

## ROMA MIGRATION PHENOMENON – EFFECTS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

CADENABBIA, 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our international workshop on the topic of „Roma Migration Phenomenon –effects and possible Solutions.“ on behalf of the Rule of Law Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

I would like to express my profound thanks to our partner organizations the Scheherazade Foundation and the Centre for Democratic Development and especially to their Presidents Ms. Wajiha Haris and Ms. Mariana Nițelea for the excellent cooperation that we had when planning this project which brings together specialists from Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Germany, countries that all have a large Roma Communities.

[...]

It is the objective of this project to find solutions for overcoming inequalities by identifying local problems generated by the Roma migration in Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Germany and the lessons learned in integrating Roma on the local level. We want to network and create partnerships in order to promote successful practices with sustainable results in overcoming negative effects of the Roma migration identified in the participating countries.

The situation of Roma in Europe is described in the following text adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 28th June 2012 (26th Sitting):

“1. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines that States have a justifiable interest in managing migration and to ensure that the asylum system is not abused. “Migration management” must, however, take place in compliance with the relevant rules, which is currently not always the case.

2. The Assembly is concerned that the Roma are among the most disadvantaged, discriminated against, persecuted and victimised groups in Europe. This situation continues and is even getting worse, as is demonstrated by extensive research and highlighted by the Assembly in its Resolution 1740 (2010) on the situation of Roma in Europe and relevant activities of the Council of Europe as well as in the Declaration on the rise of anti-Gypsyism and racist violence against Roma in Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 February 2012. The combination of being both Roma and a migrant exacerbates the disadvantage and discrimination even further as a result of this double stigmatisation.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

**RULE OF LAW PROGRAM**  
**SOUTH EAST EUROPE**  
 THORSTEN GEISSLER

July 2015

[www.kas.de/rspsoe](http://www.kas.de/rspsoe)  
[www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)

3. This double stigmatisation can be heard and seen in public discussions, media reports and political discourse on Roma in Europe. It is based principally on three deep-rooted prejudices: all Roma are nomads, they all come from abroad and their migration is illegal.

4. As regards the belief that all Roma are nomads, the reality is that in Europe less than 20% of Roma are nomadic. As for Roma being from abroad, it can be shown that they have been part of European society for approximately 700 years and the large majority are citizens of their country of residence. Finally, as regards Roma migration being illegal, it is clear that most Roma migrate within the framework of their right to free movement under European Union law. (...)

In 2012 the results of a survey on the situation of Roma in 11 EU member states were published. Among these 11 countries were Bulgaria, Romania and Germany. It was a common project of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The survey results confirm the concerns expressed by the European Commission in its April 2011 Communication 19 that many Roma face discrimination and social exclusion living in marginalised and very poor socio-economic conditions.

The indicators presented show that in the 11 EU Member States covered by the surveys the socio-economic situation of the Roma in the four key areas of employment, education, housing and health is not satisfactory and is worse, on average, than the situation of the non-Roma living in close proximity. They also show that Roma continue to experience discrimination and are not sufficiently aware of their rights guaranteed by EU law, such as the Racial Equality Directive 20.

In education:

- on average, only one out of two Roma children surveyed attend pre-school or kindergarten;
- during compulsory school age, with the exception of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, nine out of 10 Roma children aged 7 to 15 are reported to be in school;
- participation in education drops considerably after compulsory school: only 15 % of young Roma adults surveyed complete upper-secondary general or vocational education.

In employment:

- on average, fewer than one out of three Roma are reported to be in paid employment;
- one out of three Roma respondents said that they are unemployed;
- others said that they are home-makers, retired, not able to work or self-employed.

In health:

- one out of three Roma respondents aged 35 to 54 report health problems limiting their daily activities;
- on average, about 20 % of Roma respondents are not covered by medical insurance or do not know if they are covered.

In housing:

- on average, in the Roma households surveyed more than two persons live in one room;
- about 45 % of the Roma live in households that lack at least one of the following basic housing amenities, namely indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower or bath and electricity.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

**RULE OF LAW PROGRAM**  
**SOUTH EAST EUROPE**  
 THORSTEN GEISSLER

July 2015

[www.kas.de/rspsoe](http://www.kas.de/rspsoe)  
[www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)

Poverty:

- on average, about 90 % of the Roma surveyed live in households with an equivalised income below national poverty lines;
- on average, around 40 % of Roma live in households where somebody had to go to bed hungry at least once in the last month since they could not afford to buy food.

Discrimination and rights awareness:

- about half of the Roma surveyed said that they have experienced discrimination in the past 12 months because of their ethnic background;
- around 40 % of the Roma surveyed are aware of laws forbidding discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job.

So what are the specific EU-level goals compared to the current situation?

They are mentioned in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

This framework addresses the four main areas for improving social and economic integration for Roma, all of which are primarily national policy areas:

**Education:** ensuring that all Roma children complete at least primary school education. In addition, access to quality early childhood education and care should be improved and segregation reduced.

In education, Roma children generally have lower attainments and often face discrimination and segregation in schooling. Although the situation differs between EU countries, a survey by the Open Society Institute in six EU countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia) found that only 42% of Roma children complete primary school, compared to an average of 97.5% for the general population across the EU as a whole.

**Employment:** cutting the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma citizens.

Having fewer Roma people complete primary education has a knock-on effect in the labour market, where young Roma are less well-equipped and less qualified to find a job. The Europe 2020 strategy sets a headline target of 75% of people in the EU aged 20-64 to be in employment, compared to a current rate of 68.8%. For Roma, the employment rate is significantly lower, with a gap of around 26 percentage points according to World Bank research covering Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, and Serbia.

**Health:** reducing the gap in health status between the Roma and the general population and improving access to health care, especially for women and children.

Roma generally have a life expectancy of 10 years less than the average European and a child mortality rate that is significantly higher than the EU average of 4.2 per thousand births (2010). The United Nations Development Programme research in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic put Roma infant mortality rates there at 2-6 times higher than those for the general population, depending on the country. These outcomes reflect poorer living conditions, reduced access to quality healthcare and higher exposure to risks. There is also evidence that Roma communities are less well informed about health issues and can face discrimination in access to healthcare.

**Housing:** closing the gap in access to housing and public utilities such as water and electricity.

While between 72% and 100% of EU households are connected to a public water supply, the rate is much lower among Roma. Research by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency points to wider problems in accessing housing, both private and public. This in turn affects Roma health and broader integration prospects.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

**RULE OF LAW PROGRAM**  
**SOUTH EAST EUROPE**  
THORSTEN GEISSLER

July 2015

[www.kas.de/rspsoe](http://www.kas.de/rspsoe)  
[www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)

To improve the situation of Roma we will need money.

But several EU funds are available to Member States to support national Roma inclusion policies, namely the European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The EU already co-finances projects for the Roma in sectors like education, employment, microfinance and equal opportunities (in particular equality between men and women).

It is a question of political will whether EU member countries want to absorb these funds.

I look forward to exchanging information and opinion with you in the forthcoming days. And I am convinced that we will achieve concrete results.

Once again I thank you very much for your participation!