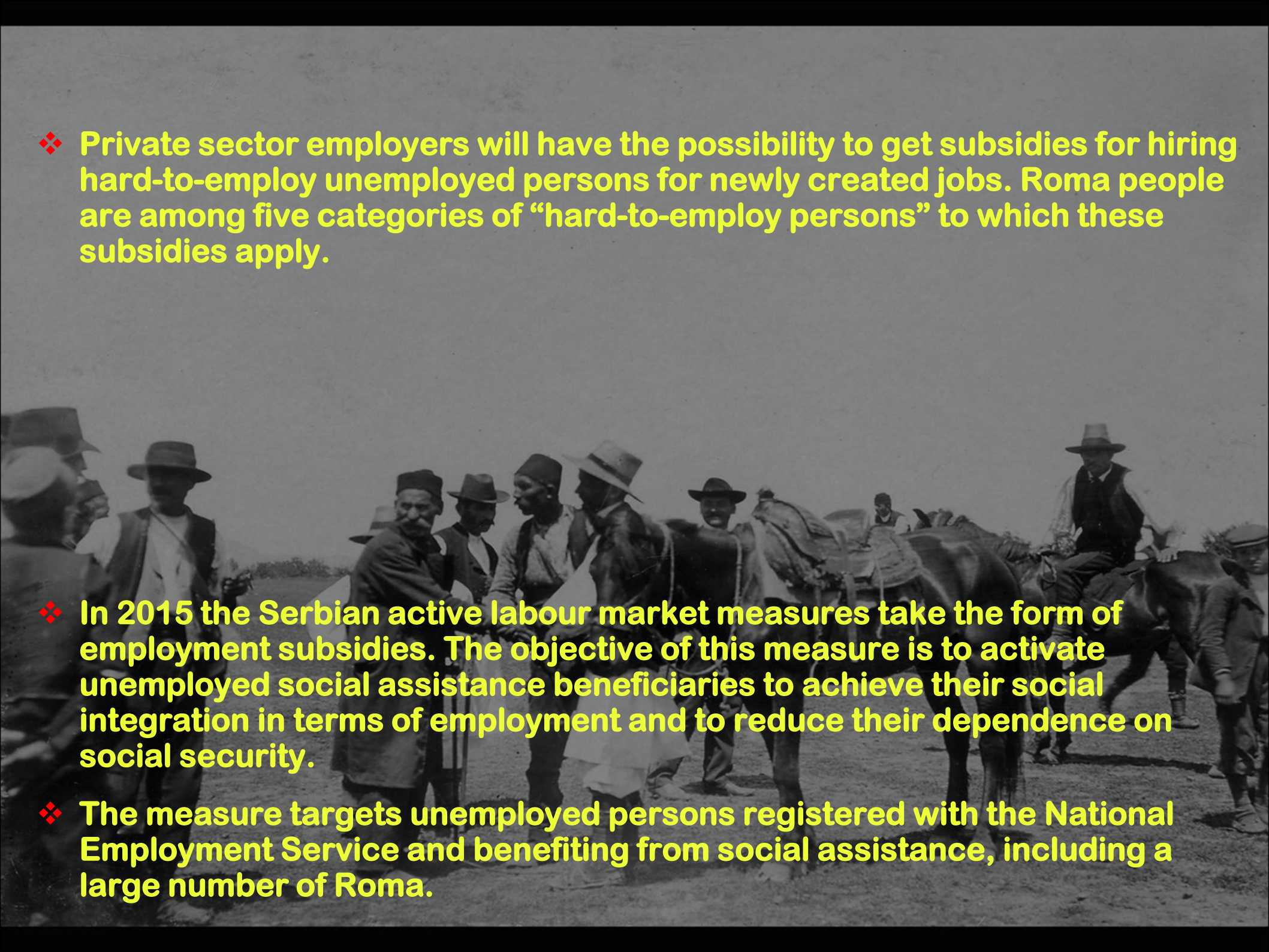




❖ The age structure of Roma registered with the NES is as follows: most are aged between 30 and 50 years, accounting for 49,41% of the total number, i.e. 10,767, while 7,214 of them are below 30 years of age, and the fewest, only 3,810, are older than 50.

❖ During 2014, 1,592 Roma nationals found employment. Out of this number women accounted for 39.76%. 37.63% of those who were employed were under 30 years of age, while 12.5% were older than 50.

❖ According to NES data, most of the employed Roma were without any qualification or with a low qualification level - 68.91%. 29.52% of the employed had secondary education, while only 1.57% of them had higher education.



❖ Private sector employers will have the possibility to get subsidies for hiring hard-to-employ unemployed persons for newly created jobs. Roma people are among five categories of “hard-to-employ persons” to which these subsidies apply.

❖ In 2015 the Serbian active labour market measures take the form of employment subsidies. The objective of this measure is to activate unemployed social assistance beneficiaries to achieve their social integration in terms of employment and to reduce their dependence on social security.

❖ The measure targets unemployed persons registered with the National Employment Service and benefiting from social assistance, including a large number of Roma.

The employment support programme for Roma of both genders, implemented by the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Serbia as a component of the Project “Here We Are Together - European support for Roma inclusion”, includes support to economic operators through:

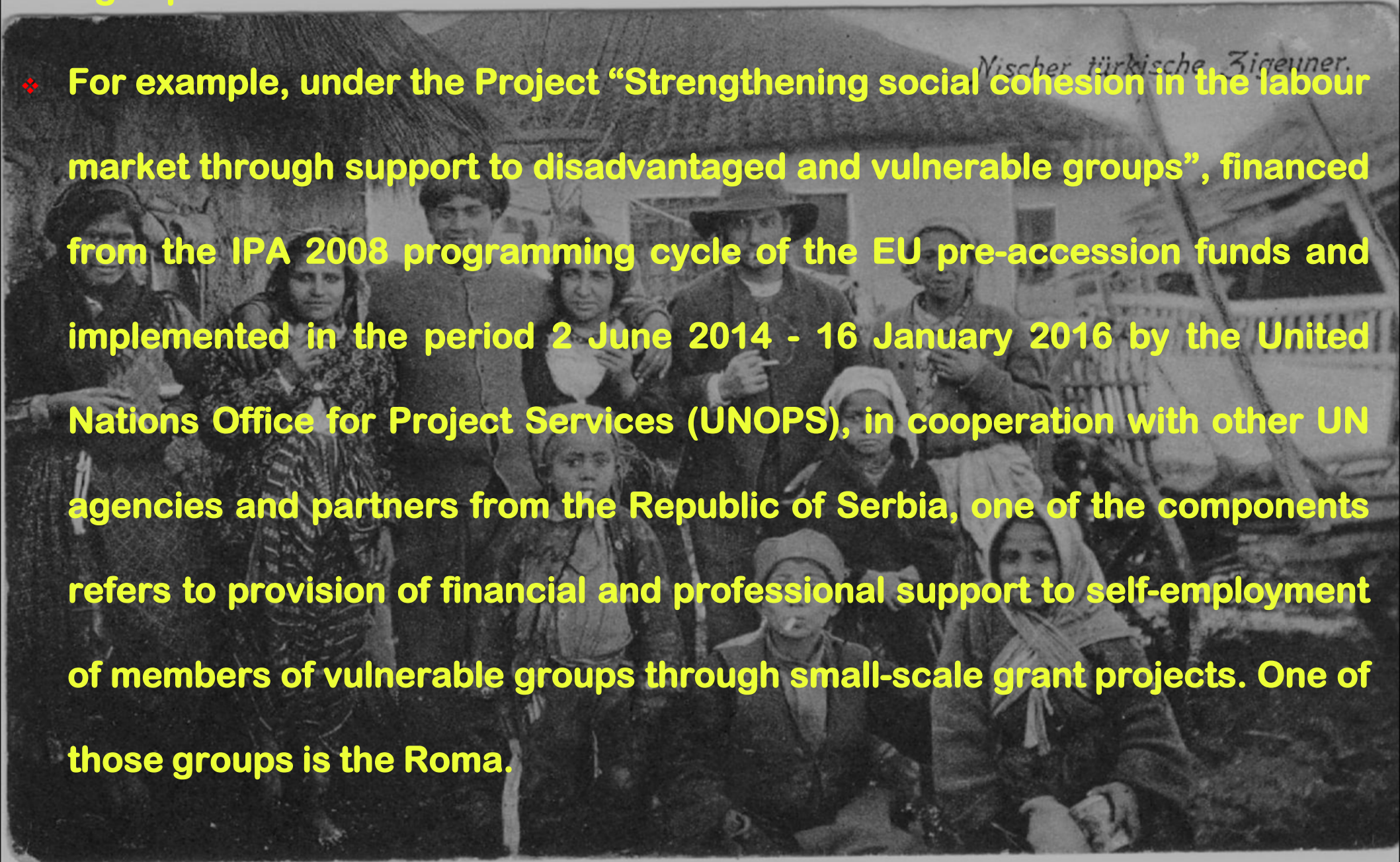
- ❖ purchase of equipment,
- ❖ non-consumable goods,
- ❖ machinery,
- ❖ appliances,
- ❖ tools and similar.

It also provides professional support for further improvement of business activities and training of newly employed Roma.

Recently several projects aimed at Roma employment have been or are still being implemented.

❖ For example, under the Project “Strengthening social cohesion in the labour market through support to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups”, financed from the IPA 2008 programming cycle of the EU pre-accession funds and implemented in the period 2 June 2014 - 16 January 2016 by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in cooperation with other UN agencies and partners from the Republic of Serbia, one of the components refers to provision of financial and professional support to self-employment of members of vulnerable groups through small-scale grant projects. One of those groups is the Roma.

*Nischer türkische Zigeuner.*





The organization HELP is currently implementing 2 projects in Serbia:

- ❖ “Poverty reduction and enhancement of employment opportunities of marginalized and vulnerable population groups in Serbia” and
- ❖ “Poverty reduction and enhancement of employment opportunities of marginalized and vulnerable population groups, with special focus on Roma women”, in which the primary target groups are precisely members of the Roma national minority.

**Roma employment is one of the important issues facing Serbia.**

**The main reason for this situation is the very low qualification structure of the Roma population, but there are also other reasons.**

