ETHNIC AND NATIONAL MINORITIES IN POLAND

Programme for the Roma Community in Poland
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Table of contents:

I. Introduction
II. Description of the problems
  1. EDUCATION
  2. THE ROMA VERSUS POLISH SOCIETY
  3. WORK - UNEMPLOYMENT
  4. HEALTH
  5. THE SITUATION OF LIFE
  6. SECURITY, CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF ETHNICITY
  7. THE ROMA CULTURE AS WELL AS PRESERVING THE ROMA ETHNICAL IDENTITY
  8. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY

III. The state’s support

IV. Law-international conditions

V. The Programme’s Assumptions

VI. The Programme’s goals
  1. THE EDUCATION
  2. THE ROMA VERSUS THE CIVIC SOCIETY
  3. COUNTERACTING THE UNEMPLOYMENT
  4. HEALTH
  5. THE LIFE SITUATION
  6. SECURITY, COUNTERACTION OF THE CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF ETHNICITY
  7. THE CULTURE AND PRESERVATION THE ROMA’S ETHNICAL IDENTITY
  8. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY

VII. The means used in achieving the Programme’s goals
  1. THE EDUCATION
  2. THE ROMA VERSUS THE CIVIC SOCIETY
3. COUNTERACTION OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT
4. HEALTH
5. THE LIFE SITUATION
6. SECURITY, COUNTERACTING CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST THE ETHNICAL BACKGROUND
7. THE CULTURE AND PRESERVATION OF THE ROMA’S ETHNICAL IDENTITY
8. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY

VIII. The Programme’s financing rules
IX. The Programmes execution monitoring
X. THE ANNEXES
Annex 1 - The population and distribution
Annex 2 - The Roma organizations in Poland
Annex 3 - The schedule of financing the Programme for the Roma community in Poland
Annex 4 - The monitoring
Annex 5 - The Report of the National Minorities Affairs Malopolski Governor’s Attorney which talks about the execution of the pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province for the years 2001 – 2003 in years 2001 – 2002
Annex 6 - The Roma in Poland – description of the situation
I. Introduction

Currently approximately 20,000 people belonging to the Roma ethnical minority are living in the Republic of Poland. These people suffer mostly from severe social and economical situation that differ greatly from contemporary life standards. The problem of Roma society has been approached repeatedly by: the commissioner for civil rights protection, the Members of Parliament (especially the members of the Parliamentary National and Ethnical Minorities Committee), the government administration, the self-government principle, the media, as well as the non-political organizations. On the other hand the Roma society is looking on its own for ways to maintain its national identity and solve the pressing problems.

The situation of Polish Roma had been caused by, among the others, the policy enforced by the authorities of The PRL (the Polish People's Republic), which similarly like in the other communist states, imposed compulsory Roma assimilation. The main tool of this policy in Poland was the so called productiveness-settlement campaign which resulted in 1964 enforced settlement of the majority of Roma people who at that time led a nomadic life. Those that belonged to groups such as: Polish Roma, Kelderasza and Lovara (the Carpathian Roma had been living a settled type of life for already few centuries) were most frequently being settled down in most socially demoted city’s districts. These actions had been destructive for the economical basis of the Roma existences connected with the nomadic life the Roma led. The Carpathian Roma had been given jobs as unqualified workforce.

The political system and economical changes that took place in the beginning of the nineties hadn’t been favourable to improvement of the difficult situation the Roma society in Poland was in. The majority of Roma begun to suffer from unemployment, decrease of sense of security, social and health problems. Education and qualification are the basic tramps of people that look for job in contemporary market economy whereas the Roma aren’t able to effectively compete and get employed. In addition, the strong cultural distinction and lack of trust toward people that aren’t part of the Roma community, as well as to the state institutions, makes even socially and economically wealthy Roma remain on the social margin of Poland. They resign from participating in the public life, they don’t use the rights guaranteed by the Republic of Poland to the national and ethnical minorities.

II. Description of the problems

1. Education

a) description of the situation. The education level of the majority of the Polish Roma should be described as very low. Illiteracy is a common phenomenon among the older generation. About 70% of Polish Roma children attend the school regularly. In some communities the majority of children ignore the school’s responsibility. The attendance of Polish Roma students is low. The children often go on prolonged trips with their parents (accompanying them during e.g. house-to-house selling) therefore the weekends and holidays get lengthened beyond all means. Girls at age of 13 – 16 are already considered to be candidates for wives. After getting married, those young wives rarely go back to school.
The situation of the Roma in the age of political system as well as economy changes of the beginning of the nineties made the Roma leaders and activists realize that the education is essential for the Roma to rightfully participate in the modern world. The Roma leaders realized that the lack of education or even illiteracy is one of the main reasons why the Roma hold low social status or experience economical handicap.

b) the problems. According to the report “The Roma about their children’s education – exemplified by the Carpathian Gypsies” done in 1997 by the Association of Roma in Poland ordered by the Department of Education and Science, what majority of Roma children lack is the preliminary preparation assured by the nursery school education. As a rule, Roma people don’t send their children to nursery schools. One of the reasons is lack of financial means required for the nursery school education. There were also cases when the Department of Education and Science would financially help to pay for the nursery school education and integration summer camps but at the same time the social welfare allowances would decrease. This kind of situation unquestionably discourages Roma parents to send their children to nursery schools.

Another serious problem is bad financial ad social conditions which a lot of Roma families live in. This situation applies particularly to the Carpathian Roma. Poor Roma can’t afford textbooks and teaching aids, they often experience difficulties in satisfying basic needs (clothes and footwear). It’s difficult for a child to concentrate well enough to be able to effectively do their homework in overcrowded homesteads.

The children are often deterred from school by the non Roma peers’ disfavour.

They drop out of school since they don’t have strong motivation neither their parent’s support. In the poll examining students, the question “Whom would you prefer not to sit with?” was answered “with a Roma - Gypsy” by the 1/3 of the asked pupils. Only mentally ill and homosexual ”scored” higher than the Roma. Marginally smaller disfavour was given to HIV positive person and a former drug addict[2]. According to the most recent research although the level of dislike towards Roma has been systematically going down, it’s still very high[3].

Approximately 200 Roma students studies in a dozen so-called “Roma classes”. These rationed out classes for the Roma children which had started being organized since the end of the eighties of the 20th century were supposed to enable the pupils to overcome the educational-adaptation barriers and prepare the Roma students for studying in integrated classes. The venture of „The Roma classes” was supposed to be a temporary solution which failed to pose an effective alternative towards the integral forms of education. It also didn’t give hope for finding solution of the unsolved educational problem of the Roma. On the other hand though, this model, despite of all shortcomings and legitimate accusations in regard to the low teaching level and strengthening the ethnical segregation, was the only chance for the educationally backward youth (e.g. because of outside country trips lasting for several years ) to master the basics of Polish or Mathematics. Also some of the parents having the choice of sending their children to the so-called integral class or the Roma class they would choose the second one, thinking that their child studying among the peers of his “kind” would not be exposed to as much stress connected not only to studying but also to potential and actual disfavour or even aggression from their non Roma peers.

Considering the shortcomings of the Roma class model though, a new educational model that would both respect the parent’s beliefs and lead to improvement in attendance and teaching level of Roma students at school had become essential.
2. The Roma versus civic society

a) description of the situation. Attitudes toward Roma such as disfavour and rejection had been and still are a reason for the Roma to reject and remain reluctant towards the non Roma world. Institutions such as schools, administrations, police or courts had more often posed a threat to the Roma integrity and identity than given a chance for better life, development and prosperity. As a result of this confrontational coexistence numerous barriers, and in many cases, justified distrust towards non Roma that tried to break the barriers from the outside had been created. The non Roma world is still perceived by many Roma as alien, worse and most of all incomprehensible place. If we add to the above mentioned description of the Roma community the fact, that Roma are very often uneducated, we will get a picture of a community of minor importance, excluded from the public life, often living with a sense of guilt spread by the public institutions representatives, whose actions the Roma often don’t understand.

b) the problems. The unquestionable majority of Roma doesn’t participate in the country and the local community’s public life. As a result of this, their problems remain outside these communities’ and authorities’ focuses. In case of a conflict, both of these communities (most often having for each other dislike and distrust) don’t know how to communicate which often leads to other misunderstandings.

3. Work - unemployment

a) description of the situation. At present the most common occupation appearing among the Roma is trade. Thanks to family connections living in foreign countries, they make money on importing second hand cars, selling textiles, cotton, carpets and, for many years already, old junk and antiques. Some Roma people put their money into durable investments such as shops, restaurants, real estates, petrol stations. The most enterprising and wealthy Polish Roma aren’t the dominant group in the Polish Roma population. The majority of Roma lives from hand to mouth, without permanent employment, providing for their families by having odd jobs, working illegally or begging also with the help of their children. The majority of Carpathian Roma is numbered among this group - almost their entire population suffers from unemployment and keeps alive thanks to the social welfare. What should be noticed though is the fact that the group of the Carpathian Roma that suffers the most from unemployment lives in the area where the unemployment rate is the highest in Poland.

b) the problems. On the strength of consultations that were carried out with the Roma community’s representatives and experts as well as on the basis of the partial researches[4], the Roma environment can be considered to be under a threat of long term unemployment. The main reasons for that are: low education (often illiteracy and not sufficient knowledge of Polish), lack of qualifications, passiveness in searching for a job and employers’ dislike in regard to employment of the Roma people.

With reference to the situation of this group of people, the unemployment counteract actions that have been taken so far proved to be insufficient.
4. Health

a) description of the situation. The Roma people to a larger extent than the Polish general public tend to fall ill with various diseases. Cases of diabetes, diseases of circulatory system, and respiratory system (asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia) as well as viral type B hepatitis are definitely more common among them. Among the Roma living in socially devastated house estates and homesteads also cases of tuberculosis happen. High sick rate combined with economic problems and not using free health service by the Roma cause an increase in the death rate and at the same time, comparing to the rest of Polish society shorter life length.

b) problems. The Roma people’s health problems appear as a result of bad, and in many cases catastrophic social situations: no water-supply, no sewage system, no heating in the homesteads, disastrous technical conditions of the heating systems, no money for the heating, poor diet, limited access to the health benefits as well as no prophylaxis and lack of habit of monitoring Roma women’s pregnancies; these neglects often cause congenital defects.

5. The situation of life

a) description of the situation. Roma communities are strongly diverse in regard to economic situations and what follows situation of life. Next to unquestionably wealthy Roma there are entire communities living in poverty and penury (especially the Carpathian Roma). In 10 communes of the Malopolska province, 75% of the Roma that live there (and in some of the communes even 95%) get social assistance. These families receive all kinds of benefits: cash benefits, payment of their children’s lunches at school, material help including purchase of fuel. Similar situation takes place in the cities of Higher and Lower Silesia where there are also clusters of Carpathian Roma.

This service is rendered in the form of the social assistance permanent allowances and single-purpose allowances. The rent arrears often unable Roma families to receive the housing allowances. Some of the rooms the Roma live in don’t even meet the building law requirements, and some of them are construction arbitrary acts. The apartments that the Roma live in are usually overcrowded. It’s common that a many-generation family (many times 10 people) lives in one room. Also the standard of majority of these rooms doesn’t meet the minimum requirements.

The earnings of most of the families are considered catastrophically low. Cases of receiving old-age pension or systematical financial help that aids the entire family’s budget are very rare. One should expect that in upcoming years there is going to be an increase in number of people of Roma origin that despite reaching the pension age they will never acquire rights to retirement pension. As a result of this there will be an increase in number of people that don’t have any permanent source of income.

b) problems. The rooms that are inhabited by the Roma families often require immediate redecoration. If the redecorations won’t be carried out in close future, part of the buildings will be fit only for demolition. As a result of reduction in existing accommodation resources further overcrowding or formation of more construction arbitrary acts will take place.

The problem of redecorations is connected to the regulation of the legal positions of the lands where the Roma live as well as the standard of the apartments. These apartments are often devoid of basic amenities: toilets, bathrooms. These defects evidently impinge on the sanitary condition of the apartments as well as the health situation of the people that belong to the Roma community.
6. Security, crimes committed against the background of ethnicity

a) description of the situation. Public opinion poll data mentioned before show that there are a number of negative stereotypes connected with the Roma existing within the Polish society. Incidents and conflicts regularly covered in media such as those that took place in Kety, ?ywiec, ?ód?, Fabianice, Ciechocinek, Czaniec, Debica, Zabrze, Koszelówka, Nowa Huta as well as every day unpleasantness that the Roma experience in offices, shops, and on the streets of Polish cities show the society’s dislike toward the Roma. Signals of this sort come flooding in especially to The Ministry of the interior and administration, as well as the Commissioner for civil rights protection. According to the Main Police Headquarters, the Roma aren’t frequent victims of crimes though, and the crimes committed by the Roma are usually meet with fast Police response. Nevertheless, complaints concerning indolence of the Police or discrimination of the Roma by some of the police officers do come up. These complaints though get filed officially very seldom. The Police have been making attempts to organize appointments with the Roma representatives in order to discuss problems and threats that occur.

The Ministry of the interior and the administration monitor criminal events inflicted on people of Roma origin as they come. Since April 2003, The Main Police Headquarters has been giving monthly reports to the Ministry of the interior and the administration about those kinds of cases registered by the police services on the premises of the entire country. Based upon those reports as well as information obtained from the Roma organizations’ representatives or the sufferers themselves, clearing up actions have been entered upon

Furthermore, according to the decree of the Cabinet from the 25th of June 2002 regarding the Government Attorney on Equal Status of Women and Men Affairs (The Journal of Law. No. 96, item. 849), the attorney was given jurisdiction over counteraction of the discrimination, among other things, due to race or ethnical origin.

b) the problems. In the face of maintained high level dislike towards the Roma within the Polish society, the representatives of the Roma communities are especially exposed to acts of aggression and discrimination. Furthermore, ignorance (lack of knowledge) of the culture and customs that are considered obligatory within the Roma communities often lead to conflicts between the people of Roma origin and the police officers. What’s of great importance in this situation is proper preparation of police officer for working in the Roma environment. The knowledge gained by the police officers of Roma peculiarity, culture, traditions and limits which result from them could help in overcoming the dislike as well help in coming up with more effective counteract actions and pursuing crimes’ perpetrators that attack the Roma.

7. The culture and preservation of the Roma ethnical identity

a) description of the situation. Unusual richness and different nature of the Roma culture differs greatly from the Polish one. Preservation of this culture is possible thanks to measures provided by the territorial self-government and government administration. The Roma cultural and publishing activities are supported by the Ministry of culture. The subsidies coming from that source for the Roma communities had summed up to 478 thousand PLN in year 2002[5]. This financial help is assigned to support the enterprises that preserve and promote the Roma minority culture (the folk groups’ activities, festivals, presentations of the Roma artists’ creative activities). The subsidies designed for Roma press and publishing houses come from the same source.
b) the problems. So far transmitted means don’t serve as efficient help in preserving the ethnical identity. In this context one should pay attention to the fact that awakened interest in the native culture shown by the Roma children and youth may become one of the most fundamental elements shaping not only the sense of their ethnical identity but also fundamental component of the multicultural education. Considering the difficult financial situation and low education level of many Roma families, a wilful assimilation of the Roma people may become a problem. Just like for the majority of the society and other minority groups, the expansion of mass culture can be a danger to the Roma culture.

8. The knowledge of the Roma community

a) description of the situation. Maintained stereotypical perception of the Roma as well as the dislike shown in every day communication comes as a result of lack of reliable knowledge of this community. These stereotypes get strengthen by the media coverage focusing on the scandalous, criminal elements, and in best case presenting an archaic-sentimental image of Roma people

b) The problems. The public opinion poll has been confirming for many years the existence of strongly rooted within the Polish society negative image of Roma people. However the essential problem remains the same: elementary ignorance about this community.

III. The state’s support

a) the general assumptions. The Roma community is treated as the ethnical minority to which, according to domestic law and international documents signed by the Republic of Poland, fall by right a full law protection and the state’s help. The Polish government cooperates with specialized branches of the Council of Europe and the Security Organization and Cooperation in Europe in solving the Roma problems. There had been also joint activities carried out with the Know-How Fund subsidized by the government of Great Britain.

b) The pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001-2003. As a result of works done by the Trans-departmental Joint Office on National Minorities in March 2000, there were initiated preparatory works that were supposed help in creating The pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001-2003. The Programme had been worked out by the Ministry of the interior and the administration also as a result of collaboration between other departments. The attorneys on the Roma affairs working in the self-government structures as well as attorneys chosen by he local Roma communities were involved in formation of this programme. These works had been preceded on a wide scale cooperation of the departmental self-government entities and the nongovernmental organizations including Roma organizations. On the 13th of February 2001 the Programme was accepted by the Cabinet. The resolution implementing the Programme came into life on the 1st of March 2001.

The principled aim of the Programme was to lead the Roma inhabiting the Malopolska province into full participation in the social life of the country and to equalize the differences dividing this group from the rest of the society. Evening the levels of education, employment, health, hygiene, housing conditions and abilities of functioning in the polish society was considered especially important.
The Programme was of a pilot nature. It was assumed that the execution of the Programme in the Malopolska will be introduction to the preparation and realization of the nation-wide, long-term Programme for the Roma community in Poland. Above mentioned programme is then a logical continuation of the programme accepted by the Cabinet on the 13th of February 2002.

IV. Law-international conditions

a) the problems connected with the issue of the Roma in the international forum. Within the confines of the UN as well as European institutions a number of documents related exclusively to the Roma had been adopted.

The most significant once are:

- The UN Human Rights Resolution number 65 from the 4th of March 1992 about the protection of the Roma/Gypsies;
- Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe number 563 from year 1969 about the situation of Gypsies and other wanderers in Europe;
- Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe number 1203 from February 1993 about the Gypsies in Europe;
- The Constant Confederacy of the Local and Regional Authorities Council of Europe Resolution number 243 from the 16th – 18th March 1993 about Gypsies in Europe: the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities;
- The European Local and Regional Authorities Congress Recommendation number11 from year 1995 Towards the tolerant Europe: the Roma/Gypsy contribution;
- The Council of Europe European Committee against Racism and Intolerance Recommendation number 3 from 1997 Struggle with racism and intolerance towards the Roma/Gypsies;
- The Brussels Declaration of the round table negotiations participants in the European Parliament in Brussels concerning the Roma/Gypsies in Europe from the 12th of July 1996

The Roma are an ethnical minority whose situation is the most often discussed by the European institutions. Attached to the Council of Europe in 1995 the Group of Specialists on the Roma/Gypsies was appointed and attached the Bureau of the Democratic Institutions of Security Organization and Cooperation in Europe (ODHIR) – The Contact Point on the Roma and Sinti was appointed. The interest in the situation of the Roma in Central-Eastern Europe beard fruits of numerous conferences and international projects.

The European Union, the Security Organization and Cooperation in Europe (OBWE) show a lot of interest in the Roma issue in nations of Central and Eastern Europe. They base their interests upon two general statements:

- the Roma minority is the biggest (most numerous) ethnical minority in the entire Europe especially in the nations of Central Europe;
- their situation is being evaluated - among other things based upon the High commissioner’s report on the national minorities OBWE from March 2000 – as “often the worst from all of the groups inhabiting the territories of OBWE”.

Far reaching involvement has been declared by the European Parliament deputies who have announced active stimulation of first of all European Committee to bring about further activities helping Roma community in the candidate countries. Also OBWE – both High Commissioner on the National Minorities as well as Warsaw Bureau of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights -
are interested in solving the problems of Roma communities in Europe. Unofficial dialogue concerning the Roma issue have been initiated by the Finnish presidency in the second half of year 1999 between European institutions and Central and Eastern Europe nations (especially with Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary). The document called Situation of the Roma in the candidate countries; background document and following this document “guiding principles” served as grounds for this dialogue that drives at overcoming the prejudices people have for the Roma and caring out activities that would change the Public Service standpoint. There has been exhibited interest in creating and funding first and foremost educational programmes which would give bigger chances to the Roma competing for jobs as well as execution of other programmes – funded by interested nations and with financial assistance of European Union.

b) Roma programmes in other European countries. In European countries where the Roma live, there are actions being taken driving at improving their situation. In many countries there have been accepted and realised national or regional programmes for the Roma community (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldavia, Federation of Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary). These programmes include also fields such as education, health, fighting against unemployment, improvement of the social conditions. Part of them is financially supported by the European funds.

c) the most important international agreements considering the rights of the people that belong to a minority, signed by Poland. Poland has accepted a number of international legal acts including regulations concerning protection of national minorities. Among other things there are: the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms from the 4th of November 1950, the International Convention on Abolishing Any Forms of Racial Discrimination from the 7th of March 1966, International Pact on Civil and Political Rights from the 16th of December 1966, Child Rights Convention from the 20th of November 1989. The most important document regulating national minorities’ rights is the Council of Europe Skeleton Convention about protecting national minorities, ratified by the Republic of Poland on the 10th of November 2000.

d) international interest shown in the Roma situation in Poland. Situation of the Roma in Poland interests the European institutions as well as the EU countries, especially those to whose territories the Polish Roma travel to and apply for status of a displaced person (e.g. Great Britain and Finland). The government of Republic of Poland is cooperating with specialized branches of the Council of Europe and EU countries in solving problems of the Roma.

The Periodical European Commission report from year 2002 which estimates the preparation of Poland and other candidate countries for entering the EU, positively evaluated the government’s action that had been taken in order to improve the situation of the Roma linking it to the realization of the Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001 – 2003. The authors of the report had noticed though, that the execution of the Programme had been seriously limited due to insufficient funds allocated from the budgetary means. One should remember that the previous reports had been taking a note of lack of integration strategies for the Roma community in our country, of which realization was to be coordinated by the government. It was taken down that the Roma economic and social conditions in comparison with the rest of the society are worse. The report from year 2000 except talking about programmes for the Roma that are being carried out by the candidate countries, finds financing them with the usage of budgetary means as a necessity: “these kinds of programmes should be aided with the budgetary means [...] should be initiated in a permanent manner in a collaboration with the Roma representatives”.

10
Also the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe Alvaro Gil Robles’ Report concerning his stay in Poland in the year 2002 included a positive evaluation of the actions taken by the administration within the confines of the Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001 – 2003. The Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe took a note though, that the Programme concerns only a small part of the Roma community and it’s necessary to spread the programme’s solutions throughout the country.

V. The Programme’s Assumptions

The Programme for the Roma community is going to be executed on the territory of the entire country in the years 2004 – 2013 but there is a possibility of continuing it in the following years. There are numerous elements of the programme: education, struggle against unemployment, health, living conditions, counteraction of the crimes committed against a background of ethnicity, preserving and propagating the Roma culture, knowledge of Roma people inside the Polish society, awareness of reforms taking place in Poland among the Roma. Based on still usually sparse and fragmentary researches[6], consultations with the government and self-government administration, as well as with the nongovernmental organizations, including the Roma once, one can assume that presented range of problems concerns unquestionable majority of the Roma community in Poland, and solving these problems remains a main postulate of all the interested sides.

Some of the suggested solutions have been tried out in the process of execution of the Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001 – 2003 and is going to be continued in the all-Polish Programme. However owing to internal variety of the Roma community in Poland, part of the solutions will have to have a novel nature or serve as a modification of the solutions used previously in the Malopolska.

Participants working out the Programme are, except government institutions, as follows:

- the representatives of the Roma community;
- the departmental self-government entities (The communes are elementary entities supporting the Programme);
- non-governmental organizations which care about the problems of the Roma community.

The Minister responsible for the national and ethnical minority’s affairs works as a co-coordinator of the Programme (Minister of the interior and the administration).

In order to achieve the assumed Programmes goals also the local communities shall participate. The authors of the Programme did their best efforts to construct it in a way that would integrate the Roma minority with the local communities as well as prevent possible misunderstandings and conflicts from taking place. That’s why also the non Roma poorest people that belong the local community shall participate in the Programme.

The supervisors watching over execution process of the Programme will be as follows: the province governors (with reference to the tasks being executed on the territories of the provinces), Minister of Interior and Administration as well as the Minister of Education, Science and Sport (in the range concerning education).
VI. The Programme’s goals

The fundamental goal of the Programme is to lead the Roma into a full participation in the society’s public life and to level the differences dividing this group from the rest of the society. Evening out levels of education, employment, health, hygiene, living conditions, Roma’s abilities of functioning within the civic society.

The Programme’s goal isn’t to come up with a temporary aid, a relief in the difficult situation which the Roma community turned up to be in, but develop mechanics that would allow achieving above outlined goals. It’s essential to support the Roma in heading towards preserving their identity and cultural distinction. Lack of education, difficult life situation, loosened up social bounds make Roma people to a bigger extent become subject to the pressure of modern civilization and its negative effects. It’s impossible not to notice that the superficial attractiveness of the mass culture does affect Roma culture and tradition. That’s why the authorities and the Roma community’s leaders believe and agree that marinating positive elements of the Roma culture might help this community in finding their own place in modern Poland.

The Programme’s object is then to even out the chances of people that belong to the Roma community as well as help in marinating the Roma identity and culture

1. The education

The Programme’s goal is to improve the state of education among the Roma people through: increasing the coefficient of graduating from school, improving the attendance and grades of Roma children and youth, making easier for the Roma youth continuing education in the secondary schools as well as in the colleges. The Programme on the education scale shall prevent an increase in the number of the Roma people that are unemployed and that don’t have any qualifications; counteract stronger than so far pushing aside this group to the social margin ; stop the process of inheriting poverty by the next generations.

2. The Roma versus the civic society

The Programme’s goal is social integration of the Roma through civil education which would result in enabling them to fully participate in the civic society.

3. Counteracting the unemployment.

The Programme’s goal in the field of counteracting the unemployment is to decrease the unemployment rate. It’s especially important, when it’s a phenomenon of a long-term nature, when it concerns the majority of the Roma community, when it cancers families with many children, often living in tragic social condition, people deprived of education. The Roma people as a group at risk of long-term unemployment should become subjects of special interest for the employment agencies. The professional trainings should be directed at the activation of Roma people on the job market. They should aim at: first of all creating privat enterprises, arousing motivation needed for gaining, improving and changing qualifications, inspiring to active searching for a job, strengthening one’s self-esteem, arousing the motivation to change one’s qualifications and raise the level of one’s common knowledge, preparing for a job in a profession needed on the job market.
4. Health

The Programme’s goal is to improve the state of health by enabling the Roma people to have a broader access to the health care and improve the state of hygiene.

5. The life situation

The Programme’s goal is to improve the life situation, in particular housing conditions of the Roma, improve sanitary situation (connect the apartments with the sewage system and water-supply system, provide access to the running water, etc.)

One should notice, that the improvement of the Roma financial situation cannot be considered as the goal in itself, but a mean used only in a process of achieving other goals such as education, improvement of the health situation. Material help should be given only in exceptional cases and should be conditioned by the Roma’s activity. The social aid should be connected with other fields such as education.

6. Security, counteraction of the crimes committed against a background of ethnicity

The Programme’s goal is to improve the security by making the Police and the representatives of justice sensitive to the crimes committed against background of ethnicity and to cases of discrimination, as well as to oppose the popular belief that crimes committed against the background of ethnicity the social noxiousness of such is low. Another goal is to convince the Roma that cooperation with the Police is necessary in order to fight against these crimes and build trust for the Police. There are plans of aiming at employing policemen having Roma origin.

7. The culture and preservation of the Romas ethnical identity

The Programme’s goal is to help in maintaining the Roma ethnical identity and the Roma cultural development. At the same time it’s worth emphasizing how original and special this culture is comparing to the Polish culture as well as to the majority of other European cultures, to promote attitudes of openness also among the Roma toward other cultures.

Another goal is to list and take care of places of Roma martyrdom from World War II period, in order to bring back memories of Roma victims to the Polish society.

8. The knowledge of the Roma community

The Programme’s goal is to improve the state of knowledge about the Roma community among the non-Roma majority and what follows it, improvement of the image of the Roma people within the Polish society and a change in the negative stereotypes connected with the Roma community.

VII. The means used in achieving the Programme’s goals

1. The education

The education is the most important element of the Programme, since the state of this field conditions the possibility of improvement of situation of the Roma community in other spheres. In the contest procedure, the tasks from the range of education will be treated as priority tasks.
The experiences gained during the Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001 – 2003 as well as the opinions of teachers working with the Roma students point out that the Roma children (often having low, or even no knowledge of Polish) lack preliminary education and socialization ensured by the nursery school education. In this case is especially important to enable (finance) the Roma children to attend nursery schools.

In the face of defects of experimental the so-called “Roma classes” having Roma children studying in the integrated classes under intensive protection is the most proper action that should be taken. The model of integrated classes in which the Roma children and youth receive support from the helping teachers and Roma assistants is a desirable one. Introducing new forms of support to schools educating Roma children should cause a gradual elimination of teaching in the Roma classes.

The helping teachers – knowing the methodology of working in culturally diverse groups – paying special attention to the Roma children, treating them, when on early education level, like speaking foreign language and two-cultural children. The teachers’ task is to currently supervise the children’s progress, carrying on the compensatory lessons, helping with the homework, and being in a constant touch with the family.

The Roma assistants – The Roma endowed with the trust of local Roma communities- ensure wide-ranging help to the Roma students in communicating while in a school environment, build positive image of school and advantages that come from being educated, ensure emotional support for the Roma students, help the teachers and educators in identifying needs and possible problems of particular students, help and mediate in difficult and conflict situations. One of the assistant’s responsibilities is building good connections between the parents and the school, informing the teachers about how their children are doing at school, as well as controlling the students’ attendance and educational progresses.

The helping teachers and the Roma assistants should be able to further educate themselves, use specialist literature concerning Roma people as well as help from methodology experts dealing with coexistence of diverse cultures and volunteers chosen from the university students studying social rehabilitation or some educational majors. The teachers and the assistants should be prepared do arouse motivation among Roma kids and make them realize that education leads to a social rise and at the same time mould within them curiosity toward their ethnic diversity, tradition and history of their own group. One should do his very best to both teachers and assistants could establish good connections with the parents of the Roma children that they teach which would help the parents get more involved in their children’s educational processes.

The following actions are also significant:

- funding the children’s stay in the nursery schools;
- enabling the children to go to nursery schools thanks to financial help as well as possibility to lengthen the education in the nursery schools
- funding the textbooks, teaching aids, and school accessories;
- funding children’s drive to and from the school
- funding the needed food at school;
- funding the students’ insurances;
- introduction of compensatory lessons enabling the children to deal with possible backlogs;
- enabling the children to do their homework at school under a teacher’s supervision;
encouraging the children to participate in competitions and educational contests and sport competitions;
- aesthetic upbringing the Roma children and youth through a direct contact with art;
- helping the youth in developing their artistic abilities
- organization of classes devoted to Roma culture and tradition
- teaching educational-integration courses for children and youth which promote a tolerant attitude and make Roma’s adaptation in new environment possible.
- organization of summer, integrating rest for the Roma and Polish children;
- Making Roma children’s participation in the summer and winter camps possible
- Employment of the Roma parents who would bring and take back their children from school and would also watch over their behaviour during lessons given outside the school, during school trips and events;
- arrangement of meetings with the parents where they would talk about the school’s duty and
- organization of psychological and pedagogic help for the parents and children;
- organization of educational classes for the Roma adults;
- organization of vocational courses for the youth and adults;
- setting up an environmental common rooms in which children could spend time under the pedagogic supervision;
- working out a scholarship system for university Roma students
- working out a scholarship system for artistically gifted Roma children and youth;
- compiling textbooks and programmes of teaching the roman language;
- compiling textbooks about Roma history and culture;

2. The Roma versus the civic society

It’s necessary to carry on among the Roma community educational activities which would inform about the country’s reality that they live in: about their civil rights and responsibilities (passive and active electoral rights), about the rights that they are entitled to as an ethnical minority, about the reforms that are being carried out, about the possibilities of getting pedagogic, psychological and social help, about the process of Polish accession to the European Union and involving it changes. Passing on information as such shall prevent the Roma from functioning outside the civic society.

Furthermore, these are also important tasks:

- formation of positions of the Roma community’s local attorneys
- organization of Centers of Civil Advices;
- trainings for the Roma local communities’ leaders;
- elaboration and promotion of publications concerning the Roma civic education;
- broadcasting serial programmes for the Roma by the local and all-Polish media;
3. Counteraction of the unemployment

The counteraction activities should be carried out by the employment agencies of the administrative districts listed in the Programme:

Individual tasks are as follows:

- segmentation of unemployed Roma depending on what help they need;
- formation of subsidizing jobs;
- trainings improving and changing one’s qualifications;
- organization of occupational counselling;

One should take a note of the fact that the special programmes serve as the statutory tools mitigating the unemployment effects among the social groups being particularly at risk of this disadvantageous phenomenon - including the Roma- (a statute from the 14th of December 1994, about the employment and counteracting the unemployment – the Journal of Law 1997, no. 25, item no. 128 with later amendments).

4. Health

- organization of the “white days” for the Roma;
- increase in the frequency of the Roma women doctor appointments;
- funding the medicines;
- making possible for the elders to stay in sanatoriums;
- employment of nurses of Roma origin who could significantly more easily convince the Roma women to regular medical check-ups;
- trainings for chosen people inhabiting the Roma clusters which would teach about first aid as well as organization on this groundwork an aid system;
- formation of places, where the Roma could get first aid and immediate medical help;
- medical examination of children’s psycho-physical development;
- promotion of immunization;
- public lectures about hygiene and health prophylaxis;
- systematical garbage removal;
- extermination of vermin and extermination of rats

5. The life situation

- redecoration of existing apartments and buildings;
- building social apartments;
- regulation of the land’s properties;
- handing over the lands into building plots;
- supporting building of small private accommodations;
- working out technical documentation of the structures;
- purchase of building materials;
- assurance of architectural supervision during realization of building;
- connection of the housing estates to the water -supply systems and the sewage system;
- building of wayside biological sewage treatment plants;
- building of wayside cesspools or purchase of sanitary containers;
- help in repaying the back rents arrears by e.g. paying it off in instalments;
- making receiving housing allowances possible;
- handing the single-purpose benefits over in order to purchase clothing, medicines, fuel;
- other benefits of social welfare[7];
- activation of the Roma community gained through community service and counselling heading toward its psycho-social independence;
- improving the qualifications of the organizers of the social welfare and the community service workers

6. Security, counteracting crimes committed against the ethnical background

Serial organization of trainings and work-shops for the policeman working in Roma environment teaching about the Roma ethnical minority issues and about crimes committed against ethnical background are advisable. It’s important to realize the Roma cultural distinctness, its reasons, social and civil conditions, as well as consequences resulting from this distinctness. Wide-range cooperation between the police and the Roma would be helpful (there have been taken down cases when the Roma had been attacked in their houses and despite the Police intervention and apprehension of the perpetrators on the spot, the injured party did not file a motion of pursuing the perpetrators).

Furthermore, the following actions are necessary:

- prevention of crimes committed against the background of ethnicity and showing fast respond in case of one
- helping the victims of crimes committed against ethnical background
- convincing the Roma that cooperation with the police is necessary in order to punish the perpetrators of crimes committed against ethnical background
- patrolling the areas inhabited by the Roma
- employment of people of Roma origin in the Police patrol and district services
- cooperation and exchange of information between the Police and the Roma community’s representatives;
- employment of the court guardians that are familiar with the specificity of the Roma community

7. The culture and preservation of the Roma ethnical identity

- supporting the Roma artistic initiatives
- actions heading toward wide-range presentation of the Roma culture
- supporting already existing and helping in creating new music bands
- helping in preparing cultural and sport events organized by the Roma community;
- Organization of events propagating the Roma history;
- supporting the publishing activity;
- assisting in scientific researches concerning the Roma history and culture;
- commemorating the Roma martyrdom during the World War II.
8. The knowledge of the Roma community

The tasks that have been undertaken within the confines of the Programme head towards popularization throughout the Polish society the real image of the Roma including their rich customs and distinctness, fascinating and often dramatic history culture and tradition which enriches polish culture, in accordance with the radiation of “Republic of Many Nations”. Talking about these issues by influential media, including the regional and all-Polish television and radio will be significant.

The following tasks are also important:

- dissemination knowledge about The Roma;
- promotion of the Roma publications;
- serial broadcasting programmes about the Roma by the local and all-Polish media;
- assisting in scientific researches concerning the Roma community.

VIII. The Programme’s financing rules

In order to guarantee financial measures within the national budget needed for execution of the Programme, it’s essential to create a single-purpose reserve, remaining at minister’s disposal who is responsible for the national and ethnical minorities’ affairs (The Minister of Interior and Administration). These measures will be activated by the minister’s motion and handed over through the governors or directly to the people carrying out individual tasks.

Next to the measures from the national budget’s single-purpose reserve[8] there should be measures financed by the local government, foundations, international and national organizations interested in supporting the Roma minority in Poland as well as by the auxiliary European funds. It should be emphasized that the financial measures passed over by the universal rights by other departments to support activities in aid of the Roma community aren’t included in the total costs of the Programmes.

Detailed applying procedure of granting subsidies from the funds remaining at the minister’s disposal responsible for the national and ethnical minorities’ affairs and designed for realizing the Programme’s tasks, will look as follows:

- in the middle of every year (proceeding the fiscal year), prior to specifying detailed rules of passing over the funds, the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities’ affairs announces an open contest for the subjects participating in the Programme. The movers move the proposals to the right governors (for the sake of the area where the proposed tasks are being carried out). After the governors endorse the motions, the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities’ affairs decides about who receives the subsidy. After implementing the fiscal bill, the funds get passed on to the budgets of right governors or other entitled subjects. The governors pass the funds on to the subjects whose motions got accepted by the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities’ affairs and were qualified for the execution,

- in case of proposal to carry out tasks of trans-local importance and range (going beyond the area of one province), the mover can move a proposal directly to the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities affairs. After a possible minister’s acceptance, the funds included
in the single-purpose reserve get passed on to the budgets of the right governors or other entitled subjects,
- the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities affairs as well as the governors
  (after receiving the minister’s approval) may throw realization of the entrusted tasks open to
  competition, with goals and conditions specified in the announcement.
- the tasks in the field of education financed from the 30th part of the national budget which is
  administered by the Minister of Education –on the proposal of this minister – will be subordinated
  to the estimating procedure provided for the financial tasks from the single-purpose reserve. The
  proposals in the field of education presented to the approval of the minister responsible for the
  national and ethnical minorities affairs get looked at by the proper guardian of education and the
  proper governor who also pass their opinions in regard to the proposals. The minister responsible
  for the national and ethnical minorities’ affairs passes on the accepted proposals to the minister on
  education and upbringing.

Simultaneously, one should stress that the funds designed for the private tasks connected with
 carrying out the educational tasks, the territorial self-governmental entities receive from the national
 budget within the confines of the general subvention which included the educational part. Every
 year, after excluding the 1% reserve, the amount of the educational part of the general subvention
 gets divided among the individual territorial self-governmental entities on the basis of the Minister of
 Education, Science and Sport decree on the principles of the division of the educational part of the
 general subvention for the territorial self-governmental entities, the so-called algorithm. The Finance
 Minister is the disposer of a part of the general subvention – including the educational part. The
 territorial self-governmental entities, which throughout the fiscal year experience lack of measures
 for realizing the planned tasks, may apply for extra funds within the confines of the 1% reserve of
 the educational part of the general subvention, after previous applying to the Minister of
 Education, Science and Sport.

One should take a note of the fact that according to the Programme’s assumptions, the territorial
 self-governmental can apply for admission of the funds (including organizations associating people
 that belong to the Roma ethnical minority). The proposals prepared together by the territorial self-
 government’s entities and the representatives of the local Roma communities will have a priority.
 Also other subjects running public activities (e.g. universities, colleges, pedagogical and research
 institutions, churches and religion associations, headquarters of the commune guards, the press, the
 radio, the television and others). Since the procedure provides for yearly applying, the detailed
 range of the tasks that are planned to be carried out will be known after every minister’s responsible
 for the national and ethnical minorities affairs approval.

Additional expenses of the government administration and connected with the Programme’s
 personnel are out of range of expectations. On the strength of the letter submitted by the Minster of
 interior and administration from the 21st of January 2003, the governors appointed attorneys
 responsible for the national and ethnical minorities affairs or appointed individuals responsible for
 implementing the policy toward the national and ethnical minorities, preparing themselves by doing
 so for, among the others, introduction of the Programme. These people’s duties include being
 responsible for realization and coordination of the activities that are being carried out within the
 confines of the Programme at the grounds of proper provinces.
IX. The Programmes execution monitoring

The minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities affairs as well as the governors monitor currently the Programme’s execution process as well as examine the Programme’s execution processes in the individual years.

The Programme’s participants have the responsibility to prepare a financial report that also shows the results of the activities that had been carried out. In case of local tasks, the subjects executing the task pass on the report to the right governor, for the sake of where the tasks are being executed. In case of trans-local (going far beyond the grounds of one province) the subjects show the financial report to the right governor, depending on where the subject is seated[9].

The governors pass on a collective report on tasks’ execution process on the grounds of individual provinces to the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities affairs.

The Central and provincial government administration may at every moment of task’s execution apply do the subject for presentation of how advanced and developed the works and effects are, or conduct a research and control of executing the task on their own.

Also results of the examinations and reports worked out by independent experts, nongovernmental organizations and other institutions can be used in evaluation of the Programme’s goals execution process.

The modification of methods and means used in executing the goals is possible based upon the analysis of the information gathered during the monitoring the activities taken up within the confines of the Programme as well as yearly evaluation of the extent to which the Programme’s goals have been executed.

[1] Annex 1 contains the estimated data in the division into provinces
[2] Piotr Pacewicz, 92 Teenagers – a result of the public pool carried out by The Social Research Study Room, ordered by “Gazeta Wyborcza”, in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, no.164/14 September 11992
[3] cf. how good it is to have a neighbour that you like – the CBOS public pool results from the 11th – 14th of October 2002, in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, no.4. 4215/6th of January 2003
[5] The Department of the National Minorities’ Culture of The Ministry of Culture data
[7] They are benefits granted in accordance with the act regulations from the 29th of November 1990 about the social assistance (the Journal of Laws from 1998 No. 64, item 441 with later amendments)
X. THE ANNEXES

Annex 1 - The population and distribution
Annex 2 - The Roma organizations in Poland
Annex 3 - The schedule of financing the Programme for the Roma community in Poland
Annex 4 - The monitoring

Annex 5 - The Report of the National Minorities Affairs Malopolski Governor’s Attorney which talks about the execution of the pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province for the years 2001 – 2003 in years 2001 – 2002
Annex 6 - The Roma in Poland – description of the situation
Annex 1 – The population and distribution

The estimated data concerning the Roma population and distribution throughout Poland by the province offices based upon the information delivered by the territorial self-government entities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The province</th>
<th>The number of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dolnośląskie</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kujawsko-Pomorskie</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lubelskie</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lubuskie</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>łódzkie</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>małopolskie</td>
<td>3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mazowieckie</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opolskie</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>podkarpackie</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>podlaskie</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pomorskie</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śląskie</td>
<td>2300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>świętokrzyskie</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warmińsko-mazurskie</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wielkopolskie</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zachodniopomorskie</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 750</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2 – The Roma organizations in Poland

- The Central Roma Council, Chairman Stanisław Stankiewicz
- Association of the Roma in Poland, Chairman Roman Kwiatkowski
- The Cultural Centre of the Roma in Poland – Cultural-Social Association having its head office in Tarnów, Chairman Adam Andrasz
- The National Minority of Gypsies RP “Solidarność” Association having its head office in Kielce, Chairman Jan Paczkowski
- The National Minority of the Roma “Roma Union” Association having its head office in Włocławek, Chairman Karol Sadowski
- The Association of the Roma the district Nowy Sącz having its head office in Laskowa, Chairman Taduesz Gabor
- The Social-Cultural Association of the Roma in Republic of Poland in Kędzierzyn-Koźle, Chairman Jan Korzeniowski
- The Polish Roma Association in Szczecinek, Chairman Roman Chojnacki
- The Counselling and the Information Centre for the Roma in Poland having its head office in Łódz, Chairman Andrzej Wiśniewski
- Małopolskie Association of the Roma in Andrychów, Chairman Józef Orłowski
- The “New Roman” Association having its head office in Lublin, Chairman Ewa Krzyzanowska
- The Association of the Roma Women in Poland having its head office in Kraków, Chairman Krystyna Gil
- The Association of the Roma culture and tradition promotion ‘Kałe Jakha” having it head office in Kraków, Chairman Zenon Bołdyzer
- The Kraków Association of the Roma, Chairman Marian Gil
- The “Czechrhań” Association of the Roma in Poland having its head office in Bytom, Chairman Tadeusz Kamiński
• The “Familia” Association of the Roma Community in Tarnów, Chairman Adam Bieluń

• The Association of the Roma in Stalowa Wola, Chairman Adam Klima

• The „Hitano” Association for the Roma Culture in Olsztyn, Chairman Adam Fedorowicz

• The Association of the Creators and Friends of the Gypsy Culture having its head office in Gorzów Wielkopolski, Chairman Edward Dębicki
Annex 3 - The schedule of financing the *Programme for the Roma community in Poland*

The anticipated financial means (in PLN) lay out within in the confines of the *Programme for the Roma community in Poland*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The field</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3 600 000</td>
<td>3 600 000</td>
<td>3 600 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roma versus the civic society</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counteraction of the unemployment</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td>700 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td>700 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The life situation</td>
<td>3 600 000</td>
<td>3 600 000</td>
<td>3 600 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security, counteraction of the crimes committed against the background of ethnicity</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The culture and the preservation of the Roma ethnical identity</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>500 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The knowledge of the Roma community</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In total:</td>
<td>10 000 000</td>
<td>10 000 000</td>
<td>10 000 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In addition, the general private financial input of the local government entities for the execution of the Programme’s tasks should amount to at least 20% of the sum lay out from the special reserve;  
- Based upon the monitoring process of executing the tasks, the minister responsible for the national and ethnical minorities affairs may decide about introducing changes of the financial means fees designed for the execution of the tasks in individual fields of the Programme;  
- The total outlays designed for the Programme’s execution in years 2004-2013 will not exceed 100 000 000 PLN.
Annex 4 – The monitoring

The reports handed in by the subject carrying out the tasks within the confines of the Programme should include the following elements:

- The name of subject carrying out the task;
- The type of the task (determination of the component, e.g. redecoration of a house);
- The amount of individuals/families of the Roma origin, receiving help within the confines of the task’s execution;
- The time period of the task’s execution;
- The amount of the means designed for the task’s execution:
  - from the private means;
  - from the Programme’s means;
  - from other sources;
  - the amount of the means utilized in the fiscal year (with a segregation of where the individual means originated from);
  - the amount of means that had not been utilized in the fiscal year;
  - the opinion (of the subject carrying out the task, the governor, the Roma) about the effects or advancements of the task’s execution;
  - the cost estimate of the task’s execution.
The essential reason for creation of the *Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province for the years 2001 – 2003* was a difficult situation of 3.5 thousand group of the Carpathian Roma inhabiting the territory of former Nowosadeckie province. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, the territorial self-government entities, which are obligated under law to take upon actions in aid of the poorest inhabitants, were unable to independently solve this problem.

The essential *Programme’s* goal is to – according to the assumptions made by the Programme’s authors – bring the Roma inhabiting mountain areas of the Malopolska province to a full participation in the civic society’s life as well as level the differences that divide this group from the rest of the society. Making possible evening the levels of education, employment, health, hygiene, accommodation conditions, ability of functioning in the civic society is particularly significant.

One should agree with the statement that desistance from improving in these fields would result in intensification of the differences in the Roma modernization and advancement comparing to the rest of the society. This group, and especially the Carpathian Roma, is a community which suffered the most in the times of the political system’s transformation. Because of poor education and cultural distinctness the Carpathian Roma experienced all negative effects of the metamorphosis taking place in Poland (unemployment, social problems, a drop in the level of security). Simultaneously this group has the largest difficulties in understanding the transformation that have been occurring. Without a reasonable help from the outside, the Roma will constantly use the social welfare which will result in significant burdening both the communes’ and the country’s budgets. The desistance from actions today will result in increasing of the expenses in the future.

The *Programme’s* goal isn’t to come up with a temporary aid in this difficult situation the Roma community turned up to be in, but develop mechanics that would allow achieving the above outlined goals. It’s indispensable to enable the Roma to preserve their cultural distinctness. Lack of education and a difficult life situation of the Roma make them susceptible to negative civilization’s effects; it also makes them lose their native culture. However preservation of the “positive elements” of the Roma culture might help this community in finding its own place in modern Poland.

The *Programme* has a pilot character. The solutions suggested in the document to a large extent should be recognized as novel. They have never been used in Poland before. As the *Programme* gets implemented and the people gain necessary experiences, the *Programme’s* individual elements (especially from the field of education) – according to the author’s intentions – should be used in other regions of Poland. One should be aware of the fact, that the *Programme* must be continued since the 3-years period of time marked of by the Cabinet’s resolution is not enough to achieve the *Programme’s* strategic goals.

*The Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province for the years 2001 – 2003* has been executed in 8 basic areas.
I. The education (the tasks were being carried out in years 2001 – 2002).

The tasks from the field of education were recognized as priority. They were funded by two sources. In the year 2001 from the Minister of Education and Science budget (500.00,00 PLN) [1] http://www.mswia.gov.pl/eng_mn_narod_prog_a5.html - ftn1, and in the year 2002 from the Minister of Education, Science and Sport budget (605.200,00 PLN) [2] http://www.mswia.gov.pl/eng_mn_narod_prog_a5.html - ftn2 as well as from the single-purpose reserve being at the disposal of the Minister of the Interior and Administration (136.486, 00 PLN).

The tasks from the field of education were being carried out in the school year 2001/02 in approximately 60 educational institutions; mainly in the elementary and middle schools. 500 Roma children had received all kinds of help. The tasks funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport have been carried out to different extents depending on individual communes and institutions that are subordinated to them and were mainly about:

- sending as many children to nursery school as possible;
- purchasing the textbooks and school accessories for all of the pupils and children studying in nursery school;
- organizing the compensatory lessons;
- organizing private lessons in polish;
- organizing clubs and equipping the schools with the essential aids needed for these classes;
- employing at school the assisting teachers;
- commissioning the already working teachers responsibilities of an assisting teacher;
- organizing courses teaching about working with Roma students for the assisting teachers;
- employing at school Roma assistants;
- organizing Friday-Saturday classes for the adults which would enable them to finish elementary and middle school

The means received from the special reserve had been used for:

- purchase textbooks and school accessories for 30 students (8.000.000 PLN);
- organization of sport competitions for the Roma and Polish children (8.000.000 PLN);
- compensatory lessons for 35 children (7.236, 00 PLN);
- financing stays in the nursery schools for 7 children (necessary because of no knowledge of Polish), (15.000,00 PLN);
- formation of Roma nursery school in Czarna Góra (necessary because of the
fact that parents did not want to send their children to a neighbouring town),
- 31.000,00 PLN;

- financing the delivery of the Roma children to the middle school (10.000, 00
PLN);

- cooperation between the Bukowina Tatrzańska commune and Special School-
pedagogic Training Centre in Nowy Targ (it concerned 8 pupils – 5.000,00
PLN).

Organization of different kinds of ways of spending holidays for the Roma children serves a unique
importance in the process of their education. It aids the school processes and it enables the children
to encounter other cultural models. Except that though, taking into account fact that some part of
these children comes from pathological families (alcoholism) different kinds of ways of spending
holidays serve also as sort of therapy and preventive actions. In the year 2002 for the execution of
above mentioned tasks 52.250,00 PLN were spent from the national budget. 84 children had gone
on summer camps. 45 children had participated in trips.

In total 1.241.686, 00 PLN was spent from the national budget and allocated on educational tasks.

II. The counteraction of unemployment (the tasks that have been carried out in 2002)

During the Programme’s execution, the communes had been trying to enable the Roma to become
professionally active. On one hand there were intervention works invested in (13.000, 00 PLN from
the national budget for employing 3 individuals in Czarny Dunajec commune), on the other hand
there were courses and trainings carried out in order to make the Roma move about the job market
more freely. In total 71 individuals had participated in those activities. 24.642,00 PLN was spent in
year 2002 from the national budget in order to execute above mentioned tasks.

III. Health (the tasks that have been carried out in 2002)

1. Employment of environment nurses

As a one of the tasks that had on their object health and hygiene improvement among the Roma
community, in year 2002 owing to the money from the national budget there were 2 environment
nurses employed; they worked in Nowy Sącz, Myszkowice as well as on the grounds of the
Limanowski district. It’s indispensable to have the people’s trust in order to carry out any medical
activities there fore employment of these nurses was very important. Hence there was a need for
specialized nurses. They not only help and give medical counselling but also distribute hygienist
agents.

65.900,00 PLN was spent from the national budget in order to carry out above mentioned tasks in
year 2002.
2. Extermination of vermin and extermination of rats

The extermination of vermin and rats is directly connected with the tasks mentioned in article 1. 13.500,00 PLN was spent from the national budget in order to financially help in those activities in Nowy Sącz.

IV. The life situation (the tasks that had been carried out in 2002).

1. Redecorations of the apartments.

The redecorations of the apartments belong to the group of the most important tasks that are being carried out within the confines of the Programme. Bad economic situation of the Malopolska Roma made the majority of them live in accommodations that don’t meet basic sanitary norms. Without improvement in this particular situation no improvements in other fields would be possible, especially entering upon actions in the field of improving the Roma population’s health and education.

In year 2002, 465.501,00 PLN was spent from the national budget on building redecorations. What should be stressed is that this money was allocated on both the infrastructure redecorations that all of the inhabitants use (these buildings are in general many-families buildings where e.g. redecorations of leaking roofs were necessary) as well as redecorations of individual apartments. 134 of these accommodations, inhabited by at least one family each, were redecorated to a different extent.

2. Container buildings

In two cases there was decision made to radically change the social-life situation of the Roma by replacing makeshift buildings with container buildings. 3 Roma families were helped like this. 105.000,00 PLN was allocated on these tasks from the national budget.

3. Social construction industry

The construction of the social building where the Roma families were supposed live was started in 2002. 280.000,00 PLN was allocated from the national budget in order to finish the construction. Since the Nowy Sącz authorities suggested only 4 apartments for the Roma families, the actions heading toward winning more private accommodations were entered upon.

4. The sewage system

The Roma housing estates need an infrastructure change. It especially applies to stocking up on water and piping off the sewage. 295.000,00 PLN was allocated from the national budget in order to improve this situation. In total districts inhabited by 280 people received a sewage system.

5. Water-supply system

Actions heading toward stocking the districts up on water had been entered upon. In Nowy Targ commune 6 buildings inhabited by the Roma were supplied with water. 10.000,00 PLN was allocated from the national budget in order to carry these works out.
6. Other actions improving the hygiene conditions

In case when equipping with sewage system was or still will be impossible in next few years, other actions heading toward improvement of the hygiene conditions had been entered upon – equipment with container toilets (it concerned one commune). 7,000,00 PLN was allocated from the national budget in order to carry these works out.

7. Helping the people inhabiting private accommodations in getting rid of debts

4,800,00 PLN was allocated from the national budget in order to help the occupants that were in debt and avoid their eviction.

8. Legal status regulation of real estates

The actions heading toward regulation of the matter of the land ownership where the Roma housing estate had been built on were entered upon in the Nowy Targ and Szaflary communes. It’s necessary for the further development of this community as well as success of the actions entered upon within the confines of the Programme. One should assume that the Roma that becomes a legal landlord of the property (often based upon the right of prescription) will change his attitude toward the occupied building and its surroundings. It would positively influence his relationship with the outside world. 15,000,00 PLN was spent from the national budget in 2002 in order to execute this task.

9. Actions in social assistance field

It was necessary to enter upon actions that would help the Roma community in this difficult situation. The following sums of money were allocated from the national budget:

- 38,900,00 PLN for the fight with malnutrition of the Roma children at school (97 students);

- 10,000,00 PLN for the therapy common rooms (30 Roma students had been using it);

- 10,000,00 PLN for the welfare benefits (26 families).

V. Security  (the tasks that had been carried out in 2002)

The tasks from this field had been carried out by the Provincial Police Headquarters in Krakow which organized series of trainings for the policemen as well as meetings between the policemen and the Roma community’s leaders entitled: “Cooperation between the Malopolska province Police and the Roma minority – new possibilities and challenges”. The goals of the entered upon activities were as follows:

- security improvement of the Roma;

- augmentation in law awareness and social harm awareness and rights that result from it;
- trust increase in the Police - Roma relationship;
- breaking the barriers and mutual prejudices existing between the policemen and the Roma;
- preparation of policemen for working in the Roma environment.

During the trainings the Policemen were acquainted with the Roma culture, tradition and customs. They were also introduced to the Roma ethnical minority legal situation in the light of international regulations (especially from the point of view of regulations that are in force in the EU countries).

The 8.000,00 PLN Programme’s subsidy was utilized fully. Other expenses that resulted from the trainings organization i.e. lodgings and food for the participating policemen were covered by the Police entities within the confines of business trip and came to 2648,00 PLN (55 individuals x 48 PLN).

VI. Culture (the tasks that had been carried out in 2002)

Considering the necessity of supporting the activities helping The Roma minority in preservation of their tradition and strengthening their identity within the confines of the Programme, the following money had been allocated from the national budget:

- 9.650,00 PLN for revaluation of the Roma sector in the Sądecki Ethnographic Park, which made it available to the public;
- 25.080,00 PLN for the activity of 3 artistic bands in favour of working with the Roma youth.

The outlays beard on this purpose seem to be quite low considering the fact that these actions not only contribute to the increase in knowledge of the Roma themselves and their culture in the larger, non-Roma society but also make the decrease in social distance between these two groups possible which also connects with decreases of all kinds of consequences resulting from this distance (discrimination, xenophobia, etc).

Further more in the city Tarnow tasks of total worth of 89.400,00 PLN had been carried out from the field of cultural enterprises. This sum of money is made up of expenses coming from redecoration of the Roma community centre in Tarnow, purchase of instruments and musical accessories, purchase of 3 computer kits, peripheral devices, and realization of the promotion movie “The Roma. The history and the culture.”, publication of the album “The camp of the Roma memory” as well as the Kale bale band records “The songs from Czarna Gora”. 8886, 00 was returned to the national budget.

Also The Nowy Sacz District Roma Association received 5.000,00 PLN for a event popularizing the Roma culture called “The Roma evening”

129.130,00 PLN was spent from the national budget on tasks from the field of culture.
VII. The knowledge among and of the Roma (the tasks that had been carried out in 2002).

1. The TV programmes

Especially two TV programmes had been used in carrying out this task: in the Innovative Cable Television and on the air of the Krakow Television. They mainly talked about current Roma community problems as well as the history and culture of the Carpathian Roma.

16.000,00 PLN was spent in 2002 from the national budget in order to carry these tasks out.

Special attention, because of its range, should be paid to the programme TV Krakow “The Roma brochure Romano Ciacipen”. It served as a 5-9 minute long supplement to the well known series “At home” episodes. Every coverage in this series was bilingual.

2. The Roma Attorney’s Office

The 31.320,00 PLN subsidies were used on: renting the apartment, furnishing the office (computer purchase, purchase of office accessories), and current charges connected with performing the office’s duty, expenses connected with the attorney’s passages. The following achieved goals are: social (civic) activation of the Roma, establishment of cooperation between the Roma environment and the local administration in order to solve the Roma community current problems, establishment of cooperation with other nongovernmental organizations, establishment of current cooperation with schools where the Roma children study at.

THE RESUME

In the present report there were described tasks financed by the single-purpose reserves (2002) and by measures coming from the Ministry of Education and Science and Sport budget (2001-2002). Even so, one should remember that the Programme – as mentioned above - had been executed since March 2001 based upon the measures of the territorial self-government entities, nongovernmental organizations and remedies granted by the Know How Fund (30.000,00 PLN designed for financing the jobs of the Roma assistants in the first half-year of the project’s execution). Only this overall depiction of the issue allows to point at first effects of the Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province in the years 2001 – 2003 execution.

The execution of the educational tasks that have been undertaken by the schools participating in the Programme had enabled the teachers, the school management and the education authorities to a large extent get familiar with the Roma environment. Also among the Roma one can observe a rise in awareness of the role and meaning their children’s education has.

In the school year 2001/02, on the grounds involved in the Programme, the school’s obligation had been fulfilled by 427 Roma students, including in the elementary schools 341, and 86 in the middle schools. According to the headmasters, 98 students, which make up 20%, had not been fulfilling their school’s obligation or had been coming to classes very rarely. Students from this groups were in majority of cases organizationally backward (e.g. at age of 16 they have classes with students from 1-3 grade of elementary schools), often changing places of residence, also a large part of these students spend some time outside borders of Poland. The attendance of students fulfilling their school’s obligation
had increased. However there is still a lot to improve. In the school year 2001/02, 136 students from 24 schools had kept a record of higher than 90% attendance, which resembles all other attendances. Approximately 300 students had an attendance of 60-80%. Lower attendance had been shown by the students from higher classes of the elementary school.

Equipment of the Roma students from the above described schools in textbooks and school accessories, enabling them to participate in the compensatory lessons and take private lessons in Polish had positively impacted the teaching results. From 427 students from elementary and middle schools, 337 had been promoted to a following grade, 69 had finished the school – 46 finished the elementary school and 23 finished middle school. Majority of these students had assured their intentions to further continue their education.

The Roma most often belonged to a group of poor students, getting C’s and D’s, however more students than before, 10-15% students had been getting B’s.

Another numerous group consists of students that study in the programme of a special school. There were 105 students of this sort in the school year 2001/02.

Out of 21 students that were awarded marks, 21 will have to repeat the class. The phenomenon of Roma pupils repeating classes comes most often as a result of low, 50% attendance. Consequently, pupils with low attendance show to have low educational result which unable them to get promoted to the next class.

Thanks to the Programme, not only had the organization improved but also the effects of the educational works. In all of the school, the Roma children study together with the Polish ones which favour the integration. Only in four schools there are still classes where only the Roma children study in (so-called “Roma classes”). Their behaviour is most often marked as good. Mainly the students that rarely come to classes are the ones to give their teachers hard time and cause educational problems.

Although the students had shown little enthusiasm in participating in the lessons that were supposed to help them in getting better grades (mainly the older ones), they had started to participate in greater and greater number in activities developing their interests. One of the effects was favouritism of Terne Ciave band from the Elementary School in Maruszyn in the Provincional Winter Songs and Carols Contests where the jury highly commented the Terne Ciave, as well as performances of the Romano Ciave band from a school in Myszkowice at the Holiday of the Blossoming Apple Tree in Łack, or exhibition of artistic works in the local Community Centre done by a student from the Middle School no. 2 in Nowy Targ.

Also the contacts between the schools and the Roma environment had improved. The courses done by teachers helped them in improving their communication skills, as well as enabled them to learn about and understand certain behaviours of the Roma children and their families and come up with an offer that would get accepted. The parents had started to more willingly and willingly as well as in greater and greater number participate in the information meetings, cooperate with the teachers in the range of the tasks that were being carried out with their children.
The representatives of the Roma community had made use of the Czech and Hungarian experiences and extended a proposal to employ Roma assistants in public schools. The candidates were chosen by the joint committee made up of the representatives of the Krakow Department of Education, nongovernmental organizations going about the education of the national minorities and the Roma organizations. After finishing the course organized by the Malopolskie Educational Association, the assistants had started their work in a dozen or so elementary schools of the Malopolskie province. Their task is to assure wide-ranging help to the children and youth studying in the integrated classes at and outside the school. They create a positive image of school and advantages of being educated, they assure emotional support for the Roma students and help for the teachers and educators in identifying the needs and problems of individual Roma students as well as help and mediate in difficult and conflict situations. To a large degree they are the ones responsible for cooperation with the parents of the Roma students.

Also the helping teachers whose tasks were to currently supervise the children’s educational progress, teach the compensatory classes, help in doing the homework, cooperate with the Roma assistants and maintain a permanent touch with the parents had served an important role. The teachers pay special attention to the Roma children, treating them on the early level of education as speaking foreign language and bicultural children that need special content-related support.

From the information passed on by the headmasters of individual schools follows that the execution of the Programme had contributed to the improvement in attendance and the Roma students educational results, increase in discipline among the students and improvement in the relationship with the parents.

Also the number of children attending nursery schools had significantly increased, which in the presence of the fact that the majority of them use only Roma language at home has a principled importance for their further school’s lots. In the previous year 69 children, including only dozen or so 5-year olds, had been attending nursery schools. According to the headmasters not all of the Roma children have been using this offer, that’s why in order to convince parents in Czarna Gora (Bukowina Tatrzańska commune) to send their children to nursery schools one was built in their housing estate.

The results in other fields cannot get summed up as precisely as in the field of education. The less so one should mention few significant facts. First of all one should notice, that thanks to the Programme it was possible to reach with help the most needy people. The Roma qualified by the communes – the Programme’s participants - to participation in the Programme’s individual fields belong to the poorest, often living their lives below limits of indigence, group of community. They live in conditions outraging life’s dignity. That’s why the redecorations of houses and apartments inhabited by the Roma not only have a material importance, it not only improves social-living conditions, the redecorations have also a beyond material importance: they change the Roma perception of the surrounding world; they make it less alien and hostile. They also change the relationship with the non-Roma majority. The non-Roma begin to perceive the Roma as equal members of the council committees – who because of their difficult situation need help.
Similar results have been brought by other solutions from the field of “Life situation”. Helping the people inhabiting private accommodations in getting rid of debts not only saves the Roma families from eviction but also (actually – first and foremost) creates a situation where the Roma begin to see a point in making efforts to find a job that would enable them to currently pay the bills. Actions of that sort offer to the Roma families a possibility to apply for housing allowances, which also contributes to standardization of their life situation.

It’s impossible to overestimate the fact, that within the confines of the Programme the process of the sanitary conditions improvement in the Roma housing estate has been started. In the places, where at this moment it’s impossible to undertake some more radical actions, the portable toilets were placed, while in the places where hooking up the water-supply system and sewage system was possible the works have been started (in few cases these works had been already completed) in order to supply the Roma families with these basic necessities. Also these activities have double-measurement. On one hand they decrease the epidemic danger, while on the other hand they allow the standardization of the Roma - non Roma inhabitants relation take place, since the sanitary issue arouses all sorts of controversies on the grounds inhabited by the Carpathian Roma.

It seems as if the matter of settlement of the property’s ownership, where the Roma houses are, is relatively of biggest importance. It’s because the Roma were settling down without any legal title to the occupied property. Although the housing estates have been functioning for few dozen years the Roma till today don’t consider themselves as the owners of the property. The sense of temporariness determines other behaviours such as: lack of care of the buildings and the surrounding, a sense of constant danger. Settlement of these issues by either carrying out a court proceedings affirming usucaption, or buying the properties out could in a cardinal way change this situation. These works have been already undertaken.

The sanitary issues are directly connected with the Roma population’s health issue and actions undertaken within the confines of the Programme. It should be emphasized that the activities of the environment nurses and organization of the so-called “white days” have been to a large degree changing the Roma attitude toward the matters of their own and other members of the family health. The Roma have started to notice “the cause and effect” connection between the sanitary-hygiene conditions in which they live and the diseases they suffer from. Except that, they have also started to realize that it’s necessary to take some more prompt steps in case of diagnosis of diseases of other etiology.

One of other improvements resulted from the Programme were the effects of actions heading toward professional activation of the Roma. First of all, one could notice increased interest in participating in courses enriching their qualifications, or giving any qualifications. In the beginning the Roma had shown little enthusiasm about this offer. Second of all, the governors of the provinces participating in the Programme have been signalling that there is a slight change in the Roma attitude toward work. They are starting to perceive it as crucial value. The fact that there is an increase in number of the Roma applying for interventionist jobs and keeping these jobs (before people would often abandon their jobs) is a very positive sign.
Accomplishing anything in the above mentioned fields is conditioned by the social acceptance of the undertaken actions. One should stress the fact that the executors of the Programmes haven’t come across any negative voices calling into question a need for a programme as such till today. Partially it’s a result of increased activities heading toward dissemination of the information about the Programme itself, as well as the Roma community. Thanks to the involvement of the subjects executing the Programme, the Roma community has become a target of the media. A number of mediumistic facts as well as TV programmes financed by the budgetary means have significantly contributed to a decrease in the distance between the Roma and non-Roma inhabitants of the Malopolska province. Also actions undertaken in the field of culture are of great importance. Not only they allow the Roma community to cultivate their tradition and preserve their ethnical identity, but they also – because of their popularizing virtue – disseminate the knowledge of the Roma, their culture and history within the local environments and contribute in breaking many of today existing stereotypes.

It should be mentioned that in this field (except the branch of “Education”), the support of the nongovernmental organizations for the Programme has been especially demonstrated. The Willa Decjuszusza Association and the Malopolskie Educational Association deserve special recognition. The initiatives these associations have been undertaking allowed for, among other things, trainings of the council office workers and teachers from schools where the Roma children study at, in the range of the Roma tradition, history and customs; they also helped to prepare the Roma assistants.

The effects that have been reached thank to the action undertaken in years 2001–2003 should be recognized as at least promising. In order to strengthen them it’s necessary to execute systematical actions directed to the Roma community in the following years Furthermore: cessation of the Government’s help (especially a type of help that has a comprehensive strategy) would cause on one hand a rise of sense of bitterness and disappointment among the Roma community, and on the other hand would significantly decrease the level of the government administration’s credibility. Reconstruction of this credibility – both among the territorial self-government entities which have become involved in the execution of the Programme to a large degree as well as especially among the Roma community – could turn out to be very difficult.

[1] As a consequence of not having carried out a part of the tasks in 2001, the territorial self-government entities have returned 101.202,00 PLN

[2] As a consequence of not having carried out a part of the tasks in 2002, the territorial self-government entities have returned 3.000,00 PLN
Annex 6 – The Roma in Poland – description of the situation

Table of contents:

1. The structure of the Roma community in Poland
2. The organizations
3. Participation in the public life
4. Religious life
5. The language issues
6. Education
7. The Roma versus the civic society
8. Work - unemployment
9. Health
10. The life situation
11. Security, danger of crimes committed against ethnical background
12. Culture
13. The knowledge of the Roma community

1. The structure of the Roma community in Poland

The population of Polish Roma community is very difficult to estimate. The numbers given by various individuals and organizations (15-50 thousand) trying to count the Polish Roma confirm that statement. According to the estimated data prepared in 2002 and based upon the information passed on by the territorial self-government entities it follows that there are approximately 20 thousand Roma living in Poland.

The Polish Roma are descendants of Indian nomads, who between the 6th and 9th century moved west, reached the Balkans from where another migration surge moved to the north and south of Europe. From the beginning of the 15th century one could find signs of the Roma existence in Poland. For next centuries Poland served as “the admitting country” for the Roma, who had been running away from persecutions in the neighbouring countries, or whose travel routes had been going through Polish lands. Part of them became involved with Poland permanently. These Roma are currently belonging to four main ethnical groups:

- Polish Roma, whose ancestors between the 16th and 18th centuries had been running away from persecution in German nations to Poland. Signs of this “German” migration one could find in numerous German borrowings present in the Polish Roma dialect. The Roma of this group have most often Polish last names: Paczkowski, Majewski, Wiśniewski, Kamiński, Glowacki, Krzyżanowski;

- The Carpathian Roma (named also as the Mountain Roma, Bergitka Roma) had been arriving in Poland from the 15th century, hiking along the Carpathian arc from Woloszczyzna, Hungary, Slovakia. Their last names have Hungarian origin: Gil, Oraczko, Pompa, Kacica, Siwak;

- The Kelderasze (Kelderai, Kalderasza, Koltarze). Since the 60’s of the 19th century they had been coming to Poland from today’s Romania. Their main profession was boiler-making.
• The Lowarzy (Lovara, Łowaria) appeared in Poland together with Kelderasze migrating from today’s Romania and Hungary. They worked as horse and textiles salesmen. The Roma that belong to the “elder” Polish Roma and Carpathian Roma groups call both the Kalderasze and Lowarzy Austrians

The Polish Roma, The Kelderasze and Lowarzy had been shaping their culture and tradition on the basis of _Mageripen_ (unwritten law code and taboo banns) whose one of the strongest determinants had been a nomadic life. Relationships with non-Roma and Roma from other groups happen sporadically, and the leaders of individual groups and families maintain their prestige and respect by using traditional common law. In the sixties of the 20th century as a result of implementation of the compulsory settlement policy carried out by the PRL (the Polish People’s Republic), the majority of the Roma nomads assembled in the cities. Today’s image of the Roma population distribution comes as a result of the policy of settlement from those years. The process of formation of the local Roma communities was accompanied by the simultaneous migration movement outside the country.

The Carpathian Roma had been permanently settling down on the grounds of southern Poland during last few centuries. Their tradition and culture had been coming to being in different conditions than traditions and cultures of all the other groups, and preservation of inner closeness wasn’t acting as an element determining the life of a community, as it was in groups of itinerant traditions (no e.g. traditional, institutional supervision: singular Sero Roma in the Polish Roma, or a collective one – Romano Kris in the Kelderasze and Lowarzy). They mainly inhabit Sądeczyna, Spisz, Podhale, Orawa where they create communal settlements in Szafary, Czarna Góra, Ostrowsko, Czarny Dunajec, Maszkowice, Krośnica, Limanowa and Koszary, Ochotnica Górna, Nowy Sącz, Nowy Targ and others. Since the fifties of the 20th century they have been emigrating to the cities (mainly Nowa Huta, cities of Higher and Lower Silesia) as well as little towns and villages of northern and northern-western Poland, where the Roma used to get hired in state-owned farms.

Next to inter-group resembling caste-like divisions among the Roma, there are also significant territorial divisions, connected with the official activities of the Roma organizations (in majority of cases having local reach), and inner divisions on rich and poor people within the grounds of the towns and villages. One should remember though, that because the Roma communities are so closed and it’s very hard to establish a deeper contact with them, surely many of the divisions and inner problems don’t even reach the outside observers.

2. The organizations

During the period before the World War 1, the Roma communities had neither conditions nor ambitions to establish official organizational bonds. These organizational bonds were strange and unfamiliar to the traditions and inner laws of the communities’ leaders. After winning back the independence in 1918 the conditions for this kind of activity had appeared, the Roma have had already strongly moulded mechanism of avoiding closer contacts with the non–Roma and concealing their actions.

After World War 2 the authorities of the People’s Poland had undertaken actions heading toward putting the Roma under control and supervision. One of ways helping in reaching these goals was supposed to be organizing the Roma into official associations. Few of them were in the end created but they finished their activity pretty fast. Sometimes the Roma would surrender to the
organizational pressure because of the economic situation. They would use this possibility to get apartments for winter, or receive material aid. During spring time, along with the camp’s departure, the organization would cease to exist. Sparse of the Roma activists had been coming across condemnation and ostracism from the majority of Roma population.

The Social-Cultural Roma Association in Tarnow had been the longest working Roma organization - it’s been existing incessantly since 1963 (till 1983 under the name of the Gypsy Cultural – Education Association “New Life”). Despite the controversies and doubts that had been expressed by the traditional Gypsies – the association had activated the Tarnow Roma activity, and the experiences collected by those Roma activists had been paying dividends in the nineties.

The attempts to bring into being social organizations were not only paralyzed till the end of the eighties by not only the Roma dislike but also the divisions within the groups and families. Since the nineties the situation has been changing. Next to the political changes which brought democracy and finished the period of discrimination toward the Roma and lead to equality of right for them, this period of time was characterized by the rise in social tensions. In 1990 there was an incident in Mlawa, where during riots the Roma had their houses vandalized and robbed. One should look for sources and similarities for these accidents in the beginning of eighties, when collective acts of aggression against the Roma in Konin, Słupsk took place as well as the most known incidents that took place in Oświecim in 1981.

According to some of the experts of this issue, the Mlawa and other events of assault directed at the Roma which took place in the beginning of the nineties were one of the causes for the Roma organizations to arise, or ethnical Roma awakening take place. The Roma having a feeling of being abandoned by the nation and being in danger of disliking them society, they believed the young leaders who a chance in improvement of the situation and having influence on the decision processes concerning the Roma saw in activities of the organization representing the Roma.

However the 10-years practice of activity in public has been showing that the leaders of the Roma organizations and associations most often limit their activity to the local environments.

The Central Roma Council that was brought in to being in 1997 by the leaders of the local Roma communities has ambitions to represent larger Roma communities. Stanislaw Stankiewicz, vice-president of the International Roma Union and an editor-in-chief of a magazine called “Rrom p-o Drom” is The Central Roma Council chairman. The Central Roma Council is rather a confederation of organizations whose leaders utter with a collective voice in most important issues for the Roma community, than continuously working formal organizational structure. Also the Association of the Roma in Poland established in 1991 by the current chairman Roman Kwiatkowski and Andrzej Mirga who is an ethnographer and doctor of Gypsy connected with the Jagellonian University and a Chairman of the Group of Specialists on the Roma of The European Council. The rest of dozen or so groups have a local range[1].

3. Participation in the public life

The Roma are an ethnical minority which (except few exceptions) doesn’t participate in the public life. It comes as a result of insufficient civil education and still existing reserve, or even a dislike among the traditional authorities toward being active in public. Also the problems of the Roma organizations (the causes for these problem have been described in the previous chapter) negatively contribute to the small Roma public activity. Constantly repeating in the Roma history periods of
persecutions and attempts of compulsory assimilation had developed a system of behaviours based on distrust and mystification in the contacts with the outside world. Traditional organizational structure of the Roma communities grounded on the family and house bonds served as the best protection against usually aggressive surrounding. All of this had been strengthening the life mode at the social margin.

Participation of Andrzej Mirga and Stanislaw Stankiewicz as candidates for the members of Polish parliament in the election campaign in 1991 was an attempt to actively involve and include the Roma in arising after 1989 civic society. Andrzej Mirga had tried to get elected again in 1993 from The Union for Freedom list. Although without a success (candidates didn’t meet a decisive support even among the Roma themselves) this has been so far the only attempts of introduction the Roma representatives to the Parliament.

Ryszard Rzepka was the Czarny Dunajec Commune councilor (the Malopolska province) of 1998 – 2002 tenure. In the 2002 elections dozen or so Roma representatives had competed. None of the candidates had received a seat, but the election campaign should be considered as a success owing to which the problems of the local communities were introduced into the public discussion. In Konstantynów Łódzki, thanks to the support of the Roma voters, a member of the Counselling and the Information Centre for the Roma in Poland, Robert Jakubowski, has become an alderman.

The changes that have been taking place after the 1989 made undertaking of actions helping in preservation of national identity and cultivating the Roma culture impossible. The “Rrom p-o Drom”, a monthly magazine for the Roma, published in Bialystok since 1990 and edited by Stanislaw Stankiewicz finds its place in this set very well. The articles get published in Polish and Roma. Since 1995 the Association of the Roma in Poland publishes, directed to mainly Polish readers, quarterly magazine “Pheniben Dialogue”. Programmes devoted to the Roma are being shown up within the confines of programmes for the national minorities in the regional departments of the TVP and PR. The Krakow TVP department, first one in Poland, has been producing once a month information programme, partly in Roma language.

The media has been lately leaving more and more place to the Roma issues. However the majority of these materials search for exotics and confirmation connected with the Roma community, romantic or criminal stereotype.

4. Religious life

The majority of the Roma declares themselves as Roman Catholic. Since the November 1996 priest Stanislaw Opocki has been a National Priest of the Roma.

The Roma religious life is rich. Traces of beliefs from the very early ages freely penetrate with the Christian tradition (in case of unquestionable majority of Polish Roma with the catholic tradition). It doesn’t create any special corporate feelings with the coreligionists. The majority of the Roma doesn’t attach much importance to active participation in the religious life.

The cult of Virgin Mary is especially important. On the 8th of December, in Jasna Góra, The Holiday of Virgin Mary of the Roma, combined with pilgrimage, initiated by the priest Edward Wesolek is celebrated. In years 1979 – 1996 priest E. Wesolek had been acting as the National Priest of the Gypsys-Roma. He was an initiator of the Roma priesthood in Poland, he has published few issues of the magazine “Devel Sarengo Dad – God as father of Everybody” in Polish and Roma
(also the prayers). The annual September pilgrimage of the Roma from Poland and Slovakia to
Virgin Mary Bolesna in Limanowa, organized since 1986 by priest Stanislaw Opocki. In September
the Roma pilgrimage to the Virgin Mary called Gypsy, whose figure can be found in the OO
Capuchin church in Rywald Królewski. In June the Roma from Lower Silesia and Opolszczyzna
meet in Virgin Mary’s sanctuary on the Saint Anne’s Mountain. One should remember though,
that the pilgrimages, next to assumed religious nature, are also an occasion to meet and strengthen
the bonds inside the groups.

In 1997, John Paul the Second had beatified Zefir Jimez Malla, a Gypsy from a Spanish band Cale.
It’s hard to estimate today though, what kind of impact on the religious life of the Polish Roma had
this beatification.

Small groups of Roma are believers of the Orthodox Church, are members of the Whitsuntide
Church and the Association of Jehovah’s witnesses.

5. The language issues

The Roma use the Roma language which similarly to sankrithas has its roots in Indo-Aryan
languages. The development of Roma had been taking place on the many hundred years old routes
of the Roma travels, which resulted in strong dialect diversity, in some cases creolization of the
language of common Indian ancestors. One should notice that the Roma culture is an oral culture
and hasn’t developed a codified written language. That’s why there are problems with the
transcription of the spoken language. The problems with systematizing Roma language deepen the
inner conflicts between the Roma groups and communities in Europe as well as lack of bigger
interest in this issue. During the proceedings of the 4th International Congress International Roma
Union in 1990 in Jadwisin near Warsaw, on the Roma philologist’s Mercel Courtiade initiative,
there was a project of rules of standardization and spelling of Roma (so called the Warsaw
alphabet) adopted. However after 10 years, the process of implementation system has been still
remaining in the initial stage. Some of the Roma leaders believe that since they don’t have their
own territory, they don’t have their national church, shaped elites or common interpretation of past
and origin – the unified literary language could serve as significant adhesive for the Roma living in
dispersal. The awareness of this fact is slender among the parties concerned. The problem is
deepening also the quarrel about the principle of the Roma language unification itself. Its dialects
(also the dialects that are being used by the Roma in Poland) are so diverse that they serve as
distinguishing feature and group’s name tag which appear to be still more important than broader
and abstractive, for majority of the Roma, ethnical community.

6. Education

Communal mode of life, which is practiced by the majority of the Roma in Poland, allows
cultivating a life model in which the traditional values are the ones that decide about the children’s
and youth’s socialization and education. The basis of this education are: introduction into the
romanipen world – rules of conduct; formation of individualistic features enabling identification –
me som Rom (I’m a Roma), determine the relation toward other community members and toward
the outside world (non-Roma). That’s why the role of the older community members is considered
significant, since they are the ones who act as the guards of “the proper exemplar” and the law
teachers. For the Roma that had used to lead a nomadic mode of life Mageripen serves as the law:
it’s a code of taboo banns, exactly normalizing and regulating many aspects of Roma’s lives.
Upbringing and preparation for work takes place inside the family. The paragons of this upbringing are different enough from the ways of upbringing in the non-Roma society, and that’s why they often had been and still are reasons for the cultural clash and conflict.

The Roma haven’t developed their own, codified written language, and Polish language in many cases remains as the foreign language, alternatively as the second language. Nomadic, or territorial unstable mode of life, also didn’t favour education in a traditional school. Besides, teaching in non-Roma school had been treated - and often still is treated- as threat for the inner closeness of the group, danger undermining and challenging the romanipen principles and values as well as tool of indoctrination and assimilation. Indeed, the school next to purely educational tasks had been often catching onto the social rehabilitation and re-educational responsibilities, teaching the Roma the standards and customs of the majority.

In the conditions of travelling, the school’s responsibility hadn’t been fulfilled. The Roma had been settled down, this compulsion was enforced, treating it also as one of the penal-administrative tools helpful in the settlement process. That was when the Roma children had started to in bigger number attend schools. However lack of adjustment in the school requirements, dislike or even hostility from the parent’s side toward schools as well as not smaller lack of adjustment of schools and teachers in teaching the Roma settled about the failure of the action.

The Roma children even if they did get to school, they would most often finish their education in initial classes of the elementary school. They would also often and without foundation get transferred to special schools. After the 1989 the situation didn’t improve, and the school compulsion had been fulfilled even to a smaller degree.

Current assurance of proper education is one of basic postulates of the Roma organizations. None of the Roma leaders and Roma activists has doubts, that the education is a necessary condition for the rightful Roma participation in the modern world. The Roma leaders do realize that lack of education or even illiteracy is one of most important reasons for low social status and economic handicap of the majority of the Polish Roma.

A dispute about the model of education didn’t help the education of the Roma. In 1985, on the teachers from Nowy Sącz and priest’s Stanislaw Opocki initiative there was first Roma class created similar to a Sunday school and taught next to the Roman Catholic parish in Lososin Gorny. The children were taught how to write, read, how to take care of their personal hygiene, they were taught preparation for the adult life and catechism. This initiative because breaking educational monopoly of the state school didn’t come across favourable attitude of the PRL educational authorities. After the 1989 in the entire Poland there were Roma classes being created. In 1993, about 25 classes of this sort had been working (about 430 children studied in these classes) supported by the Ministry of Education and Science recommendation. The classes attended by the youngest children (1st – 3rd grade) had been created in order to enable them to overcome the educational – adaptation barriers and prepare for studying in higher grades, in the integrated system.

This kind of organization of teaching the Roma children was criticized by part of the Roma environment. Its representatives are against creating special Roma classes and they see them as an example of a “school ghetto”. It’s because except the case of Parish Roma Elementary School in Suwałki, the level of education and teaching in the Roma classes is unquestionably lower than in the integral classes. The school in Suwałki, has been effectively carrying out the educational mission among the suwalski Roma thanks to involvement of the teachers and the school’s founder and headmaster Jacek Milewski.
Currently there are dozen or so Roma classes working (7 on the grounds of the Malopolska province). Children and teens of different age and level of advancement study in these classes. There are 15-year olds that study in 1st grades (learning how to read and write) with 7 and 8 year olds. In spite of all shortcomings and legitimate accusations concerning low teaching level, it’s hard not to agree that for the educationally backward youth (e.g. because of few years long departure outside the country), the Roma classes serve as the only chance for them to master basics of Polish language, Mathematics. Also some of the parents would choose the Roma class for their children thinking that their child among the peers of his “kind” would not be exposed to as much stress connected not only to studying but also to potential and actual disfavour or even aggression from their non Roma peers. However everybody, including the founder of the Roma classes, priest S.Opocki, agree that this kind of educational model for Roma children and youth, serves as only short-term help, a temporary solution which wouldn’t present an effective alternative compared to the integral education forms. It also doesn’t give hope for permanent solution for the problem of the Roma education.

About 70% of Polish Roma children attends the school regularly. The attendance of Polish Roma students is low. The children often go on prolonged trips with their parents (they accompany them during e.g. house-to-house selling) therefore the weekends and holidays get lengthened beyond all means. Girls at age of 13 – 15 are already considered candidates for wives. When the parents fear that their daughter might get abducted in order to get married with an accidental son-in-law, they preventively take their child out of school and put it under the supervision of the elders. After the marriage, the young wives don’t go back to school.

According to the report “The Roma about their children’s education – exemplified by the Carpathian Roma” done in 1997 by the Association of Roma in Poland ordered by the Department of Education and Science, what majority of Roma children lack is the preliminary preparation assured by the nursery school education. One of the reasons for this situation is lack of financial means required for the nursery school education. One of the reasons is lack of financial means required for the nursery school education. There were also cases when the Department of Education and Science would financially help to pay for the nursery school education and integrality summer camps but at the same time the social welfare allowances would decrease. This kind of situation unquestionably discourages Roma parents to send their children to the nursery schools.

The children are often deterred from school by the non Roma peers’ disfavour. They drop out of school since they have neither strong motivation nor their parent’s support. In the poll examining students, the question “Whom would you prefer not to sit with?” was answered “with a Roma - Gypsy” by the 1/3 of the asked pupils. Only mentally ill and homosexual ”scored” higher than the Roma. Marginally smaller disfavour was given to HIV positive person and a former drug addict[2]. According to the most recent research although the level of dislike towards the Roma has been systematically going down, it’s still very high[3].

Another serious problem is bad financial ad social conditions which a lot of Roma families live. This situation applies particularly to the Carpathian Roma Poor Roma can’t afford textbooks and teaching aids, they often experience difficulties in satisfying basic needs (clothes and footwear). It’s difficult for a child to concentrate well enough, to be able to effectively do their homework. In overpopulated homesteads.
7. The Roma versus the civic society

Attitudes toward the Roma such as dislike and widespread rejection had been and still are a reason for the Roma to reject and remain reluctant towards the non-Roma world. The Roma had developed a number of mechanisms that enable them to survive on the social margin of the majority societies. These societies through the agency of their institutions such as schools, administrations, police or courts had more often posed a threat to the Roma integrity and identity than given a chance for better life, development and prosperity. As a result of this conflictive coexistence numerous barriers and in many cases justified distrust towards non-Roma that tried to break the barriers from the outside had been created.

The mutual strangeness characteristic for the Roma and Polish majority relations was the reason for creation of not only stereotypical, negative image of the Roma, but also a stereotypical image of the Gadzow – Non-Roma people. One should remember that this term describing non-Roma, used in the right context happens to be a pejorative description. The Roma living in enforced and at the same time chosen social isolation, treat the non-Roma with distrust, sometimes even with contempt. The non-Roma world is still perceived by many Roma as alien, worse and most of all incomprehensible place. If we add to the above mentioned description of the Roma community fact, that Roma are very often uneducated, we will get a picture of community of minor importance, excluded from the public life, often living with a sense of guilt spread by the public institutions representatives, whose actions Roma often don’t understand.

8. Work - unemployment

Smiting, horse trade, fortune telling and making music and singing are the basic sources of earning with which we associate the Roma with. Obviously they had been earning for bread in tens of different ways taking up various jobs going beyond the common stereotype. Today what are left from those traditional professions are the fortune-tellers and sometimes genius Gypsy musicians. The “metal” professions and horse trade has been dying out.

In the mountain, Carpathian villages, the Roma smiths had dominated this profession. Farmers were their clients. The smiths were producing and repairing the agricultural tools and shoeing the horses. They were respected and valued as experts, and their services were not expensive. Industrialization, suppression the horses out of the agriculture economy and factory tool production had undercut the profitability of this profession.

The Kelderasze as well as representatives of other groups that had taken over this profession from them had also been busy with a related “metal” profession - the boiler-making. The boiler-makers had worked in the manufacture and whitewashing of the copper dishes and boilers for the households as well as for the industry. The Kelderasze got wealthy between the 1918 and 1939 thanks to their skills. Long after the war, till the eighties, there was a big demand for enamelling the boilers with copper in the cake shops, breweries, food processing plants which allowed the Roma boiler-maker’s cooperatives function pretty well. There are still Gypsy pans hanging in numerous houses, but they are more often considered a memory from bygone days, an antique, just as the craftsmanship connected with metal processing.
The PRL authorities had tried to convince the Roma to work in professions which they had never encountered. The experiments in PGR (state-owned farms) came out to be a failure. Since the Roma in general didn’t have any farming traditions, they in majority had been abandoning the crops and breeding, or lead to its downfall. Many of the Carpathian Roma had found jobs on the huge socialistic constructions. That’s why there are clusters of the Roma in Nowa Huta, Zabrze, Bytom, Katowice and other cities. After the 1989 breakthrough, the unqualified Roma were first to lose their jobs in the process of industrial restructuring and abolition of the state-owned enterprises.

These days most common Roma profession is trade. Thanks to connections with families living in foreign countries, they make money on importing second hand cars, selling textiles, cotton, carpets and, for many years, old junk and antiques. Some Roma people put their money into durable investments such as shops, restaurants, real estates, petrol stations.

Their economic basis had been built in rationing and limitation of trade turnovers conditions. Black market trade with foreign currencies and gold had been bringing large profit. This groups consisted of mainly The Polish Roma, The Kelderasze and The Lowarzy who because used to independence, they found their place in the new economic reality. The most enterprising and wealthy Polish Roma aren’t the dominant group in the Polish Roma population. The majority of the Roma lives from hand to mouth, without permanent employment, providing for their families by having odd jobs, working illegally or begging also with the help of their children. The majority of Carpathian Roma makes up this group. They lost the possibility to earn money in the professions they had been practicing for dozens of years along with the industrialization of the socialism era and market changes after the 1989. Because of lack of demand for the Gypsy craftsman’s manufacture and unqualified labour force (e.g. knapping the stones for the road), the Carpathian Roma are in majority dependent on the social welfare.

One of the reasons for the Roma unemployment is low education (often illiteracy and not sufficient knowledge of polish), lack of qualifications, but also the employer’s disfavour in employing the Roma people. The passiveness in searching for a job is also if big importance. A conviction that the Roma works when he has to is a popular belief in the Roma environment. This convictions strengthens the negative term: gadzikani buc{ (the non-Roma job) – as the synonym for a repetitive, boring bad and most of all not giving profit work. On the other pole there is the Roma job – profitable, based on rather agility and dexterity and one time effort, done in a fast and inventive manner. The stereotype of lazy, irresponsible and badly working Roma is e extremely strong. The Roma themselves yield to it. They fall into passiveness (they don’t look for job, they don’t rise their qualifications) dependence on the social welfare. It causes a difficult situation where the unemployment is pathologically inherited.

On the basis of the report *The Roma – unemployment. The elements of the description of the social Roma situation in Poland in 1999*, done by the Association of the Roma in Poland ordered by the National Employment Agency one can affirm that:

- every third examined Roma didn’t finish elementary school;
- only 0.8% of the examined population has higher education;
- only 42% of the examined individuals had indicated their professional; work as the income source fro their family;
- although 32% of the examined individuals stated their will to work professionally, as many as 5% didn’t answer this question, moreover as a justification the majority said that there is no such tradition, “It doesn’t happen in the Roma environment”;
- only about 30% of the Roma had had contacts with the employment agencies;
- only 25% of the examined individuals had expressed will to participate in the trainings of profession preparation, despite a very low education level.

In the light of above mentioned data, the Roma environment can be considered as especially being under threat of long term unemployment. From among all of the Roma groups, the Carpathian Roma are to a largest degree afflicted with this problem. Almost their entire population suffers from unemployment and gets by thanks to the social welfare.

9. Health

The Roma's health problems appear as a result of bad, and in many cases catastrophic social situation: no water-supply, sewage system, no heating in the homesteads, disastrous technical conditions of the heating system, no money for the heating, poor diet, limited access to the health services as well as no prophylaxis and lack of habit of monitoring the Roma women’s pregnancies which could help to cure children’s congenital defects in early stage. According to the information passed on by the representatives of the Roma community one can conclude that the Roma are especially in danger of diabetes as well as diseases of circulatory system. The diseases of the respiratory system (asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia) as well as viral type B hepatitis are also common among them. Sometimes there are also cases of tuberculosis among the Roma that live in socially devastated housing estates and homesteads. The catalogue of illnesses (in reality significantly bigger) combined with economic problems, and exclusion of the Roma from the free health service cause an increase in the death rate - and at the same time make the Roma life length shorter comparing to the rest of Polish society.

10. The life situation

The Roma communities are strongly diverse in regard to economic situations and what follows living conditions. Next to unquestionably wealthy Roma individuals and often spectacularly expressed affluence, there are entire communities living in poverty and penury. Their life situation affects especially children who are deprived of not only basic equipment, clothing or occasions to participate in summer holidays trips, camps etc, but also possibilities to study outside their place of residence, to study in high schools because they don’t have money to pay for the transport.

This situation especially applies to the Carpathian Roma. The Roma inhabiting piedmonts of the Malopolska province are in most cases clientele of the social welfare. In 10 communes of the Malopolska province, 75% of the Roma that live there had been receiving or still are receiving all kinds of social benefits, and in some communes more than 95% of the Roma families take advantage of various forms of this help. These families receive all sorts of social benefits: cash benefit, money for their children’s canteens, material help including purchase of fuel. Similar situation takes place in cities of Higher and Lower Silesia where there are also clusters of Carpathian Roma.

Those services are provided as permanent benefits, social welfare, and single-purpose benefits. Rent arrears often unable Roma families to receive housing allowances. The apartments that the Roma live in often require immediate redecorations, some of them don’t even meet the requirements of the construction law, and part of them are construction arbitrary acts. If the redecorations won’t be carried out in close future, part of the buildings will be fit only for
demolition. It’s common that a many-generation family (many times 10 people) lives in one room, that’s why these apartments are usually overcrowded. Another significant issue is the matter unregulated ownership of the grounds inhabited by the Roma, which prevents from building new apartments. The existing ones are often deprived of basic necessities: toilets, bathrooms, in few so-called “Roma settlements” in the Malopolska province the Roma don’t even have running water.

The earnings of most of the families are considered catastrophically low. Cases of receiving old-age benefits or systematical financial aiding the entire family’s budget are very rare. One should expect that in upcoming years there is going to be an increase in number of people of Roma origin that despite reaching the pension age they will never acquire pension rights which will increase number of people that don’t have any permanent source of income.

11. Security, danger of crimes committed against ethnical background

The Roma called Gypsies or Egyptians appeared in Europe in the beginning of 14th century and during first two centuries hadn’t been experiencing dislike or discrimination. They had carried the legend of biblical origin of Egyptian fugitives and penitential aim of their travel. Europe which during middle ages had been traversed by the crusade, armies of feudal rulers, the brotherhood of expiating pilgrims, welcomed the nomadic salesmen, circus artists and other so-called “loose people” with interest and without dislike. This statement finds firm back up in numerous testimonies and documents from this period of time – accompanying letters, the urban chronicler’s information about helping the Gypsy camps, court files in which the Roma are rightful party of the case and others. However it turned out fast that the statement about the Roma Christian roots was strongly overestimated, and their nomadic life – alleged pilgrimages – begun to be treated as vagrancy. The distinctness and strangeness, also the anthropological one, dabbling in fortune-telling and taming the animals created in the contemporaries suspicions of being in secret dealings with the Devil forces.

In the 16th century many hundred years old period of time of Roma persecution had begun in Europe. A period of time filled with brutal bills prosecution aimed at nomadic Roma, acts of banishment, actions of compulsory settlement and denationalization. After 6 centuries of Roma presence in Europe, the Nazi German policy lead to extermination of almost half of the European Gypsy population – the Roma, the Sinti, the Manus. But the persecution didn’t finish together with the World War 2. The countries of the “people’s democracy” had carried out a policy of assimilation under the banner of equality and building a homogeneous, socialistic society. The “antisocial’ Roma that had still practiced nomadic mode of life had been compulsorily settled down. They had been forced to participate in the “productiveness actions” and work in professions forbidden by the romanipen – the law code of the nomadic Roma. Also some of the western democracies had carried out a secret assimilation policy. The women had been sterilized; the children had been taken away from their parents and compulsorily put into dormitories.

The Roma had appeared on the grounds of the Polish nation in the beginning of 15th century. Sparse, however, traces indicate that just like in the Western Europe they were kindly and friendly welcomed. They were free citizens, owners of properties, craftsmen.

The first bill directed at the Roma starting of with a sentence “The Gypsies, or the unwanted people, will be thrown out from this land by us and can’t be taken in again” was enacted in the General Crown Seym in 1557. Next bills had been enacted quite systematically but at the same time hadn’t been implemented or even acted against it by carrying out a policy contradicting with its
discriminatory nature (the Gypsy superiors from the royal conferment). Mass flights to Poland from Germany where the anti-Roma laws were being brutally executed took place as a result of Polish tolerance. Contemporary Roma from the Polish Roma group are descendants of the “German” fugitives.

The last law act of the 1st Republic of Poland which was supposed to determine new Roma policy was worked out based upon The 3rd May Constitution and published in 1791 Proclamation of Both Nations Committee. This document guaranteed the Roma freedom and protection of the law.

Along with the downfall of the Polish nation a period of longest, separated by the 1918-1939 period Roma persecutions had started. Especially difficult was the period of porrajmos extermination – the Roma Holocaust, as well as PRL period where a relative personal safety was connected with the compulsory settlement process and the productivization of the Roma. The compulsory settlement – which had been carried out since 1952 and crowned with mass 1964 action - caused irreversible changes in the Roma lives and consciousness of those, who had developed their tradition and culture during many hundred years travels. Travels that weren’t stopped by even most brutal invader’s activities. The PRL authorities managed to do that thanks to mass administrational-penal activities.

The contemporary 3rd Republic of Poland treats the Roma as rightful citizens, considering the Roma community as ethnical minority and wraps it in special custody.

The law protection enjoyed by the Roma ethnical minority doesn’t mean that there is no dislike from the side of non-Roma citizens. Systematical media reports talking about consecutive conflicts and incidents in Kety, Żywiec, Łódź, Pabianice, Ciechocinek, Czaniec, Debica, Zabrze, Koszelówka and in other places and every day unpleasantness experienced by the Roma in offices, shops and on streets of Polish cities constitute a proof for this dislike.

According to the Main Police Headquarters, the Roma aren’t common victims of crimes though, and the crimes committed by Roma meet usually fast Police response. Nevertheless, complaints concerning indolence of the Police or discrimination of the Roma by some of the police officers do come up. It might be a result of many years long experience, which tells the Roma to avoid open conflicts as well as any kind of contacts with the authorities, even in cases of evident harm. The profession policeman – chalado - is often numbered among the “impure” by the majority of Roma and prohibited professions, which definitely makes the cooperation between the Police and The Roma difficult. The Police have been making attempts to organize appointments with the Roma representatives in order to discuss problems and threats that occur. What’s of great importance in this situation is proper preparation of police officer for working in the Roma environment. The knowledge of Roma peculiarity, culture, traditions and limits which result from them that the police officers could help in overcoming the mutual dislike.

The Ministry of the Interior and Administration monitors criminal events inflicted on people of Roma origin as they come. Since April 2000, The Main Police Headquarter has been giving monthly reports to the Ministry of the interior and the administration about those kinds of cases registered by the police services on the premises of the entire country. Based upon those reports as well as information obtained from the Roma organizations’ representatives or the sufferers themselves, clearing up actions have been entered upon.
In evident and well-substantiated cases, the Roma can claim for having regard for their civil rights by invoking the Constitution of Republic of Poland regulations, especially the 32nd article - forbidding discrimination for any reason, as well as the regulations included in the Criminal code, in the code of criminal procedure, and in the code of administrative procedure. Till today there hasn’t been a single case of Roma formally initiating of proceedings regarding discrimination. It might be a result of low sense of law among the Roma, dislike toward contacts with public prosecutor’s office and disbelief in effectiveness of the administrative course of claiming or the recourse to the law.

12. Culture

To the majority of Polish people, the Roma culture means first and foremost “Gypsy” music. The Roma musicians had been accompanying at all times weddings, funerals and all the other events when the non-Roma people needed music. They had been playing at village parties and royal balls. The music played by the Roma is as different as the Roma themselves. They have many sources of inspiration and they often become virtuosos of music in the country they live in. The accomplishments of the Roma musicians in Poland had been relying on the Russian romance. Its position constructed by local “wedding” orchestra was strengthened by the stage bands such as Roma, Temo and the Roma soloists such as Randia, Michaj Burano, Wit Michaj, Sylwester Masio Kwiek, Adam Andrasz.

The contemporary Roma music is a combination of Hungarian czardas, Russian romances and more and more popular Balkan rhythms. This music gets presented on more and more numerous reviews of national minorities’ music and on their own Roma festivals. The two largest events are organized since 1988 Romane Dyvesa – The International Meeting of Gypsy Bands in Gorzów Wielkopolski and organized since 1997 International Song and Roma Culture Festival in Ciechocinek. The Association of the Founders and Friends of the Gypsy Culture in Gorzów Wielkopolski is the organizer of the above mentioned Gorzow Wielkopolski event. A manager of the Terno band established in 1979, Edward Debicki, is a director of the festival. The festival’s programme gets completed by panel discussions, specialist gypsy literature presentations, poetry evenings, vernissages of artists. The Ciechocinek Festival is organized by a popular Roma artist Don Wasyl and the Association of the national minority of the Roma “Roma Union” in Wloclawek. Both Festivals has been extensively reported on by the public television. These festivals popularize the Roma culture, strengthen the stereotypical, romantic yet positive image of the Roma – people loving singing and dancing’s. Moreover throughout the entire country there are events of smaller importance taking place, presenting the output of the local Roma communities.

In 1979 there had been first museum Gipsy-enology collection in Poland created, which was put together in Tarnow, thanks to the activity of ethnographer and an expert on the Gypsy community Adam Bartosz. In 1990 there was first in the world, permanent exhibition dedicated to the history and culture of the Gypsies opened in the local Ethnographic Museum. All kinds of folk events take place during the season in this museum. Another permanent exhibition is the Gypsy sector in the heritage park in Nowy Sącz.

In 2001, in Block 13 on the grounds of “Stammlager”, former Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz – Birkenau in Oswiecim there was permanent exhibition dedicated to the Roma and Sinti martyrdom in Europe opened. The exhibition was created on the initiative and participation of The Documental – Cultural Centre in Heideberg, the National Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, and the Association of the Roma in Poland as well as six national Roma organizations.
Every year, on the 2nd of August, the Association of the Roma in Poland and the National Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum organize the celebrations of the remembrance day of the Roma and Sinti extermination. The ceremony takes place next to the monument commemorating the liquidation of the so-called “family” camp on the grounds of Birkenau on the 2nd of August 1944.

The Roma music publishing houses have been appearing. Thanks to the television, especially popular became Don Wasyl. His son Dziani was the first one to have a professional marketing campaign done by a large music company. In 2002, within the confines of the series called The Music of the source published by the Polish Radio there has been a record made called “The Roma” with the songs of bands such as Kale Bale from Czarna Góra and Kale Jakha from Krakow – Nowa Huta. This publication was possible thanks to funds from the Pilot programme for the Roma community in the the Malopolska province for the years 2001 – 2003. Also the older records of Michaj Burano, Wit Michaj and Randi have been reissued.

Edward Debicki, Teresa Mirga, Izolda Kwiek have published their poetry volumes. The son of Edward Debicki, Manuel Debicki, has published Roma fairytales of his won authorship. However small editions determine the fact that these publications become only “collector’s items’ for the fans of the Gypsy artistic activities. Graffo Glowacki has published “The Gypsy Love”, a novel in style of Russian romance.

Jan Kanty Pawluśkiewicz has composed music for the Bronislawa Wajs - Papusza poems. The open air spectacle “The Papusza harp” has been presented in, among the others, Krakow and Oswiecim. In year 2000 in Olsztyn a premiere of the spectacle “The forest gave birth to me...” based on the Papusza poetry took place. Olsztyn Roma participated in this spectacle. The music for this spectacle wrote Adam Fedorowicz. Bronislawa Wajs-Papusza still remains only as a poet, whose works, thanks to the popularizing support of Julian Tuwim, and first and foremost Jerzy Ficowski, had came to existence in the Polish culture.

The Association of the Roma in Poland is the most active publishing house promoting Roma culture and publishing specialist literature about the Gypsy community. It has published a few dozen of entries from this field since the beginning of the nineties.

13. The knowledge of the Roma community

The Roma have been a constant element in our culture. We all know what a saying “The smith was guilty – the Gypsy was hanged” means, we also have words in Polish which mean “to cheat” and “to swindle” but taking it roots from a word ‘Gypsy”. The character of Gypsy – the Wander but also of Gypsy – the Thief and the Beggar has grown in size in the awareness of Polish people. The Roma in the eyes of the non-Roma are romantic artists of life – adventurers, people living by their wits, although they sometimes are also loafers, looking for an occasion to easily steel something. This duality of stereotypical perception acts as determinant of the non-Roma majority towards still alien, although present on the grounds of Polish nation for more than 500 years, minority. For many years, in the public opinion polls talking about Polish dislike toward other nationalities, the Roma has been taking up leading places which proves that the second one, the “black” image of the Roma prevails. Elementary ignorance in regard to this community serves as the basic problem.

[2] Piotr Pacewicz, 92 Teenagers – the result of the public pool carried out by The Social Research Study Room, ordered by “Gazeta Wyborcza”, in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, no.164/14 September 11992