
Mapping the Terrain: exploring participatory monitoring and evaluation of Roma programming in an enlarged European Union

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Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of the monitoring and evaluation strategies adopted at multiple levels of governance by various stakeholders who express a desire to improve the living conditions of the Romani minority¹ of Central and Eastern Europe and ensure their participation in public and political life. It is argued that in spite of international and national rhetoric in favour of participatory approaches to Roma issues among some international and national bodies, with a few exceptions, current approaches to monitoring and evaluation tend to exclude Roma input and fail to provide an accurate picture of the lived reality of the Roma on the ground.

The paper's primary purpose is to provide a critical overview of monitoring and evaluation strategies and the degree of Roma participation through examining the work of key organisations in this field and how policy influences practice at the local level. The paper draws heavily on reports and papers from major organisations working in the field of Roma programming, accessed through desk-based research.² In the second section of the paper, the three case studies of Romania, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic demonstrate the importance of civil society in representing Romani communities. The paper concludes that qualitative techniques are an important tool to ensuring Roma participation in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

This paper is intended to be a source of information to those people designing programmes intended to benefit the Romani minority and has the potential to act as an advocacy tool for activists working in the field of Roma rights. It is clear from this paper that Roma participation must move from rhetoric to reality and the international commitment to Roma issues expressed through the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) offers an arena for ensuring such participation.

Monitoring and evaluation strategies that focus on outcomes with quantifiable indicators often fail to provide any information about changes that are happening on the ground. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has assumed a key role in coordinating data-collection. In various workshops on so-called 'ethnic data', a clear preference for quantitative indicators and statistical data collection techniques has been exhibited. While the merits of more qualitative, so-called 'anthropological' methods were highlighted, these were seen as secondary or supportive techniques to more quantitative approaches. However, when one looks closely at the example of the needs assessment on low-income housing micro-projects in Sofia conducted by the World Bank in 2001, it is clear that the qualitative component of the assessment provided vital information about levels of satisfaction with current conditions and perceptions of future programs. It also provided extremely valuable information about the socially and culturally specific nature of the

¹ It is important to bear in mind that the Roma are a heterogeneous group who are divided along the lines of gender, socio-economic status, language, tradition and so forth. However, this report the collective term 'Roma' will be used (and 'Romani' as the adjective).

² The research was carried out in September to December 2004, with an update in 2006 as part of the editorial process.

Roma's housing preferences within particular contexts, which could be useful in designing future projects. Quantitative data would certainly not have provided such information.

In addition, such lessons cannot be derived from approaches that concentrate only on the adoption of particular international human rights standards in domestic law. While human rights standards are an important component of social inclusion, more work is needed to ensure that such standards are implemented in a way that produces meaningful changes in the lived reality of Roma. Instead of assuming that a rights-based framework will necessarily produce such changes, it is important to move the focus from reporting at the national level, to what is happening in practice at the regional and local levels.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The Romani Population of Central and Eastern Europe	3
1.2 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	5
1.3 Roma Programmes and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	5
1.4 International Consensus	6
2. Standard Setting and Compliance	7
2.1 The United Nations: The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination	7
2.2 The Council of Europe: Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities	8
2.3 The European Commission	8
2.3.1 The EC Directive Against Racism	9
2.3.2 Copenhagen Criteria	9
3. Indicator Setting and Recommendations	10
3.1 European Union	10
3.1.1 The European Commission's Phare Programme	10
3.1.2 EQUAL – an EU programme	12
3.1.3 LAEKEN Indicators	13
3.2 UNDP	14
3.3 The Council of Europe	14
3.3.1 ECRI	16
3.4 The World Bank	16
3.5 OSCE	18
3.6 Joint Programmes: Roma Under the Stability Pact	19
3.7 Joint Programme: Decade of Roma Inclusion	21
4. Foundations and NGOs	22
4.1 Open Society Institute (OSI)	22
4.1.1 EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP)	22
4.1.2 The Roma Education Initiative	23
4.1.3 Studies and Research	23
4.2 European Roma Information Office (ERIO)	23
4.3 The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)	24
4.4 Project on Ethnic Relations (PER)	25
5. The Case Study Approach	26
5.1 Romania Case Study	26
5.1.1 National Strategies	26
5.1.2 Political Representation at Parliamentary Level	28
5.1.3 Local Government Level	28
5.1.4 NGOs (Relationship with Government, Local Government and Communities)	28
5.1.5 Summary	29
5.2 Bulgaria Case Study	30
5.2.1 National Strategies	30
5.2.2 Political Representation at Parliamentary Level	32
5.2.3 Local Government Level	32
5.2.4 NGOs (Relationship with Government, Local Government and Communities)	32
5.2.5 Summary	34
5.3 Czech Republic Case Study	34
5.3.1 National Strategy	34
5.3.2 Political Representation at Parliamentary Level	35
5.3.3 Local Government Level	35
5.3.5 Summary	38
6. Concluding Comments	38
Appendix: Methodology	41
Bibliography	43

List of Acronyms

CERD:	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
DG:	Directorate-General
EC:	European Commission
ECRI:	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ENAR:	European Network Against Racism
ERIO:	European Roma Information Office
ERRC:	European Roma Rights Center
ERTF:	European Roma and Travellers Forum
EU:	European Union
EUMAP:	EU Monitoring and Advocacy Programme
FCNM:	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
IBRD:	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA:	International Development Association
IHF:	International Helsinki Foundation
IMIR:	International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations
INTRAC:	International NGO Training and Research Centre
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MEP:	Member of the European Parliament
MG-S-ROM:	Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers
NCEDI:	National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues
NDI:	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NPAA:	National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODIHR:	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE:	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSI:	Open Society Institute
PDSR:	Party of Social Democracy in Romania
PER:	Project on Ethnic Relations
PERRAC:	PER Roma Advisory Council
Phare:	Poland and Hungary Assistance for Economic Restructuring Programme
RIO:	Roma Initiatives Office
ROL:	Romanian Leu
ROMAP:	Monitoring the local implementation of the Government Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of Roma
RSDP:	Roma Social Democrat Party [Romania]
SDP:	Social Democrat Party [Romania]
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Introduction

In recent years, there have been major changes at the European political level that have impacted on Roma policy and moved the concept of Roma participation from an ideal to an imperative. There now exists an international consensus that Roma participation in policy design and implementation is key, and that participatory monitoring and evaluation is one aspect of this.

The ever growing awareness and international commitment to Roma issues is reflected in new, far-reaching initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005 – 2015) and the establishment of new organisations devoted to Roma issues such as the Open Society Institute's (OSI), Roma Initiatives Office (RIO), the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) and the European Roma Information Office (ERIO).

A major political, social and economic change that impacted on attitude and policy towards Roma was the accession of ten Central and Eastern European member states to the European Union on 1 May 2004. This brought with it increased focus on Roma issues as the Romani population now represents the largest minority within the newly expanded European Union.

Changes to the political sphere as a result of enlargement have specifically been the election of two Hungarian Romani MEPs, Lívía Járóka (elected June 2004, member of the Hungarian Fidesz Party, part of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats), and Viktória Mohácsi (replacing another MEP in October 2004 as a member Alliance of Free Democrats, part of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party) and several pro-Roma MEPs. This has contributed to a number of Roma-related initiatives and to an increased focus on Roma issues within the European Parliament, such as the establishment of a Roma traineeship programme within the office of Lívía Járóka MEP and a hearing on the situation of Romani women in the EU (Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament, November 2005).

The European Commission has also organised a Roma internship programme through the DG of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (first trainees arrived May 2005). This internship is part of increased attention that the European Commission is devoting to Roma issues, particularly through the DG of Employment, Social Affairs.³ Mr Vladimir Špidla, the new Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, has expressed his intention of Roma inclusion as a policy strategy (see Špidla's contribution to the conference *Roma Diplomacy: A Challenge for European Institutions?* Brussels, December 8 – 9 2005).

Increased attention to the situation of the Roma is evident across the institutions of the European Union. For example, an Inter-service Group met for the first time on 12 November, 2004 and discussed the phenomenon of anti-Gypsism in Europe. It proposed to create an inventory of all Roma-supporting initiatives and projects over the past years to form the basis of future interventions. DG Employment has been carrying out an anti-discrimination project through three trans-national programmes and DG Social Affairs is cooperating with ERIO on human rights violations against Roma.

³ See DG Employment and Social Affairs commissioned report 'The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union' (European Commission 2004a).

This emphasis on Roma is set to continue with the expansion of the EU (Bulgaria and Romania are preparing for EU accession in 2007 and so attention has turned to the Romani minorities living in these countries) and the continued concerns that pro-Roma policies are failing in fundamental areas.

There is a general consensus that, despite changes at the political level outlined above and the ambitions and enthusiasm of a variety of key actors at both the international and local levels there has been little impact on the ground in terms of improving the everyday reality of life as a Roma person. Ineffective programmes, at times resulting in unintended consequences, have highlighted to the international community the lack of participatory approaches in designing and implementing and monitoring Roma programmes and policy. A plateau has now been reached where activists and policy makers working in this field are aware of the limitations of their programmes and that an essential missing component has been genuine participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Strengthening the participatory approaches of NGOs is one of the aims of the UK-based International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) that commissioned this report. INTRAC works to support civil society organisations in becoming alternative and independent actors that effectively represent and assist the poor and most marginalised. Within the framework of this wider objective, INTRAC became interested in the capacity needs of NGOs that work with and for, support and are driven by their Romani constituencies. It is clear from this report that there are few genuine participatory and consultative processes between governments and NGOs and between NGOs and the communities they serve. Policy is being designed and implemented without proper reference to the civil society sector – the voice of Romani communities – and it is this weakness that needs to be fully addressed.

This report is a mapping document that provides a broad overview of the current monitoring and evaluation policy at the levels of standard setting and compliance, indicator setting and recommendations through examining the work of key actors at the multilateral, bilateral, inter-governmental and non-governmental levels. The second section analyses how these policies and interventions work in practice by examining national strategies, Roma political representation at parliamentary and local government level, and NGOs' interaction with communities and government structures in three case studies: Romania, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. These countries are at different stages in terms of EU membership: the Czech Republic acceded to the European Union in May 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria are expected to join in January 2007. Each of the countries has a significant Romani population and each government has implemented a national programme designed to address the situation of the Roma in their state. The difference processes and strategies of these programmes are overviewed and their effectiveness commented on in light of practices at local level. As this paper demonstrates, qualitative methodologies are key to understanding the situation on the ground for Roma and that civil society is one of the most important mechanisms through which Roma can access and influence policies and programmes.

1.1 The Romani Population of Central and Eastern Europe

The issues facing the Romani population of Central and Eastern Europe⁴ have come to be viewed as one of Europe's most pressing human rights and social inclusion priorities.

The Romani population of Europe is estimated to be ten million, although there is no agreed, either official or unofficial, figure. Linguistic evidence indicates that the Roma originated from India, travelling west in the 11th century in an initial movement, and subsequently dispersing across Europe over the centuries. The term 'Roma' (meaning 'men' in Romani) is used in this report to cover a diverse range of groups and communities which are distinct from one another in terms of language, dialect, traditions, culture, education, religion and history, but which is used as a shorthand for the broad umbrella of groups and individuals who describe themselves as Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Sinti as well as other terms.⁵ However, one common characteristic of the Romani population of Central and Eastern Europe is its existence on the margins of society in all spheres: education; employment; health; housing; and political representation.

Romani children routinely receive a lower standard of education through their placement in segregated classes or 'remedial special schools'. The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) found that, for example, in the school year 1988-1999 in the Czech city of Ostrava, more than half of pupils at the 'remedial special school' for the mentally disabled were Roma and that any Romani child was 27 times more likely to be schooled in a 'remedial special school' than a non-Romani child.⁶

In terms of employment, recent research carried out by ERRC (Hyde 2006) found that the majority of working age Roma in Central and South Eastern Europe do not have a job and many have been out of work for a considerable length of time. Two out of every three Roma are currently unemployed. Of those unemployed, 35% are long-term unemployed as they have been out of work for a year or more. The report acknowledges that the reconstructing of the economy during the transition from state socialism, the low levels of education and detachment from the labour market of the Roma all play a part in this situation, but also highlights discrimination as significant factor to exclusion from employment (Hyde 2006).

Roma in countries across Central and Eastern Europe find themselves subject to inferior quality medical treatment. The ERRC points to the disproportionate number of Roma excluded from health insurance, the large number of Roma living in neighbourhoods without health facilities, the large number of Roma living in neighbourhoods without health care facilities and the severe under-representation of Roma in the medical profession as indicators of the disadvantages Roma face in this area (ERRC Roma Rights Quarterly 3 2004a and 4 2004b).

The situation of Roma today can only be fully understood in the context of their historical struggles (Guy 2001: 4), struggles which continue to reverberate in the present with Roma suffering from systematic discrimination at both the institutional and community levels.

⁴ Central and Eastern Europe was chosen as the focus for this report as INTRAC has experience working in the region on Roma issues through its regional programme, however Roma face significant hardships across Western Europe and the Balkans too.

⁵ See European Commission report (2004a: 5).

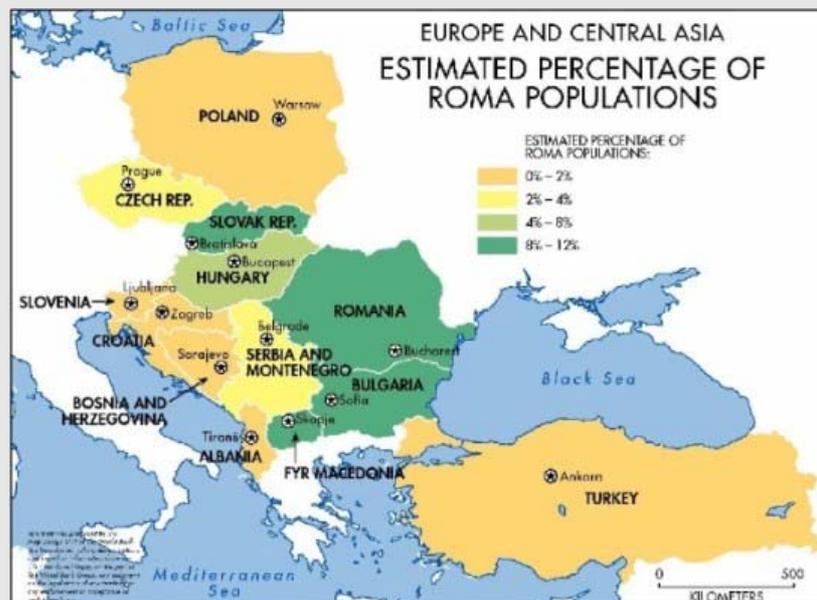
⁶ European Roma Rights Center (1999). 'A Special Remedy: Roma and Schools for the Mentally Handicapped in the Czech Republic'.

History of Roma Overview

Following relative tolerance in the late Middle Ages towards Roma, there then followed a series of persecutions. The Enlightenment brought new policy approaches to the Romani population. For two centuries, from the mid-18th century on, a series of efforts were taken to compel Roma to conform to the norms of society. For example, the Hapsburg monarchy of the 18th century implemented policies including the forced removal of children from their families and forbidding the use of folk costume and the Romani language. As a result of Nazi persecution of Jews and Roma, in Germany and the countries occupied by the Nazis during the Second World War, an estimated 1.5 million Roma were killed (between 1933 and 1945).

The post-war communist regimes regarded the 'Gypsy problem' as a social rather than a cultural problem (in line with socialist theory) and introduced policy accordingly, forcibly settling Roma, encouraging school attendance and working towards the creation of full employment as part of intense assimilation efforts. Following the collapse of communist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe (1989), the Roma suffered disproportionately as levels of unemployment soared among the unskilled labour force.

The post-1989 era in both Western and Eastern Europe has been defined by increased anti-Romani sentiment. Approximately four-fifths of Kosovo's Romani population were violently expelled from their homes in 1999 by ethnic Albanians, and many of these Roma continue to live in extremely poor conditions as internally displaced people inside Kosovo and the rest of Serbia and Montenegro, or outside these borders as refugees (see ERRC 2006).



From www.worldbank.org

1.2 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

As this paper will explore, participatory monitoring and evaluation must move from rhetoric to practice, and a fundamental part of this is to develop a common understanding of what exactly participatory monitoring and evaluation means. For clarity, working definitions of monitoring, evaluation and participation are outlined below.

Definitions of Monitoring, Evaluation and Participation

Monitoring is the systematic and continuous assessment of the progress of a piece of work over time, which checks that things are 'going to plan' and enables adjustments to be made in a methodological way (Bakewell 2003: 6).

Evaluation is the periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency and impact of a piece of work with respect to its stated objectives. An evaluation is usually carried out at some significant stage in the project's development, e.g. at the end of a planning period or in response to a particular critical issue (Ibid: 7).

Participation must be a basic building block of monitoring and evaluation approaches. It is essential that the monitoring and evaluation system describes the impact on all key stakeholders' parties to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of benefits and that the project is not contributing to inequality (Ibid: 13). Therefore, it is important to include the donors, those implementing the programme and beneficiaries in a participative discussion to go beyond checking the impact from different viewpoints to become constructive tools for learning and strengthening further programme and strategies.

Gender relations should be considered, and different ethnic groups, socio-economic classes and ages should be fully included in the design and operation of the monitoring and evaluation system (Ibid: 13).

1.3 Roma Programmes and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Social development programmes, such as those targeting Roma, seek to produce more than just quantifiable outcomes, but also a change in beliefs, values and attitudes. These higher-level objectives that seek to achieve social inclusion of a minority, focus not only on reducing socio-economic inequalities between majority and minority communities but also on overcoming prejudice and bias in the interests of promoting inter-ethnic harmony while facilitating minority empowerment. It is, however, more difficult to measure whether these latter more 'intangible' goals have been met.

In order to monitor and evaluate social development programmes it is necessary to unpack the components of 'intangible' higher-level objectives and outline what observable changes or events will be taken as signs that these components have been achieved. These 'signs' or indicators should ideally be easy to collect, specific, unambiguous, credible and consistent, even though they are often related to subjective judgements or to contexts that change over time over the duration of a project. Who identifies these indicators, and when, is thus extremely important. As stakeholders may perceive the impact differently, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders, in particular the intended beneficiaries in the process

of deciding upon the higher-level objectives, the components of these objectives and the indicators that will be used to determine whether the objectives have been met. Therefore for programmes with Roma stakeholders, it is important to understand the reality for individuals, families and communities and how activities really impact on their lives. This can only be achieved by involving Roma themselves.

1.4 International Consensus

An international consensus has recently emerged around the importance of monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects that seek to promote the inclusion of the Romani minority. This consensus is based on the growing recognition that current programmes and projects are not achieving their desired objectives and may even have unintended consequences that ultimately undermine Roma rights. This was expressed at a number of conferences⁷ and has led to calls for monitoring guidelines which could be used at international level.⁸ In spite of some of the rhetoric in favour of Roma 'ownership' of the process, it is clear that in reality this is rarely the case: the charge of tokenism can continue to be directed at many of the efforts to include Roma in processes. The sheer number of stakeholders at multiple levels of governance who have a role to play in designing and implementing Roma-related programmes complicates the process.

However, some organisations are taking concrete steps to move from dialogue to implementation. Effective monitoring, with a focus on participatory approaches, is a central theme of the Council of Europe/European Commission's new project "Advancing Equality, Tolerance and Peace: Equal Rights and Treatment for Roma".⁹ The Open Society Institute (OSI) is in the process of commissioning an evaluation of its past ten years' work in the field of developing Roma civil society. This external evaluation will emphasise the impact of its work on the situation of Roma in society, recognising that despite the efforts of OSI and others, the actual living conditions of Roma have not improved substantially, there has been no major breakthrough in terms of equal participation of Roma in public life, and that public attitudes towards Roma continue to be negative resulting in the continued marginalisation of this minority group.

⁷ *European Conference on Policies Towards Roma/Gypsies and Travellers* (Granada, 19-20 May 2003. Via www.coe.int) and at the *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future* (Budapest, 30 June -1 July 2003. See Gillsater et al 2004).

⁸ *Monitoring and Evaluation of national programmes/strategies for Roma or Travellers: brainstorming seminar between key practitioners to share ways forward* (Council of Europe 2004a).

⁹ See www.coe.int for further information.

2. Standard Setting and Compliance

Several key multilateral and intergovernmental stakeholders have designed legislation that is of relevance to the Romani population. At the level of legislative frameworks/standard setting, there is recognition of the importance of monitoring to ensure that governments are complying with these regulations. This section is an overview of key legislative instruments and regulations relating to compliance.

2.1 The United Nations: The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

The United Nations (UN) consists of 191 member countries that have all agreed to accept the obligations of the UN Charter. According to the charter, the UN has four purposes: maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations among nations; cooperating in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted by the United Nations on 7 March 1966.¹⁰ 'Racial discrimination' in this Convention refers to "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin" that undermines or impairs enjoyment or exercise of human rights. State Parties are asked to review and amend all their policies that create or perpetuate racial discrimination.

In terms of compliance, the Convention provides for the creation of a Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), comprised of 18 impartial experts who are elected by States Parties. States Parties are expected to commit a report to the Secretary-General of the UN, within one year after entering into force of the Convention and every two years thereafter and whenever requested to do so by the CERD. The CERD in turn reports annually through the Secretary General to the General Assembly of the United Nations and may make recommendations to States Parties (UN 1966: Part II Article 8 and Article 9).

A number of reports have highlighted the discrimination faced by Roma. For example, the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Bulgaria (UN 1997) notes that, "the Roma face *de facto* discrimination in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights which increases their vulnerability in a context of economic crisis" (UN 1997: Sect. D.9). It recommends that "adequate indicators and other means of monitoring the economic and social living conditions of this group should be developed" (UN 1997: Sect. E.14).

The General Recommendations adopted by CERD in 2000 stress the need for Romani communities, associations and their representatives to be involved in the earliest stages of Roma-related policies, in an effort to ensure their transparency (UN 2000).

In terms of compliance with these recommendations, States Parties are encouraged to include statistical data about Roma participation in political life and their economic, social

¹⁰ It was opened for signature and ratification by the General Assembly resolution 2106 of 21 December 1965 and entered into force on 4 January 1969 in accordance with Article 19.

and cultural situation in periodic reports under Article 9 of the Convention. The issue of discrimination against Roma is also discussed in thematic meetings attended by members of the committee, experts from various UN bodies, treaty bodies and from other regional organisations.

2.2 The Council of Europe: Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

The Council of Europe groups together 46 countries of Europe, including 21 countries from Central and Eastern Europe, to set and monitor human rights and other standards across the continent. The Council of Europe sets standards through the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the revised European Social Charter.

Within the Council of Europe, the Group of Specialists on Roma/Gypsy (MG-S-Rom) deals specifically with Roma-related issues. This group (MG-S-Rom) meets twice a year to discuss matters including economic development and employment, human rights violations and discrimination, citizenship issues, housing, media, education, health care, women and community relations.¹¹ MG-S-Rom has 11 permanent members, although member states have the possibility of sending one or more experts. The Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and the ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) can each send one or more representatives. Representatives of the OSCE-ODIHR (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) and the European Commission can attend the meeting as observers. Representatives of Roma organisations and competent experts can also be invited to attend these meetings.

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹² adopted in Strasbourg in 1995 is a formative text with regards to the situation of minorities such as the Roma. Emphasis is placed on the compliance of partners. State parties are required to submit a report describing legislative and other measures that pertain to the principles of the Framework Convention within a year of their entry into force. These reports are made public and are evaluated by the Committee of Ministers, which is assisted by the Advisory Committee. The Committee of Ministers appoints the 18 independent and impartial experts that constitute the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee prepares an Opinion on the measures taken by each reporting State. Once the State has been given the opportunity to comment, the Committee of Ministers adopts conclusions and, where appropriate, provides detailed recommendations.

2.3 The European Commission

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political confederation of 25 European nations that are responsible for a common foreign and security policy and for cooperation on justice and home affairs. The European Commission (EC) acts as the core of the EU with executive and some legislative functions. The EC fulfils three main functions: it is charged

¹¹ Council of Europe. Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM). See www.coe.int

¹² Council of Europe (1995). Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Strasbourg, 1.II.1995. European Treaty Series – No. 157.

with making proposals for all new legislation; acts as the guardian of the EU Treaties to ensure that EU legislation is applied correctly by the Member States; and is the executive body of the EU responsible for implementing and managing policy.

There are many EU initiatives that have the potential to affect the situation of the Roma. In this report, we focus on a couple of key directives that have the potential to have more of a direct impact on the Romani population. At this level, the focus is on standard setting and compliance. While the European Commission is divided into 26 Directorate-Generals (DG) and several other services such as legal services and the Secretariat-General, there are few DGs that tackle Roma issues specifically. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is the most conscientious of the DGs in this respect.

2.3.1 The EC Directive Against Racism

On 29 June 2000, the European Commission adopted a directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin in an attempt to combat direct and indirect forms of discrimination (Council of the European Union 2000). Member States are responsible for ensuring that their judicial and/or administrative procedures and national legal systems comply with the standards set out in this directive. Article 12 also states, that "Member States shall encourage dialogue with appropriate non-governmental organisations which have, in accordance with their national law and practice, a legitimate interest in contributing to the fight against discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin with a view to promoting the principle of equal treatment" (Council of the European Union 2000).

In terms of compliance, Member States were expected to adopt the laws, regulations and necessary administrative provisions by 19th July 2003 and to communicate to the Commission every five years thereafter. On the basis of this input, and along with those of social partners and NGOs, the Commission provides a report to the European Parliament and the Council. As a consequence of these reporting requirements, on the 19 September 2004, the Commission announced that it would take legal action against Austria, Germany, Finland, Greece and Luxembourg for not passing the necessary measures to introduce, amend or update their equality legislation. These member states had two months to reply in a Reasoned Opinion, after which time they would be referred to the EC Court of Justice.¹³

2.3.2 Copenhagen Criteria

The issue of accession into the European Union involves an in-depth process of discussion in order to ensure that each new member state's laws are consistent with EU legislation. Roma inclusion as a political criterion for accession is included in the sub-chapter on 'human rights and protection of minorities', adopted in the 1993 Copenhagen European Council. By implication, if a country fails to meet these criteria through appropriate reforms it will not be admitted into the EU.

The country progress reports that were issued in October 1999 to all accession countries with sizeable Roma populations (including the Czech and Slovak Republics, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia) further emphasised the importance of improving Roma conditions. At the Helsinki Summit, the EU voted to adopt 'Guiding Principles' on Roma in the policy areas of employment, housing, education and health (Ringold 2000).

¹³ European Network Against Racism (ENAR) News. See <http://www.enar-eu.org/en/brnews/index.php> (Accessed 10/01/2005)

3. Indicator Setting and Recommendations

In this section, we present an overview of the monitoring components in the implementation of these regulations and consider the level of participation involved in monitoring and evaluation strategies.

3.1 European Union

The European Commission defines monitoring and evaluation as “the continuous process of examining the delivery of programme outputs to intended beneficiaries, which is carried out during the execution of a programme with the intention of immediately correcting any deviation from operational objectives”.¹⁴ The EC has acknowledged that it has devoted insufficient attention to evaluation and monitoring as EU monitoring mechanisms provide for little beyond compliance.

As Ringold argues, “The process for monitoring implementation of the guidelines and accession criteria as they relate to Roma, beyond the regular progress reports of the Commission has not been established” (2000: 39). A report commissioned by the European Commission on the situation of Roma in an enlarged EU, concludes that there is a pressing need for evaluation of the impact of programmes targeting Roma in a way that appreciates the importance of “change on the ground” (European Commission 2004a: 49).

At a side event during the 1998 Warsaw Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, “participants stressed that there is clearly a need to associate Roma in the monitoring process for fulfilling political criteria for accession, and that the main question for both Roma and the governments is not if Roma should participate, but how Roma should participate” (OSCE 1998).

As a step towards rectifying this, Ivana Skodova (DG Social Affairs, European Commission) proposed at the November 2004 meeting of the Informal Contact Group of International Organisations on Roma, Sinti and Travellers that Commission representatives visit Roma settlements, that Commission officials and national civil servants receive specific training and that Roma professionals assure the monitoring of projects (Council of Europe 2004c).

3.1.1 The European Commission’s Phare¹⁵ Programme

The Phare programme was designed to assist countries in Central and Eastern Europe to carry out economic restructuring and political change in preparation for their entrance into the European Union. It focuses on the pre-accession priorities highlighted in the Accession Partnerships and the timetables set in the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA).¹⁶

The European Commission keeps the other European Institutions, the European Council and the European Parliament, duly informed of the candidates’ preparations for membership with help of ‘Monitoring Reports’. Peer reviews cover the most problematic issues identified

¹⁴ See Official Journal of the European Commission, 2001 (European Commission 2001a)

¹⁵ Originally an acronym for ‘Poland and Hungary Assistance for Economic Restructuring Programme’.

¹⁶ Both can be accessed via www.europa.eu.int

in the Monitoring Reports and these reports also serve to help guide the candidate countries in their preparations.

At the pre-accession stage, the European Commission produces a Comprehensive Monitoring Report. This report serves as a basis to decide on any possible remedial measure to be taken by the EC in its role as a guardian of the Treaties. Such measures relate to safeguards, infringement proceedings and financial management.

Regular Progress Reports are carried out to assess the progress of each country in preparation for accession. Below we examine the case of a Phare programme in Bulgaria to understand how the monitoring process develops and which organizations are involved.

Case Study: Phare Programme in Bulgaria

One of the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) priorities for Bulgaria states that efforts should be made “for fulfilling the obligations of the government on improving the Roma situation and encouraging the tolerance and mutual understanding between Bulgarian citizens from different ethnic and religious groups” (European Commission 2001b).

The 1999 Phare Programme for Bulgaria provided assistance to projects proposed by the NCEDI (National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues) and the Ministry of Education and Science with the aim of improving public services, increasing the education level of the Romani population and facilitating urban development of Roma areas. The 2001 European Commission Regular Report noted that “*little progress has been made to start implementation of the Roma Framework including provisions of necessary financial support*” (European Commission 2001c). It highlighted that no efforts had been made to fight discrimination and foster employment opportunities.

As a result, the Phare Programme, ‘Urbanisation and Social Development of areas with Disadvantaged Minority Programmes’ sought to build on previous Phare funded projects ‘Beautiful Bulgaria Phase I and Phase II’ to attempt to change perceptions and attitudes of the majority population. The project summary notes, “The issue of discrimination is a complicated one and requires a very careful step by step approach with the ultimate aim to change perceptions and attitudes. This project with its limited scope can only make a small contribution to change and perhaps most of all constitute an experience from which to draw lessons when designing a work programme for the implementation of the Roma Framework Programme” (European Commission 2001b).

In terms of monitoring and evaluation of project activities, the project fiche states that NCEDI and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) are responsible for carrying out independent expert assessments of the project design and implementation. It is stated that daily interaction with the UNDP team will give the NCEDI ‘hands on’ experience and job training. A National Project Office was to be selected by the UNDP and NCEDI in order to monitor project activities at a local level. A public awareness campaign was also to be carried out because “it is important that the communities feel informed and consulted to stimulate ownership and co-operation at the implementation stage” (European Commission 2001b). An external expert was to be hired to carry out on-going monitoring and evaluation once every 6 months. Expert reports were to be presented to the NCEDI, UNDP and EC. At the end of the project an external evaluation was to be carried out by a team composed of members from the NCEDI, UNDP and UN to: assess performance (effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness); overall success (impact, sustainability and contribution to capacity development); strengths and weaknesses; and draw out lessons learnt.

Monitoring and evaluation was to be funded by the UNDP. The National Steering Committee was responsible for coordinating the entire project and was to review progress on a quarterly basis. At the municipality level, Local Management teams comprising the Mayor, the chief architect, the representative of the District Governor, the head of the labour office, one representative from a local minority NGO, two representatives from the NCEDI and a UNDP representative. To review progress on an ongoing basis, the team was to meet at least once every 6 months. The project fiche is accompanied by a log frame that lists the indicators and how, when and by whom they will be measured (European Commission 2001b). In terms of results it was stated that public infrastructure in the six municipalities with disadvantaged minority populations had been improved and statistics were provided to attest to this success. However, from the logframe it is unclear whether civil societies were consulted in this evaluation process.

Extract from the Phare Logframe Planning Matrix¹⁷		
<i>Wider Objective(s)</i>	<i>Indicators of Achievement</i>	<i>How, When and By Whom Indicators Will Be Measured</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve the living conditions of disadvantaged minority communities in Bulgaria by upgrading the public technical infrastructure in selected areas of the country characterized by a high concentration of disadvantaged minority ethnic populations (target areas). - To contribute to the social and economic integration of disadvantaged minority communities in Bulgaria by implementing active labour market policies in the target areas. - To foster good interethnic relations while preserving the identity of ethnic minority communities by building public social infrastructure in the target areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public infrastructure for up to 12.4% of the Roma population and 0.01% of the ethnic Turkish population upgraded. - Unemployment among the targeted minority communities in the six target areas reduced in the years 2003 and 2004. - Contribution to the successful implementation of the Framework Programme in general and particularly in relation to the promotion of good interethnic relations and the preservation of the identity of ethnic minority communities (qualitative indicator). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing project monitoring conducted every 6 months by an external expert (funded by UNDP). - Terminal External Evaluation of the Project (March 2005 – funded by UNDP). - Data from the Local Labour Offices published every month. - Report on the implementation of the Framework Programme, which will be prepared by the Agency for Minorities in 2005 (successor of the NCEDI). - EC Regular Report for Bulgaria (2005)

3.1.2 EQUAL – an EU programme

EQUAL is the Community Initiative of the European Social Fund that forms part of the European Union strategy to create employment and remove discrimination in the field of employment (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation). It is an initiative to provide funding and encouragement for innovative projects to fight discrimination and social exclusion in labour markets. Since 2001, the EQUAL

¹⁷ See

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/fiche_projet/#document/0401%20Fiche%20Minorities.pdf

programme has funded around 45 projects where Roma have been among the beneficiaries, either as a specific target group or mainstreamed alongside other disadvantaged groups (European Commission 2004b: 24).

Emphasis is placed on learning through evaluation. In the process of assessing and implementing policies and programmes, actors are able to learn from others and thereby improve their own strategies and actions. In order to facilitate this it seeks to create partnership between various transnational partners to develop integrated approaches to multidimensional problems of discrimination. These actors include non-profit organisations, public organisations, private organisations, semi-public organisations, social partners, co-operative actors and states partners who work in one or more of the thematic areas.¹⁸

'Development partnerships', bound by common themes in the framework of European Thematic Groups, are responsible for evaluating the most promising practices and outcomes of work on the basis of the criteria of innovativeness, sustainability and mainstreaming. Managing Authorities and the European Commission support this review process by hosting conferences, seminars and working groups in order to advance the assessment, benchmarking, delivery and implementation of good practices. In this way, EQUAL contributes to effective policy-making "by finding out, on the ground, what works and what does not, and making sure that all key stakeholders can learn from it" (European Commission 2004b).

3.1.3 LAEKEN Indicators

In order to ensure that by 2010 the European Union would become the most "competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world", a common set of objectives on poverty and social exclusion were adopted in Lisbon in March 2000 by the European Council, European Union heads of state and governments (and agreed to in Nice in December 2000 by the European Council). The extent to which member states progress towards these objectives are monitored by means of National Action Plans that each country was expected to prepare and which in turn are subjected to 'peer reviews' (Guio 2004).

It was argued that a common set of indicators "can also prove useful for illustrating areas where more policy action is needed" (Guio 2004: 2). In December 2001, the Laeken European Council endorsed a set of 28 common statistical indicators for social inclusion, which set targets for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion in four dimensions: financial poverty, employment, health and education. These 28 indicators are divided into 10 primary indicators that lead to poverty and social exclusion, and 8 secondary indicators that highlight other dimensions of the problem. Third level indicators can also be included to reflect specific national circumstances. Member states are expected to use these indicators in their National Action Plans and in their 'Joint Report on Social Inclusion'. Acceding and candidate countries are also expected to use these indicators (Guio 2004).

However, these indicators operate at the macro level which does not encourage the targeting of provisions within the state. Disaggregated data is crucial to see where problems are located and top down macro indicators provide little assistance in this regard.

¹⁸ EQUAL can be accessed at the following web address:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm

3.2 UNDP

The UN's global development network, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), supports a variety of programmes that tackle the multi-dimensional aspect of Roma poverty, including job creation projects, advocacy to enhance awareness, and education and health assistance programmes. In addition, the UNDP published a cross-border comprehensive survey of the Romani minority in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, entitled 'Avoiding the Dependency Trap' (UNDP 2002).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), launched by United Nations member states in the Millennium Declaration in 2000, reflect a shift from macro-economic notions of development to social forms of development (see box below). As Johnston (2004) argues, "Economics has finally been recognized as only a means to an end. The ends, as embodied in the MDGs, are human and social". As the MDGs form a set of global indicators that the UNDP recognizes as being equally applicable in the European context as in the South, the UNDP refers to the Millennium Development Goals in its work to address Roma development. These goals, targets or indicators are regarded as useful because they are short, stable over the short- to medium-term and politically supported. However, as macro level indicators, they are open to similar criticisms as the LAEKEN indicators discussed above.

The Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership

Source: UNDP Website <http://mdgr.undp.sk/>

Various data collection programmes including household surveys and the collection of statistics relating to births and deaths, the environment and new technologies can be used in regard to the MDG indicators. International monitoring is enacted through an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the MDG Indicators, which is comprised of all the UN agencies as well as OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), independent experts, statistical and technical cooperation specialists and occasionally NGOs from developed and developing countries (Johnston 2004).

3.3 The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe assists policy development through various recommendations adopted by the Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) and by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). It monitors policies through independent committees and through contact and/or monitoring visits organised by ECRI and the Framework Convention for National Minorities, and subsequently provides recommendations or guidelines for member states and candidate states to follow. These

recommendations emphasise the importance of participatory approaches to the Roma, and that of monitoring and evaluation in particular.

In the Appendix of the Recommendation 17 (Council of Europe 2001a) on improving the economic and employment situation of the Roma,¹⁹ the first general principle states: “Roma/Gypsy communities and organisations should participate fully in the process of designing, implementing and monitoring programmes and policies aimed at improving their economic and employment situation”. It is argued that the development of income-generating activities by Roma should be supported by the following principles: “partnerships between Roma and non-Roma NGOs, a bottom-up approach to policy and programme design, wide participation of all parties concerned, Roma and non-Roma co-operation, equal opportunities between women and men, accountability and transparency”. Funding projects should foster Roma participation and co-operation between government and civil society (Council of Europe 2001a).

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it is argued that governments should support the establishment of intermediary structures and innovative small-scale projects for initiatives at the local level to provide research and assessment for local needs and resources. Recommendations include “labour market and economic development policies and programmes should be carefully monitored and evaluated. The evaluation of their impact on Roma/Gypsy communities should not only be limited to business success but also consider the wider implications for Roma communities” and also recommends that a clear statement of objectives and the establishment of evaluation procedures be included in the design phase of the project. Ultimately it is argued that examples of ‘good practice’ should be disseminated nationally and internationally (Council of Europe 2001a). Similar recommendations were made for both housing²⁰ and education.²¹

Member states should “establish appropriate monitoring mechanisms” in which “Roma representatives should be involved on an equal footing”. Systematic reviews and mechanisms to ensure the compliance of regional and local authorities should be established, which “allow for participation of Roma representatives and NGOs at all stages of monitoring”. Indicators should be established “for measuring the achievement of policy objectives over time”. In order to better assess progress in line with set indicators, emphasis is placed on the collection of statistical data on a regular basis in accordance with international and national norms in the field of personal data collection (Council of Europe 2005).²²

¹⁹ Council of Europe (2001a). Committee of Ministers. Recommendation 17 on Improving the Economic and Employment Situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 November 2001, at the 774th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.

²⁰ Council of Europe (2004b), Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-Rom), “Draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Improving the Housing Conditions for Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe”. Strasbourg, 14 May 2004

²¹ Council of Europe (2000). Committee of Ministers. Recommendation 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 Feb 2000 at the 696th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.

²² Council of Europe (2005) Committee of Ministers. Recommendation 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 23 February 2005 at the 916th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.

3.3.1 ECRI

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is the body of the Council of Europe entrusted with the task of combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance from the perspective of the protection of human rights, in light of the European Convention on Human Rights (1950).²³

ECRI Policy Recommendation Number 3 on combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies (Council of Europe 1998) stresses the need for institutional arrangements for Roma participation in decision-making at local and national levels by means of consultative mechanisms and partnership structures that facilitate interaction on an 'equal footing'. It also highlights the importance of equipping the Roma with the knowledge and skills required to participate fully in projects and programmes, by means of training and other forms of support. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, ECRI argues, "There is an urgent need for the effectiveness of these various government-led mechanisms, several of which have proven controversial within the Roma community, to be subject to monitoring and evaluation" (Council of Europe 2001d).

ECRI provides a list of 'good practices' on the world-wide web which highlights various monitoring and evaluation strategies in state Roma programmes and policies; however it is quick to add that it is a small sample because few initiatives "have yet been adequately documented or evaluated". 'Good practices' are those that serve to empower the Roma to participate fully in wider society (Council of Europe 2001d).

3.4 The World Bank

The World Bank is made up of two unique development institutions (owned by 184 member countries), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). Each institution plays a different but supportive role in the World Bank's mission of global poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards. IBRD and IDA provide low-interest loans, interest-free credit and grants to developing countries in areas including education, health, infrastructure and communications.

World Bank publications have stressed the need for participation of Roma in policy and programmes and the World Bank has commissioned studies and analyses of project interventions among Roma. Ringold (2000) and Ringold, Orenstein and Wilkens (2003) highlights the need for participatory approaches to Roma policy and programmes. In terms of participation Ringold argues, "participation of Roma is essential for any kind of policy or program to work. The recent past is littered with projects and programs that, however well intentioned, failed because they were designed and implemented without the involvement of the future beneficiaries" (Ringold 2000: ix). Moreover, "without effective monitoring of objectives and outcomes, targeted programs can be instruments for maintaining existing patterns of segregation and exclusion of Roma" (ibid: 40).

The World Bank applies various approaches, approach to drawing on both qualitative and quantitative information for monitoring purposes.

²³ ECRI was established following a decision of the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Vienna in October 1993. It was strengthened by a decision of the 2nd Summit held in Strasbourg in October 1997.

Case Study: Baseline Studies and Needs Assessment: low-income housing micro-projects

The 'Sociological and beneficiary assessment of potential low-income housing micro-projects' conducted in Sofia, Bulgaria in 2001 provides an example of a baseline study and needs assessment produced by the World Bank (World Bank 2001). In order to evaluate current housing conditions in selected Roma neighbourhoods, indicators that addressed floor area and the availability of basic utilities such as heating, water supply, and sewer systems were used. The indicators were defined as indirect measurements of the social and economic status of individual households and whole regions in a particular country. These indicators were then used in a quantitative and qualitative assessment.

The quantitative methods included a survey that was delivered in face-to-face interviews with 1142 people in 11 Roma neighbourhoods. Statistical data from the National Statistical Institute and from the 1992 and 2001 national censuses were also used, despite the acknowledged limitations of out-of-date data that does not disaggregate according to ethnicity (World Bank 2001).

A qualitative study was also carried out involving structured in-depth interviews with 45 individuals and 8 groups, including local government representatives, social workers, representatives from local and national Roma non-governmental organisations, local Roma leaders and representatives of Roma neighbourhoods. This was combined with field observation of the general appearance of housing and infrastructure using a specially designed observation card (World Bank 2001).

The quantitative and qualitative assessments relied upon Bulgarian nationals and Roma individuals in particular. The quantitative assessment used local Roma leaders to gain access to particular neighbourhoods. Vitosha Research¹ national interviewer networks were employed to carry out the interviews and only Roma who were typically living in the neighbourhoods surveyed worked as interviewers in an effort to ensure access to various Roma neighbourhoods and avert potential conflicts.¹

The information collected from the in-depth interviews confirmed the quantitative results of the poor state of infrastructure and housing. However, the in-depth interviews also provided vital information about levels of satisfaction with current conditions and perceptions of future programmes. In other words, the findings of these interviews formed the basis of a needs assessment and provided vital information about what types of inputs would have the desired impact and ultimately meet the intended beneficiaries' needs (World Bank 2001).

From the results of the assessment, it was clear that the needs of the individuals and the Roma generally were highly specific and contextual; they were determined by specific social and cultural preferences. For example, personal and emotional reasons clearly determined what was regarded as a suitable location for new housing; it was associated with attachments to friends and family, to where the respondents were born and raised, habit and the security of living in a particular environment. The groups surveyed also proved to be highly sedentary and it was thus clear that programmes to improve housing conditions would be highly relevant. The majority of the Roma interviewed also stated that they would prefer to live in houses rather than apartment blocks (World Bank 2001: 49-51). From the interviews it was also apparent that the Roma were willing to actively participate in future initiatives although this often depended on whether work would be remunerated and whether it would involve renovating their own houses (World Bank 2001: 52).

It was also clear that the Roma were sceptical of using so-called Roma leaders to distribute housing because of their tendencies to favour certain individuals. It was therefore argued that Roma leaders should act as mediators, but should not be assigned decisive or administering functions. Most favoured joint decision-making. The Roma leader is regarded as important as he has "contacts and knows the people well" (World Bank 2001: 57). Organisations with "clear-cut rules and standards" (Ibid 57) were also seen as vital. Cooperation with the municipality was also seen as a useful way to overcome the discord among the Roma councils, who "will start fighting among each other and will never reach agreement" (Ibid 58). It was further highlighted that greater transparency and accountability is needed in future projects by means of consultations with the Roma themselves, and by means of enhanced monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure that funds are spent on reaching the intended outcomes. This assessment concludes by focusing on a number of case studies and analysing the possibility of developing housing projects in each location (World Bank 2001).

3.5 OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest security organisation, with 55 participating states. It monitors and reports on the situation of the Roma and Sinti in the OSCE region, with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), acting as a Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues and as a 'clearing house' to inform participating states about implementation of Roma commitments.

Since the early 1990's, the OSCE has placed increased emphasis on an integrated perspective that accounts for both civil and political aspects, and socio-economic aspects of Roma exclusion. In order to ensure that none of these aspects is neglected, increased monitoring and evaluation is regarded as essential. The OSCE believes that it can play a key role in facilitating such monitoring and evaluation by encouraging the participation of the Roma themselves in the policy making process. The OSCE considers the involvement of the Roma as vital to ensure that such policies are "deeply embedded" and directed to their specific culture and needs (Gheorge and Tanaka 1998).

According to the OSCE, Roma-related policies and programmes can only be successful if they take into account the lived reality of the Roma. It can only do this if it is based on the equal and meaningful participation of the Roma. "Much of the Romani and Sinti population is still approached as an object of policy making by others, as 'beneficiaries' of the policies and programmes, and at best to be 'represented' or 'consulted' formally. A clear, strategic role and profile should be accorded to Roma and Sinti, contributing both to an increased organizational capacity among Roma and Sinti persons and groups, and reinforcing a sense of cultural and political identity" (Gheorge and Tanaka 1998). In other words, mechanisms that are established to allow for Roma participation must not merely amount to "window dressing or tokenism" (van der Stoel 2000), but must be meaningful and live up to certain benchmarks. The indicators by which one can measure the effectiveness of these consultative mechanisms include the early participation of Roma in policy formation, representation of different social categories within the Roma population, transparency, and the involvement of Roma in implementation and evaluation of Roma-related programs (van der Stoel 2000). These consultative mechanisms need to have the political support of governments and be regarded as legitimate by Roma representatives. They must thus be subject to an on-going process of monitoring and evaluation.

General recommendations include: establishing domestic mechanisms to regularly monitor and report transparency and progress; undertaking feasibility studies to understand Roma needs; involving Roma at the earliest stages of development; including Roma in the formal consultation process; informing Roma communities of programmes and proposals in advance so that they can provide meaningful input and analysis; organising informal meetings with Roma leaders; involving the Roma in evaluating the success of programmes; and training the Roma in policy making and public administration (van der Stoel 2000). One of the suggestions that emerged from a consultation on Roma refugees and asylum seekers, was that "a team composed on Roma and non-Roma should evaluate the funding of project targeting Roma and review the programmes that have benefited from European financial support" (OSCE-ODIHR 2000). Specific recommendations for enhancing the role of the OSCE Contact Point include adopting a pro-active role in analyzing information provided by governments on its progress, advising government on how to enhance Roma participation and how to link national policy to implementation at the local level, compiling a

manual of 'best practices' and conducting on-site enquiries to investigate Roma conditions (van der Stoel 2000).

The OSCE also provides the standards, norms and commitments by which policies can be monitored. The Copenhagen document for example, requires participating states to "respect the right of persons belonging to national minorities to effective participation in public affairs, including participation in the affairs relating the protection and promotion of the identity of such minorities" (OSCE 1990). It also dictates that states accept the presence of observers and representatives of non-governmental organisations to ensure greater transparency in the implementation of commitments. Furthermore, it encourages participating states to convene meetings or seminars of experts to discuss measures designed to build viable democratic institutions.

The OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area (OSCE 2003)²⁴ also provides standards by which Roma-related policies and programmes can be monitored and evaluated. It was drawn up in a participatory manner with input from Roma and national governments. In terms of Roma participation it states that, "Roma and Sinti populations should have an ever-increasing degree of ownership of the policies focused on them" (OSCE 2003). National policies or implementation strategies should also "respond to the real problems, needs and principles of Roma and Sinti communities" (OSCE 2003). Hence, "the guiding principle in the efforts of participating States and relevant OSCE institutions should be that each policy and implementation strategy should be elaborated and implemented with the active participation of Roma and Sinti communities" (OSCE 2003). In terms of monitoring and evaluation, section III.11 advises that states should "create, where appropriate, specialized institutions to ensure the implementation of such legislation, as well as domestic mechanisms to monitor and report regularly and with transparency on the progress achieved in its implementation. Encourage participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in such bodies, whose work should be accessible to the public" (OSCE 2003). Hence, attempts should be made to "assess on a regular basis, especially at the local level, the results of these strategies and involve Roma and Sinti communities in the evaluation process" (OSCE 2003).

The OSCE also provides a forum in which such monitoring can take place. The ODIHR's Contact Point for Roma and Sinti (and its newsletter) brings governments and members of non-governmental organisations together to discuss Roma needs and the extent to which current policies meet these needs. In addition, the OSCE Human Dimension meeting provides an annual forum where civil society representatives can engage in dialogue with government representatives. The OSCE also coordinates the activities of various organisations and states in an effort to ensure that activities are not duplicated and resources misspent.

3.6 Joint Programmes: Roma Under the Stability Pact

The Council of Europe and the OSCE-ODIHR together with the financial support of the European Commission, initiated the Roma under the Stability Pact in the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. This joint project is aimed at promoting the status of

²⁴ OSCE (2003). 'Decision No. 3/03 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area'. 2 Dec 2003. Maastricht. 2nd Day of the Eleventh Meeting. MC (11) Journal No. 2 Agenda item 8.

the Roma population through addressing the most acute crisis situations, policy development on Roma affairs and participation of Roma in civil society.

The Stability Pact places emphasis on Roma civil society by encouraging the “participation of the Roma, partnership at all stages of preparation and implementation of activities”²⁵ and supporting the development of Roma self-organization at regional level. It supports Roma NGOs in establishing Roma civic associations in communities which are particularly affected by crisis or post-crisis situations largely because it is believed that “Roma should be more active in taking on responsibility and raising their voice on behalf of other Roma living in difficult conditions”.²⁶

One of its main objectives includes evaluating the implementation of Roma strategies, as highlighted in the paper “Assessment of Roma Projects and Initiatives under the Stability Pact” (Council of Europe 2001b).

This strategy includes organising roundtables and meetings, in-country assessments, national surveys and annual reports. For example a roundtable discussion on “Evaluation of the National Strategy for Roma” organised in collaboration with a local NGO, the Human Rights Project, and the international NGO, the ERRC (European Roma Rights Center) was held in Bulgaria (Sofia, 22-23 February 2001). In Romania, a Regional Meeting of Roma NGOs was organised by the OSCE-ODIHR in collaboration with a local NGO, Romani CRISS (28-30 April 2001), and an OSCE conference on Roma and Sinti held in Bucharest (10-13 September 2001).²⁷

An assessment was conducted in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (August 2003 to February 2004) by a team composed of members of the Council of Europe, OSCE Human Rights field officers and nine Roma members of the National Council of Roma. The team surveyed informal Roma settlements and focused on property rights in the post-war context. A database was established with information on each settlement and the Roma Council and OSCE were held responsible for following up activities with officials or the courts.²⁸

Projects were also evaluated by means of annual reports, which are prepared by the Council of Europe and submitted to the European Commission. Project leaders were required to quantify results, and assess the results in light of foreseen goals and unforeseen developments by means of a logframe. Leaders were also expected to highlight the impact of the project on the target group and target countries. In addition, they were asked to account for how and by whom their activities had been monitored and evaluated and whether the results had been publicised.

From the evaluations, it was clear that involving the Roma in the monitoring process met with varying success. For example, in the interim narrative report of the Roma Under the Stability Pact programme, it was argued that “the noticeable participation of Roma women and young Roma in the implementation of the Project as experts proves that one of the main goals of the project has been achieved” (Council of Europe 2002). However, it also

²⁵ Council of Europe (2001b). DG III Roma/Gypsies Division, “Assessment of Roma Projects and Initiatives under the Stability Pact (I.A.7) for the Second Regional Conference for South East Europe, Bucharest, 25-26 October 2001”.

²⁶ OSCE (2001). Newsletter. Volume III, No. 3. March 2001.

²⁷ See www.osce.org

²⁸ Council of Europe (2002) Interim Narrative Report. Via www.coe.int

highlighted how longstanding divisions between Roma leaders could “slowdown the process” (Council of Europe 2002). As a result of divisions between Roma NGOs a “meeting between Roma is always required and organised in the evening before the meeting” (Council of Europe 2002).

3.7 Joint Programme: Decade of Roma Inclusion

The Decade for Roma Inclusion was officially launched on 2 February 2005 by the governments of eight Central and South-East European countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovakia), with the support of the international community (including the World Bank, UNDP, OSI, and the European Commission), as an initiative to eliminate discrimination and improve the economic and social status of Roma across the region. The four priority areas that the Decade focuses on are: education, health, employment and housing.

The Declaration of the Decade for Roma Inclusion states that we “commit to support the full participation and involvement of national Roma communities in achieving the Decade’s objectives and to demonstrate progress by measuring outcomes and reviewing experiences in the implementation of the Decade’s Action Plans”.²⁹

In workshops held in order to formulate goals, targets and indicators for the Decade Action Plans in the four priority areas (organised by the World Bank with the Open Society Institute) in 2004, monitoring and evaluation emerged as key themes.³⁰ The workshops aimed to review definitions and indicators, propose meaningful targets and reassess the effectiveness of employment practices and policies. Key recommendations were adopted which emphasised the importance of clearly defined goals, targets and indicators. It was argued that when designing Action Plans, instead of focusing on inputs more focus should be placed on outcomes. Goals were defined as broad, long-term objectives of a particular strategy. Targets were defined as specific measures which contribute to reaching objectives. Indicators were seen as measures used to track progress and should focus on outcomes, not processes. Specific milestones should be set with a concise timetable, which are linked to indicators over a ten-year period. When setting goals, it was argued that adopting a few, broad, quality-oriented goals which have a real impact is preferable to a list of specific goals. Indicators should be based on relative measures rather than absolute numbers for data collection indicators, so that the development outcomes of the Roma can be assessed in relation to the non-Romani population. It was unclear who should design these action plans, set specific milestones or determine which indicators should be used.

The resulting Decade Action Plans perhaps reflect the lack of clarity on these issues. While the monitoring element of the Action Plans varies significantly between countries in all Action Plans the monitoring components are weak since they rely on macro-statistical data. In the different country Action Plans, the role of the civil sector in the monitoring progress is often insubstantial or non-existent. Additionally, there is no evaluation component in the Action Plans (an issue brought up by Andre Wilkens who currently oversees the Roma Initiative Office of OSI in addition to working as director of OSI-Brussels at the meeting of the Informal Contact Group of International Organisations on Roma, Sinti and Travellers [Council of Europe 2004c]). Tanaka (2005) urges for impact assessment of programmes at

²⁹ www.romadecade.org

³⁰ Series of workshops held in 2004. See www.soros.org

household level to gain a better understanding of World Decade programme impact, following years of similar programmes but little improvement of the situation of Roma on the ground.

4. Foundations and NGOs

4.1 Open Society Institute (OSI)

The Open Society Institute (OSI) prioritises public health, education and minority protection. Roma rights in particular are emphasised in various programmes in the network that aim to enhance states' ability to integrate the Roma on a long-term basis. Creating structures that enable the participation of the Roma in policy-making, policy implementation and monitoring on an equitable and informed basis are all key areas. It focuses on three levels namely, policy research and analysis, capacity-building and advocacy. Monitoring strategies are involved in all three facets.

4.1.1 EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP)

The EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (formerly the EU Accession Monitoring Program) is a programme of the Open Society Institute that monitors standards and policies both in the EU and in candidate countries, as they pertain to human rights and the rule of law. It has carried out monitoring in 10 Central and Eastern European countries and in 5 member states utilising general indicators as specified in the Copenhagen Criteria.³¹

EUMAP raised the concern that candidate member state governments are not genuinely and permanently committed to complying with the Copenhagen criteria but view compliance in an instrumental manner. It was argued that the EU allocated significant funding towards the implementation of state programmes but that there has been "little systematic evaluation of their impact and efficiency, and insufficient involvement from minority representatives in their design, implementation and development" (OSI 2002: 20). Furthermore, upon accession, the monitoring of compliance with the Copenhagen criteria ceases.

EUMAP's monitoring approach is thus driven by the belief that "monitoring the situation of a particular vulnerable group is a useful way of testing a system's effectiveness and commitment" (OSI 2002: 22). The particular approach is based on a commonly shared conceptual framework that "monitoring may provide impetus to the articulation of shared standards" (OSI 2002: 20). OSI also considers evaluation to be important. "Regular evaluation – with participation from representatives of minority communities – is vital to ensure that the standards are themselves subject to regular review, and that public policies are operating in fact to protect minorities from disadvantage and exclusion" (OSI 2002: 21).

In monitoring accession countries, EUMAP utilises a single reporting methodology that relies on a questionnaire and on-site assessments of reporters. Qualitative and quantitative methods are adopted, which are adaptable to the local context and which build on the expertise of local NGOs, think tanks and researchers. The evaluation procedure addresses the comprehensiveness of programmes in terms of approach and content, the efficiency of

³¹ See www.eumap.org

the programme administration, allocation of funds, reporting and evaluation, the reception of the programme by the minority and majority communities and the general effectiveness of improving minority protection. Results from field research are reviewed and developed into a working draft report by the EU Accession Monitoring Program editing team of OSI. These drafts are then discussed at roundtable meetings in the respective countries, which are attended by representatives from the government, civil society, academia, and international organisations. One of the goals of EUMAP is to emphasise the importance of civil society in monitoring. Hence, these roundtable discussions are designed to provide a forum for frank dialogue between civil society and the government on human rights issues. Country reports and a general overview with clear recommendations are then published in English and in the relevant country's national language (OSI 2002).

4.1.2 The Roma Education Initiative

The OSI Institute for Educational Policy³² seeks to eliminate discriminatory processes in school systems and facilitate Roma children's participation in the teaching-learning process by means of the Roma Education Initiative. In addition to projects that target issues of access and enablement, this initiative supports the monitoring of appropriate educational policies at national and local levels. It provides indicators by which Ministries, schools and teachers can evaluate their curriculum guidelines and textbooks, their policies and practices in the classroom. It also works directly with individual foundations and NGOs to plan components of, and provide training for, monitoring the educational system. In terms of monitoring, it provides support for a discussion process in which Romani community leaders can interact with teachers to highlight needs and desired outcomes (OSI: 1999).

4.1.3 Studies and Research

OSI publishes reports that evaluate current state programmes and projects that cater for Roma. Zoon's (2001) report uses a qualitative methodology to assess Roma and public services in Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, with a supplement on housing in the Czech Republic. Her evaluation is followed by general recommendations that call on countries to develop and implement meaningful legislation, allocate appropriate funds, and develop relationships with Romani community leaders. She also calls on the international community to provide technical expertise, financial support and training on monitoring strategies (Zoon 2001).

The case study approach was also adopted by the National Democratic Institute for a study entitled 'Roma political participation in Romania' (Denton 2003a), funded by OSI. It used a qualitative methodology in which an in-country assessment team, that included a respected Roma leader, would meet Roma and non-Roma politicians, NGO leaders, elected and appointed government officials, policy and opinion makers, researchers, journalists, educators, project leaders, analysts and ordinary citizens (Denton 2003a).

4.2 European Roma Information Office (ERIO)

The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) is a trans-European organisation that aims to contribute to political and public dialogue by providing factual and in-depth information on the Roma. It is funded by Cordaid, Stichting Doen, Kerk in Actie and the Open Society Institute. It seeks to monitor the programmes adopted by states through its press service.

³² Roma Education Initiative can be accessed online at <http://www.osi.hu/iep>

ERIO also meets with various government leaders in an effort to place Roma needs and the issue of effective monitoring and evaluation on the political agenda. For example, on 16 June 2003, ERIO held a meeting with Roma representatives and members of the European Parliament on the 'Future of Roma Policy in Europe'. It was suggested that the funds earmarked for Romani communities should be monitored more effectively. On 12 September 2003, ERIO representatives met with Hungarian and Romanian EU Missions in Brussels. It was agreed to have periodical meetings to discuss existing or potential problems facing the Roma, which would contribute to accurate information on the situation of the Roma.³³

ERIO argued in March 2004 that an international mission should be deployed to Slovakia in order to monitor the situation of the Roma following the government's sudden withdrawal of welfare benefits. Some Roma responded by rioting in the eastern part of country, which was met by a violent response by the government. As a result ERIO called for an immediate international response to aid the Roma and for the development of indicators which could be used to identify concrete and verifiable measures towards improving the situation of Roma. In addition, ERIO representatives argued that emphasis must be placed on monitoring the use of finances that have been earmarked for Roma-related purposes.³⁴

4.3 The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)

The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation that seeks to use the law to invoke social change and monitor Roma-related programmes. The ERRC has been active in monitoring the treatment of Roma in many European countries, including European Union member states and accession countries.

In the case of European Union member states, a collective complaint was sent to the Secretariat of the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe on 4 April 2003 regarding the treatment of Roma in Greece³⁵ and written comments concerning Germany were sent to the United Nations Human Rights Committee on 8 March 2004 (at its 80th Session, March 16, 2003 to April 3, 2004).³⁶ The ERRC also collaborated with EUMAP to produce a report on the discrimination faced by Sinti and Roma women and girls in Germany which was presented to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.³⁷

The document 'Racial Discrimination and Violence against Roma in Europe', presented to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its 57th Session (15-16 August 2000), recommended that in designing, implementing and evaluating policies to combat and prevent discrimination, governments must involve representative groups of Roma at all stages (ERRC 2000).

³³ See www.erionet.org

³⁴ See www.erionet.org

³⁵ See www.errc.org

³⁶ See www.errc.org

³⁷ Commenting on the fifth periodic report of the Federal Republic of Germany, submitted under Article 18 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, 09.01.04. Via www.soros.org

The ERRC argued, in a joint intervention with the International Helsinki Federation (IHF), that there is an “increasing conviction among governments and civil society in the OSCE member states that one of the conditions for remedying the present exclusion of Roma is Roma participation: the inclusion of Roma in the policy process and, indeed, in government” (ERRC and IHF 2003).³⁸ However, Roma tend to be under-represented in state and local administrations and “for the most part have little or no say in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of policies addressing their situation and are thus denied their fundamental rights as equal citizens of the democratic polity”. As a result it argues that policy measures are “doomed to fail”. It thus calls for the full participation of the Roma in the decision-making process and “in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy measures addressing issues of relevance to Roma” (ERRC and IHF 2003).

The ERRC also publishes a quarterly journal that discusses matters related to Roma integration. One edition (Petrova 2004a) was dedicated to the issue of ethnic statistics in which Dimitrina Petrova (executive director of ERRC) attributes some of the failings of special programmes relating to Roma to the fact they are not based on statistics disaggregated by ethnicity. It is argued that reasons for this include the ‘misperception’ that personal data protection laws prohibit the gathering of ethnic data, the failure to understand the importance of this data for monitoring purposes, fear of misuse by respondents, weakness of political will, methodological issues surrounding how to define Roma and the methodological difficulties associated with the Roma’s refusal to self-identify themselves as such. She argues that one needs to “take the Roma rights approach to ethnic statistics to a new level, by building a more detailed case for numbers and percentages. This effort is meant as a response to the positive tendency to step beyond rhetoric and to get down to the business in many of the departments where Roma-related programmes and projects are being drafted” (Petrova 2004a).

4.4 Project on Ethnic Relations (PER)³⁹

PER seeks to prevent ethnic conflict in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the former Soviet Union by means of dialogue between disparate and often opposing groups, using the media to influence public opinion and by cooperating with international organisations, governments and Romani leaders. Since 1991, PER has organised a number of key meetings with authorities and Romani leaders that have come to form the basis of a long-term agenda on Roma.

The PER Romani Advisory Council (PERRAC), which includes a team of prominent Romani leaders, activists and experts that advise and design Romani policies, guides PER activities. PER assists in the development of national policies by encouraging dialogue between government officials and Roma leaders, it has sought to enhance levels of Roma’s electoral participation, the positive role of the mass media and improve the attitudes and behaviour of the police. In addition, it has directed attention to the problems associated with government statistics.⁴⁰

PER organised a number of roundtable meetings to discuss the issue of Roma participation. At the meetings held in Budapest (24-25 March 1998) and in Slovakia (3-4 July 1998), the

³⁸ At the OSCE *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting*, 2003

³⁹ PER is based in Princeton, USA.

⁴⁰ See www.per-usa.org

importance of Roma participation was agreed upon but a debate ensued as to whether participation should take the form of formal political representation or involve activists from Romani civil society. The project report concludes, “Regardless of the strategies ultimately adopted, greater representation of Roma is seen as an important part of developing more democratic political institutions in which Roma are an integral part of their societies” (PER 1999) .

In the report co-authored by Mirga and Gheorge (1997) entitled, “The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy Paper”, the issue of Roma’s participation in civil society was discussed in greater depth. It was argued that NGOs which are better skilled tend to receive funding from foreign sponsors and foundations. As these skilled NGOs tend to be non-Roma NGOs, Roma NGOs are placed at a disadvantage. It is argued that participation in an NGO promotes self-reliance and Roma empowerment but there is the risk that “projects on Romani-related issues can become an end in themselves often consuming great amounts of time and aid but producing only modest results or none at all”. Alternatively, states use the efforts of NGOs as a substitute for their own activities and as an excuse not to implement Roma-related programmes. However, as Mirga and Gheorge (1997) argue, “The NGO sector cannot substitute provisions and activities by the state. That is, without state participation in solving the problems of the Roma, basic change cannot be expected in the near future”. Hence, increased monitoring of the selection criteria adopted by donors, and the Roma-related initiatives adopted by the state and NGO sectors is essential to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved.

5. The Case Study Approach

As the previous section explored, current international approaches to monitoring and evaluation tend to focus on compliance. Emphasis is placed on the national programme or policy and whether this conforms to international instruments and frameworks, however little attention is paid to what this means for Roma on the ground. While a national programme may conform on paper to the criteria outlined in international instruments, in practice this is not necessarily the case.

Policies and programmes that seek to further Roma inclusion need to be monitored and evaluated at multiple levels. For the purposes of this report, strategies, systems, policies and programmes have been analysed at the levels of state, local government and NGOs. These are somewhat arbitrary distinctions and other perspectives could have been included in the study, however these categories form useful reference points and a framework for comparison.

5.1 Romania Case Study

5.1.1 National Strategies

‘The Strategy of the Government of Romania for Improving the Condition of the Roma’ (hereafter ‘the Strategy’), adopted in April 2000, outlines the position of the Romanian national government towards the Roma, and monitoring and evaluation in particular. The Strategy includes a Master Plan of Measures covering the period to 2010, with specific measures for the first four years (2001-2005). Various ministries in collaboration with representatives of Roma organisations drew up the Strategy in line with international

standards (Obretenova 2004: 12). The Strategy preparation was funded by the EU and carried out by a consultancy of Mede and Minority Rights Group, chosen by the Romanian government in consultation with Roma organisations. This process was commended by the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as “Romania is the only country where a programme on such a scale is being drawn up with the direct participation of Roma representatives from the outset”.⁴¹ However, the report by the Framework Convention for National Minorities criticized the government for a lack of real consultative and participatory commitment.

In line with various international standards,⁴² the strategy reaffirms “the right of any minority, implicitly the Roma, to actively participate in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of public policies on this minority, and the fact that the minorities’ problem has to be taken into consideration as a national problem” (Government of Romania website).⁴³ These principles are reflected in the objectives of the strategy which include: stimulating Roma participation in the economic, social, educational, cultural and political life of Romanian society; transferring responsibility from central authorities to local authorities; removing the stereotypes and prejudices of certain civil servants in central and local public institutions; and determining a positive change in public opinion (Government of Romania website).

Decentralisation and the importance of participatory approaches to the Roma issue, and monitoring and evaluation in particular, are also affirmed in more specific recommendations in the fields of education, employment, health, social services, housing, public order, justice, equality, culture and public administration.

Responsibility for implementing the Strategy lies with a Joint Committee of Implementation and Monitoring and executing decisions lie with the Office for Roma Issues. Responsibilities are further allotted at inter-ministerial level, county offices, and local level.

There are however, significant gaps and ambiguities in the Strategy. Among the criticisms identified by Obretenova (2004) is that the exact number of Roma representatives and activists in the Joint Committee is not stipulated, nor are their decision-making powers. There is no mention of indicators in the Strategy or Master plan, nor information concerning to whom the Joint Committee’s conclusions are addressed. In addition, there is no information about the role or capacity of the National Office for Roma. Furthermore, while it is important that one Roma representative sits on the county offices, the fact that this representative is also responsible for implementing the Strategy does not ensure any independence or impartiality when evaluating the Strategy. Obretenova (2004) thus concludes that there is “some” level of monitoring in the National Strategy although the extent of proposed Roma’s participation in this process is unknown.

The Strategy therefore has many holes, even if it does seem to conform, on paper at least, to many of the standards set by international instruments. There is no provision within the

⁴¹ Council of Europe (2001c). Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. ‘Comments of the Government of Romania on the Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Romania’. 28 August 2001

⁴² The government of Romania is an adherent to the Framework Convention for National Minorities, Resolution ECRI no. 3 Recommendation 1203 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the UN Convention regarding the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

⁴³ See www.gov.ro

Strategy to analyse how the principles and Master plan translate into practice at the regional or local levels. It thus provides little information as to what this Strategy *means* in terms of Roma participation, and monitoring and evaluation in particular.

5.1.2 Political Representation at Parliamentary Level

Despite potentially restrictive legislation requiring political parties to have at least 251 founding members, several Roma parties emerged between 1990 and 1992. However, their failure to obtain enough votes to gain seats in the Constituent Assembly, combined with lack of political experience and fragmentation ensured that many Roma turned to the NGO sector after 1992 (Denton 2003a).

The Roma party (Partida Romilor) repeatedly received the one place in the Constituent Assembly automatically allocated to national minorities. Despite international organisations encouraging the stimulation of alliances among Roma political parties,⁴⁴ Roma organisations continued to act independently and align themselves with mainstream political parties. Roma leaders allied with the PDSR (Party of Social Democracy in Romania) on the basis of promises that the Roma would have two representatives in parliament – one in the Presidency and one in the government offices that deal with the minority – and a number of local representatives (Denton 2003a). However, such alliances were contested on the grounds that “politicians and parties are interested in obtaining votes from members of the Romani community, but after elections they tend to forget what they promised” (Pavel 2000). Nonetheless, the electoral alliance went ahead, and a member of the Roma party was chosen as the head of the National Office for Roma (Joint Committee) and another was selected as an advisor to the Romanian president (Denton 2003a).

In November 2003 another political protocol was signed between the Social Democrat Party (SDP)⁴⁵ and the newly constituted Roma Social Democrat Party (RSDP, formerly the Partida Romilor). The RSDP ultimately benefited from the ROL 35.85 billion (approximately 900,000 Euros) allocated from the State Budget. By 2003 the relationship between the RSDP and other active Roma NGOs deteriorated (Resource Centre for Roma Communities and OSI 2004).

The European Commission’s Regular Report (2003) criticised the state’s tendency to work with a single Roma organisation. In response the RSDP organised a network of 76 Roma NGOs, known as ‘For Romangue’. However, according to ROMAP (Monitoring the local implementation of the Government Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of Roma), RSDP leaders run approximately 60 of the organisations. Divisions between Roma organisations have ensured that the representation of the Roma at the local level is low particularly since a recent Law on Local Elections (2004) states that unless an association is already represented in parliament, associations of national minorities cannot participate in local elections (Resource Centre for Roma Communities and OSI 2004).

5.1.3 Local Government Level

The principle of decentralisation has not produced the desired results in Romania largely because the various institutions responsible for implementing the strategy have not been

⁴⁴ Meeting of PER, ODIHR and OSCE with Romani leaders in Lirgu Mures, September 2000, to try to rectify low levels of parliamentary representation.

⁴⁵ Social Democratic Party of Romania (SDP) was formed in 2001 by the merging of the Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSDR) and the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR).

functioning as planned (Bunescu and Canek 2004).⁴⁶ Many prefectures, such as Cluj and Braila, have not established a County Office for Roma, and those that have been established often lack resources and authority and work in isolation, not collaborating with other local bodies. Positions within the Office do tend to be filled by Roma, but only contain one member as opposed to the three or four stipulated in the Strategy.

The county of Botosani is generally considered as an example of good practice even though it does not have a local Roma expert officially institutionalised. The President of the County Branch of Partida Romilor (the Social Democratic Roma Party of Romania) acts as a volunteer facilitator and, together with another volunteer facilitator from a local NGO, attends regular meetings with the Mayor and Local Council, reports to the Mayor on a weekly basis and to the Regional Bureau for Roma on a monthly basis. According to Bunescu and Canek (2004), the volunteer affiliated with Partida Romilor benefits from preferential treatment. These facilitators have identified the problems of the Romani community and set a list of priorities, which have been used to formulate a Local Action Plan by the Local Joint Committee for Roma (Bunescu and Canek 2004).

Generally however, Roma experts face a number of difficulties, including a lack of capacity and financial resources to make and implement decisions. The approval of the Mayor is often required before an expert can make a site visit to participate in Roma-related events. As a result, effective and immediate responses to Roma needs are thwarted.

5.1.4 NGOs (Relationship with Government, Local Government and Communities)

According to the Strategy, the County Offices are also responsible for establishing Local Joint Working Groups consisting of public institutions and NGOs. However, this has not been carried out uniformly. In some counties (such as Braila and Dolj) there is no working group and in cases where working groups have been created, they generally lack resources, expertise or motivation. Civil servants delegated to this group often have little decision-making authority. Generally, these working groups exhibit low levels of participation in public structures (Bunescu and Canek 2004).

The Roma NGO sector on the other hand has been more effective in reaching Roma communities largely because they seem to actively engage with local communities and conduct participatory needs assessments. The (Resource Centre for Roma Communities and OSI 2004) report highlights the example of Cluj County where a partnership developed between the Association for Roma Women Emancipation, the Romanian Cancer Society and the Cancer Institute Ion Chiricuta to implement a cervical cancer screening project under Phare. As a result of this programme, 11 Roma women were trained as health mediators and pap smears were administered to approximately 1,600 women who were then offered medical treatment as necessary.

5.1.5 Summary

Although there are a number of significant omissions in the Strategy, it does in many ways conform – on paper at least – to the standards outlined by various international instruments. In particular it makes mention of participatory approaches to Roma inclusion and the importance of monitoring and evaluation. In addition to the Ombudsman, the Strategy tasks

⁴⁶ The case study approach adopted by Bunescu and Canek (2004) forms a good basis for evaluating the impact of the national strategy on the lived experiences of the Roma on the ground. Bunescu and Canek (2004) compare the way that the Roma have been included as civil servants in the local and regional administration in Romania and the Czech Republic.

four main bodies with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating its implementation namely, the Joint Committee of Implementation and Monitoring, the Ministerial Commission on Roma, the County Offices on Roma and the local experts on Roma. However, few of the measures outlined in the Strategy have been implemented, and an inadequate amount of direct government funding has been allocated to this task. This reflects low levels of political will. The state tended to work only with a single Roma political party, Partida Romilor. This has caused serious divisions between Roma NGOs and has left the state open to criticism about its apparent lack of commitment to the Roma issue and the absence of accountability to Roma communities. At a regional and local level, decentralisation has complicated the issue further. Local experts are rarely employed and if they are hired, it is not on the basis of their expertise or skill but because of their political affiliation to the favoured Roma political party. This limits their ability to monitor the government's activities. The relationship between the Romani community and Roma experts vary. A number of the strategies' measures have not been implemented at the local level. However, a number of 'good practices' show that the most successful initiatives are based on participatory needs assessments, in which Romani community leaders or representatives of Roma organisations are consulted prior to and during the project. These 'good practices' tend to be characterised by 'mutual ownership'; in other words, partnerships between the Roma and the government.

At the local level, Local Joint Working Groups were supposed to have created a formalized structure of consultation for NGOs and a way in which they could monitor government's policies in line with Roma interests. However, as these bodies have not been established, such formal mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation are closed to NGOs. The NGO sector does however appear to be more effective when reaching Romani communities, but given their urban, educated orientation many are unable to represent all the sectors of Roma society. In general, the Romani communities feel disillusioned and distrustful of those who claim to represent their interests largely because programmes rarely have any impact on the ground. Projects that are directed to achieving narrow outcomes fail to influence the high levels of prejudice against the Romani minority.

5.2 Bulgaria Case Study

5.2.1 National Strategies

'The Framework Programme for Equal Implementation of Roma in Bulgarian Society' (hereafter 'the Framework Programme') was adopted in Bulgaria in 1999.⁴⁷ The objectives of the Framework Programme include: synchronizing domestic legislation with international standards of human rights and protection of minorities; integrating the minorities in the spheres of political, social, economic and cultural spheres; and building adequate institutional mechanisms at all levels with clearly defined responsibilities and powers.

The Framework Programme was based on a Human Rights Project⁴⁸ document entitled, 'A Program for Equal Participation of Roma in Public Life in Bulgaria', which was signed by 75 Roma organisations at a national roundtable in 1998. According to van der Stoep, "the roundtable process has already produced a model to encourage effective Roma participation which can be used in the development of national Roma policy" (2000: 146).

⁴⁷ See www.ncedi.government.bg/en/RPRIRBGO-English.htm

⁴⁸ Human Rights Project was established in 1992 as a non-profit organisation focusing on monitoring the human rights situation of Roma in Bulgaria.

Roma participation was highlighted as a priority in the Framework Programme. However, the Framework Programme contains no information on monitoring or evaluation, although explanations are given on the central role played by the National Council of Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCEDI) (Obretenova 2004: 3).

The NCEDI, established in 1997, acts as the state agency responsible for matters concerning all of the country's minorities and is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Framework Programme. A number of experts of Roma origin work for the NCEDI. It coordinates and consults with minority communities and is in contact with 30 organisations representing minorities, and with similar bodies at regional and municipal levels (Obretenova 2004: 3).

The NCEDI has assumed an active role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Framework Programme and encouraging Roma participation. As part of its monitoring strategy, it holds periodic discussions with Roma NGOs. It has commissioned a study on attitudes towards ethnic tolerance and partnership in the Bulgarian military forces,⁴⁹ an evaluation of educational policies and practices towards minorities⁵⁰ and carried out a housing need-assessment in Roma neighbourhoods.⁵¹

According to Filiz Husmenova, the chairwoman of the NCEDI, "The problems of minorities are grave and they are not problems of today or of yesterday but of many years. Unfortunately, the efforts made so far for their overcoming, though significant, have not led to very encouraging results...There are quite serious problems in the regions where Roma population is predominating" (NCEDI 2003: 7). She argues that the NCEDI does not have the capacity to deal with these problems: the experts are well qualified but there are not enough of them to implement the priorities. At a regional level a number of projects have been successful, however the government, NGOs and the minorities themselves need to collaborate on bigger projects "so that the minorities themselves could feel it, perceive it, see it" (ibid: 9).

The first Action Plan for implementing the Framework was adopted in 2003 (for the period October 2003 to December 2004). The short and medium term measures stipulated in the Action Plan were based on the assessments carried out by the NCEDI and various national and international organisations. The only reference to the monitoring process is a discussion in the section 'Administrative Framework and Partnership' (Obretenova 2004: 3).

The Human Rights Project has expressed dissatisfaction with the Action Plan, arguing among other things that there was no meaningful Roma participation in creating the Action Plan, as is evident in the fact that most of the members of the Sub-Commission on Roma Issues of the NCEDI received copies of the Action Plan on the same day that they were expected to provide comments – inviting accusations of tokenism. In terms of

⁴⁹ IMIR (2001). 'Attitudes towards Ethnic Tolerance and Partnership in the Military Forces of the republic of Bulgaria', carried out by the Institute of prospective Studies in Defence with the 'G. S. Rakovski' Military Academy, in collaboration with the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR). Via www.ncedi.government

⁵⁰ IMIR (2003). 'Evaluation of the Existing educational Policies and Practices to grant equal Access to Education to Children from Minorities and Elaboration of Policy Recommendations for Sustainable Solutions of the educational Issues of Minorities' carried out by IMIR (contracted out by NCEDI with funding from the World bank). Via www.ncedi.government

⁵¹ FAS International Consortium (2003). 'Background Survey on Urbanisation and Housing in Roma Neighbourhoods' carried out under the National Phare Programme. Via www.ncedi.government

recommendations, the Human Rights Project suggests that the government invests more political will in the process, consults meaningfully with the Roma and carries out an analysis of the needs of the Romani community prior to elaborating a further plan (Cohen 2004).

In the NGO Alternative Report on Bulgaria's Progress Towards EU Accession, 2004,⁵² it was argued that Bulgaria has adopted sporadic measures, is not committed to involving the society as a whole and that more attention needs to be paid to monitoring and evaluation. It is claimed that even when the Roma are consulted, the government often does not defer to their advice and the process by which strategies are created is not transparent.

5.2.2 Political Representation at Parliamentary Level

The Bulgarian constitution forbids the creation of parties on an ethnic and religious basis so there has therefore been no active Roma political party.⁵³ As Roma organisations cannot register as ethnically based political parties they have consequently been restricted to functioning only as social and cultural organisations. Therefore the support of the Romani minority has been sought by a number of major political parties, often through the inclusion of Romani minority members as representatives in parliament. However, "so far whenever Romani MPs were elected as candidates of mainstream parties, they were too afraid to confront Roma issues with the fear that they may lose their position" (Spirova 2000: 8).

In the June 2001 elections, 8 Roma parties formed the Free Bulgaria coalition. However, as it only received less than 1% of the overall vote, it failed to reach the 4% threshold for parliamentary representation. According to the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Roma do not always vote as a bloc and, in the case of Bulgaria, Roma parties received little support for a number of possible reasons: many Roma feel alienated from the political process; the parties tend to lack a set of identifiable political or philosophical principles and values; and Romani leaders are often unskilled, inexperienced, divided and self-interested. As one Rom stated, "the parties voice token interest with token programs before elections, or when civil unrest erupts, or when the international community exerts pressure" (Denton 2003b:17).

5.2.3 Local Government Level

According to the first report offered by the Human Rights Project, despite the fact that the central administration has attempted to include Roma in local and district government structures, it suggests that it has never been fully realized because, among other things, the Roma experts employed lack the necessary technical expertise or decision-making power. No official documents specify their duties and responsibilities. When monitoring the behaviour of local and district authorities, the Roma experts do not have any right to impose sanctions on those that do not implement their obligations. Additionally, their position is vulnerable as they can easily be dismissed. As funds are allocated centrally, many find that they do not have the funds required to carry out their duties as the funding does not tend to reach the local projects. These factors ensure that the Roma experts lack power at the local level, thus undermining their role in monitoring the government and placing them at risk of criticism from local Romani communities. As a result, "the national policy for the improvement of the state of the Roma community does not reach the local communities and settlements" (Cohen 2004).

⁵² Save the Children et al (2004). 'NGO Alternative Report on Bulgaria's Progress Towards EU Accession, 2004'.

⁵³ It is argued that this provision is discriminatory and contradicts international law.

5.2.4 NGOs (relationship with government, local government and communities)

Various examples from Bulgaria show that in many cases (as in other countries) the central government is limited in its capacity to carry out projects and programmes that benefit the Roma because of lack of political will, the absence of participatory needs assessments, the use of 'objective indicators' and goals that do not correspond to the needs and lived experiences of the Roma. Non-governmental organisations, on the other hand, may be better located to implement various projects or monitor the approaches adopted by government. As a representative from the Romani-Bureau Foundation argued at a conference organised by PER (Lom, 24-25 April 1998), "Government officials need to listen carefully to the Romani organizations. Each of the organizations represented here can say what the situation in its town is" (Atanasova 1998: 12).

Given the 'top down' nature of policies, contextual factors such as day to day discrimination and prejudice among the majority population are often ignored. Projects that neglect the wider social prejudices tend only to have a short-term impact. For example, wage subsidies are often used to encourage employers to appoint Roma; however, Roma are often only appointed for a short period of time and there is little investment in their job places. While on the surface these projects appear to be successful, when they are evaluated in terms of longer-term impacts it is clear that they have done little to improve the situation of the Roma involved. Evaluations suggest that the government needs to develop meaningful programmes that change the attitudes of the Bulgarians and the Roma themselves.

This criticism has also been directed towards foundations and international NGOs, which also fail to take into account contextual realities and fail to carry out participatory needs assessments. As a result, projects do not always have the intended impact. For example, Noncheva highlights a project that provided humanitarian aid and breakfast for pupils at a school in a Roma neighbourhood. The beneficiaries argued that this was not a sustainable way of improving school attendance, as planned, because children's attendance dropped as soon as the food ceased (Noncheva 2000).

Despite the fact that there are few legal provisions that support partnerships between local authorities and NGOs, examples show that developing a collaborative relationship between the state and Roma NGOs is of essential importance to the success of a project.

The case of a partnership between the Roma-Lom Foundation and the Lom Municipality illustrates a situation where the specific qualities of the NGO and those of the local authority work well together, and serves as an example of good practice. The NGO is better located to understand the needs of the Roma, while the state's presence is useful to enhance the institutional capacity of the organisation. The Roma-Lom Foundation was established in 1996 to design and implement initiatives that meet the needs of the Roma. A survey of the Romani population in Lom revealed that the three biggest problems were unemployment, low levels of educational attainment and the poor conditions of infrastructure. Its key approach was based on the notion that "cooperation and communication with the local authorities and state institutions" is essential (PER 1998: 8). The Lom Municipality and the Roma Lom Foundation agreed upon a 'Lom Declaration for Justice and Fairness'. The Lom Commission was created to develop, implement and coordinate programmes, which improve the Roma's access to services and opportunities. Its members include the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, representatives of the public service department, representatives of the Roma-Lom Foundation and other Roma representatives. The Lom Commission designed, implemented and monitored an integrated strategy for social policy in the fields of public services, health, education and police services (Oakley 2002).

5.2.5 Summary

The Framework Programme for the Equal Integration of the Roma in Bulgarian Society was adopted in 1999 as a result of pressure from the non-governmental sector. The Programme emphasises the equal participation of the Roma, who are represented at the regional level in Regional Councils. At the national level, the NCEDI also represents Roma NGOs but does not have the capacity to carry out its tasks effectively. It has however taken an active role in monitoring and evaluation, by commissioning various studies to be undertaken on the conditions faced by Roma in Bulgaria. On the basis of these studies it found that despite government's efforts, the issue of Roma integration had not been resolved. This finding formed the basis of the First Action Plan, which was adopted in September 2003.

The NGO sector (and the Human Rights Project in particular) criticised this plan on the basis that insufficient funds were allocated to its implementation, it did not facilitate meaningful participation of the Roma and generally reflected the government's lack of real commitment to Roma issues. At the Regional level the Roma lack the necessary expertise and decision-making power. Centralisation has ensured that funds cannot be allocated to suit particular local needs. In general the central government is not well positioned to implement Roma-related projects and programmes because of a lack of political will, the absence of particular needs assessments, the use of 'objective' indicators and goals that do not correspond to local needs. Similarly, examples show that some foundations and non-Roma NGOs adopt 'top-down' approaches to Roma development, which ensures that they often ignore contextual factors and levels of discrimination on the ground, which render the impact of their projects minimal.

The NGOs themselves often lack trained staff, have poor institutional capacity and appear to be temporary bodies because they are dependent on foreign donations. They are also divided over their role vis-à-vis the community largely because the state often relies on them to carry out its social work functions. The experiences in Bulgaria indicate that a collaborative relationship between the state and the NGOs is vital to the success of a project; NGOs are in a better position to understand the needs of the Romani community but the state must provide the NGOs with the institutional support to allow them to properly carry out the tasks they are expected to. The weaknesses and tokenistic aspects of the Bulgarian government's interaction with the civil society sector highlights the need for a true partnership based on achieving outputs.

5.3 Czech Republic Case Study

5.3.1 National Strategy

The Czech Government's national Roma programme, the 'Roma Integration Policy Concept', was adopted in June 2000. As a result of annual evaluations of the fulfilment of tasks (submitted to the Government Commissioner for Human Rights through the Deputy Prime Minister), the Concept was updated in 2002 and 2003. In order to take account of local differences, some regions adopted their own integration policy documents. There are three advisory bodies involved in the monitoring process under the Roma Integration Policy Concept: the Council for Roma Community Affairs,⁵⁴ the Council for Human Rights; and the Council for National Minorities (Obretenova 2004: 5).

⁵⁴ Formerly known as the Inter-ministerial Commission for Roma Affairs; its name was changed in December 2001.

The Council for Roma Community Affairs is headed by a Minister without Portfolio, and includes representatives of 12 ministries and 14 Roma representatives from each of the country's 14 regions. The Deputy Prime Minister chairs this council and is responsible for appointing all the members. Half of the Roma representatives come from local government, while the other half comes from NGOs. All members have voting rights. Decisions are taken by a simple majority vote or by consensus (Obretenova 2004: 5). However, the Council for Roma Community Affairs only has an advisory role: the government or ministries are not obliged to seek its opinion (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic website).⁵⁵

The fact that the ministries have no obligation to listen to the advice of the Council for Roma Community Affairs is one of several weaknesses identified by Obretenova (2004). She also points out that the frequency of the meetings of the Council is not specified and that the Council deals almost exclusively with the executive branch of the national administration, has no links with parliament and scant institutional links with the regions, despite the fact that it is supposed to work closely with Roma coordinators at a regional level. It lacks the financial resources required for it to assume a more active role in implementation and its monitoring responsibilities are not outlined. Although the last section of the Roma Integration Policy Concept makes reference to concepts associated with monitoring, there is no description of the monitoring process that the Council is supposed to participate in (Obretenova 2004).

The Council for National Minorities is also involved in monitoring the implementation of the Czech national programme. Its members include representatives of the public authorities and members of the 11 minority communities, including 3 Roma. It is responsible for monitoring respect for minorities' cultural rights and securing funding within the state budget for activities benefiting national minorities and Roma integration (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic website).

The Council for Human Rights is responsible for monitoring and reporting human rights violations. It also monitors the effective implementation and fulfilment of the various legal instruments that the Czech Republic is committed to (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic website).

5.3.2 Political Representation at Parliamentary Level

The most politically active of the political parties are the Romani Democratic Initiative and the Democratic Alliance of Roma in the Czech Republic. As Sobotka's (2002) paper explores, representation of Roma in the Czech Republic is non-existent in terms of the political representation as the model followed is the policy formation model, as opposed to the political representation model (as in Hungary). While there has been some effort from the Czech government to suggest that Roma advisory bodies to the government constitutes an outlet for political representation, Sobotka (2002) opposes this premise, arguing that advisory bodies to the government are limited in their capacity to actually bring about changes.

5.3.3 Local Government Level

In 1997, the institution of Roma Advisors was created in order to provide a local and/or regional instrument of government to mediate between the Romani minority and the

⁵⁵ See www.vlad.cz

majority. Having been created suddenly, in response to the rising number of Romani immigrants to Canada from the Czech Republic, the institution was not clearly defined.

In the same year (1997), a study was commissioned by the Office of the Minister without Portfolio to map out the attitudes of state administrative employees to the Romani community because it was recognised that the bureaucracy is the “extended hand of government” at the district and municipal level, and implementation of government regulations depends on “human qualities”, in particular the capabilities and willingness of state administrative employees, which in turn had an impact on inter-ethnic relations.

Based on interviews with state employees and Roma advisors, this commissioned study concluded, “A state employee, particularly on the regional and local level is significantly affected in his opinions by the local atmosphere and the ‘locally dominant’ stereotypical and continuing attitudes of the majority” (Dobal et al 1997). As an example of the majority opinion, the study found that many regard the Roma as likely to engage in criminal activity, unwilling to work legally and incapable of coexisting ‘normally’. According to Dobal et al, “the government has so far not adequately utilized its opportunities to positively influence the social atmosphere and gradually make racist expressions and prejudices taboo” (1997).

From the study it was clear that, although the relationship between the state and Roma NGOs was not always rated positively, entrenching the position of the Roma Advisor emerged as a possible way of improving this relationship (Dobal et al 1997). Most respondents had limited experience with Roma Advisors (at the time of the study there were only 29 Roma Advisors in the district offices, of which 6-8 were Roma), however, the relationship between NGOs and the state were described more positively in places where the position of a Romani Advisor was created, compared to places where there were Romani organisations but no consultants.

Of the Roma Advisors and consultants interviewed, 85% rated municipal authorities and city mayors as willing to cooperate, but many were critical of NGOs because of their internal disputes, unrealistic requests or unwillingness to cooperate. Despite the fact that the consultants often perceived their work as important, many felt “undervalued by the Roma and Romani organisations and also encounter lack of interest and unwillingness on the part of authorities, though to a lesser extent” (Dobal et al 1997).

Among the problems that the institution of Roma Advisors has encountered⁵⁶ are the problems associated with confusion over the role of the Advisors, leading to ineffective monitoring and evaluation. The tasks of a Roma Advisor include supporting communication between the local Romani community and the authorities, proposing solutions for Roma integration, and solving problems and conflicts. However in Bunescu and Canek’s (2004) study, a number of Roma Advisors took on the role of social workers, in this way often undermining their task of analysing and monitoring the situation of the Romani communities.

Another area of confusion was the Roma Advisor’s relationship to the local community. In Brno, for example, there has been a high turnover of Roma Advisors; “All of them left because of the pressure and feeling that they weren’t respected by the Roma community” (Bunescu and Canek 2004). In Pardubice, a Roma Advisor had to be replaced because, as a representative of an NGO argued, “For a long time he was doing good things for Roma, however, later he favoured mostly his own family. He tried to destroy all competition among

⁵⁶ See Bunescu and Canek (2004) for a detailed critique.

Roma” (cited in Bunescu and Canek 2004). According to another expert, this was not unique. “This person...has a family in that area, has some kind of status, has some loyalties and these may be an inhibiting factor for the performance of the function. Many of the (Roma) Advisors were leaving because they entered into conflicts with the so-called Roma community” (cited in Bunescu and Canek 2004).

Roma coordinators were introduced in 2001. Regional Offices were obliged to appoint a Roma coordinator whose role was broadly defined as including the protection of all minorities. Roma coordinators were responsible for coordinating Roma Advisors and the field of social workers. However, many were unable to fulfil their positions because they were not employed on a fulltime basis, were often located within a single ministry, which restricted their inter-sectoral activity or were overburdened with bureaucratic, administrative tasks (Bunescu and Canek 2004).

5.3.4 NGOs (*relationship with government, local government and communities*)

An example of the way in which Romani communities, Roma NGOs and the local government can collaborate successfully is the case study of ‘solving the problem of coexistence through the creation of self-government and the mobilization of energy and skills’.⁵⁷ The NGO, Partners for Democratic Change, offered to organise and conduct training sessions for Roma and town hall clerks working on Roma-related issues in the Czech town of Usti nad Labem. The Municipality identified key areas where it felt the Partners for Democratic Change contribution would be useful, including problem housing, employment, social needs, education and child-care. Together with representatives of Roma organisations (SoRo, Jekhetane), the Roma from Maticini Street (where Roma live in housing estates), Romany Rainbow (the civic association founded on this street) and town hall representatives and clerks, priorities were set and small action groups created to form specific objectives around up-lifting conditions in these housing estates, training Romany volunteers in a system of social state support, meeting estate agents and so forth. The project involved conducting a participatory needs assessment and agreeing on indicators. Regular meetings ensured that the local government could be held accountable.

In comparison, the experiences of the local government and local Roma organisations in Nusle, a quarter of Prague, provides an example of lack of cooperation. In Nusle, the relationship between the town hall, Roma NGOs and the Romani community was negative, largely because of the lack of objective monitoring and evaluation.⁵⁸ According to Stiburek, “We must admit that the position of the town hall is really difficult as the local Romany community belongs to the most problematic and conflict ridden ones. The town hall officers are often old district residents and so they have a lot of significant experiences with local Roma. It is only natural that they can’t pretend to see the whole problem from an outer independent point of view”. The town hall provided office space to the Association of Olach Roma and helped prepare a training course for them; however, as the Roma activists had no experience in dealing with administration, funds and accounts, they incurred increasing debts. This led one town hall clerk to complain, “The Romas came up with a number of promises and requirements, which we have satisfied and they had not”. For their part the

⁵⁷ LGI database: Situation of the Roma in Maticni Street, Usti Nad Labem, Czech Republic. ‘Solving the problem of coexistence through the Creation of Self-government and the mobilization of energy and skills’ case study. Partners for Democratic Change. Via www.lgi.osi.hu

⁵⁸ Stiburek, M. “The program of social and drug abuse prevention for the Olach Romas in the Czech Republic: the activities of the Romany Children’s Club”. Located on the Local Government Initiative Database. Via www.lgi.osi.hu

Roma complained that the training was conducted at an inappropriate time and in an inappropriate place.⁵⁹

5.3.5 Summary

The Czech Republic's national programme, the 'Roma Integration Policy Concept' created three bodies that focus on Roma-related issues namely, the Council for Roma Community Affairs, the Council for Human Rights and the Council for National Minorities. There are a number of significant 'gaps' in this document, including the absence of clear terms of monitoring and evaluation. At a regional level the institution of Roma Advisors was created in 1997. In the same year, a study commissioned by the state highlighted how state employees were negatively influenced by majority views against the Roma and how social welfare programmes were successful. In addition, it revealed how the relationship between the state and NGOs were not rated favourably except for those areas where a Roma Advisor had been appointed. However, decentralisation meant that municipalities could appoint Roma Advisors at their own discretion. As a result, few Roma Advisors were actually employed. In cases where the position was created their role was not clearly defined and many were forced to take on the role of social workers. Many felt undervalued and experienced great pressure from the state, their families and the Romani community at large. A number of examples have been provided that highlight the relationship between the state, NGOs and the community. Once again it is clear that comprehensive programming that is based on the needs of Roma and non-Roma communities, and seeks to produce real attitudinal changes, is necessary.

6. Concluding Comments

"Do all involved in administering the Millennium Development Goals really recognize their validity in Central Europe? Most of the diplomats deciding on this never visit Roma settlements and again from experience, I can assure you that you can travel lots in Central Europe as a diplomat without ever visiting such a settlement. So it is very difficult for quite a lot of our colleagues to really recognize the issues concerned".⁶⁰

A new international consensus appears to be emerging around the importance of participatory approaches to Roma inclusion, and the need for increased monitoring and evaluation of such approaches. This consensus is emerging due to a realisation that current programmes and projects seeking to further Roma inclusion have not had the intended impact and have often produced unintended, negative consequences for the Roma concerned. However, much of this discourse is likely to remain mere rhetoric unless a firm commitment is made by the key stakeholders concerned to promote Roma participation more generally, and in the monitoring and evaluation process in particular. Well-resourced action plans are needed in states, which are implemented meaningfully at a central and local level.

⁵⁹ Stiburek, M. "The program of social and drug abuse prevention for the Olach Romas in the Czech Republic: the activities of the Romany Children's Club". Located on the Local Government Initiative Database. Via www.lgi.osi.hu

⁶⁰ Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hungary, representing the OSCE at *Roma in an Expanding Europe* conference (Douma cited in Gillsater et al 2003: 56).

Current approaches to monitoring and evaluation tend to focus on achieving 'tangible' outcomes with quantifiable indicators as is epitomised by the Millennium Development Goals proposed by the UNDP and the Laeken indicators proposed by the European Commission. However, measuring whether these 'tangible' outcomes have been met provides little information about the 'intangible' aspects of Roma inclusion, such as empowerment, capacity-building and acceptance by the majority population. These intangibles are not obviously visible, material or quantifiable. However, to many Roma and the proponents of human rights they are just as important, and often more important than outcomes such as access to infrastructure. Projects that focus only on these narrow concerns tend to be short-lived if they do not address the wider issue of historically and socially embedded discrimination and prejudice.

The problems associated with data collection is a recurring theme in discussions concerning Roma programmes and are particularly relevant to monitoring and evaluation processes. The lack of reliable statistics broken down by ethnicity can be explained by several factors, including a misconception that personal data laws prohibit the gathering of, so called, ethnic data, a fear that ethnic statistics can be misused to harm the respondents, and the methodological difficulty of defining who should be counted as Romani.⁶¹ The ERRC maintain that statistics relating to disadvantaged groups is both a right and a duty in the framework of the human right to equality.⁶²

However, governments and inter-governmental bodies should not use the problems of inadequate information as an excuse to delay programmes. Nor should the need for reliable data distract from the need to develop qualitative indicators. In the various workshops on collection of ethnic data, a clear preference for quantitative techniques has been exhibited, with the UNDP assuming a key role in coordinating data-collection. Monitoring and evaluation strategies that focus narrowly on these 'tangibles' using quantitative techniques often fail to provide any information about changes that are happening on the ground.

While the merits of more qualitative methods were highlighted, these were seen as secondary or supportive techniques to more quantitative approaches. However, when one looks closely at the case study of the needs assessment on low-income housing micro-projects in Sofia, produced by the World Bank, it is clear that the qualitative component of the assessment provided vital information about levels of satisfaction with current conditions and perceptions of future programs. It also provided extremely valuable information about the socially and culturally specific nature of the Roma's housing preferences within particular contexts, which could be useful in designing future projects. Quantitative data – while valuable – would certainly not have provided such information.

Similarly, the three country case studies adopted in the second half of the paper derived largely from 'good practice' case studies available from the Open Society Institute's Local Government and Public Services Initiative and various other project reports, highlights how useful such in-depth information is. Quantitative data would not have provided information about the power dynamics implicit in the relationships between the national government, regional and local governments, politicians, civil servants and NGOs and Romani communities. The case studies, on the other hand, reveal how in Bulgaria, the NGO sector

⁶¹ Petrova (2004b) European Roma Rights Center 'Notes for Oral Presentation'. Via www.europa.eu.int

⁶² Petrova (2004b) European Roma Rights Center 'Notes for Oral Presentation'. Via www.europa.eu.int

has been particularly vocal about what it perceives to be a lack of political will on the part of the state. The state has come to rely on the NGO sector to implement its social welfare policies, while the NGO sector often lacks institutional capacity, funding and is internally divided. In the Czech Republic, decentralisation has had a negative effect on the role of the Roma Advisor whose position is not clearly defined and often tends to merge with the social worker position. Many Roma Advisors find it difficult to negotiate their 'dual roles', namely representatives of their communities and employees of the state. The case studies demonstrate that, in many instances, it is the civil sector that is in the best position to represent and respond to the needs of the local Romani communities.

As well as discussions concerning data, a key theme emerging from discussions and reports, is that of the unintended consequences of programmes and policies. The OSI study (2005) into current attitudes towards Roma in Central Europe found that both Romani and non-Romani respondents react negatively to programmes that target Roma specifically. Programmes and services that are perceived to be preferential are seen by both Romani and non-Romani respondents as being counterproductive – with the potential to increase discrimination and hostility towards Roma.⁶³ It is such information as this that can only be learnt through in-depth qualitative research and which is vital if social development objectives are to be met.

Against this background of stated commitment to monitoring and evaluation, and with the Council of Europe/European Commission making it a key part of their coming joint programme, it is crucial that concrete measures are taken to ensure transparency and synergy. Duplication and replication are to be avoided, while sharing of experiences and coordinated activities should be encouraged. The emphasis on including the Roma as active participants in the processes should be a central theme – there is no longer any genuine excuse to do otherwise.

⁶³ OSI (2005). 'Current Attitudes Toward the Roma in Central Europe: A Report of research with non-Roma and Roma Respondents'. Via <http://www.soros.org/>

Appendix: Methodology

Information for this paper was gathered through extensive internet-based research carried out from September to December 2004 using key words related to monitoring and evaluation.⁶⁴ As stakeholders often do not explicitly use the terms monitoring and evaluation, related terms were often used to gather data. Official documents, project reports and meeting summaries produced by international, national and local actors were accessed in this manner. Data referred to in this paper is therefore from secondary sources. The report suffers from the obvious limitations associated with internet-based research: a number of documents were not accessible on the world-wide web either because they have not been loaded onto websites or because access is restricted; and documents were often not available in English.

It is important to consider that the vast majority of Roma have limited access to the internet, so documents accessible through the internet are only reaching members of the 'elite'.

Given the sheer number of stakeholders, programmes and projects on Roma inclusion at international, national and local levels, a selective approach has been adopted bearing in mind that this amounts to an *overview* of the monitoring and evaluation strategies adopted at multiple levels of governance in programmes and projects that seek to further the interests of the Romani minority group in Central and South Eastern Europe.

In the first part of this report, emphasis is placed on Roma-related programmes and projects adopted or supported by multilateral, bilateral and inter-governmental actors as well as by foundations, and selected Roma and non-Roma NGOs. At each level, the particular actor's commitment to monitoring and evaluation, and to Roma participation more generally, is discussed. Emphasis is placed on how actors monitor their own activities and those of others. Hence, the interaction of actors within and between levels is highlighted. It is argued that in spite of international and national rhetoric in favour of participatory approaches to Roma development issues, with a few exceptions current approaches to monitoring and evaluation tend to exclude Roma input and fail to provide an accurate picture of the lived reality of the Roma on the ground.

In the second part of this report, the three case studies focus on some of the activities of state and non-governmental actors in Romania, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. These countries were chosen as examples of first and second wave countries to EU accession. The Czech Republic acceded in 2004, and Romania and Bulgaria are due to join in 2007 on condition of them meeting specific requirements. With significant Romani populations, these countries have particular strategies designed to address the situation of Roma living in these countries and therefore serve as useful examples to compare strategies and their effect.

The analysis in the second part of the report starts off from the premise that to carry out effective monitoring and evaluation, the needs of the beneficiaries must be taken into account. Hence, the case studies highlight the state's approaches to monitoring and evaluation in terms of its commitment and allocation of tasks and responsibility. The success of those individuals who are often tasked with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating state policies at the executive and legislative levels of government is also discussed in terms

⁶⁴ Updated in 2006 during editing process.

of whether they are aware of Roma needs and have the power to place those needs firmly on the political agenda. The relationship between the state and NGOs is also highlighted. The success of NGOs in terms of monitoring their own projects and those adopted by the governments concerned is discussed.

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Mapping the Terrain: exploring participatory monitoring and evaluation of Roma programming in an enlarged European Union

By Zosa De Sas Kropiwnicki and Fran Deans

This paper provides an overview of the monitoring and evaluation strategies adopted at multiple levels of governance by various stakeholders who express a desire to include the Romani minority in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. It is argued that in spite of international and national rhetoric in favour of participatory approaches to Roma issues among some international and national bodies, with a few exceptions, current approaches to monitoring and evaluation tend to exclude Roma input and fail to provide an accurate picture of the lived reality of the Roma on the ground.

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