



**MONTENEGRO
GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO
MINISTRY FOR HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS**

DRAFT

S T R A T E G Y

**For Improving the Position of Roma and Egyptians in
Montenegro**

2012 – 2016

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I INTRODUCTION

Unlike other minority groups and minority national communities who are included in contemporary mainstreaming of Montenegrin society, Roma and Egyptians are members of the most vulnerable and marginalized minority national community in Montenegro. Low economic power, low level of education, very few employees, inadequate housing conditions, social exclusion together with ethnic stereotypes and prejudices, specific way of living and other characteristics, are only some of the causes lying behind their difficult position in society.

During the years of the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, when ethnically inspired wars reached their culmination in our nearest neighbourhood, Montenegro managed to preserve its internal peace and multiethnic coexistence. Not only it succeeded in preservation of its internal peace in those difficult times, but Montenegro had also widely opened its doors and had become the shelter to the columns of refugees and displaced persons. At one moment, refugee and displaced population reached the number of one quarter of the total population of Montenegro. Given the well known war events in Kosovo and departure of significant number of displaced persons from Roma and Egyptian population, overall socio-economic situation of this population had additionally been aggravated.

Systematic response of the Government of Montenegro to the issues of RE population started soon after the regional conference »*Roma in an Enlarged Europe*«, after which Montenegro had accepted the project »*Decade of Roma inclusion 2005-2015*«. In January 2005, Government of Montenegro adopted its Action Plan for implementation of *Decade*, with tendency to stop the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion of Roma people from social life in Montenegro through projects in the areas of education, employment, housing and health care. Given the limitations of effectiveness of Action Plan with regards to four priority areas, Government of Montenegro adopted *Strategy for Improvement of Position of RAE population in Montenegro 2008 – 2012* at the end of 2007. Strategy was a set of concrete measures and activities in four-year period of a legal, political, economic, social, urban and communal, educational, health, cultural-informative and of any other necessary character. Strategy defined holders of activities, deadlines and financial costs, as well as method for monitoring over realization of projects and one-year obligations to inform the Government of Montenegro.

So far undertaken measures and activities with the purpose of improvement of Roma and Egyptians' position resulted in significant and evident, but not entirely positive changes. Although application of Action plan for Implementation of Decade of Roma Inclusion and Strategy for Improving the Position of RAE Population in Montenegro gave certain positive results, expected steps forward the improvement of overall position of RE community as collective have, however, missed out.

According to the existing and available data from the census and list of households and dwellings in Montenegro¹, 6251 persons declared as Roma nationals; this is 1,01% of total population. Egyptian population has 2054 members, i.e. 0,33% of total population, while 5169 persons listed Roma language as their mother tongue. The majority of Roma people live in Podgorica (3988), than in Berane (531), Niksic (483), Bijelo Polje (334), Herceg Novi (258), while most of Egyptians live in Podgorica (685), Niksic (446), Tivat (335) and Berane (170).

With the purpose of implementing Strategy for Improving the Position of RAE Population in Montenegro 2008 – 2012, Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) in cooperation with CSO Coalition Roma Circle conducted research and created statistical document *Data Base on RAE population in Montenegro* at the end of 2008. Publication has accomplished two basic goals: to identify number of RAE population in Montenegro and to assess their socio-economic status. Publication covered 9943 individuals who declared themselves as Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian in terms of nationality. The objects of analysis were:

- demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status)
- geographical characteristics (place of residence)
- educational characteristics (formal and informal education, finished school, whether a person attends school, the class, etc)
- ethno-cultural characteristics (national or ethnic origin, second language they use, religion, etc);
- migration characteristics (the last immigration, when and where from, etc)
- economic characteristics (employment, activity, unemployment – registered as unemployed, persons with personal income, household income)
- household and family (ownership of an apartment, apartment equipment – in terms of water supply system, electro installations, vicinity of the waste landfill, roads, etc)

Based on data analysis, we can conclude that majority of Roma and Egyptian people still live in conditions of extreme poverty and very poor living standards, especially in terms of health and hygiene. Further, many of them do not possess identity documents, do not have health and social insurance and mostly are undereducated. Deeply concerning is the number of those not being familiar with the official languages, while only few of them have completed primary education, yet with very limited opportunities to gain higher education. Majority is unemployed, while those employed often operate in least qualified and paid positions. Some of them provide minimum wages by performing self-taught skills and crafts, which again puts them in very in unenviable and uncompetitive position at the labour market.

In order to change and improve the status of Roma and Egyptians, and thus provide their complete inclusion in social, economic cultural and political life, certain systemic solution which

¹ Source: MONSTAT

would provide RE population with more efficient access to most challenging areas must be put in place.

II OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

Strategic goal as defined under this document is to improve and advance the position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegrin society, which should further lead to reduction of existing differences between them and the rest of the population. Given the well-defined and comprehensive normative framework of guaranteed human and minority rights in Montenegro, basic objective of the Strategy is the creation of positive environment for respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms for RE population, individually and collectively, in the purpose of overall improvement of social, cultural, socio-economic and every other status of this group of Montenegrin citizens. This will enable RE community to gradually integrate into the social mainstreaming of Montenegro, which shall be long and complex process. Integration of Roma and Egyptian population also includes the establishing of new socio-cultural relations towards RE community, in sense of specific form of peaceful coexistence with majority population, as well as elimination of traditionally rooted prejudices and stereotypes typical for relation towards this population; unfortunately this is, not just the case in Montenegro.

Principles of equality under the law and prohibition of discrimination are the basic prerequisites for enjoyment of all human and minority rights; however, these preconditions are not sufficient for provision of the actual equality of minority, particularly in terms of protection of minority identity. Therefore, both international standards and national legislation envisage recognition of additional set of laws for minority members, the institute known as *affirmative action – preferential treatment – positive discrimination*. This concept, as international legal standard, as defined by the Council of Europe, refers to national, racial, religious, linguistic and cultural minorities. Its purpose is to provide recognition of certain rights to a greater extent than the extent of rights recognized to majority population based on general rules of international law on protection of human rights. Measures to be undertaken under affirmative action relate to the minority member, hence to the group most distinguished from the rest of population by objective criteria (language, religion, origin, culture, national affiliation). This group is numerically smaller, it is in inferior social position, but which members express joint wish to belong to that minority and to preserve its uniqueness.

The exercise of fundamental human rights and overall improvement of position of RE population has its multiple benefit-implications on total Montenegrin society. Balanced economic and social development additionally stimulates the tendency of Montenegro towards wider integrative processes, as multiethnic democratic state.

Development and implementation of the Strategy rests on the basic principles developed in practice of protection of human and minority rights, particularly in terms of vulnerable, excluded and marginalized groups and population, which are as follows:

- equality and equal opportunity and antidiscrimination;
- integration without assimilation;
- affirmative or positive action;
- respect for and recognition and promotion of diversity;
- gender equality;
- provision of help and self-help to disadvantaged citizens and groups in the socially inferior position;
- mutual partnership of the Government, local authorities, international and civil society organizations, together with Roma and Egyptians, i.e. participation of Roma and Egyptian organizations in the development and implementation of the Strategy;
- social solidarity and peaceful coexistence of minorities and majority;
- divided responsibilities between main actors dealing with development and implementation of the Strategy.

All these principles are interrelated, interdependent and in a high mutual correlation, meaning that the goal and objectives of the Strategy can only be achieved through their integral implementation. This is completely logical and reasonable, given the actual status of Roma population in Montenegro and therefore, necessity of undertaking urgent and effective measures aimed at rehabilitation of such a situation, as well as creation of long-term conditions for Roma and Egyptians to start exercising basic human and minority rights, as other Montenegrin citizen do.

III LEGAL STATUS

Shortly after regaining of its independence, Montenegro has become member of most important international organizations. Furthermore, Montenegro has acceded to a comprehensive process of succession to international treaties which it was party of in the former state formations (SFRY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, State Union of Serbia and Montenegro). In this regard, protection and improvement of status of Roma and Egyptians as extremely vulnerable minorities, stems from obligations imposed under International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, European Social Charter, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, number of conventions on prohibition of various forms of discrimination – based on race, education, gender, age, in relation to work and labour rights, different rules of so-called *soft law* within the scope of UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, such as

UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities from 1992, OSCE Copenhagen criteria and principles and number of recommendations of Council of Europe in this regard.

EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 is also very important document, given the commitment of Montenegro towards the full membership in the European Union. This EU Framework seeks to make a tangible difference to Roma people's lives. It is the EU's response to the current situation and does not replace Member States' primary responsibility in this regard. With this EU Framework, the European Commission encourages Member States, in proportion to the size of the Roma population living in their territories and taking into account their different starting points, to adopt or to develop further a comprehensive approach to Roma integration and endorse the foreseen goals. This Strategy had in mind the goals set out in this framework, especially with regards to the four crucial areas: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing and basic living conditions.

The Constitution of Montenegro incorporates all of these international legal standards on protection of human and minority rights in the internal legal system of Montenegro. This is particularly related to provisions on the prohibition of all forms of discrimination, equality before the law, equality of opportunity, prohibition of dissemination of all ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, and in particular the provisions on a set of additional rights for members of national, ethnic, linguistic and other minorities and minority communities at the political, economic, religious, cultural, social and educational level. Also, the Constitution stipulates that *“ratified and published international agreements and generally accepted rules of international law shall make an integral part of the internal legal order, shall have the supremacy over the national legislation and shall be directly applicable when they regulate the relations differently from the internal legislation”*.

A set of laws defines the modus of exercising the special rights and thus, provides equality and the prohibition of discrimination of any grounds:

- Ways of resolving the status issue are defined under the Law on Montenegrin Citizenship, Law on Foreigners, Law on Asylum and Law on Civil Registries;
- Education processes are treated in: General Law on Education, Law on Preschool Education, Law on Primary Education, Law on Education of Children with Special Educational Needs, Law on Gymnasium, Law on Vocational Education and Law on the Education of Adults;
- Legal Framework within the area of employment, exercise of labour rights and right to employment is composed of set of laws, regulations and rules, particularly Law on Labour, Law on Employment and Right to Unemployment Insurance, Regulation on Subventions for Employment of Certain Categories of Unemployed Persons;
- Normative framework for achievement of right to health care is defined, inter alia, by the Law on Health Care and Law on Health Insurance;

- Law on Social and Child Protection regulates issues of financial protection of family, persons in social need, children, children in risk, etc;
- Law on Culture, inter alia, defines principles of achieving the culture based on respect for freedom of expression and right to culture, with equal protection of all cultural identities and respect for cultural diversity;
- Law on Media, Law on Public Broadcasting Services of Montenegro, Law on Electronic Media and Law on Ratification of European Convention on Cross-Border Television are the most important legal acts within the area of the right to information;
- Achievement of gender equality principle is defined under the Law on Gender Equality;
- Law on Prohibition of Discrimination prohibits every form of discrimination and identifies mechanisms for protection from discrimination;
- Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms more closely defines set of minority rights and mechanisms for protection of those rights, with particular emphasis on the protection of national minority identity i.e. protection from minority assimilation, as well as enabling efficient minority participation in public life;

Method of conduction of national framework and its practical application are further defined and developed under series of strategic documents in particular areas.

IV FIELDS OF APPLICATION

1. LEGAL STATUS

Legal status of each individual defines the body of statutory rights that are at his/her disposal. Possession of identity documents is a fundamental prerequisite for social inclusion and poverty reduction of Roma and Egyptian (RE) population. This enables regular access to the labour market, social protection, health and education services, and all other preconditions relevant for normal organization of life. Unfortunately, certain number of Roma and Egyptians whether domicile or displaced, do not possess identity documents.

Based on the realisation of measures envisaged under the *Strategy for Improving the Position of RAE Population in Montenegro 2008 – 2012* and with the purpose of regulating the status of foreigners with permanent or temporary residence in Montenegro, Government of Montenegro achieved evident and measurable results, through the work of its competent ministries and institutions and with the help of international organizations. In terms of regulation of Montenegrin citizenship for domicile RE population, certain measureable results were

achieved through the work of public institutions and in cooperation with civil society and international organizations. Further and continuous work on this issue is necessary.

Appropriate legal status is a prerequisite for local integration. Government will act as to ensure that all conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who wish to remain in the country acquire legal status either by status of permanent residents or through naturalization in accordance with the *Strategy for Permanent Resolution of Status of Displaced and Internally Displaced Persons in Montenegro, with special reference to the Konik area*.

Status of internally displaced persons may be permanently resolved in two manners, which must be based on voluntary principle, and are as follows:

- Local integration and
- Voluntary return.

Local integration includes regulation of the legal status of RE population in Montenegro, which shall further provide access to all the rights guaranteed under applicable legislation of Montenegro. Additional problems among RE population were noted in relation to the documents from country of origin, referring to:

- Obtaining the documents of persons registered in civil registries;
- Subsequent registration of birth for both, adults and children;
- Subsequent registration in the register of citizens for adults and children.

In order to address these and similar problems, Governments of Montenegro and Republic of Kosovo signed the Agreement on subsequent registration of internally displaced persons from Kosovo residing in Montenegro in primary registers and register of citizens of Republic of Kosovo, which tends to facilitate the establishment of mechanism for cooperation in solving the status issues of IDPs from Kosovo residing in Montenegro. This relates to the procedure of subsequent registration in primary registers (of births, marriages and deaths) and register of citizens of Republic of Kosovo.

Recommendations:

1. To continue with action of informing on possibilities for resolution of status issues of internally displaced persons and domicile population;
2. To continue with action of going to municipalities of origin in order to gain personal documents necessary for regulation of status in Montenegro;
3. To dedicate special attention to vulnerable groups which are not able to obtain documents necessary for submission of request for gaining the status, especially for persons with special needs and those living below poverty line.

2. EDUCATION

2.1. Preschool Education

The coverage of Roma and Egyptian population in preschool education is 13.81 %, which is twice less than the coverage of children at the state level (26.65 %). Data on coverage of boys and girls indicate that there is a slightly larger number of girls included – 15.02 % in comparison to the coverage of boys – 12.69 %.

On the territory of the Capital City of Podgorica in the settlement Vrela Ribnicka, there is a pedagogical unit attended only by the children of Roma and Egyptian population (native and displaced from Kosovo). Parents of children attending this educational unit are exempt from any food costs; breakfast and snacks costs are covered by “Djina Vrbica” public preschool institution itself. The Red Cross of Montenegro organizes daily 2-3hour-long psycho-social workshops for 160 children at the age of 3 – 6 years from RE population displaced from Kosovo and residing in Konik Camp, Vrela Ribnicka.

In accordance with Article 35 of the Law on Preschool Education, the food costs for children without parental care and children whose parents are beneficiaries of financial help for families, in line with the institution referred to in paragraph 1 above, are covered by social centres operating in territories of child’s or parents’ residence.

2.2. Primary Education

Primary education is compulsory for all children aged from 6 to 15 years of life. The children being enrolled in the school are the ones about to be 6 years in that calendar year.

Number of Roma and Egyptian children in primary education is rising from year to year. Data indicate to continuous number rise and positive trend in the area of primary education of RE children. Based on data by school years, number of pupils of RE population attending primary education, was as follows: 2001/02 – 536; 2002/03 – 626; 2003/04 – 1006; 2004/05 – 1169; 2005/06 – 1195; 2010/11 – 1582. In 2011/2012 that number was:

Domicile RE population	Internally displaced persons from RE population (Kosovo)	Displaced persons from RE population (Former SFRY)
Total	Total	Total
842	720	20

Special support is being provided to *Bozidar Vukovic Podgoricanin* Primary School, which is nearby Konik Camp (place where refugee and displaced persons from Kosovo are settled). The main unit of Primary School *Bozidar Vukovic Podgoricanin* has 560 pupils of Roma and Egyptian population, while regional department of this school in Konik Camp has 237 pupils of this population. Team made of representatives of Ministry of Education and Sports, Institute of Education, Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro and University of Montenegro – Faculty of Philosophy form Niksic works together on advancement of pupils, reduction of linguistic barriers, provision of support and help in gaining social skills and knowledge, as well as on provision of support to development of higher level of trust and satisfaction of parents and children in this school. Institute of Education monitors over the implementation of responsibilities of school principal and teachers in regional department of Primary School *Bozidar Vukovic Podgoricanin*. Student volunteers were divided by classes; common plan on the work of volunteers, school teachers and pedagogues was also developed.

During past five school years, all pupils from RE population were given textbooks², teachers have passed a series of seminars³, and additional classes were regularly performed. Within the *Roma Educational Initiative Program* the school has made the supplement to the First Cycle Program (I, II and III class) for following subjects: Montenegrin language and literature, nature and society, music culture by adding up contents from Roma literature, history, tradition and music culture⁴.

Since 2008/09, Ministry of Education and Sports together with Red Cross of Montenegro, is regularly performing activities with the purpose of elimination of segregation in education of Roma children from Konik Camp. The Ministry provides these children with free of charge textbooks and transport to city schools.

Further, there are several projects within which Roma assistants in primary schools were or are still being engaged:

- *Roma Educational Initiative Program in Montenegro*, conducted in period January 2006 – December 2008, supported by Roma Education Fund (REF);
- *Support to RAE Population in Konik Camps*, implemented by the Red Cross of Montenegro.

² Ministry of Education and Sports has thorough Instituted of Education and with support of Commission for Oversight and Implementation of *Strategy for Improving the Position of RAE population in Montenegro 2008 – 2012*, provided textbooks for pupils attending I, II and III class of primary education, in the total costs of € 33.387,50.

³ Inclusion Index (35 teachers), Peace and Tolerance – Creative Problem Solving (32 teachers), Step by Step, basic course (28 teachers) and advanced course (26 teachers), Development of Critical Opinion (18 teachers); Education for Social Justice – Against Stereotypes and Prejudices (25 teachers), Active Learning (48 teachers); Innovative Ideas in Education for Roma Integration (12 teachers) etc.

⁴ It was anticipated that these topics are to be treated within 20% of curriculum planned for cooperation with the local community.

All children until the age of 15 should be included in primary education. The problem with the continuity of education was especially noticed among children of Roma and Egyptian population. Namely, dropout of regular education phenomenon mostly derives from socio-economic and cultural reasons. Research surveys conducted by civil society organizations ERRC and CRI indicate that the main reasons for girls' drop out of school derives from fact that RE parents are less directed towards girls' education, so that girls can take care of family or younger brothers and sisters. Reasons for poor education of girls were also indentified in early and forced marriages and maintenance of negative aspect of tradition.

When a school finds that the student is no longer coming to school and when it is unable to make contact with the parents, it shall inform the Secretariat – General for Administration and Social Services and the relevant inspection bodies. Anyway, in order to timely receive information on the possible drop out of school so that proper action in accordance with the law could be undertaken, it is necessary to develop clear procedures and defined responsibilities.

2.3. Secondary Education

Students of Roma and Egyptian population are being mostly enrolled in secondary schools where teaching is performed in Montenegrin and other official languages, under the principle of affirmative action. Ministry of Education and Sports in cooperation with Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare provides free textbooks, while scholarships are provided by Ministry for Human and Minority Rights.

In 2011/2012 number of enrolled students of RE population in secondary schools was 65.

2.4. Other Levels of Education

In recent years, number of members of Roma and Egyptian population attending high-educational institutions is significantly rose due to the activities of different actors. At the moments, there are 8 students of Roma and Egyptian population studying at different faculties in Montenegro. Two of them are law students (General Department and Security and Criminology Department), two students study at Faculty of Political Science (Social Work Department and International Relations Department), three of them attend Faculty of Philosophy (Departments for: Psychology, Preschool Education and Pedagogy) and one of them studies at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports (Department for Sports Journalism). All students receive scholarships from the state's budget.

In accordance with the Law on Education of Adults, adults may acquire education under applicable educational program for primary, secondary and vocational education, adjusted to educational program or some its part, as well as under the programs for education of adults. Adult educational attendees are exempt from primary education costs, as well as costs necessary for getting the first job qualification.

Functional Literacy Program and *Program for Primary Education of Adults* are being conducted by primary schools and adult education organizers, who have working licence issued by Ministry of Education and Sports.

Under the request of Employment Office of Montenegro, Centre for Vocational Education developed vocational standards and training programs for the implementation of the project *Creating equal opportunities for RAE population to access the job positions*. Under the requests of Roma Scholarship Foundation (supported by COSV) and Red Cross of Montenegro (program supported by EU Delegation to Montenegro and Red Cross of Denmark), Centre also develops standards, programs, monitors the implementation of programs and together with Examination Centre organizes final exam for attendees of basic *Functional Literacy Program*. Further, project *Step by Step – CHANGE* supported by UNESCO is also being implemented. The aim is to organize workshops with parents in order to encourage understanding of core motifs of parenting and common role of parents in upbringing and education of children, develop future good relations between parents and child, develop constructive communication skills for adequate problem solving, etc.

Project *Support to Full Process of Social Inclusion*, proposed through IPA 2010 programs is currently ongoing. General goal is to enable inclusion of vulnerable, social excluded groups through educational system and social care services. One of project's specific goals is an engagement of Roma assistants in preschool and primary school facilities.

Ministry of Education and Sports strongly encourages civil sector activities which are directed towards standardisation and codification of Roma language. First step is to standardize and codify Roma language so that it can obtain form of literary language and also, to provide adequately educated personnel for conduction of teaching. Second step includes introduction of Roma language into the education system.

Recommendations:

1. To provide all children (particularly the girls) coming from families in social need, with free enrolment, residence and food in preschool facilities, under the desegregation principles;
2. To develop and implement short-term program of preparation for primary school for children aged from 5 to 6 years and special program of psycho-social support; to provide adequate education of personnel;
3. To develop data base including records on enrolment, as well as number of children outside the education system;
4. To develop mechanism for identification of children outside the education system with the purpose of their inclusion in schools;

5. To develop continuous monitoring mechanism over student attendance (regular reporting by schools, monitoring form, identification of schools with greatest drop-out, monitoring over schools' work and competent services, etc); to put emphasis on mechanism of monitoring over education of girls from RE population, followed by permanent control of the quality of acquired education;
6. To introduce additional classes in purpose of overcoming the language barriers, conduction of home works, improvement of educational success based on individualisation principles;
7. To provide support in teaching to assistants and student volunteers; to differentiate between roles of Roma assistants and mediators;
8. To organize and provide adequate psycho-social support to pupils/students, particularly to girls;
9. To work with parents on motivation building for continuation of their children's education, with specific focus on girls, including adequate teaching classes for the use of official language for parents of RE children;
10. To prepare city schools for acceptance of RE children from Konik Camp in order to reduce segregation and continue with training of teachers (individualised classes, violence prevention, cooperation with parents, Roma history, origin, tradition, customs, etc);
11. To develop professional orientation program (with focus on girls) and continuously inform the parents;
12. To continuously educate members of RE population interested in work in educational facilities and to provide appropriate scholarships for RE students, with particular emphasis on stimulation of girls inclusion and use of affirmative action during the employment process;
13. To increase number of persons involved in programs for education and training of adults, with focus on gender equality: functional literacy programs; first professional qualification programs; certified educational and training programs for occupations currently needed at the labour market which further, meet the needs and interests of member of RE population; educational and training programs for well-known employer; motivational scholarships and additional contents after the vocational trainings (for example, free driver training, etc);
14. To raise public awareness on necessity and importance of inclusion of RE children into education system; to use positive cases of affirmed and successful, highly educated members of RE population as role models for motivation and integration of parents and children.

3. EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RIGHTS

Employment policy in Montenegro is defined by National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources, which envisages combat against long-term unemployment through measures of active employment policy oriented towards the most vulnerable groups in the area of employment. *National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources 2012 – 2016* was adopted in December 2011.

In accordance with the Law on Employment and Exercise of the Right to Unemployment Insurance (Article 8), bearers of certain employment issues are Employment Office of Montenegro and Employment Agency, which address these issues under conditions prescribed therein. Primary activity of Employment Office is to provide necessary assistance to unemployed persons through the mediation in employment and working engagement, professional counselling and informing of employers and unemployed persons on job opportunities, keeping required data in the employment area, providing the right to unemployment insurance, conducting of other measures of active employment policy (education and training of adults, public works, support to self-employment, subvention of employment, etc).

Basic characteristics of social-economic status of members of RE population in Montenegro are the low level of economic activity and high unemployment rate. RE population is mainly excluded from formal employment, whilst the greatest number of persons deals with occupations not requiring professional expertise. Major number is employed in *gray economy sector*, and mostly on collecting raw materials for recycling. Thus, RE population belongs to the category of persons with very limited possibilities for employment, low competition rate and mobility in labour market.

Lack of education and educational opportunities represents one of the biggest obstacles in terms of employment of Roma population. Other obstacles bringing RE population into disadvantaged position when entering the labour market and keeping the job, are as follows: lack of personal identity documents (which is prerequisite for enjoying services in employment area); difficult economic and social situation, due to which they are not able to accept long-term programs of training and education; discrimination and rejection by the non-Roma and employers; life in insecure and non-standardised dwellings; lack of guarantees in terms of real estates and guarantors for bank loans; lack of information; negative aspects of their own tradition; lack of confidence in public institutions; lack of cadre for education of members of this population; social exclusion and lack of social skills, etc.

Average number of persons declaring as members of RE population in the annual data base of Employment Office is 1000. Proportion of women is around 40%. This population is considered to participate with 3-4 % in total registered unemployment rate. However, there are no précised records on registered unemployment of RE population, due to the fact that regulations on data bases in areas of unemployment and employment did not envisage tracking records based

on ethnicity of persons seeking the job. Besides, given the fact that the greatest number of RE persons does not expect assistance from Employment Office during the employment process, and also the fact that they seek an exit through engagement in gray economy, précised data on unemployment rate of Roma people are even harder to get.

Over 90% of registered members of RE populations are persons with no occupational and professional skills. As a rule, they have to wait longer to get employed. Smaller part of this population finds seasonal jobs in construction, agriculture and tourism and through programs of public works, where they are being employed for specific period of time.

Programs of active employment policy conducted by Employment Office are oriented towards systemic reduction of unemployment rate of people with employment difficulties. In the area of the employment of RE persons, Employment Office builds partnerships with civil society organizations and employers.

Results of the social inclusion of RE population as part of the recent activities under active employment policy seem to be encouraging, since they have pointed to the existence of larger interest in improving the current situation and inclusion in programs which are offered to this population by Employment Office. However, what seems to be the limiting factor of the efforts put in the field of education and professional education is evident discrimination at the labour market in terms of employment of RE people, after the finish of aforementioned programs.

General objectives in area of employment are, as follows: increased number of members of RE population partaking in measures of active employment policy, with equal participation of women; improvement of quality job opportunities; increase of employment rate and maintenance of such trend; improvement of cooperation between social partners and civil society and reduction of discrimination in the labour market.

Provision of quality education and training of RE population as an active employment measure shall raise the level of their employability and generate the potential for creating their own incomes. This will be the starting point in development of social economy, free from poverty, together with secured full membership in society.

Recommendations:

1. To organize information campaigns on rights and obligations of RE population in the employment area, with special emphasis on informing the women (active participation of Roma Council, Roma CSOs and leaders);
2. To increase motivational level of RE persons for active job search and inclusion into measures of active employment policy;
3. To promote attendees of the local community program;

4. To organize language courses for RE persons not speaking Montenegrin language, with emphasis to women;
5. To organize functional literacy and other forms of educational programs;
6. To organize first professional qualification programs for as many of people with no professional qualifications;
7. To organize certified educational and training programs for occupations currently needed at the labour market, in line with needs and interests of RE persons and related to future job opportunities;
8. To organize educational and training programs for well-known employers;
9. To introduce motivational scholarships and additional incentives after training (free driver training, etc);
10. To include RE persons into programs of public works and seasonal employment, with special emphasis on equal participation of women;
11. To include RE persons into programs of apartments building for Roma community;
12. To initiate creation of new occupational standards – mediator for social inclusion and Roma assistant – and to organize training for the named;
13. To engage mediators for social inclusion and Roma assistants with good knowledge of Roma and other official languages, local situation, developed skills and acquired qualifications, through project activities and program of public works;
14. To initiate special employment program for female members of RE population for work at home;
15. To provide support to development of family business;
16. To provide support to maintenance and development of traditional crafts in Roma communities (through development of cooperatives and allocation of grants);
17. To establish special fund for financing the entrepreneurship and self-employment of persons with Roma nationality under more favourable conditions than those of market (interest-free loans, loans with very low interest rates, loans with longer repayment periods, etc);
18. To legalize current businesses in the area of gray economy through introduction of special business and taxation incentives;
19. To determine quotas under principle of affirmative action for certain jobs for RE population;
20. To conduct research survey on the level of discrimination and mobbing of members of RE population during both, the employment process and the working period;
21. To organize information campaign for employers to overcome the stereotypes and prejudices when employing RE persons;
22. To establish system of business and tax incentives and subventions for Roma entrepreneurs and employers who employ workers with Roma nationality;
23. To actively employ members of RE population in public sector;
24. To initiate drafting legislation for development of social economy;

25. To additionally develop knowledge and skills of CSO sector and its representatives in official bodies for tasks of monitoring over inclusion processes and public advocating in order to provide more effective implementation of national and local policies towards RE population / reporting included;
26. To enhance social partnership – inclusion and connection of existing institutions and local community;
27. To enhance coordination and partnerships between centres for social work, labour offices, Roma CSO and leaders, Roma Council and international organizations, in terms of preparation and implementation of social projects funded by the EU.

4. HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

The health system institutions do not keep records based on ethnic, national or some other affiliation of beneficiaries of health care. Nevertheless, by an indirect insight in the category of *contributor or feature of the insured person*, one can come to the data whether members of Roma and Egyptian population enjoy health services in the health system of Montenegro.

Based on the insight in daily work of elected doctors, centres and units for support, it is evident that members of RE population (with the status of internally displaced or refugee persons or persons seeking for an asylum or special protection) enjoy services same as other beneficiaries of health care.

Institute of elected doctor was introduced as part of health system reform. This doctor provides them with primary health care and directs them to secondary and tertiary level of health care.

Law on Health Insurance stipulates that socially vulnerable categories – unemployed, children up to primary school, and if they go to school until the end of secondary and high education, women during the pregnancy and one year after the child birth, people elder than 65 and those suffering from various diseases do not participate in treatment costs (they enjoy free health care). Regulation on the implementation of health care for foreigners equalised the rights of members of RE population with the rights of those insured (to whom Law on Health Insurance relates to). At the moment, there are no normative obstacles for member of RE population with no identity documents (identity card, passport or some other identity document - birth certificate, personal identification number) to enjoy right to health care as regular insured citizens, both in terms of scope and content of health services. Cases of persons facing with problems in achieving the right to health care shall be equally processed in cooperation with UNHCR and DEU.

Since the establishment of Camp I and Camp II in Podgorica, clinic for adults and children has been developed, where adults and children doctors now work two hours a day (in the

past, the ambulance was operating two hours before and two hours after noon). During the off time of referred ambulances, members of Roma and Egyptian population can get health services in ambulances of Podgorica Health Care Centres (in all locations, and the nearest location is in Konik).

When it comes to reproductive and sexual health services, female members of RE populations can contact the elected gynaecologists in health care centres, while child delivery may be done in every maternity hospital in Montenegro.

Vaccination of children of RE population who have not elected their paediatrician and do not go to school is conducted in settlements where this population lives. Institute for Public Health periodically organizes vaccination campaigns for RE children in Konik, which results in high percent of coverage (for some diseases, that percent is over 98).

Very important part of activities in education of Roma and Egyptians on health care system is raising awareness and information sharing on importance and advantages stemming from use of services provided by health facilities' support centres, wherein prevention, protection and improvement of health is being promoted and practiced. With the purpose of protecting mother and child health, there is a need for mediators who shall directly and in specific and appropriate way transfer important information to these persons with regard to relevance and importance of reproductive health.

Recommendations:

1. To determine health status of Roma and Egyptians on the basis of identifying relevant health indicators, so that specific measures for health care of this vulnerable category could be defined;
2. To provide permanent oversight of health status and needs of Roma and Egyptians;
3. To increase availability and accessibility to health care having in mind all aspects – territorial, cultural and economic availability;
4. To encourage and direct members of Roma and Egyptian population towards electing their doctor (referring to all those with resolved status in Montenegro: citizen of Montenegro or foreigners with permanent or temporary residence);
5. To provide health care to members of Roma and Egyptian population with unresolved status in accordance with the Regulation on the implementation of health care for foreigners;
6. To sign agreements on cooperation with CSO dealing with Roma and Egyptian health issues in sense of providing competent, reliable and specific information and adequate interventions;

7. To educate members of RE population on right to health care, manners of exercise of this right; to educate health care workers who are supposed to provide them the exercise of right to health care;
8. To provide adequate measures for education of health care workers because of the particularity of this populating group.

5. SOCIAL AND CHILD PROTECTION

In the system of social and child protection there is lack of track records based on ethnic, national or some other affiliation of social protection beneficiaries.

Having in mind previously stated problem of dispossessing personal identity documents and thus, unavailability to access different rights, very few Roma families receive family allowance, child allowance and other social benefits which may be achieved based on legal solution in this area.

Basic goal of the Strategy in this field is to provide Roma population with eased access to system of social and child protection. This may be achieved through certain activities in future four-year-period.

Recommendations:

1. To improve availability and quality of services of centres for social work;
2. To organize information campaign in Roma and Egyptian settlements on rights to social and child protection and how to exercise them;
3. To engage RE assistants in expert teams in centres for social work and other facilities of social protection;
4. To provide protection to RE persons with special needs through special programs and activities;
5. To establish mobile teams consisting of representatives of centres for social work, RE mediators, RE CSOs, medical centres and Police Department in order to provide social support services;
6. To undertake special activities in coordination with centres for social work in order to strengthen the level of supervision and care of Roma and Egyptian children, especially in the field of eliminating street begging;
7. To take over the supervision and care over children who drop out of regular education, with special emphasis to RE girls;

8. To prevent minor and forced / arranged marriages through work of multi-disciplinary teams within centres for social work and through improvement of cooperation with school facilities;
9. To undertake activities of permanent supervision and evidencing the changes in social status of RE population.

6. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is specific gender-based violence which threatens the achievement of basic human rights and freedoms.

Although Montenegro pursues policy based on principles of anti-discrimination and respect for human rights, the existing normative and institutional frameworks still do not guarantee effective safeguards for protecting women against violence which would, further, provide equal protection of women from RE population, as in accordance with adopted international standards. Possible reasons behind this could be: lack of systemic solutions in the area of family protection, lack of uniform rules and procedures in the treatment of victims of violence, insufficiently developed cooperation and coordination among competent institutions, insufficient exchange of relevant data. In addition, the practice of systemic collection and analysis of data on domestic violence and violence against women among RE population is insufficiently developed. Hence, it is impossible to precisely and accurately measure the incidence of domestic violence, neither it is possible to analyse quality and scope of preventive and protective measures undertaken in cases of violence among this population. Until the adoption of Law on Free Legal Aid, victims of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence did not have access to developed system of the legal free assistance. Information on legal, physiologic and social support is not available to all members of RE population. Specialised services for victims of domestic violence, such as SOS phone for women and children – victims of violence, exist only in some municipalities, while rehabilitation and advisory programs for perpetrators of violence are not being practiced.

Research conducted by organizations SOS Niksic and CRI has shown that 70% of female respondents⁵ were in some time victims of domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands, relatives or other family members. In that particular moment, most of them (67%) were living in situation where they have been exposed to violence. However, in only 13% of such cases victims have contacted the police. Only one woman out of six reported cases felt that police gave her the appropriate help. In that regard, research identified an obvious lack of education and existence of

⁵ Research by SOS Niksic, CRI

stereotypes and prejudices among public administration representatives in dealing with victims of domestic violence from RE population.

Due to the marginalization and closeness of RE community itself, its female members are in certain way already socially isolated. Their position is additionally aggravated by maintenance of traditional norms and patriarchal customs. Research conducted by SOS Phone from Niksic showed that in 75% of cases family decisions are made by men, while more than 1/3 female members are not even allowed to independently decide on their free time activities. Starting from the age of 10, girls are already directed towards care of family, younger brothers and sisters and towards marriage preparations. In comparison to boys of the same age, girls are much more socially isolated.⁶

The largest number of married Roma women did not independently choose their spouse; their broom has already been chosen by their father or relatives. Roma girls step into marriage at an early age, which is further confirmed by the fact that more than 51% of them get their first child before reaching the adulthood. More than half marriages in Roma community are not legally concluded and the research shows that in some parts of community still persists a tradition whereby man is allowed the practice of polygamy. However, although polygamy is prohibited under the law, in RE community it is accepted as the part of the tradition. Once they get married, female RE members lose touch with their relatives. In accordance with the custom law, if woman wants to divorce from her husband, she is forced to leave her children with the husband and his family.

It should be borne in mind that female members of RE population often stay in relationships in which they suffered violence, due to the lack of their own incomes and family support. Low level of education, high unemployment rate, widespread poverty and lack of alternative accommodation all together practically leave female RE members with no possibility of choice. In such circumstances, particularly concerning is the lack of public safe houses in Montenegro and insufficiently informed victims on such possibilities and centres founded by women's civil society organizations. All this further contributes to difficulties these women face with when they try to find the shelter after being exposed to domestic violence.⁷

With the purpose of prevention and suppression of risk of violence these women face with, and having in mind all the facts, it is very important to plan, prepare and conduct adequate measures and activities in that regard.⁸

General objective in terms of prevention and suppression of violence against women and domestic violence is the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls from RE population. **Specific goals** are as follows:

⁶ Research by Coalition Roma Circle, Inclusion of Young RAE population, 2010

⁷ Source CERD

⁸Source: Position of Roma women and Roma minority in the family and community, available at http://www.sosnk.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Polozaj_romske_manjine_i_polozaj_Romkinja_u_zajednici.pdf

- Improvement of strategic framework for prevention and suppression of violence against women and domestic violence among RE population;
- Capacity building of the system of prevention and protection of women from RE population against violence and domestic violence;
- Improvement of availability of the statistical data on violence against women and domestic violence, based on ethnic affiliation;
- Raising public awareness on the issue of violence against women from RE population;
- Improvement of socio-economic position of single mothers from RE population;
- Strengthening the prevention from violence against women from RE population;
- Building and improving cooperation between state institutions and civil society organizations dealing with the issues of RE population in the area of prevention and suppression of violence and human trafficking.

Recommendations:

1. To adopt local action plans for inclusion of RE population, containing measures for prevention and suppression of violence against women and domestic violence;
2. To research and collect data on the cases of harassment, sexual harassment and sexual abuse;
3. To include female RE members in local field teams that are to be formed / that are already formed;
4. To include female RE members in implementation and conduction of measures and activities set forth in local action plans for achievement of gender equality;
5. To incorporate prevention from violence in all local action plans for inclusion of RE population;
6. To protect girls from juvenile forced marriages and prevention of such practices through education, campaigns and application of legislation;
7. To educate female RE members on Law on Free Legal Aid;
8. To educate female RE members on Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence;
9. To educate female RE members, employees in centres for social work, police representatives, as well as employees in health system on the issues of prohibition of discrimination and prevention and suppression of domestic violence;

10. To develop new and encouraging of existing local services for support of victims of domestic violence, including specific training for working with the female members of RE population and other vulnerable groups;
11. To educate girls and women from RE population on protective measures;
12. To integrate knowledge on violence against women, gender equality and non-violent communication in educational facilities for primary and secondary education;
13. To include data on specific groups in all research surveys on domestic violence and gender-based violence and classification of collected data on the basis of gender and ethnic affiliation.

7. CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

Language, oral culture, music and traditional material culture of Roma are priority issues in plans and programs of most every European country, wherein certain institutions and facilities have already been established. Following examples of these countries, Montenegro should also develop such programs, institutions and facilities for Roma and Egyptian population.

Based on guaranteed collective rights, Roma people can directly or indirectly participate in decision-making process on certain issues regarding nutrition of their culture, exercising the rights to education, information and official use of their language and alphabet in accordance with law. The right to preservation of particularities refers to the right to exercise, protect, develop and publicly express national, ethnic, cultural and religious particularities, as well as right to preserve relationship and develop cooperation with their compatriots outside the territory of Montenegro, and so on.

According to the Law on Human and Minority Rights, Roma Council partakes in policy making in the field of culture. The Council participates in decision-making on the way of presenting of cultural and historical heritage, etc. Culture and its expression, preservation, nutrition, advancement, heritage and public expression are the integral tasks of Roma and Egyptian community. Culture is two-folded issue i.e. on the one hand, it is an instrument for affirmation of identity of RE community; on the other hand, it is an instrument for advancement of interethnic communication and integration of Roma and Egyptians into society.

Stemming from the envisaged rights and having in mind significance and role of the culture, which by definition pervades all segments of life of people from one community (starting from production, through knowledge, its use, than ideas and values, to methods and institutions dealing with its development), it can be concluded that Roma and Egyptians still have no fundamental conditions for development of their culture.

Culture, which is the core of Roma and Egyptian identity, has two key aspects: traditional and contemporary. In order to enable expression, preservation, nutrition and development of culture as well as to keep and develop cooperation with compatriots from abroad, it is necessary to provide operating conditions for few existing cultural institutions and associations and to establish and develop new institutions and organizations which are necessary for contemporary cultural creativity of Roma and Egyptians.

Recommendations:

1. To creation of systemically sustainable preconditions for preservation and development of Roma language, as good of an exclusive importance for cultural and national identity of Roma people;
2. To provide support and partnership to regional initiative for standardization of Roma language;
3. To organize summer camps for Roma language learning, with the support of institutions;
4. To issue Roma dictionary and translate literature from Roma and to Roma language;
5. To establish department or centre for cultural-publishing activities of Roma within the Centre for Preservation and Development of Minority Culture;
6. To provide support for project cooperation between cultural associations and institutions with number of Roma facilities outside Montenegro, with the purpose of improving cultural lives of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro;
7. To provide support to ethnological research surveys regarding to life and customs of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro;
8. To promote Roma culture within the manifestation *Minority Cultures Days in Montenegro*;
9. To establish local community centres in cooperation with local self-governments and civil society organizations.

8. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Both, freedom of expression and access to information represent fundamental human rights in each democratic society. These rights are proclaimed and guaranteed under international, as well as national legislation in Montenegro.

Providing information to Roma population in Montenegro is realised through programs of national public broadcasting services of Radio and Television of Montenegro, followed by local public services, as well as commercial electronic media, where special shows are being broadcasted whether in Roma (subtitle included) or in Montenegrin language. The TV and radio shows are dedicated to issues of social Roma integration into Montenegrin society.

Realization of right to access to information is an issue of huge importance to Roma people. It is the question of their social integration into Montenegrin society and one of the indicators of success of the policy oriented towards provision of better quality of life for Roma community. It seems that project *Decade for Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015* was pretty incentive for positive changes that occurred in the field of informing the Roma. Advocating for *Decade* matters became more media-covered, and again, media became active place for exchange of information and contents contributing to realization of this project's objectives.

In terms of informing the Roma, law provisions according to which public broadcasting services on national and local level are obliged to produce and broadcast programs in minority languages are still insufficiently implemented. However, this due to the objective reasons, first of all, due to unfamiliarity with Roma language. In addition to this, an important issue is education of journalists on recognizing and quality reporting on minority-important issues, in order to raise the level of understanding problems minorities often face with in contemporary plural societies which limit their full integration. Socially put, instead of media *ghettoization* of minorities, the society should establish practice of introducing minority issues into regular programs, above all, informative and culture ones. It is necessary to create programs (in their language) which could provide minorities with answers to number of their vital issues; on the other hand, it is important to intensify media contents representing the minority values to the other listeners / viewers. In addition, individual inclusion of minorities into regular programs of public service is also necessary in sense of reporting on issues of all minorities. Also, the continuous education of RE population with the help of media seems necessary in order to include these persons in their work. By further investment in their education, these RE persons could significantly contribute to change of stereotyped images of them existing in society.

In order to improve the situation of Roma in the promotion of information issues, activities and role of National Roma Council shall be strongly appreciated, together with funding envisaged by Budget of Montenegro, which also represents significant encouragement. By using funding from Minority Fund, National Roma Council can now initiate more media initiatives and projects relating to the right to information in their language. However, their education seems necessary so that they could apply for quality media programs / projects.

In addition to activation of first Roma media (hence, in Roma language) – Roma Radio, solid results have been achieved in informing the Roma and Egyptian population. Quality and quantity progress has been noted in terms of scope, contents and quality of information in relation to the previous period in this regard. It also seems that this issue is more and more recognized as

issue of public interest. Nevertheless, in order to achieve full integration of this minority into social life, further promotion of these matters is required.

Recommendations:

1. Ministry of Culture to:
 - Provide exercising of right to access to information for RE community, as well as their right to be informed in Roma language with the goal to preserve uniqueness of language identity through means of Budget of Montenegro and by broadcasting legally determined program of public service – Radio and Television of Montenegro;
 - provide program production and contents of importance for realization of goals set out in the Action Plan for implementing *Decade of Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015*, which are in line with issues of social integration of Roma in Montenegro;
 - Co-finance media themed programs and contents on social integration of Roma people in Montenegro through vacancies, especially in areas of health, education, employment and housing, as well as media contents affirming multiculturalism, multilingualism and media literacy;
 - provide media presentation of Action Plan for implementing *Decade of Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015* in accordance with policies and fields of action in relation to this issue, through TV video, radio jingle or some other forms and contents of visual communication;
2. Local self-governments with local broadcasting services to ensure that programs of *Decade of Roma* are properly represented in annual contracts on obligatory program contents of public interest;
3. National and local public broadcasting services to, where possible, professionally engage media-educated journalists from RE population, especially in areas where these persons live;
4. To stimulate partnership between Government, CSO sector and media associations in the field of media presentation of *Decade of Roma* through educational programs, trainings and strategic defining of media priorities in this area;
5. Commission for allocation of revenue from games of chance to provide redirection of allocation of some part of extra revenue towards production of program contents of commercial broadcasters of public interest and of specially significance to members of RE population in Montenegro; production of this program shall be specifically valued during selection of submitted project proposals.

8. HOUSING

Housing conditions are one of the most important measuring criteria of living standards. There are no précised data on facilities in which RE population lives, whether they are habitable or inhabitable. There is general impression that housing conditions of most RE people in Montenegro are below minimal national and international standards. Some of these persons have almost no permanent accommodation, and many of them reside in premises which are far from being adequate for living. Heath and sanitary conditions of great number of RE persons are extremely bad and deeply concerning.

Many members of RE community face with problem of pure survival – de facto right to life, due to the lack of clean drinking water, fact that housing facilities are of temporary character which are often made of poor, insufficiently solid materials, small-scaled facilities without sanitary and sewage nodes, and the fact they often live near municipal waste landfills.

Unsolved housing issues are in particular an obstacle for internally displaced persons wanting to integrate into society of Montenegro. *Study on sustainable solutions for Konik residents (May 2011)* conducted for needs of UN mission to Montenegro stated following:

- *Electricity coverage among non-RE households is almost complete, while slightly less coverage was registered in case of RE households.*
- *Similar situation was registered in case of availability of drinking water over city water supply system. Percent of water coverage from city water supply system is a bit higher among non-RE population in relation to percent of water coverage of RE households. It is important to note that households located in refugee camps are connected to city water supply system through taps placed in front of prefabricated barracks which RE persons live in.*
- *The majority of observed households, which do not share toilet with other households, was registered among domicile non-RE residents, while the households of displaced RE people often do so.*
- *Nonetheless, households of displaced RE persons are in the poorest housing conditions with regards to average size of accommodation, number of rooms, number of persons in one room and average accommodation surface per household member. Based on observation, the best housing conditions under these criteria were noted among domicile non-RE population.*
- *Solid fuels (wood) are most often used for heating purposes among domicile households. Electricity as heating source is also highly present, while other fuel sources are not in frequent use.*
- *Huge differences were also noted with regard to possession of durable goods.*
- *Problems related to quality of accommodation are mostly evident among displaced RE households, and are least present among domicile non-RE households. Significant differences were also recorded with regard to residing area; hence, households located in*

refugee camps face more frequently with problems caused by poor accommodation conditions they live in.

Long-term goals of Strategy in housing rights area

In order to provide more comprehensive rights to human housing conditions, it is of vital significance to provide the following:

- Adoption of appropriate legislation governing area of social housing (normative framework);
- Strengthening the role of public and local self-government authorities (institutional framework);
- Promotion of maintaining the Housing Fund (maintenance of Housing Fund);
- Improvement of access to housing objects through building of new housing facilities (improved access to housing facilities).

Short-term goals of Strategy in housing rights area

Short-term and realistically achievable goal of the Strategy in this regard is urgent improvement of minimal housing conditions, particularly in terms of hygiene and health. This shall be achieved through series of activities and measures in conduction of Government, local self-government and CSO.

Recommendations:

1. To solve disputes in relation to assets and enable RE population to exercise right to peaceful possession of property; these activities also include legalization of certain facilities and entire settlements, particularly their legal connection to infrastructure;
2. To supply Roma settlements with clean drinking water and to connect them to water supply system, sewage and other essential urban infrastructure;
3. To construct and build solid housing objects for RE families still living in facilities made of friable materials, which jeopardise surrounding environment and are problematic for safety reasons;
4. To draft and implement the program for subsidised loaning for RE persons in order to provide construction and reconstruction of living space with solid materials;
5. To undertake particular activities in the area of combating against all types of segregation and ghettoization of Roma population (persons who reject to live with others implicitly lose their right to social accommodation, thus their place shall be filled by another RE person in need);

6. To relocate the settlements or waste landfills in the vicinity of Roma settlements;
7. To secure certain number of social apartments each year to the most vulnerable members of Roma population;
8. To securing protection of water spring, especially in rural areas;
9. To provide members of Roma population with urban utilities and tax incentives, as well as benefits for individual housing construction;
10. To draft and submit projects by local self-governments and Roma CSOs to international organizations and donors for allocation of funds in this area.

Resolving social housing issues shall be conducted in compliance with *Strategy for Permanent Resolution of Status of Displaced and Internally Displaced Persons in Montenegro, with special reference to the Konik area.*

9. PARTICIPATION OF ROMA MINORITY IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

Basic goal of the *Strategy* – improvement of position of Roma population and their inclusion in social life is hardly achievable without appropriate participation of Roma and Egyptians in public and political life. In this regard, political representation of Roma community as specific cultural and political entity and collective seems more than necessary. It is important and essential segment of total cultural and social emancipation of Roma community, but is also concrete factor of combat against discrimination, which requires equal legal treatment of RE persons as citizens and of Roma community as collective.

Certain progress was made in this regard given the establishing and acting of different Roma CSOs, which are more and more included in solving aforementioned vital issues of this population. However, these organizations seem to still lack necessary support from society and state of Montenegro, both in substantive and financing sense. Further, given the significant role and competences prescribed under Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, establishment and operation of the Roma Council is also very important. In order to create conditions for Roma to enjoy fundamental human rights and for them to gradually integrate in social life of Montenegro, political representation of Roma population must become an integral part of accomplishment of previously proposed measures and activities for resolving Roma vital issues.

Basic goal of *Strategy* in this area is professional, operational and capacity training of Roma community for full participation in public and political life. This in order to create environment for Roma to enjoy fundamental human rights, integrate into civil society and provide protection of their vital needs and interests.

Recommendations:

1. To create normative conditions for political representation of Roma and Egyptians at state and local level, which shall require certain amendments to and adjustments of Law on Election of MPs and Councillors;
2. To provide attendance of representatives of Roma CSOs in the work of local assemblies when issues of specific interests to Roma are discussed under the *empty chair system* i.e. with right to address, but no right to vote;
3. To establish cooperation with local self-governments in the area of drafting and implementing local action plans for Roma and Egyptians;
4. To prepare and implement long-term technical and financial help programs for Roma CSOs;
5. To build adequate human resource capacities in Ministry for Human and Minority Rights for these purposes;
6. To undertake set of media, marketing, educational and informative activities, particularly in public service, for purpose of affirmation and raising awareness on position and needs of Roma population; this also includes organizing of seminars, public debates and round tables on this topic;
7. To provide respect for and implementation of legally defined measures of affirmative action in the purpose of employing certain number of Roma and Egyptian nationals in all bodies of state administration, local self-government and public services;
8. To educate women from RE population for participation in public and political life, for the purpose of exercising the fundamental human right – right to gender equality;
9. Commission for allocation of revenue from games of chance to provide redirection of allocation of some part of extra revenue towards programs / projects of special significance to members of RE population in Montenegro; these programs / projects shall be specifically valued during selection of submitted project proposals.

V IMPLEMENTATION, OVERSIGHT AND FUNDING

Strategy encompasses the period from 2012 to 2016, and is going to be conducted through one-year action plans. First action plan shall cover the period from adoption of the Strategy until the end of 2012, while annual action plans for next year shall be prepared during the last quarter of current year. The annual action plan shall specify priority measures and activities to be undertaken during that year.

In this regard, the Government shall establish a special group – Commission for Monitoring over Strategy Implementation. Commission is to be composed of representatives of institutions defined as bearers of certain activities under the Strategy and the Action Plan, as well as of representatives of Roma Council in Montenegro and RE CSOs. Commission shall determine action plans for Strategy implementation, monitor over their implementation, assess and review achieved results, propose amendments to Strategy at annual level and inform the Government of Montenegro on implementation of the Strategy. In order to efficiently conduct its activities, Commission may invite representatives of state administration and other institutions, as well as representatives of local authorities to participate in the Commission's work.

Total costs for Strategy implementation are not subject of this document, due to the fact that individual activities costs shall be defined within annual action plans. During the annual budget planning, all bodies and institutions are obliged to envisage funds for realization of activities defined under action plan, and the Ministry of Finance shall ensure timely use of this funds.

Active relation towards improvement of position of Roma and Egyptians and local self-governments is of great importance, particularly in areas where Roma and Egyptian represent majority population. In that context, it is necessary for local self-governments to allocate funds from their budget toward improvement of position of Roma and Egyptians. Further, it is also important to actively include international organizations and donors and to direct international aid funds towards these matters.