

National Strategies for Minority Schooling:

A comparative analysis

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(EUMC)

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Contemporary Status of Minority Education in the Candidate Countries.....	5
3. The Educational Situation of the Roma in the Candidate Countries	9
4. The Educational Situation of the Russian Minority in the Baltic States	22
5. The Educational Situation of Other Minorities in the Candidate Countries.....	27
6. Analysis, Recommendations, and Comparison of Data	30
APPENDIX 1	37
Table 1: Ethnic Minorities in the Candidate Countries	37
Table 3: Anti-discrimination Legislation	42

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1. Introduction

In order to fulfil its mission, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) created the Racism and Xenophobia in Europe Network (RAXEN). This network is composed of National Focal Points (NFPs) in each EU Member State. The NFPs are in charge of data collection and delivery of country reports on different topics under guidance by the EUMC. This RAXEN network was enlarged with the assistance of the PHARE programme¹ to the Central and Eastern European Candidate Countries (CEECs). These include the eight acceding countries joining the EU in May 2004, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as Bulgaria and Romania, which are Candidate Countries of the second round of enlargement.

In January 2004, each of the ten new National Focal Points delivered a short report on the national strategies for minority schooling in their countries. From a methodological standpoint, this study compares the major results of the reports and also discusses similarities and differences in comparison with the educational situation of ethnic minorities in the EU Member States. Theoretical aspects are discussed in relation to the different topics addressed.

It should be pointed out that the concepts “ethnic minority” and “national minority” are applied differently in the Candidate Countries. In addition, terms such as “indigenous minorities” (Hungary) or “territorial minorities” (Slovenia) are being used. The terms “ethnic minority” and “national minority” are sometimes defined in the legislation and sometimes not (e.g. in Latvia). Citizenship status is in most countries a precondition for acknowledgement of minority status. In Estonia, for example, this has the consequence that more than half of all minorities do not fall under the legal definition of national minorities and therefore, have no minority rights. The same is true for recent immigrants, who are not seen as belonging to minorities in most Candidate Countries. In some instances, existing minorities are not recognised as such (e.g. Bulgarian Macedonians). In others (e.g. Lithuania), national minorities have to be numerous and live in concentrated communities in order to be recognised.

The first part of the study provides a short overview of the contemporary status of minority education in the Candidate Countries, of the status of minority groups, of main legal measures, and of practical applications of promoting minorities’ cultures and languages in the education system, as well as of anti-discrimination initiatives.

The second part has three subsections that concentrate on the most relevant ethnic minority groups discussed in the NFP reports. First, it addresses the educational situation of Roma, a minority that can be found in almost all Candidate Countries. Then, it illustrates the situation of the Russian minority in the Baltic States. And finally, it summarises relevant educational aspects pertaining to other larger minority groups in different countries.

¹ The PHARE programme is one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Communities to assist the applicant countries of central Europe in their preparations for joining the European Union.

The third part provides an analysis of the situation, as well as recommendations for improvement of minorities' educational situation, and discusses differences and commonalities concerning the education of minorities between the Candidate Countries and the EU Member States.

2. Contemporary Status of Minority Education in the Candidate Countries

The following section deals with the contemporary status of minority education in each of the Candidate Countries. It briefly describes the status of minority groups, main legal measures and practical applications of promoting minorities' cultures and languages in the education system, as well as anti-discrimination initiatives.

Bulgaria acknowledges "traditional" minorities, such as the Roma or Turkish minorities on national or ethnic criteria. However, Bulgarian Macedonians are not officially acknowledged as a minority. Also, immigrants or "new minorities" are not provided with any minority rights. Bulgaria tends to provide special rights to acknowledged minorities and supports cultural diversity in the education system to some degree. Minorities have the right to study their mother tongue and schools offer minority language teaching as a compulsory selectable subject. Instruction in these classes also focuses on ethnic minority history and culture.

However, the implementation of mother tongue teaching is not without problems. While Turkish mother tongue classes are well provided, pupils who often have to choose between Turkish and English, increasingly opt for the latter. Roma children currently do not study their language because of a lack of commitment on behalf of the authorities. In addition, legal provisions limit the possibility to exercise the right for mother tongue schooling for smaller minority groups and for minorities living in areas with predominantly Bulgarian population.

Access to good quality education is not assured for the Turkish and Roma minorities. Segregation and low educational attainment due to placement of students in special schools are central problems. Integration of disadvantaged groups into the regular education system is therefore the main goal at the moment. Anti-discrimination measures target particularly the desegregation of Roma schooling.

National minorities in the **Czech Republic** are, since 2001², defined as a community of citizens living on the State territory with other ethnic origin than the Czech population, which differ in language, culture, and traditions and demonstrate the wish to be considered a national minority. Most minorities are described as "fully assimilated". Immigrants and refugees are simply referred to as minorities (i.e. Romanians, Russians, Vietnamese). A clear, coherent and comprehensive conception of minority schooling still needs to be developed. The legal norms allow for the establishment of schools or classes with mother tongue as language of instruction. Only larger minorities manage to exercise the right to education in their mother tongue.

²

Charter of Basic Rights and Freedoms, July 2001, Act No. 273/2001 Coll.

The schools are organised by the minorities themselves and follow either bilingual programmes (German schools), minority language as language of instruction (Polish schools) or they offer additional language classes including minority culture and history (Jewish school). Some of these minority groups receive support from their countries of origin. Roma pupils often do not receive adequate education and experience discrimination. Various initiatives and anti-discriminatory measures have been implemented to improve their schooling situation.

In **Estonia**, the term “national minority” refers to citizens who reside on the country’s territory, maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with Estonia, are distinct from Estonians on the basis of their ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics and are motivated to preserve their cultural traditions, religion or language, which constitute the basis of their common identity.³ The distinction between “national” minorities and “ethnic” minorities, who are citizens of other countries or people with undetermined citizenship (“stateless”), means that approximately 62 % of the minorities who do not fall under the legal definition of national minorities have no access to special rights.⁴ This also affects the large Russian minority, whose members are not always citizens.

Since regaining independence, Estonia aims at the establishment of the State language Estonian as main language of instruction. This transition and re-organisation is accompanied by difficulties and tensions between ethnic and national minority groups and the majority. Beginning with the year 2007, all upper-secondary schools must at least provide 60 % of instruction in Estonian, which poses a special challenge for Russian schools and Russian pupils. There is fear that low comprehension of Russian speaking pupils in the State language and a lack of competency of Russian teachers to provide high quality Estonian language instruction may lead to a decline of quality education. However, so far, language immersion programmes have been established in four Russian schools, leading to good academic results and low dropout rates.

National minorities may receive education in their mother tongue. National minority schools choose the language of instruction. A new regulation aims to clarify an existing ambiguity regarding the right of ethnic minorities to receive education in their language as an elective subject at publicly funded educational institutions. Sunday schools organised by NGOs and minority groups currently cover other forms of minority education.

Hungary divides the term “minority” in three categories: minorities indigenous to Hungary, migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees), and the Hungarian minority living abroad. “Indigenous minorities” are either national minorities, who can refer to a country of origin or ethnic groups like the Roma. Minorities have the right to initiate teaching in their mother tongue and to create their own nationwide network of educational institutions. Minority schools exist at several levels (from kindergarten to secondary level) for different minorities (including one Roma school). Schools are obliged to provide language classes or study groups on request of at least eight minority members in the school. In general, Hungary provides minority schooling on a qualitatively lower level. Minority schools cannot provide instruction in the minority

³ The term “national minority” is defined in the “National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act” through the right of individuals to establish self-governing agencies; http://muhiu.www.ee/E-LIST/1993/93_11/1993_11_16_20_56_13_0200 (20.01.2004).

⁴ 2000 Population Census; 13% of the population with undetermined citizenship, 7% of the population citizens of other countries; <http://www.stat.ee>.

language in all subjects. Teachers are only trained to teach language and culture classes in the minority language.

Roma attain low levels of education and face discrimination. Anti-discrimination programmes target the segregation of Roma children into separate classes, low quality schooling, and their overrepresentation in special schools. Measures are also taken to improve the education of new immigrants who speak a language other than Hungarian, by supporting schools in which they are enrolled. However, this only includes non-Hungarian speaking children whose parents reside in the country and are legally employed. Teachers do not receive special training for teaching non-Hungarian speaking children.

In **Latvia**, the term “minority” is not defined in the legislation. Nevertheless the Constitution speaks about “ethnic minorities”. Since 1989 Latvian is the proclaimed State language. All other languages (with the exception of the autochthonous Liv language) are considered foreign. Latvian legislation offers the possibility to establish minority schools. Ethnic minorities have the right “to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural minority”. This constitutes a change since minorities had no opportunity to study their language, culture and history during the Soviet era. However, current school practice shows that minority education focuses almost exclusively on the maintenance of language. The lack of a legal definition of minority limits the possibilities to claim the right for minority education although stipulated in the law. Minority schools (with the exception of Russian schools) are barely established because many minority members use Russian as their main language.

Before gaining independence in 1992, the school system was segregated. Russians and other minorities received instruction in Russian; Latvians attended schools with Latvian as language of instruction but also were taught Russian. Bilingual schooling in different models support the transition, which, however, is also accompanied by the lack of adequate language skills of teachers in the State language. Most resources are mobilised for the transition programme and State language acquirement of minorities rather than for minority schooling with an aim to maintain minority language, culture, and history. Intercultural exchange programmes help to improve not only the dialogue between the Latvians and the Russians but also support the Russian children’s acquirement of the Latvian language. Roma are so far left out of any minority schooling programme and often experience segregation.

In **Lithuania**, the law guarantees national minorities, inhabiting the country in “numerous and concentrated communities” to have instruction in their native language. According to the Constitution, “Citizens who belong to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language, culture, and customs”⁵. The lack of a clear definition of “minority” as well as of a clear legislation for mother-tongue instruction can lead to an arbitrary policy and practice in minority education that is dependent on the good will of the majority. Only larger minority groups can provide education in their native language. For smaller minorities the education is not covered by the regular public school system. Polish and Russian schools are run either monolingually or bilingually. Nine schools even follow a multilingual programme (Lithuanian, Polish, Russian). Schools receive funds for education of national minorities in form of a “pupil’s basket” which is by 10 % bigger

⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania 1993.

than for Lithuanian schools. Smaller minorities organise Sunday schools where children can learn the minority language as well as their culture and history.

Education of national minorities forms a significant part of education in Lithuania. The orientation is determined by a basic acceptance of Lithuania as a culturally plural society. The engagement with problematic historical events and periods like the holocaust or the Soviet era seem to be characteristic for the current considerations on minority schooling and the attitude towards minorities at a whole. Roma children are integrated in the regular school system, where programmes fostering their ethnic identity and language skills are offered. Efforts are made to improve their school success and to lower the dropout rate.

In **Poland**, 96,74 % of society declared to be Polish according to the census conducted in 2002. Nevertheless, in this ethnically rather homogenous society some minorities take advantage of minority schooling, which forms a part of education policy. Citizens belonging to national and ethnic minorities can maintain and develop their own language, customs, traditions and culture. Public schools shall enable minority students to study their language, history, and culture. The education of national and ethnic minorities is funded through the State budget and also supported by minorities' countries of origin, but for the most part has to be organised by minorities themselves. The law enables different forms of language approaches such as instruction in the native language, bilingual schools, or supplementary education of the native language. Roma language is not offered as a language of instruction and native languages of small minorities currently can only be learned in form of an additional subject.

Currently, the execution of the State policy on minority education occurs on four levels: the central authority, the local authority, schools, and minority communities. This leads to ambiguities regarding the distribution of responsibilities. The organisation of minority education is problematic because of insufficient curricula, school textbooks, and lack of teaching staff. The State makes efforts to improve school attendance and educational attainment of Roma pupils and provides support to teachers involved in Roma schooling.

National minorities have a long history in **Romania** and already in 1948 they were granted education in their mother tongue at all levels. During the Ceausescu regime minority rights were violated but re-establishment of minority rights in education has taken place since 1990. Romanian law distinguishes between 18 national historical minorities and other ethnic groups who have recently entered the country. These newcomers do not have minority status and thus no minority rights.

The Hungarian minority education system is very extensive, covering the entire school age population within the Hungarian community. Hungarian schools are completely separated from the Romanian system. This minority group has achieved high standards in terms of education. Smaller minority groups benefit from the high standards provided in Hungarian minority schools. Educational institutions with teaching in the mother tongue are established on request. There exist a small number of minority schools where the minority language is the language of instruction (Croatian, Czech, German, Serbian, Slovak, Ukrainian). Still, several small minorities are facing the pressure of assimilation. Whereas separate education for Hungarians is presently accepted as the best solution - in order to maintain peace between the minority and the majority - this is not the case for the Roma minority. Roma need to be integrated in the national school system. The Romanian

State takes measures to improve school attendance, to limit segregation and to improve the situation in general by affirmative action.

In **Slovakia**, a law on the status of ethnic minorities has so far not been adopted. The Constitution recognises the right of ethnic minorities to be educated in their mother tongue and to establish educational facilities. However, there is a differentiated approach for the different ethnic minorities based on their size and regional distribution. Depending on the extent of specific minorities' rights, minority languages have been divided into three groups: Hungarian; Ukrainian and Ruthenian; Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Polish, and Romani. This division leads to unequal opportunities for minorities. For example, while Hungarians unconditionally receive mother-tongue education, other minorities have to request it. Minority language instruction is for the most part offered in Hungarian and in Ukrainian. Roma currently do not receive instruction in their language. A number of schools follow a bilingual approach (Slovak-Hungarian, Slovak-Ukrainian and Slovak in combination with another foreign language). The Czech minority is not provided any minority schooling. Also, minority education presently does not pay attention to recent immigrants. The educational situation of Roma pupils is very problematic. Various programmes intend to integrate Roma children into regular schools.

In **Slovenia**, distinctions can be made between the Hungarian and Italian minority, which are territorial minorities living in border regions, the Roma, who often live in isolated settlements, and other minorities such as Serbs, Croats, or Bosnians. Minority schooling legislation focuses mostly on bilingual schooling for the Hungarian and Italian minority. Bilingual schools follow either maintenance or enrichment programmes and show positive results. The models have been used since 1959 and are constantly improved. The curricula and textbooks also contain issues of cultural identity and history of the minorities and aim on cultural pluralism. Government strategies towards education of Roma pupils in Slovenia are primarily intended to foster socialisation and integration of Roma children. Roma are not provided mother tongue education. Programmes also aim at the education of adult Roma, who are often illiterate. For all other minorities no concepts, programmes or special rights for minority education are reported.

3. The Educational Situation of the Roma in the Candidate Countries

In **Bulgaria**, according to census data, Roma make up 4.7% (370,908) of the population and are the second largest ethnic minority. However, it is assumed that the actual number of Roma is considerably higher. In the past, territorial segregation was established by law, in that it was required that Roma children who lived in separate neighbourhoods had to study in the local "Roma schools". After 1989, gradually, provisions, which allowed for a "territorial division" of schools, were eliminated.

Roma continue to be confronted with inequality and discrimination in the field of education. The large majority of Roma pupils studies in segregated schools, where the quality of education is drastically lower than that offered in the schools of their Bulgarian peers. These schools have poor material resources, teachers with lower qualifications, and inadequate supervision. Currently, there are approximately 60 primary, 350 basic, and 9

secondary schools in Bulgaria, in which Roma enrolment varies between 50 to 100%⁶ and 106 schools with close to 100% Roma enrolment.⁷ In general, Roma attain only low levels of education; have lower school attendance and high dropout rates. The share of illiterate Roma beyond the age of 7 even increased in recent years.⁸

The most pressing problem is the overrepresentation of Roma pupils in special schools for children with developmental disabilities or in schools for juvenile delinquents. These schools use questionable placement methods and even try to attract Roma students by offering accommodation and food. As a result, nearly 70% of the students in schools for children with developmental deficiencies are Roma⁹ and the average share of minority children (predominantly Roma) in boarding schools for juvenile delinquents and social and pedagogical boarding schools varies between 60 and 70%, reaching 95% in some schools.

The study of mother tongue is guaranteed by the Bulgarian *Constitution* to persons who belong to ethnic and linguistic minorities. However, the Roma, who are officially recognised and large enough groups to allow for creating mother tongue classes, currently do not study their language because of discrimination and lack of commitment on behalf of authorities. The majority of Roma students in Bulgaria speak Romani language in their families, but the teachers in the segregated Roma schools are predominantly Bulgarian and do not speak Romani.

The *Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society*,¹⁰ adopted in April 1999, outlines specific problem areas and suggests measures for countering discrimination in Roma education. These include desegregating Roma education, reducing the number of Roma children in special schools, introducing measures to combat racism in the classroom, providing possibilities for the study of Romani language in school, facilitating the access of Roma to higher education, and organising literacy courses for adult Roma. However, for several years, the Framework Programme existed only on paper, and even now, is not being implemented adequately. The same holds true for other regulations and acts geared to improve the educational situation of the Roma. Among recent good practices, the Bulgarian NFP reports on the projects “Free access for Roma children to all schools in Vidin” and “Romany folklore in Bulgarian schools”. While the first project lead by the Roma organisation “Drom” fights desegregation by assisting the enrolment of Roma children in schools with multicultural curricula outside their neighbourhoods, the second project by the Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance aims at introducing Romani folklore through a special textbook.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Roma constitute the second largest ethnic minority. In the 2001 census, less than 12.000 people officially declared themselves as Roma. However,

⁶ Denkov, D., Stanoeva, E., Vidinski, V. (2001) *Roma Schools in Bulgaria 2001*, Sofia: Open Society Foundation, p.10.

⁷ Nunev, I. (2002) “Analysis of the Current Status of Schools with Roma Enrolment”, in: *Strategies for Policy in Science and Education*, Special issue, pp.110-144 (in Bulgarian).

⁸ Open Society Institute (2002) *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection*, p. 90.

⁹ *ibid.* p. 8.

¹⁰ *Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society*, Part 2.V. The Framework Programme has not been

officially published by the Bulgarian Government. It is available in Bulgarian on the web site of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee:

<http://www.bghelsinki.org/zakoni/otherdocs/FrameworkProgram.doc> (29.12.2003).

the total number of Roma living in the Czech Republic is estimated to be 150,000 to 200,000 (1,5-2%) During the Second World War, the Roma population in the Czech Republic was exterminated. The majority of the contemporary Roma population moved into the republic after 1945 from Slovakia. The migration of the Slovak Roma was sometimes voluntary. More frequently, however, the Roma were forcefully removed from their age-old settlements in Slovakia.

The current critical educational situation of Roma in the Czech Republic is a result of long-lasting exclusion from society and biased legislative measures directed at assimilation of the Roma population. Official school enrolment data based on voluntary declaration hardly represents the actual numbers of Roma in Czech schools. Data for the school year 2000/01¹¹ shows 751 (0.27%) Roma in Kindergartens, 471 (0.04%), in Primary schools 6 (0,004%) in Grammar schools, 17 (0,009%) in Technical schools, 32 (0,18%) in Apprentice Training Centers, none in Secondary Technical Schools, 745 (1,04%) in Special Schools, and none at Universities. Experts speak of a much higher number of Roma in schools, e.g. in primary schools their number is assumed to be 20-30 times higher.

Despite the fact that actual placement of Roma into special schools is very difficult to trace, it is known, that Roma pupils are highly over-represented in these schools. Different reports conclude that their representation in special schools is 15 times higher than that of other pupils.¹²

In April 1999, the Czech government passed resolution. 279,¹³ which recognises the extent of the problem concerning the placement of Roma in special schools: *“The fact that around three quarters of Romany children attend special schools for children with a minor mental defect and more than 50% of all pupils in the special schools are formed by the Roma, has become the subject of a growing criticism from abroad, where these schools, viewed as forcefully segregative, represent a premonition of apartheid tendencies.”*

In the last decade, the Ministry of Education has been implementing various measures to promote education of Roma children. These include foremost the establishment of preparatory classes for Roma children before their entrance to primary school and the support for alternative educational programmes. In the academic year 2000/01, 110 preparatory classes were opened (for 1364 pupils). By the beginning of the academic year 2001/2002, 214 pedagogical assistants were employed in the preparatory classes. This measure ostensibly has decreased the number of Roma pupils in special schools by 25%.

Other projects and initiatives have been introduced to improve the schooling of Roma pupils. Since 1998, *The Evangelic Academy - Higher professional Social School* in Prague has been running a secondary correspondence course for Roma advisors and assistants. *The Romany Secondary Social School* in Kolín, a private boarding school,

¹¹ Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001, Prague, Published by Council of National Minorities

of the Government of the Czech Republic, June 2002, pp. 30 – 31.

¹² Jitka Gjuríčová (1991) et al./Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Prague and Institute for Information on Education (no year) Statistical Yearbook on the Czech educational system.

¹³ Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic on the Conception of Governmental Policies towards the Members of the Roma Community Supporting Their Integration into the Society.

offers students a complete secondary professional education with curricula concentrating on Roma specificities and socio-cultural background. In 2001, a Primary Art School for Roma pupils with a Roma teacher and assistant on staff was established under the auspices of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church. Various university faculties offer courses in Roma studies. More than a hundred of local community centres run by Roma and pro-Roma civic associations offer after-school activities for youth and children and standard club activities. Since January 2001, the People in Need Foundation has been implementing the PHARE project "Improvement of the Relations Between the Czech and Romany Communities", concentrated on multicultural education. Different NGOs implement projects on human rights and multicultural education (Association for the Education to Citizenship, Teresa-Association for Ecologic Education, Educational and Cultural Center of the Jewish Museum). Finally, the Research Institute for Education, a ministerial institution, is responsible for the conceptual development of multicultural education for primary and secondary schools.

In **Hungary**, for centuries, different Roma groups have coexisted with Hungarians. Today, they constitute the largest minority. In 1990, according to official data¹⁴, which have to be treated with caution, they made up 1,37% of the population (142,683 people). Following the change of regime in the 1990s, the economic situation of the Roma deteriorated and many lost their jobs. Today, a significant percentage of the country's Roma are socially and economically at the very bottom of society. Educational practices are discriminatory, as the chances of a child receiving inferior services on account of his or her ethnicity are rather high. Roma children are often put in segregated schools or classes. Up to 2002, segregation of Roma children was made possible by the so-called "Educational programme for the Gypsy minority", ostensibly meant to serve as a framework for assisting them in catching up and to provide for instruction in Roma culture. However, schools often exploited the additional subsidies in part to bolster their budgets and in part to form separate classes for Roma without teaching them the prescribed cultural content. Roma pupils are highly over-represented in remedial programmes and in alternative programmes ("auxiliary classes"). Despite the fact that there is conclusive evidence that the percentage of mental retardation is not higher among the Roma than among the population at large, today, every fifth Roma child in Hungary is sent to an "auxiliary" programme¹⁵ based on a diagnose for mental retardation. The main reasons for relegating Roma children to these programmes are disregard for social-cultural factors on the one hand and prejudiced thinking on the other.¹⁶ The percentage of Roma pupils in these programmes is above 80%.¹⁷ Roma children are more often excluded from classes taught at a higher level of specialisation.

Among twenty-year-olds, one out of four Roma fails to reach grade eight in primary school. Roma pupils stand an eight times greater chance not to attend school than non-Roma pupils. Today, 10% of Roma children aged 14 to 15 do not attend school regularly.

¹⁴ MAPSTAT Central Statistical Office software, Budapest, 1992: Demographic Characteristics According to Nationality; Census data 1990.

¹⁵ Loss, S. (2000) Út a kisegítő iskolába, in: Horváth, Á; Landau, E; Szalai, J. (Eds.) Cigánynak születni, Budapest: Új Mandátum, pp.365-401

¹⁶ Kaltenbach, J. (2000) Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights

from Jan 1 1999 to 31 Dec 1999, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners

¹⁷ Havas, G; Kemény, I; Liskó, I. (2002) Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában, Budapest: OKI-Uj mandátum –

The application of the status of "private student"¹⁸ is one recent legally established method of schools getting rid of "problem cases". A non-Roma child is normally classified "private student" for medical reasons or when this procedure is seen to serve the interests of an exceptionally talented pupil's career, as in the case of athletes or artists. With Roma children, the most frequent explanation is chronic misbehaviour. In reality, children condemned to home study never graduate from primary school.

Schoolbooks were shown to reproduce and reinforce prejudices and stereotypes of the Roma minority.¹⁹ An inquiry conducted by the minority ombudsman found that a significant proportion of trainee teachers hold prejudices against the Roma.²⁰

Furthermore, a series of discriminatory practices, such as a separate school-leaving ceremony for Roma students, serving Roma children's school meals separately from their non-Roma schoolmates on specially marked plates and glasses, or the creation of a new school building, which segregates Roma children from Hungarian children by a foundation, are being reported.²¹

In recent years several measures to combat discrimination and to eliminate educational segregation in public education have been taken to support Roma pupils. However, putting these measures into practice still leaves a lot to be desired. Launched in 1999, the János Arany Programme for Talented Children was meant to assist talented children of an expressly underprivileged status to continue their studies at higher levels. These children are given stipends and admitted to a secondary school programme. Recently, a revision of this programme took place, since hardly any Roma children have benefited from it so far. The 1999 PHARE Programme of the Ministry of Education spent several billion Forints on improving the educational situation of the Roma. Monitoring reports and even a EU report²² concluded successful implementations. However, an analysis,²³ carried out in 2003, found that those educational institutions applying for support under the PHARE programmes were not necessarily committed to improving the education of the Roma, but rather tended to regard the programme as another source of supplementary financing. Most of the money spent did not lead to any noticeable improvements. Ethnic segregation, ineffective pedagogical initiatives, and parental dissatisfaction were reported from participating institutions. Problems failed to come to the surface because of a lack of effective monitoring.

As of 2002, The Bureau of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged and Roma Children was set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Education to improve the operation of this legally regulated but ineffective approach.²⁴

¹⁸ Children with the status of "private student" are not obliged to attend classroom teaching, they only have to show up for occasional

afternoon consultations and then sit for term exams.

¹⁹ Terestyéni, T: A középiskolai történelem és társadalomismeret tankönyvek romákkal kapcsolatos tartalmi (Roma-related contents

in history and social science textbooks used in secondary schools), Manuscript

²⁰ Kaltenbach, J (2002) Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights

from Jan 1 2001 to 31 Dec 2001, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners

²¹ For more details see: *ibid.*

²² The 2002 report of the European Committee on Hungary's progress towards accession. <http://www.kum.hu/euint> (12.01.2004)

²³ The investigation is now concluded but the official report is not yet complete.

²⁴ The survey here of recent measures was made on the basis of interviews conducted with employees of the Bureau of the Ministerial

Among other measures, the bureau introduced concepts for integration and ability development. As a result, as of September 2003, there were 8.776 first, fifth, and ninth graders participating in preparatory programmes for integration nationwide. An additional 24.117 students attending primary and vocational schools are now involved in ability development programmes, which have supplanted the remedial courses of the previous period. The population targeted by these preparatory programmes are children Roma, who terminated their formal education before or immediately after completing grade eight and are eligible for child-protection benefit on account of poverty. The change was motivated by the realisation that the approach to underprivileged status on an ethnic basis did not improve the situation of the Roma. Instead, a National Network of Integration in Education has been set up to implement nationwide modern pedagogical measures to improve the situation of the underprivileged. Further measures are to increase the nursery-school capacity, to support tutorial schools providing assistance to Roma children, to increase mother tongue instruction, and to provide financial assistance to institutions, where considerable grass-roots efforts have been made to advance the development of Roma children. The government's planned decree on positive discrimination (admitting applicants to university or college despite lower scores) met with serious opposition and continues to be a debated issue.

In **Latvia**, the Roma are a traditional but small minority and officially make up only 0,3% (approx. 7000 people) of the population. They are in a socially precarious situation and face high unemployment. Despite the small number of Roma pupils, the failure to ensure adequate education has led to high illiteracy rates. In contrast to other minority groups, education of the Roma does not follow a minority education programme. Educational results for Roma are dramatically lower than for other ethnic groups. In 2000, almost one quarter of Roma aged 15 or above had not completed a fourth-grade education and more than half of the Roma school population had no education beyond 4th grade. In 2002/2003, approximately 1,600 Roma children were registered attending school – over 900 with instruction in Latvian and over 600 with instruction in Russian.

Since 1997, special classes for Roma children have been established in seven cities and towns of Latvia.²⁵ With the exception of the Riga State Technicum class, established in 2001, which also includes extracurricular Roma musical and cultural activities, these schools have the status of “special correctional education institutions”. The Roma children are de facto segregated from other school children even when attending the same school. Although the goal is allegedly to help them integrate into the regular classes over time, in reality no such movement has been observed. These special classes are exclusively in Latvian, and only rarely do teachers speak any Romani.

In **Lithuania**, the Roma officially constitute a rather small minority, making up 0.1% of the population (approx. 3,700 people). The major part of Roma lives under very poor conditions and have no permanent places of residence. Education of Roma children is integrated into the general education system. Therefore, there is no segregation in teaching Roma children in Lithuania. Still, Roma attain very low levels of education. Even though education under the age of 16 is compulsory, many Roma children start

Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged and Roma Children and with independent experts as well as the analysis of the press coverage given to these measures.

²⁵ In Sabile, Talsi, Tukums, Riga, Kuldiga, Ventspils and Jelgava. The overall number of students is 225. The Situation of Roma in

Latvia (2003), Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, Riga; p.24.

attending school with delay, do not attend at all, or do not finish school. The majority of Roma only speak Russian and the older generation did not receive schooling beyond elementary education. A lack of competency in the current State language causes them to understand the study programme only with difficulty. The economic hardship of Roma parents often does not allow them to supply their children with the necessary aids for learning and forces children to leave school and earn their living by various means. Because of this, improvement of Roma education is now being considered a priority.

The Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society has been prepared in accordance with Recommendation No. 1203 "On the Roma in Europe", approved by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in 1993. In carrying out the programme, the Roma Public Centre in Vilnius undertakes educational and cultural activities. In 2002/03, 24 Roma children attended two preschool groups in the Centre. The Centre offers vocational preparation courses, a day centre, and a summer recreation camp for Roma children and adult education. An important project of the non-governmental Education Exchange Fund that aims to foster education of the Roma is "Support to Roma Pupils in Lithuania". Data on Roma children attending different educational institutions has been collected. A publication on the Roma in Lithuania, which helps to form a public opinion, and a Roma language textbook were prepared. Over 100 teachers from all over Lithuania were invited to methodical seminars dealing with Roma educational difficulties. 316 Roma schoolchildren from 36 educational institutions were supplied with learning aids. The Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights devotes considerable attention to Roma education and to the education of society on the Roma in Lithuania. The organisation provides educational seminars for teachers, pupils, and persons belonging to national minorities. "Saulėtekio" School, which is noted for its active activities in the field of education of national minorities, creates conditions for Roma children to study, to participate in the extracurricular activities, and to seek vocational education. In 1999, the Centre for Studies of Cultural Communities was established at the Faculty of History at Vilnius University. This university division is designed only for those ethnic groups that have no State or sovereignty status – Roma, Karaite, Tartar, the Old Believers, and Yiddish cultures. The key objective of the Centre is to create new academic study programmes, to research and teach the history and cultural heritage of the mentioned minorities, and thus to encourage and propagate tolerance to national minorities in order to change the negative stereotypes of society.

In **Poland**, according to the most recent National Census of the Population and Housing conducted in June 2002, Roma make up only 0,03% (12,900 people) of the population. Similar to other countries, it can be assumed that their actual number is much higher. The Roma are the least educated minority in Poland. Some Roma do not attend school at all and the majority drops out of school after completing only a few grades. Among the reasons for this is a lack of familiarity with the Polish language, a lack of pre-school preparation, the generally poor economic situation of Roma families, as well as cultural differences. This impacts the situation of the entire minority since a lack of education is associated with general unemployment amongst the Roma and the lack of skills to function in a civil society. There are no schools with Romani as the language of instruction nor do the Roma learn their language as a supplemental subject.

Several attempts at solving the problem of educating Roma children have been made. At the outset of the 1990s, experimental Roma classes began to be formed. The National Roma Priest Father Opocki, one of the initiators, indicates that as of 1998, there were about 30 Roma classes with nearly 430 children. Teaching in such classes was in Polish

based on special curricula. They did not include teaching the Roma language or any issues concerning the Roma history and culture. The Roma classes engendered significant controversy. They were criticised for having a lower teaching level adapted to less skilled students, which closed the road to further education for Roma children. It was argued that they *de facto* led to segregation. On the other hand, supporters of Roma classes felt that they enable many children to at least obtain the foundations of an education, improved the attendance of Roma children in schools, and enhanced the contacts of parents with educational facilities. A few of these classes continue to exist until today. Children who, due to interruptions in their education and their age, cannot continue their education in regular classes attend them. Currently, however, the goal is to eliminate the Roma classes and teach the Roma in regular classes.

The Roma School in the Suwałki region conducts only initial elementary education (grades I-VI) with the assumption that the children will continue schooling in regular schools. To make this possible, classes are held at the school directed at counteracting the rearing and social differences among Polish and Roma children. An educational and development association at the school organises a number of interest-oriented clubs, field trips, and visits to theatres, museums, and cinemas. The school's activity centre also organises preschool education. As a result of the experience gained from many years of practice, the school's director has developed a methodological guide for middle school teachers entitled "Roma – close encounters", with basic information regarding the Roma and lesson plans about their culture. Although criticism has been voiced against Roma classes (incl. segregation of children), the Roma School in Suwałki is viewed as a very positive initiative – various institutions and NGOs willingly fund its activities.

The most complex project for improving Roma education is the "Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Małopolskie Voivodship for the years 2001-2003". However, this programme did not succeed in implementing all its goals, largely due to a shortage of funds. The activities undertaken most often were training and employment of Roma assistants and assistant teachers, organisation of remedial activities (including speech therapy and tutoring in Polish), equipping schools with teaching aids, paying for children's meals at school, covering the costs of bussing to school and for insurance, purchasing textbooks and school supplies, organising interest circles, school festivities, trips, camps and day camps, covering the costs of preschools, and financing kindergartens. The success of the programme largely depended on the initiative and activity level of local authorities and NGOs. For example, the Education Society for Małopolska in cooperation with the Gypsy Association in Nowy Sącz Area organised trainings for Roma assistants (out of the 24 Roma trained, 18 later found employment in schools), and the Stefan Batory Foundation is providing funds for school textbooks and teaching aids. The activities undertaken as part of the pilot programme undoubtedly contributed to the improvement of Roma education. School attendance increased, as did the level of discipline during classes. In individual cases, children began to attain improved educational results. According to teachers, remedial classes, employment of Roma assistants (especially in preschools, where children demanded additional assistance), equipping children with textbooks and school supplies, made the greatest contributions. A total of about 500 Roma children were provided assistance through the programme.

The government appointed Team for National Minorities that handles national and ethnic minority education issues, has a Sub-team for Roma Issues, which prioritises education of

the Roma minority. However, education of the Roma minority is not included in the minority education rights provided for in the Law on the System of Education. This law stipulates that schools and public facilities execute tasks to maintain the national, ethnic, language, and religious identities of students belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.

To counteract this inequality, similar tasks concerning Roma children's education can be found in the new government-developed programme for Roma, which is to be executed in 2004-2013 across all of Poland ("Programme for the Roma Community in Poland"). In addition, an article allowing schools to organise additional remedial courses for students of Roma origin was, in 2002, added to the decree of the Minister of National Education and Sport regarding organisation of education for national minorities and ethnic groups. As a result, schools with Roma students may receive equal additional financing as schools providing language instruction or instruction in a minority language pertaining to other minorities.

Thus, efforts by the State have been primarily directed toward inclusion of the Roma into the general educational system. Other institutions are also involved in these activities, such as the Ombudsperson, NGOs and the church. Funds from abroad have been used numerous times to achieve this goal.

In **Romania**, according to official 2002 Census data, the proportion of Roma in society is 2.5% (535,250). Roma face a marginal position in society. A significant majority lives in poverty²⁶ and illiteracy rates are very high.²⁷ Great hostility from the majority population towards the Roma is being reported. According to a recent poll conducted in September 2003, 47,3% of the total population support setting limits on the community's growth in numbers and 35,8% of Romanians believe that Roma should live separately from the rest of society.²⁸ For a long period of time Roma were completely ignored by various governments. Only after 1998, Romanian authorities seemed to respond to the international dimension of the Roma issue. The National Office for Roma was established in 1998 and the „Strategy for the Improvement of the State of Roma” was adopted in April 2001 through Government Order 430/2001. In July 2002, the government adopted the National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Plan, which acknowledged the social, economic, and educational disparities between various social groups.

The main issues in Roma education are attendance of the mandatory school programme, segregated Roma classes, and affirmative action for Roma children. In general, Roma children receive instruction in mixed schools and mostly in Romanian. Instruction in the Romani language was provided in 2001/02 in 102 schools for 12,650 Roma pupils. The teaching staff amounted to 164 full time teachers and another 96 who teach Romani either as primary school teachers or as part time employees. In spite of the policy promoted by the Ministry of Education and Research, there are still separate Roma classes or schools segregated according to ethnic criteria. An urgent problem is discrimination against Roma children in local educational institutions. The quality of teaching in segregated classes is considerably lower than that of instruction received in mixed classes. The dropout rate in

²⁶ In 1997, the poverty rate among the Roma was 79%, compared to a national figure of 31%. (Source: Ina Zoon, *La periferia societatii*, Open Society Institute, 2001);

²⁷ 44% illiterate males and 59% illiterate females (C. Zamfir, E. Zamfir, 1993, p.93.)

²⁸ Institutul pentru Politici Publice, *Intoleranta, discriminare, autoritarism in opinia publica*, Bucuresti, 2003, <http://www.ipp.ro> (22.2.2004).

institutions with Roma children is much higher compared to other schools. Following a complaint addressed to the National Office for the Fighting of Discrimination (CNCD)²⁹, a report on segregation of Roma children in schools was concluded for a primary and lower secondary school, which, as a result, received an official warning. Other segregation cases were documented by the organisation Romani CRISS for 2003.³⁰ Such acts occur in spite of the Ministry's notification, which expressly prohibits ethnic segregation in schools.

The Ministry of National Education commenced the programme of affirmative action for Roma in 1992-1993. The Ministry's initiatives with respect to education for Roma became more coherent in 1998, when Ministry Order 3577/1998 allocated places for young individuals of Roma origin in university centres. The number of allotments increased over the years. In 2002/03, it amounted to 422 places in 37 colleges and universities.³¹ Another goal of affirmative action strategies was to promote open distance learning in higher education institutions for Roma teachers (with merely a high school diploma), who were to obtain a university degree with double specialisation as "teacher – Romani language teacher". The universities' policies implementing affirmative action programmes for Roma contributed to the shaping and development of a young Roma elite.

The series of affirmative action measures was extended by the Ministry of Education to the level of high schools and vocational schools. Their impact is reflected in a comparative analysis of statistical data. While in 1989/90 the number of Roma between ages 6 to 18 who attended school was 109,325, it increased to 158,128 (4,23%) in the school year 2002/03.

The study of Romani language is organised within the framework of general educational legislation in Romania and is included in the education act for national minorities.³² However, even before initiatives existed to use Romani in education. In 2002/03, 15,708 Roma pupils opted in favour of an additional Roma curriculum (Romani language and Roma culture and traditions).

In **Slovakia**, Roma are the second largest ethnic minority. Official data of the 2001 Census³³ shows a proportion of 1,7% (89,920 people) Roma in the population. According to various estimates, this number is actually somewhere between 350,00 – 500, 000 (approximately 8% of the population). A big portion of the Roma population has not declared affiliation with the Roma ethnic group. This is caused by several factors such as the policies of the State prior to 1989, when Roma were not officially recognised as an ethnic minority and specific attempts were made to assimilate them into society. Roma are the poorest minority group and to a great extent excluded from participation in many socio-economic processes in society. Often, Roma are confronted with differential treatment by the majority population. This persistent exclusion, aside from other areas, applies especially to education.

²⁹ Romani CRISS filed with the CNCD complaint no. 1704/12.05.03 on the basis of Art.2.1 and 2.2 of Law 48/2002 approving

Government Order 137/2000 concerning the prevention and fighting of all forms of discrimination.

³⁰ Available at: <http://www.romanicriss.org> (22.2.2004).

³¹ Ministry Order 4120 of 06.09.2003, concerning matriculation in public higher education institutions.

³² Study in the mother tongue is organised under Education Law 84/1995 and Ministry Order 4646/1998.

³³ Available at: <http://www.statistics.sk/webdata/english/census2001/tab/int2.doc> (22.2.2004).

The ethnic composition of pupils in the school year 2002/03 shows 1,121 (0.74%) Roma in kindergarten, 4,255 (0.71%) in primary schools, 6 (0.01%) in grammar schools, 100 (0.12%) in specialised secondary schools, 85 (0.1%) in vocational secondary schools, and 2,475 (7.62%) in special schools.³⁴ Like in any other statistics, it can be assumed that the actual enrolment numbers of Roma pupils are much higher, but it is apparent that Roma have a higher representation in schools, which are less academically challenging.

Roma children often enter into compulsory schooling badly prepared. They do not speak the Slovak language, do not possess graphomotoric skills, and have problems keeping attention. Pre-school education (Kindergarten) is one way to prepare Roma children for schooling. However, since it is no longer compulsory, the attendance of Roma is rapidly decreasing. For this reason, several programmes were launched in Slovakia. At the one hand they aimed at increasing the enrolment in kindergartens, at the other at improving the system of pre-school education with a focus on the needs of the Roma minority. For example, within the project “Mother and Child,” provided by the PHARE fund in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, financial contribution is given to approximately 50 kindergartens attended predominantly by Roma children. The aim of the project is to engage Roma mothers in the educational process of their children and thus to better prepare children for compulsory schooling.³⁵ The PHARE project “Better Conditions for Roma Self-Realisation in the Education System” includes the pre-school activity “Strengthening the Comprehensive Pre-school System for Roma Children by Employing Trained Roma Teacher’s Assistants”. There are also attempts to narrow the gap in school performance by instituting a mandatory school attendance of the so-called “zero” or “preparatory” levels prior to entering first grade in primary schools.

At present, in the system of primary education, the most effective programme to improve the situation of Roma pupils is that of Roma teacher’s assistants. Originally the project was carried out by non-governmental organisations. In 2003, teacher’s assistants became pedagogical employees, which in practice means that in the future, these assistants will have the status of a teacher in the State administration. Roma teacher’s assistants serve as intermediaries between the Roma community and the school. Since many children prior to their enrolment in first grade cannot speak the Slovak language, it was the Roma assistants who became instrumental in overcoming the language barrier between the teacher and the pupils³⁶. Roma assistants cooperate with teachers directly in the classroom and are spending time with children during extra-curricular activities.

The educational system in Slovakia includes special schools that are intended for children with mental disabilities. The graduates of special primary schools usually attend specialised secondary schools or vocational training schools according to their abilities. Eventually they have limited prospects on the labour market. In Slovakia, Roma children are often placed in these specialised educational facilities due to the fact that they show unsatisfactory results on psychological tests, or their teachers or parents feel that better care will be provided to them in special schools. Psychological testings, on which the transfer of children to special schools is based, do not take relevant cultural, language, and social aspects into account. Thus, Roma children are often misdiagnosed as being mentally disabled. The Ministry has turned to the Research Centre of Psychology and

³⁴ Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, available at: <http://www.education.gov.sk> (22.2.2004).

³⁵ Jurásková, M., Kriglerová, E. (2004) Roma, in: Mesežnikov, G., Kollár, M. (Eds.) *A Global report on the State of Society*,

Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, p. 169.

³⁶ *ibid.* pp. 163-175.

Pathopsychology to create a new set of tests for the purposes of diagnosing children with special needs. Moreover, the project *Reintegration of Roma Students from the Socially and Educational Handicapped Environment of Special Schools into the Majority Population* is in a phase of experimental trials.

The Roma, in general, attain lower educational levels than the majority population. There is a low percentage of Roma in secondary schools and specialised training schools. Most Roma students in secondary education are enrolled in vocational schools and specialised vocational schools. In the future, there are plans for grammar schools focusing on the teaching of Roma language, history, and culture. Roma enrolment at universities is very low.

Ethnic minorities in Slovakia have a constitutional right to be educated in their mother tongue. However, at present the education in minority languages taking place in Slovakia includes only Hungarian and Ukrainian languages. The situation of the Roma language is highly specific. Currently, approximately 60% of the Roma use Romani in day-to-day communication³⁷, which concerns mostly Roma living in Eastern Slovakia. The only existing codified Roma language (codified in 1971) was based on a Roma dialect, which is used by a minority of Roma living in Western Slovakia. This dialect is incomprehensible to the Eastern Slovakian Roma. Using this dialect for educational purposes is highly ineffective. Presently, there are attempts to re-codify the Roma language. In 2002, a Roma grammar textbook was published. Based on this grammar, it is possible to use Romani in the educational process. However, according to a study from 1994, about half of the Roma minority are interested in being educated in Romani.³⁸

Many recent activities and programmes aimed at improving the educational conditions of Roma pupils in Slovakia were made possible with the financial support from the PHARE fund. While the government introduced various initiatives, activities such as proposals for equal access of Roma to education, the dismantling of discriminatory practices, and activities to increase the motivation and the involvement of Roma parents in the educational process of their children still remain in the domain of non-governmental sectors. Even though positive steps promoting equal chances for access to education of Roma children have been taken, so far they have not contributed noticeably toward increasing the level of education of Roma youth. There are persisting problems in this area, which need to be overcome. The improvement of Roma students' education requires further training of teachers and Roma assistants, support for the relationship between the family and the school, and the use of specific educational methods.

In **Slovenia**, according to official data from the 1991 Census, the Roma are a small minority, which makes up 0,12% of the population (approx. 2,300 people). The majority of Roma in Slovenia lives in isolated settlements without suitable living conditions. Their social position is marginalised in all fields of social and political life. Until recently, the bad socio- economic situation of Roma in Slovenia was also seen as the main problem within the educational system. Legal regulations dealing with the educational situation of Roma children in education were included into schooling legislation in 1996.

³⁷ Findings of international comparative research Roma Human Development Project in the Slovak Republic, available at: http://www.ivo.sk/mensiny_vyskum/UNDP/Index.htm (29.1.2004).

³⁸ Statistics Slovenia Republic, May 1994. The sample consisted of 682 respondents who claimed Roma ethnicity.

In conformity with the Roma Aid Programme and the schooling legislation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport allows schools additional pedagogical hours for group classes outside regular class time. Since insufficient comprehension of the Slovene language is considered one of the reasons for the low school success of Roma pupils, additional help is organised by persons who are capable to communicate with Roma children in Romani and in Slovene language. Adapted workbooks for Slovene language and mathematics were prepared for those Roma pupils in need of this assistance.

With the introduction of a nine-year elementary school programme, new curricula were adopted that include minimum standards for class graduation. In this context, in 2000, the Council of Experts for General Education adopted Instructions for initiatives for Roma pupils. The National Education Institute monitors the reform and promotes new working methods, adapted to the nine-year schooling of Roma children. In December 2002, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport established a special Working group for the preparation of the strategy of Roma education. The group includes experts of pre-school to adult education, as well as members of the Ministry, The Roma Association, and representatives of the National Education Institute. The main challenge is how to improve the integration of the Roma by taking into account differences based on different ways of life, tradition, and culture, and at the same time avoid assimilation through the education process.

Since the year 1996, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, on a monthly basis, has provided schools with small amounts of money for Roma pupils, for the purchase of study materials, special activities, and excursions.³⁹ Schools with the help of special textbooks funds provide textbooks for Roma pupils. The Ministry provides additional funds for subsidising school meals for Roma pupils.⁴⁰ The above measures contributed to improved cooperation of Roma children in classes and to a higher level of attendance.⁴¹

A persisting problem in Roma education is the lack of teaching staff, i.e. members of the Roma minority with good command of both, Slovene and Roma language. Roma students were given scholarships within a public call for scholarships for pedagogical professions. Until now only one Roma applied for the scholarship, but failed to graduate.

Among the projects presented as examples of good practices concerning the education of Roma is a project in two regions with a high proportion of Roma population. It was set up to encourage young Roma parents to bring up their children bilingually and with dual identity. Participants of these seminars were Roma pupils and their parents, teachers, headmasters, psychologists, pedagogues, and social workers, who work with Roma children. Roma parents were encouraged to support their children's schoolwork, their cooperation with the school and at the same time to increase their ethnic and cultural self-awareness.

In a municipality in the central part of Slovenia, educational programmes are adapted for Roma, who are illiterate or did not finish elementary school, aiming at their further

³⁹ Since the January 2003 it is 1,200 SIT (ca. 6 Euros) monthly.

⁴⁰ In the school year 2001/02 613 additional subsidies were approved.

⁴¹ In the school year 2002/03 elementary schools were attended by 1,223 Roma children, the 10 kindergartens by 157 children,

elementary school programmes in 8 public institutions by 295 adults, while over 100 Roma pupils continued education after having finished elementary school.

training and development of skills for better employment opportunities. The programmes strive to achieve a higher educational level for Roma, a more effective integration, and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma. The idea to include Roma in educational programmes within the adult education programmes is based on national legislation and financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Entirely new is the local approach that programmes for Roma must be flexible and individual, conducted in small groups and even individually sensitive to each candidate.

4. The Educational Situation of the Russian Minority in the Baltic States

After regaining independence more than a decade ago, Russians in the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have become minorities. Even though many Russians left these countries in the last years, they are still substantially large groups. Today, they make up 25,6% in Estonia, 30,4% in Latvia, and 6,3% in Lithuania. The education system under Soviet rule impeded integration and many Russians did not learn today's State languages. Recent legislations and policies pertaining to education have set off changes in this regard. All students are now supposed to acquire competency in the State languages, and Russian, which is considered to be a foreign language, is losing its supremacy. In a transition period accompanied by debates and even protests, the Baltic States are taking different approaches to achieve their desired goals.

In **Estonia**, Russians are by far the largest ethnic minority, constituting 25,6% of the population (approx. 362,500 people). Following independence, one of the first priorities of the educational reform was the unification of the Estonian and Russian language school systems.⁴² A curricula reform was introduced that significantly increased the number of Estonian language lessons in Russian language schools. Teaching more subjects in Estonian language will gradually become compulsory in these schools.

Currently it is possible to acquire pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education in Estonian or in Russian. However, the Law on the Pre-school Institutions only protects the right of all Estonian children to receive Estonian language pre-school education.⁴³ It provides for a possibility to establish classes in other languages if decided by the local self-government council but no guarantees of minority-language classes exist for the Russian-speaking population or other minorities. Moreover, according to the Article 8 (3), bilingual pre-school groups are prohibited.

Through the adoption of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act 1993⁴⁴, the attempt is made to gradually transform public education into a monolingual system.⁴⁵ Beginning no later than in the school year 2007/08, Estonian shall be the primary language of instruction in upper-secondary schools. Following criticism, the Act was amended in April 2000. Now 60% of the subjects are to be taught in Estonian and the remaining 40% can be thought in another language at the upper secondary level. Any

⁴² During the Soviet period the schools in Estonia were either with Estonian or Russian language of instruction. Estonian language schools had 11 years curricula but Russian language schools had 10 years curricula.

⁴³ Koolieelse lasteasutuse seadus (The Law on the Pre-school Institutions) RT I 1999, 27, 387 (18. 02. 1999)

⁴⁴ Põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiseadus (Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act) RT I 1993, 63, 892 (15. 09. 1993)

⁴⁵ Initially it was planned to start the reform in 2000, however later by relevant amendments extended to 2007

language may be used at the basic education level, although Estonian language instruction must also be given. A high level of proficiency in Estonian will be required from all teachers in all schools.

Legislation specifically related to schooling of ethnic minorities and protection from discrimination is problematic. The legal definition of “national minority” adopted by the State is very restrictive and excludes more than 60 % of ethnic minorities residing in the country. Estonia declared that it understands the term ‘national minority’ as including *citizens* of Estonia who reside on the territory of Estonia, maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with Estonia, but are distinct from Estonians on the basis of their ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics. They are motivated by a concern to preserve their cultural traditions, their religion, or their language, which constitute the basis of their common identity.⁴⁶ The Estonian State has been called in numerous occasions by the international monitoring bodies to re-consider the adopted definition which only grants Estonian citizens minority rights, but so far this has not been done. The Constitution and the Education Act guarantee everyone the right to receive instruction in Estonian language only. Russian according to the law is considered to be a foreign language and does not enjoy special protection. In spite of important legislative steps recently taken by the Government to mitigate the ambiguities related to the rights of ethnic minorities to receive education in native language, the situation remains unsatisfactory.

The Law on Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities allows only persons belonging to recognised national minorities to establish cultural self-governments, to promote their constitutional rights in the field of culture, and to establish minority cultural and educational institutions.⁴⁷ Thus, the part of the Russian-speaking minority with Estonian citizenship (38%) in fact may rely on these provisions and may demand their right to education in minority language, but the part of the Russian speaking population without Estonian citizenship (62%) cannot. According to a recently adopted regulation, national minorities, whose mother tongue is other than the language of school instruction, may request an elective course in their own language and culture of at least two hours per week.

The proponents of the educational reform argue that the transformation to an increasingly monolingual education system will guarantee equal opportunities in accessing the Estonian State universities, where only a very limited number of programmes are provided in a minority language, as well as in the labour market. This argument is strongly opposed by the representatives of national minorities. In their view, the above-mentioned reform will in fact even further exacerbate the existing differences on the labour market. A monolingual system without adequate resources will undermine the level of educational attainment of minorities, thus further limiting their opportunities on the labour market. Concerns have been expressed that the new provisions pertaining to the education system, particularly the deadline of 2007, are unrealistic, and that there is

⁴⁶ Estonia: **Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification, deposited on 6 January 1997 to the Framework Convention for the**

Protection of National Minorities <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/cadreprincipal.htm> (20.01.2004). The term “national minority” is also defined in the “National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act” through the right of individuals to establish self-governing agencies; http://muhiu.www.ee/E-LIST/1993/93_11/1993_11_16_20_56_13_0200 (20.01.2004).

⁴⁷ Vähemusrahvuse Kultuuriautonoomia Seadus (Law on Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities), RT I 1993, 71, 1001 (26.10.1993) Article 5.

too much uncertainty surrounding their implementation.⁴⁸ For example, there is a severe lack of trained and competent teachers of the Estonian language in the Russian-language schools, and it is not clear what will happen to the surplus of teachers teaching various subjects in Russian once the increased teaching in Estonian is introduced.⁴⁹

The programme “Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007,” approved by the Government in 2000, aims at addressing the problematic issues identified in the 1997 analytical report concerning the Russian language schools in Estonia. The sub-programme dealing with education has very broad and far-reaching aims and includes tasks such as the development of language didactics, the elaboration of language teaching methodologies, and curricula and teaching materials for pupils whose mother tongue is not Estonian. It also covers language immersion programmes, continuing education for teachers of Estonian as a Second Language, and the development of curriculum and teaching materials supporting Estonian-language subject teaching.⁵⁰ The European Union has greatly contributed to the implementation of the integration programme through different PHARE projects.

The main criticism of the integration programme is its underlying understanding of integration, which resembles a policy of assimilation.⁵¹ It is not yet common practice to pay adequate attention to continuous monitoring and evaluation of the major national policy. There is concern that the proposed reform would bring about more problems than it attempts to solve. In order to diminish the feeling of frustration regarding the perspectives of the Russian language schools and the education in the minority languages, it is desirable to provide more information materials on national programmes and on initiatives undertaken at national and local levels. So far, there is very limited information available in Russian language explaining the ongoing changes in the educational sector. The danger remains that the lack of competent teachers, who are able to provide Estonian language instruction to native Russian speaking pupils, will lead to a decline in the quality of education of ethnic minority children. Moreover, low competency in the Estonian language and an inability to follow the educational programme in their mother tongue may lead to higher dropout rates among minority students. The reform may increase ethnic tensions, as the hostility of ethnic minority groups toward the majority grows. This could be exacerbated by the fact that almost a third of all Russian families are in a difficult socio-economic position and lack additional resources to support their children’s schooling.⁵²

In **Latvia**, Russians are the largest minority. According to the last census conducted in 2000, they constitute 30,4% of the population (approx. 730,000 people). During the Soviet period, Russian-language schools were considered to be regular rather than minority schools. The Soviet school system was segregated. Russians and other minorities attended schools with Russian as language of instruction, whereas Latvians went to Latvian schools, in which Russian language instruction was a mandatory part of the curriculum. As a result, at independence, the Russian language had a greater

⁴⁸ Second ECRI report on Estonia, available at: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/Ecri/4-Publications/\(22.2.2004\)](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/Ecri/4-Publications/(22.2.2004)).

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Available at: http://www.meis.ee/index.php?lang=eng&main_id=109,134,136 (22.2.2004).

⁵¹ For criticism of the State Integration Programme see for example Semjonov, A. Estonia: Nation Building And Integration. Political

And Legal Aspects. Copenhagen Peace Research Institute Working Paper Nr. 8/2000, available at: <http://www.copri.dk/publications/WP/WP%202000/8-2000.doc> (20.01.2004).

⁵² Vihalemm, P. et. al. (1997) Return to the Western World, Tartu: Tartu University Press, p. 61.

representation in schooling than the newly re-established State language Latvian. In 1991, most Latvians were bilingual Latvian- and Russian-speakers, while Russians and other minorities living in Latvia generally did not speak Latvian.

Today, approximately 100,000 students attend Russian-language schools. In the academic year 2002/03, 70% of the students in general full-time schools were enrolled in schools with Latvian language of instruction, almost 30% in schools with Russian language of instruction, and less than half a percent in schools with other languages of instruction. Currently, school enrolment in the Russian-language schools is decreasing. The principal reasons are emigration, the decreasing birth rate of ethnic Russians, and the willingness of Russian parents to send their children to Latvian language schools. In 2003/04, around 8% of students in schools and in classes with Latvian language of instruction were minority representatives.⁵³

The Constitution of Latvia states that those “belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural minority.” However, the term minority is not defined in the legislation. The Language Law from 1999 not only establishes Latvian as the State language, but also sets the goal of promoting the use and development of the Latvian language.⁵⁴ Except for the autochthonous Liv⁵⁵ language, all other languages, including Russian, are considered to be foreign languages.

Since regaining independence, education reform in Latvia has been concerned with the Russian-language schools. The gradual transition toward an increase of Latvian in Russian-language primary schools started in 1999. The Ministry of Education developed four models of varying combinations of subjects taught in Russian and in Latvian and/or bilingually. When many schools declared that none of the models suited their needs, the alternative to implement their own developed model after approval by the Ministry, was accepted.

More than one third of minority language schoolteachers evaluated their Latvian language skills at the lowest level, and only ten percent at the highest level. Other problems outlined by the teachers include insufficient access to methodology and materials about bilingual education. Given the lack of preparedness of schools for the implementation of the reform, the government established methodological and language training for teachers.

An active participant in elaborating pilot projects and working on issues of bilingual education has been the Soros Foundation Latvia. The Open School Project was started in 1999 and has focused not only on language learning, but also on the positive values of intercultural exchange, by bringing together Latvian and Russian-language schools in cooperative projects. By 2003, it appears that most schools have successfully increased teaching in the Latvian language, but there are still reports of serious shortcomings and lack of appropriate assistance in the implementation of the reforms.

The secondary school reform continues to be debated and has unclear requirements regarding the official language of instruction in minority schools. At this point, it has been decided that minority language in secondary schools should not exceed 40% of

⁵³ <http://www.izm.gov.lv> (22.2.2004).

⁵⁴ Valsts valodas likums [Official Language Law] 1. panta 5. daļa, available at: <http://pro.nais.dati.lv/naiser> (7.01.2004).

⁵⁵ Līvi are a very small group of indigenous people in Latvia.

instruction time. All private educational institutions may provide instruction in any language. However, State and municipal funding is foreseen only for schools, which follow State accredited education plans. In 1992, Latvian became the sole language of instruction in State-funded higher education.

Opinion polls conducted in 1998⁵⁶ show that there is a large consensus among residents, including minorities, in favour of learning Latvian. However, there is wide disagreement about how to achieve this goal and what role should be left for the Russian language in minority schools. Some suspect that reforms are ultimately aimed at the elimination of Russian in all schools. According to 2002 survey data, around half of minority parents, school directors, and teachers support the transition to Latvian as the language of instruction at the secondary level by 2004, while the other half opposes it.⁵⁷

As an exceptional example, the Krāslava Varavīksne Secondary School received the Society Integration Award in an official recognition of its achievements in the field of integration in the year 2002. In contrast to minority schools elsewhere in the country, the school is attended by almost the same number of Russian and Latvian students, as well as by students from nine different other ethnic backgrounds. Since 1999, this secondary school has followed a model of minority education by teaching mostly bilingually, putting an emphasis on the learning of Latvian and still allowing students to retain a strong ethnic identity. Latvian, Russian, and Byelorussian are used as languages of instruction. At the same time, the school prides itself at teaching seven different languages, among them English, French, and German. The aim of the school programme is to encourage parents' and students' interest in other cultures, to promote respect and tolerance, and to foster society integration through knowledge of Latvian culture and language. In addition, the quality of the school is validated by excellent results in the yearly national competitions for best students in various disciplines.

In **Lithuania**, Russians are the second largest ethnic community, comprising 6.3% (approx. 220,000 people) of the population. However, compared to the other Baltic States, the Russian minority is rather small. Most Russians in Lithuania have the Lithuanian citizenship. The Constitution specifies: "Citizens who belong to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language, culture, and customs".⁵⁸ The laws of the Republic of Lithuania guarantee national minorities inhabiting the country in numerous and concentrated communities, to have public and State supported preschool establishments, schools of general education, and lessons with instruction in their native language as well as faculties in institutions of higher education.

The specific needs of education of national minorities are met in public, municipal and non-State official and informal educational institutions. There are general education schools, where instruction is provided in Russian, schools, where the native language can be learned as a subject, or schools, in which native language is provided as extracurricular option. Education of national minorities in vocational schools, which provide general education, includes the opportunity to learn the minority language as a subject. The specific needs of education of

⁵⁶ Baltic Data House (1998) On the road to a civic society.

⁵⁷ According to another survey, 86% of ethnically Latvian citizens,

55% of ethnically Russian citizens and 47% of non-citizens support the switch to Latvian as the language of instruction in secondary schools; 42% of non-citizens are against it, Towards a Civic Society 2000/2001.

⁵⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. LR Seimas Publishing House, 1993.

national minorities may also be met in informal educational institutions. According to the data from the school year 2002/03, 56 schools provided Russian language instruction and 49 mixed schools had Russian classes. These schools had 33,698 pupils accounting for 5.9 % of the total number of pupils in Lithuania. In the past years, a drop in attendance at preschool educational establishments with instruction in Russian has been observed. In 2000/01, the enrolment number of Russian-speaking children decreased by 1,047. These developments were partly influenced by the demographic situation, but also by the desire of parents to integrate their children into educational establishments with instruction in Lithuanian. The need of minority children to get a good comprehension of the Lithuanian language is increasing. Good knowledge of the language fosters integration, allows to continue schooling in institutions of higher education that almost exclusively offer instruction in the State language and helps in finding better jobs.

The increasing number of pupils from non-Lithuanian speaking background in schools with instruction in Lithuanian has created difficulties. Many Lithuanian schools are not ready to accept pupils with little knowledge of the language. Bilingual programmes could be a solution to these problems. Within the last decade, translated textbooks of many subjects into Russian were published for minority schools, since the curriculum in all schools of Lithuania is regulated by the same general programmes and education standards. For teaching the native language, original textbooks were prepared. In the school year 2003/04, schools were offered to order 45 textbooks in the Russian language, of which 9 were published for the first time.

5. The Educational Situation of Other Minorities in the Candidate Countries

Overall, the reports on minority education from the Candidate Countries focused primarily on the educational situation of Roma, and in the Baltic States on the Russian minority. Some country reports also discussed other larger ethnic minorities and mentioned a variety of smaller minority groups. The scope of this study does not allow discussing in detail the existence and relevance of schools and other educational programmes for all of these groups. For example, private schools for smaller minority groups or Sunday school programmes are not addressed. Instead, this section gives a short overview of the educational situation of minority groups other than Roma and Russians that were addressed in the NFP reports.

In **Bulgaria**, the Turkish minority makes up approximately 9,4% of the population. Turkish minority pupils face problems in terms of access to quality education. Their education prospects are negatively affected by poverty and the geographic isolation of the regions they live in. According to the World Bank study, the percentage of Turkish minority pupils attaining higher education levels was considerably lower than that of Bulgarian pupils, both in urban and in rural areas.⁵⁹ Attendance rates for members of the Turkish minority are considerably lower compared to the figures for Bulgarians. Also, they are more likely to drop out of school after a couple of years of schooling.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ World Bank (2002) Bulgaria: A Changing Poverty Profile, Country Study Report No. 24516 (29.10.2002), p. 117.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* p.118.

Since Turkish language was introduced in the beginning of the 1990s, the number of students, who study it as a mother tongue, has been constantly dropping. This is mainly caused by the fact that Turkish language classes are placed in competition with other subjects, which children and parents consider more important and more practical for the future. Mother tongue instruction was introduced as a compulsory elective subject for first-graders from the Turkish minority in 2002/03, whereby children and parents have to choose between Turkish, English, and choreography.⁶¹ In addition, Turkish language is studied as a mother tongue in several secondary schools. Turkish is also taught as a foreign language in three private schools and in the three secondary Muslim religious schools in Bulgaria. Two pedagogical universities train Turkish language teachers. Turkish philology is taught at the University of Sofia, while Turkish language is also taught at the Higher Islamic Institute in Sofia.

In the **Czech Republic**, Slovaks are the largest national minority making up between two and three percent of the population. Today, there are more than 193,000 Slovaks permanently living in the country. With respect to their linguistic closeness, the members of the Slovak minority do not face any larger problems in schools. In the regions with higher concentration of the Slovak minority, primary schools used Slovak as the language of instruction. However, in the academic year 2000/01 the only primary school with Slovak as the language of instruction in the town of Karviná has been closed because of an insufficient number of pupils and a lack of interest of the parents of the Slovak minority to send their children to this particular school. Schools in other places offer Slovak lessons as a facultative subject, the teaching of which is subsidised by the State. The lack of interest in sending children into a Slovak school also prevented the implementation of a Slovakian Secondary Grammar School in Prague.

In **Lithuania**, the Polish minority has a proportion of 6.7% of the population. 81 schools have Polish language of instruction and 43 mixed schools have Polish classes. The number of pupils in Polish schools total 21,314, which accounts for 3.7% of the total number of pupils in Lithuania. Recently, schools with Polish as language of instruction increased quite considerably (by 8.6 %).⁶² Aside from the Roma, members of the Polish minority receive the lowest education in the country.⁶³ Within the last decade, many textbooks for various subjects were translated into Polish and used in minority schools. Elementary and basic schools use textbooks in Polish for teaching the native language and textbooks of instruction for different subjects, which are translated from Lithuanian. Senior pupils in general secondary education schools are recommended to use textbooks and other teaching material in the Lithuanian language.

In **Poland**, there are rather small minorities with less than one percent of the population. Lithuanian and German education is relatively well developed with respect to education of other minorities. There are eight schools, in which the language of instruction is Lithuanian (they include schools where Lithuanian is the language of instruction in all

⁶¹ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (November 2003), Alternative report to the report submitted by Bulgaria pursuant to article 25, paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (at Art. 14), available at: http://www.bghelsinki.org/special/en/2003_Shadowrep_FCNM.doc (29.12.2003).

⁶² Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, the Education Development Centre, Lithuanian Education 2002, Vilnius.

⁶³ Department of Statistics, 2001 census of the population.

classes as well as those where some classes are taught in Lithuanian and some in Polish) and 14 schools with German. In addition, 12 schools offer Ukrainian as the language of instruction. Lithuanian education is the most advanced in development, both in terms of curricula and textbooks. The main problems encountered in the organisation of minority education are funding shortages (especially for small schools) and an insufficient number of curricula, school textbooks, and teaching staff. Generally speaking, the education of minorities originating from an existing country possesses a better support, which may be used in cases of shortages in lecturers (e.g. by training teachers at universities). Often material assistance, e.g. in the form of textbooks and other teaching aids, as well as favourable scholarship exist. Thus, the political support provided by the country of origin is an important factor in minority education.

In **Romania**, Hungarians are the largest minority with 6,6% of the population. Traditionally, they enjoyed a separate school system which strengthened their cultural identity and ties to Hungary. The attempt of the Ceausescu regime to assimilate Hungarians by integrating schools caused a noticeable disruption. After 1989, the return to a separate system of education became the major claim of the Hungarians in Romania. Their effort to separate schools was met with resistance of Romanian political leaders, which led to several major crises. Still, the separation process has progressed and relations between Romanians and Hungarians have improved. Although many theories stress the importance of an integrated school system, in the Romanian context, the separation of Hungarian schools is often seen as a necessity to avoid assimilation of the minority.

The system of education in Hungarian is very extensive, covering practically the entire school age population. In the school year 2001/02, there were 2,384 educational institutions with a teaching staff of 15,537, matriculating 187,156 pupils. There were 24,598 undergraduates and graduate students. Two exclusively Hungarian private universities were established. Between 1990 and 2002, the number of schools increased by 9.86%, from 2,145 to 2,384.⁶⁴

In **Slovakia**, Hungarians are the largest minority accounting for 9.7% of the population. The right of the Hungarian minority to be educated in their native language on all levels of the education system has been recognised. During the school year 2002/03 instruction was given in Hungarian or in Hungarian and Slovak languages at 11.6% of kindergartens, at 12.4% of primary schools, and also at 25 grammar schools, 24 specialised secondary schools, 31 vocational secondary schools, and 35 special schools. In March 2003, the government approved the establishment of a Hungarian University in order to raise the educational level of members of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Slovakia. Prospective teachers, who will be instructing students at institutions of Hungarian primary and secondary education, are being educated at different universities.

In **Slovenia**, bilingual minority education is provided for members of the rather small Italian and Hungarian minorities (0.1-0.3% of the population). In the Slovene - Italian ethnically mixed area of Istria, children frequent preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools, colleges with the Slovene or Italian language of instruction and with the second language as the obligatory subject of the curricula. Therefore pupils are

⁶⁴ Ministry of Public Information, Ministry of Education and Research, *The Present Time in the Education of National Minorities in Romania. Achievements in 2001/02 school year and perspectives*, Ed. Studium, Bucuresti, 2002, p. 27f.

educated in Slovene or Italian, but also learn the second language following either a maintenance or an enrichment model. In 2001/02, 980 children received education in the Italian language. In the Slovene-Hungarian ethnically mixed area of Prekmurje, the educational process is bilingual for all pupils, irrespective of their ethnicity, at all grades (from kindergartens and primary schools, up to different types of secondary school). Bilingual education in Prekmurje has been functioning since 1959. Their social goal is cultural pluralism, while their linguistic goal is to provide equal possibilities for the use of both languages.

6. Analysis, Recommendations, and Comparison of Data

The objective of the EU-comparative study on national strategies for minority schooling was to summarise the main results of reports delivered by the National Focal Points of the ten Central and Eastern European Candidate Countries (CEECs) to the EUMC and to discuss the main differences and commonalities regarding minority schooling between the Candidate Countries and the EU Member States. The overall aim of this study is to provide the European Community and its Member States with information on how to enhance equality and diversity and to reduce racism, discrimination, and other forms of exclusion. This section analyses the most relevant issues discussed in the report. It draws conclusions, makes recommendations, and provides a comparative perspective.

Most NFP reports paint a bleak picture of the educational situation of Roma, who, overall, constitute the largest minority in the Candidate Countries. After long-lasting discrimination and segregation in society, it was not to be expected that current efforts to improve the schooling situation would be met with great immediate success. Most Roma live in poverty and their employment situation has worsened after the break-up of communist rule in the Candidate Countries. Their desperate situation has led to violent conflicts and civil unrest, as can currently be observed in Slovakia.⁶⁵

The report shows that many measures to improve schooling of the Roma have been taken in the last decade in several countries. New or amended legislations, non-discriminating school policies, material support, and a wealth of projects and initiatives have been introduced, which, to a great extent, were sponsored within the scope of the European Union PHARE programme. At times, funds have been misused or inappropriately utilised. However, it can be assessed that in terms of the variety and innovative character of the projects described, these initiatives surpass those taken in EU Member States in which Roma also constitute a substantial minority.⁶⁶ Still, the implementation of new legislations and policies has not yet brought the desired results. Segregative schooling, wrongful assignment of Roma pupils to special schools, and a lack of mother tongue instruction are still common practice. A measure that highlights the urgent need to combat this deficient situation, regarding it as a human rights issue, was taken in

⁶⁵ Hilfloer Zorn unter Roma (Helpless rage among Roma), available at: <http://www.orf.at/040224-71206/index.html> (24.2.2004).

⁶⁶ Luciak, M. (2004) Comparative Study On Education - Measures of Discrimination and Integration of Migrants and Ethnic

Minorities in the Field of Education in the 15 Member States of the European Union. Report submitted on behalf of the European

Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), Vienna (<http://www.eumc.eu.int/>).

February 2004. Public Interest Lawyers acting for the European Committee on Romani Emancipation (ECRE) have sent a formal complaint to the European Commission with the request to end a state sponsored segregated education system of Roma children in the Czech Republic, in Hungary, and in Slovakia.⁶⁷

The most effective and promising measures counteracting low educational attainment, segregation, and discrimination in education, include preparatory classes for Roma children before entrance to primary school, employment of Roma pedagogical assistants (especially in preschools), after-school activities for children and youth run by Roma and pro-Roma civic associations, financial assistance to institutions, where relevant grass-roots efforts take place, support programmes that foster the relationship between families and the school, remedial activities (including tutoring in the countries' main language), increase of mother tongue instruction and developments of Roma language textbooks, as well as affirmative action programmes. A focus on the underprivileged status of Roma rather than on their ethnicity has led to initiatives that target their financial needs. Positive outcomes such as higher enrolments have been observed through measures like equipping children with textbooks and school supplies or financing kindergarten participation. School attendance increased through paying for children's meals at school or covering the costs of bussing to school.

Overall, the assessment of the educational situation of Roma is impeded by the fact that neither census reports nor school enrolment data represent a realistic picture of the groups' size. For a variety of reasons Roma often do not appear in statistics accounting for ethnic affiliation. Also, there appears to be a lack of research, in particular qualitative and ethnographic research, which could bring a better understanding of the dynamics within the Roma communities that sometimes are regarded as being counter-productive in regard to educational attainment of the younger generation. The existence of a patriarchal and hierarchical structure of communities with certain influential people holding power is threatened by an educated younger generation with better prospects.⁶⁸ Thus, it has to be studied how Roma children and youth could receive appropriate support from the entire community in order to foster their educational intentions. Also, case studies on Roma who advanced in society through education, could be undertaken to counteract the persistent view of all Roma as being poor, as discriminated against, and as failures, and to provide role-models for children and youth.

The Candidate Countries will have to make efforts to ensure that Roma, who attain higher levels of education, will in fact have better employment opportunities. If discrimination in hiring Roma and a "job-ceiling" continue to exist Roma will never believe that they can advance in society through education.

The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania undergo a difficult transition period as the State languages are sought to become the main languages of instruction. The situation of the Russian minority is precarious. In these countries, many Russian pupils, who do not have a good comprehension of today's State languages, are to make rather swift improvements in language learning. Russian schools and teachers are often not prepared

⁶⁷ Complaint To European Commission – Institutionalised Discrimination Against The Roma In Education Systems In The Czech

Republic, Hungary And Slovakia, available at: <http://www.apecurope.org/pil00A.htm> (26.2.2004).

⁶⁸ Gauß, K. -M. (2004) *Die Hundeesser von Svinia* (The dog eaters from Svinia). Zsolnay. Vienna. p.28 f.

to implement the new regulations, demanding that the State language becomes the primary language of instruction in a rather short period of time.

The Baltic States are taking different approaches to achieve this goal. Estonia appears to have chosen the most controversial approach by outlawing bilingual pre-school programmes and by aiming for an increasingly monolingual and monocultural education system. In addition, the majority of ethnic minorities in the country do not fall under the legal definition of “national minorities” and thus have no access to minority rights. Despite protests, both within the country and by international bodies, it appears that little attempts are made to value the benefits of cultural and linguistic plurality. It remains to be seen whether the current approach to minority education will be modified. Otherwise, the educational attainment of large parts of the population may be impeded and the risk for further ethnic tensions might increase.

A more cautious and gradual transition concerning Russian-language schools was initiated through the education reform in Latvia. Educational authorities appear to be more willing to negotiate planned reforms and to find the most appropriate and successful solutions. There is consensus that intensified learning of Latvian in schools will increase students’ opportunities in society. But how this goal could best be achieved and what role Russian language should play in minority schools is still disputed. There is a lack of preparedness of schools and teachers for the implementation of the reform. Thus, the government established special methodological and language trainings for teachers. Transition through bilingual education seems to be the most accepted method. Future developments will show, whether Latvia will acknowledge bilingualism as an asset for the whole society or eventually move towards monolingualism and thereby repress minority rights.

In Lithuania, where Russians are a much smaller minority, various school programmes are offered and Russian schools so far either have a monolingual or bilingual orientation. Minority education in general is determined by a basic understanding of Lithuania as a culturally plural society. However, the acknowledgement that minority children need good comprehension of the Lithuanian language in order to succeed in society is increasing. The current lack of clarity regarding the concept of “minority” and regarding legislation for mother-tongue instruction has the potential to lead to arbitrary policy and practice in minority education.

The situation of minorities other than the Roma or Russians, as discussed in Part 2 of the report, shows the diversity of the Candidate Countries’ ethnic composition and the different approaches taken regarding minority education. The situation of the Hungarian minority living abroad is of special peculiarity. In particular, the separate education system of Hungarians in Romania proves that integration into the general educational system within a country is not a necessity for educational success of a minority group as long as adequate basic conditions exist. However, the implications a separate system within a State may have on intercultural dialogue and understanding have to be questioned.

Comparing the recent developments in the Candidate Countries (CC) with the situation in the 15 EU Member States (MS) the following conclusions can be drawn:

- There is a strong orientation towards minority schooling in the CC, which differs a great deal from the intercultural education concepts and approaches in the MS, where intercultural education targets *all* students, not just minorities. However, it should be mentioned that often these concepts are not adequately implemented in the MS. There is little teacher training regarding intercultural aspects in the CC and no diversity approach. In the MS, sufficient teacher training to acquire intercultural competencies is also absent in several countries.
- While minority language development is a relevant issue in the MS, it is *the* central aspect in minority education in the CC. There is, however, little theoretical discussion in the NFP reports from the CC that mother tongue teaching fosters the learning of the second language.
- Teaching of ethnic minority culture and history in the CC is primarily provided *for minorities* (with some exceptions). In the MS, minority culture and history is also at times part of the curriculum for *all students*.
- Some CC lack legislation for minority education. Others do not clearly define the concept of “ethnic or national minority”. The categories “nationality” and “ethnicity” are at times intermingled despite the fact that most minorities permanently live in these countries and are not migrants. This is similar to the MS, where uniform standards pertaining to the constitutive elements of minority status do not exist. Furthermore, the citizenship status places a bigger role in the CC for the recognition of minority status.
- The educational situation of immigrants and “new minorities”, independent of citizenship status, is at the centre of the discussion in the MS, but less so in the CC. Contrary, the discussion concerning the education of national or autochthonous minorities appears to be underdeveloped in several MS.
- Some countries, such as Romania and Slovenia, have a long tradition of minority schooling. This is also true regarding ethnic minority teaching in some MS (e.g. U.K. or the Netherlands).
- Sunday schools for minorities appear to play a much bigger role in the CC.
- Certain CC describe a general school system “in crisis” (e.g. Hungary, Czech Republic). This discussion is absent in the MS.
- Approaches to counteract negative developments concerning the education of Roma appear to be more innovative and manifold in the CC as compared to the MS.
- Debates on values and religion (e.g. head-scarf) are more at the centre of attention in the MS. With the exception of a few countries (e.g. Bulgaria) the schooling situation of Muslims is much less an issue in the CC.

Overall, it appears that there is a lack of research, knowledge, and debate on the commonalities and differences between the Candidate Countries and the Member States in the areas of minority education and intercultural education.⁶⁹ This circumstance prevents a fruitful exchange of ideas and practical experiences on how to improve the educational situation of minorities. On the basis of the education reports delivered by the National Focal Points from the Candidate Countries as well as those from the 15 EU

⁶⁹ Agalianos, A. S. (Ed., 2003) “European Union-supported educational research 1995-2003 - Briefing Papers For Policy Makers”.

Member States⁷⁰, it can be assessed that all sides could benefit if more efforts were made to strengthen research, dialogue, and exchange of ideas across countries. Thus, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers may gain a better understanding of the current standard of knowledge regarding the educational situation of ethnic minorities in different countries, of successful measures to improve the situation of the most vulnerable groups, which face low school success, discrimination, and segregation, as well as of new school programmes, initiatives and policies, which support diversity in the field of education.

⁷⁰ The last series of reports from the Member States were delivered for the year 2003 in the phase RAXEN 4.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Ethnic Minorities in the Candidate Countries

Country	Main Target Groups	Estimated Size in % ⁷¹	Other Minorities (mentioned in the report concerning education) ⁷²	Minorities not mentioned in the report (concerning education)
Bulgaria	Turks Roma	9.4 4.7	Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Romanians	Ukrainians
Czech Republic	Slovaks Roma	1.9 (3.1) 0.1 (official) (0.3) 1.5–2 (NFP est.)	Germans, Jews, Poles	Hungarians, Russians, Vietnamese
Estonia	Russians	25.6 (ca. 25.9)	Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Byelorussians, Fins, Georgians, Germans, Jews, Latvians, Lithuanians, Tartars, Ukrainians	
Hungary	Roma	n.s. (1.3 / ca. 4.5)	Bulgarians, Croats, Germans, Romanians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenes,	Jews
Latvia	Russians Roma	30 0.3	Byelorussians, Estonians, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Poles, Ukrainians	
Lithuania	Poles Russians	6.7 (8.2) 6.3 (9.9)	Armenians, Byelorussians, Estonians, Germans, Jews, Roma, Romanians	Ukrainians, Tartars, Latvians
Poland	Germans Lithuanians Roma	0.4 (ca. 1) 0.015 0.03 (ca. 0.9)	Byelorussians, Greeks, Jews, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Kashubians, Lemki	Armenians, Russians, Czechs
Romania	Hungarians Roma	6.6 2.5	Armenians, Bulgarians, Chingos, Croats, Czechs, Germans, Greeks, Poles, Russian-Lippovans, Tartars, Turks, Ukrainians	Albanians, Carasovenians, Chinese, Gagauz, Jews, Ruthenians, Slavo-Macedonians, Slovaks, Serbs, Slovenians
Slovakia	Hungarian Roma	9.7 (10.6) 1.7	Germans, Ukrainians	Czechs, Jews
Slovenia	Italians Hungarians	n.s. (0.1) n.s. (0.3)	Roma	Albanians, Bosniacs (Bosnians), Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs, Jews

⁷¹ All data is taken from the NFP country reports. The percentages in between brackets are differing figures from State reports submitted to the Council of Europe's Secretariat of the Framework

Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, available at: <http://www.coe.int/T/e/human%5Frights/Minorities/> (22.2.2004).

⁷² In this column only those minorities are listed where the NFP report addresses their educational situation, e.g. they are provided mother-tongue instruction or special schooling programmes.

Table 2: Native Language Regulations

Country	Native language regulations ⁷³	Excluded groups
Bulgaria	The right for study of mother tongue exists since 1994/95 as “freely selectable subject” from 1 st to 8 th grade (Ordinance No 183). Since 1999, it turned into a “compulsory selectable subject”, creating possibilities to study mother tongue also in upper secondary school ⁷⁴ Regulation Nr. 7, 2000, stipulates the minimum number of 11 students necessary to form a group for the study of mother tongue for regular schools, only 8 students are required in special schools. ⁷⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roma to a great extent ▪ Not acknowledged minorities (Macedonians) ▪ New minorities/immigrants (Arabs)
Czech Republic	The contemporary legal norms allow for the establishment of schools or classes for foreign-language speakers with mother tongue as the language of instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only numerous minorities manage to run minority language schools ▪ Roma to a great extent
Estonia	Regulation 154 (May 2003) guarantees the right of ethnic minorities to receive education in their minority language at public educational institutions. At least 2 hours elective language classes per week should be arranged if requested (in written form) by a minimum of 10 parents belonging to this minority or on initiative of the school in co-operation with the local municipality. There is no such programme mentioned in the report ⁷⁶ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The report does not mention any minority language programme established in a regular school (with the exception of 1 Jewish school)
Hungary	National minorities have the right to create the conditions essential for teaching of their language or for mother tongue instruction. A class or study group has to be opened by a school if at least 8 minority members in the school request this. ⁷⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roma to a great extent

⁷³ All data is taken from the NFP country reports.

⁷⁴ Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act, Art. 15, Par. 3, State Gazette No 67 (27.07.1999), latest amendment State Gazette No 29 (31.03.2003).

⁷⁵ Ministry of Education and Science, Regulation No 7 on the Number of Students and Children in School and Kindergarten Classes (29.12.2000), Art. 26, State Gazette No 4 (12.01.2001), latest amendment State Gazette No 74 (22.08.2003).

⁷⁶ Regulation 154 of the Government of the Estonian Republic, “Conditions and procedure for creation of opportunities for learning native language and culture for pupils acquiring basic educations in schools where language of instruction is other than the native language of the pupil” RT I 2003, 44, 302.

⁷⁷ Law No. 77 of 1993, Chapter III, Art. 18 (3) a)-b) on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities Law and Chapter VI, Art. 43 (4).

Table 2 (continued): Native Language Regulations

Country	Native language regulations	Excluded groups
Latvia	Two education laws were adopted in 1998 and 1999. The first reform entailed a gradual introduction of Latvian or bilingual classes in Russian-language schools, while retaining a significant amount of teaching time in Russian. The second reform aims at a 60/40 proportion between the State and minority language of instruction in secondary schools ⁷⁸ . Article 114 of the Constitution states “sons belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural minority.” The term minority is not defined anywhere in the legislation. Also the contents of minority education are not described anywhere. Ministry of Education and Science keeps a large measure of control.	Roma to a great extent
Lithuania	Article 14 of the Convention says: “In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.” ⁷⁹	Roma to a great extent Small minorities are provided native language classes in Weekend schools.
Poland	Minority members may learn in their native language or additionally study the minority’s language, history, geography and culture. The director of the school has a duty to organise such education if the requested number of declarations is received (7 at the elementary and middle school level, 14 in high school) The law provides for the following forms of minority education:	Roma to a great extent Minorities without support of a country of origin (i.e. Kashubians, Lemki) have problems managing language classes

⁷⁸ Unpublished materials from Ministry of Education and Science (2003) Mazākumtautību izglītības politikas raksturojums: valsts ieguldījums [The Characterisation of Minority Education Policy: the Investment by the State], p. 2 and Latviešu valodas apguves valsts programmas 2002. gada ziņojums [2002 Report of the National Programme for Latvian Language Training] (2003), Riga: NPLLT.

⁷⁹ Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. / Official Gazette, 2000, No. 20-497.

Table 2 (continued): Native Language Regulations

Country	Native language regulations	Excluded groups
Poland (cont.)	Schools and preschools in native language as the language of instruction, Bilingual schools and preschools, Schools with supplementary teaching of native language to members of minority, Interscholastic sections with supplemental teaching of the native language to members of minority. ⁸⁰	
Romania	Government Order 22/1997 (Art. 118 of the Constitution) provided for the members of national minorities the opportunity to have a system of education completely in the mother tongue: “The persons belonging to national minorities have the right to study and receive instruction in their mother tongue at all levels and all forms of education, or, as the case may be, to any type of education there is a need for, under this law.”	Roma to a great extent Small groups (Changos, Tartars) have problems managing language classes or are denied to participate in other minority language classes (i.e. Changos in Hungarian language classes)
Slovakia	In Law No. 184/1999 of the legal code on usage of languages of ethnic minorities the usage of languages of ethnic minorities is described and regulated. Despite the fact that in 1999, law No. 184/1999 of the legal code on usage of minority languages was adopted allowing and regulating the usage of ethnic minorities in official contact, all deformations and limitations on usage of minority languages, which were introduced in the Law on official language, were not eliminated. Law No. 29/1984 of the legal code on primary schools and secondary schools defines the right of members of ethnic minorities to be educated in minority languages. It clearly affords this right only to members of Czech, Hungarian, German, Polish, Ukrainian, and Ruthenian nationality. European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, signed on February 20th, 2001 in Strasbourg, affords the right to the minorities to be educated in their native language if the members of the minority request it. In practice this means that there is officially a differentiated approach to different ethnic minorities in Slovakia based on the number of members of each minority (Article 8, §1).	Roma to a great extent Small minorities (i.e. Bulgarians, Croatians, Czechs, Poles etc.)

⁸⁰ Law on the System of Education, September 7, 1991 [art. 13].

Table 2 (continued): Native Language Regulations

Country	Native language regulations	Excluded groups
Slovenia	The tasks, organisation and participation of ethnic community in the planning and regulation of education in ethnically mixed areas are defined by laws regulating particular fields of education, as well as by special law (The Law on Special Rights of Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Community – Official Gazette, 11.5.2001, no. 35, p. 4044-4047). A special law deals with the implementation of rights of Italian and Hungarian ethnic community in the field education, which provides bilingual education in ethnically mixed regions: Education in mother tongue, second language acquisition (majority or minority language), as well as getting to know the culture and history of one's own nation and the nation one lives with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All other minorities than Hungarians and Italians

Table 3: Anti-discrimination Legislation

Country	Anti-discrimination Legislation ⁸¹
Bulgaria	<p>Anti-discrimination provisions exist on a legal level (Public Education Act, Art. 4, Par. 2, State Gazette No 86): “No privileges based on grounds of race, nationality, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion and social status shall be permitted.”</p> <p>The anti-discrimination provisions regulating education in Bulgaria are enforced through administrative channels by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as by the courts.</p>
Czech Republic	<p>Article 11 (General Provisions, Section 1, Art. 2 “Principles of Education“) stipulates the basic principles of education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal access to education for every citizen of the CR • Mutual respect, opinion tolerance, solidarity, and defence against manifestations of discrimination and intolerance • Promotion of the development of knowledge on the culture, history, language, traditions, and religion of the nations and national minorities living in the CR • Respect for the educational needs of the individuals in the educational process
Estonia	Estonia does not follow and implement an anti-discrimination programme.
Hungary	The principle of non-discrimination is a constitutional right since 1989 (Article 70/A) and forms the guidelines in the legal framework concerning minority education. Law on Public Education Articles 4 (7)-(15), 5, and 84 (7)-(15) from September 2003 were amended to include anti-discriminatory elements.
Latvia	Latvia does not follow and implement an anti-discrimination programme.
Lithuania	<p>Lithuania does not follow and implement an anti-discrimination programme.</p> <p>The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁸², was adopted in 1995, and ratified by the Republic in Lithuania in 2000.</p>

⁸¹ All data is taken from the NFP country reports.

⁸² Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. / Official Gazette, 2000, No. 20-497.

Table 3 (continued): Anti-discrimination Legislation

Country	Anti-discrimination Legislation ⁸³
Poland	Poland is a signatory to all significant international documents concerning protection of human rights as well as those safeguarding national and ethnic minority rights (including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Central European Initiative Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights). ⁸⁴
Romania	In the Constitution of 1991 Article 4 (2) says: “Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin.” Article 6 (2) states: “The protecting measures taken by the Romanian State for the preservation, development and expression of identity of the persons belonging to national minorities shall conform to the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relation to the other Romanian citizens.”
Slovakia	Discrimination of minorities in education is not defined and regulated by any legislative provision in effect in the Slovak Republic. In January 2004, an agreement has been signed to formulate and present an anti-discrimination law and other proposals of amendment to 14 existing legislative norms in the parliament. ⁸⁵
Slovenia	Slovenia does not follow and implement an anti-discrimination programme.

⁸³ All data is taken from the NFP country reports.

⁸⁴ Poland, Biuro Studiów i Ekspertyz Kancelarii Sejmu RP (2003) Problemy dyskryminacji osób należących do mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce (polityka państwa, regulacje prawne i nastawienia społeczne), p. 8.

⁸⁵ Csáky a Lipšic chcú spolu predložiť antidiskriminačnú legislatívu (Csáky and Lipšic Plan to Submit to the Cabinet Antidiscrimination Legislation), in: Slovenská tlačová agentúra SITA, (15.1.2004).

APPENDIX 2

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