

# Inclusion and education in European countries

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# **Inclusive Education Issues in Slovenia**

**Contract -2007-2094/001 TRA-TRSPO, Strategies for supporting schools and teachers in order to foster social inclusion**

INTMEAS, DOCA Bureaus

## **Study, Slovenia**

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## 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to provide a general overview of policy measures promoting social inclusion of ethnic minorities into the educational system of Republic of Slovenia and to present a summary of selected studies/projects aimed at the evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy measures.

As it was specified in the first Slovenian team's work-plan the focus of the Slovenian contribution will be on the specific language/culture features which are closely related to the underlying socio-economic factors as the social inclusion issue. The Roma and migrant children inclusion in education will be in the forefront of investigation, while the situation in the ethnically mixed regions of Prekmurje (Slovene Hungarian) and in the Slovene Istria (Slovene Italian) will also be partially inspected.

The issue of language education policy is of extreme relevance when social integration of the minority, migrant and Roma children is dealt with. In the framework of favourable conditions and environment for social inclusion culture and language factors play the role of an important intervening variable. Therefore promotion of the language and culture of minority groups through appropriate language education policy can be considered a milestone in their overall social inclusion, language competence being one of the key factors for their access to the labour market on equal terms.

The language competence role in the social inclusion is the matter of a multifacet effect. On the one hand, mother tongue is an essential feature of ethnic identification and an important means of intergenerational ethnic continuity. It is transmitted to younger generations through the process of socialisation in which formal (school) education plays a major role. On the other hand, competence of the second language which is essential for efficient integration into the society is of special relevance for success in labour market and social mobility. Recent sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic research show that language is one of the crucial factors influencing a child's academic development: discrepancies between the pupil's mother tongue and the language of instruction, accompanied by inappropriate didactic approach, can be detrimental to a child's cognitive as well as to his/her overall development.

Deficient competence of both languages, the first and the second, are quite widely spread outcomes in such situations, known as the semi-lingualism<sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, language and culture variables strongly intervene in the social inclusion process. Grater rate of school failure and higher number of school out-drops of children from minority groups can be attributed to the language competence issues, and (at least when migrant and Roma children are concerned) also to the cultural mismatch. Allocation of languages as media of instruction and as subjects of curriculum, contributing to either social inclusion or exclusion, is strongly dependent on a country's language policy strategy; in the educational process learner's native tongue can be taken into consideration or disregarded.

The significance of culture and language in promotion of social inclusion and in creating equal economic opportunities for different ethnic groups has not yet been fully recognised neither in the EU nor national strategies and documents. One of the appeals for taking into consideration the cultural and language factors as the social inclusion issues of minority groups was launched by the European Commission<sup>2</sup>: "...the European Commission has recently drawn attention to the importance of culture in promoting the inclusion of ethnic minorities and immigrants and has identified culture as a key policy area to be assessed and evaluated<sup>3</sup>, arguing that access to cultural activity is a core part of human existence and is thus crucial for fostering a positive sense of identity. In its report of March 2004, the Commission emphasized cultural policies as a central part of any approach to addressing social exclusion and highlighted the aspect of culture in promoting social inclusion in countries with high immigration.«

It is worth noting that in the Republics of Slovenia National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 – 2010 from September 2008 due attention is given to the language and culture dimension of social inclusion of Roma and migrants. On the other hand, educational models for both national minorities, the Italian language school and the bilingual Slovene-Hungarian one, have been an integral part of the educational system of Slovenia for over five decades now, and have been proven successful with regard to the

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<sup>1</sup> Skutnabb Kangas, (1981)

<sup>2</sup> Ulrike Schmidt (2007), The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities: Assessing Language Education Policies under the EU's Open Method of Coordination. [http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/1-2007\\_Schmidt.pdf](http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/1-2007_Schmidt.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, "Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion, 2002–2006: Evaluation of the Impact of Inclusion Policies under the Open Method of Coordination", Call for Proposals, VP/2005/009.

language maintenance and ethnic identity transfer as well as with regard of social inclusion of members of both minority into the mainstream society.

In the present study some general information, enabling an insight into the policy of social inclusion in education in Slovenia is given in the first chapter; legal framework is presented and basic strategy documents are briefly summarised together with the related reports. The subsequent chapters focus on the selected populations: the second chapter deals with the situation of Roma pupils in education. First some general information on the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia together with some indices on the situation of Roma children in schools should provide the reader with some background data for a better understanding of the policy measures. Presentation of legal framework and discussion of the inclusion documents related to the Roma community is rounded up by presentation of mayor findings of studies and projects dealing with the inclusion of the Roma in education. In the third chapter general information on migrant children in the Republic of Slovenia is followed by presentation of legal framework and documents dealing with their inclusion in education. The effectiveness of the prescribed measures is illustrated by short summaries of some evaluation studies/projects. The case study of Prekmurje follows in the fourth chapter, followed by some conclusive remarks and references.

## **2. Policy on social inclusion in education in Slovenia, related documents programs and projects**

The overview of documents, different materials and research results show that compared to other EU countries the problem of social exclusion is not an outstanding problem, (yet). The share of primary school pupils continuing their education at the secondary level amounted to 98% in 2001/2002, and 75,4% of the generation completed secondary school in 2000<sup>4</sup>. However, there are certain groups that appear more vulnerable than others. Young people who leave education without recognized qualifications are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Moreover, certain groups of early school leavers are likely to experience greater disadvantage than others, in particular those who leave the system before completion of primary education. Adults learn better in a non-competitive environment where they can work together with

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<sup>4</sup> Barle Lakota and Gajgar 2003: 14

others and where they are in control of their learning processes. They are more motivated when they acquire knowledge and skills in a situation where their self-respect is not at risk. The learning climate is important; age and life experience are aspects that should be taken in consideration when developing learning environments. This is particularly relevant when additional socio-cultural differences come into interaction with traditional school approach and expectations, as ethnic, linguistic, religious.

This section concentrates on documents and other materials that inaugurate measures for reducing the dropout rate of the primary and secondary vocational and technical education. Along with pointing to a general approach in the Slovenian policy documents, strategies for more vulnerable populations, like, Roma, migrants and special needs pupils are unfolded.

Since the educational models in the ethnically mixed, bilingual (Slovene Italian and Slovene Hungarian) areas form a constituent part of the Slovene educational system, there are no data available on the precocious school leaving according to the mother tongue or ethnic adherence of pupils. For the same reason, there are no specific documents dealing with the inclusion issue of both classic minorities in education; however, the social inclusion aspect is taken into account in the related legislation, which is listed at the end of this chapter. As claimed by most of the interviewees in our case study (see chpt. 5) early school leaving does not represent a substantial problem in the bilingual region of Prekmurje.

## ***2.1. Legislation and documents on social inclusion in education***

1. Program of measures against poverty and social exclusion / Program boja proti revščini in socialni izključenosti. Ljubljana, 19. 1. 2000. Republika Slovenija, Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve/Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Slovenija: Section 8. *Education* refers to equal access to education for all social groups as stated in all general education acts:

1. Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 101/07),
2. Kindergarten Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 100/05),
3. Elementary School Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 102/07),
4. Gimnazije Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 1/07),
5. Matura Examination Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 15/03, 115/06),

6. Vocational and Technical Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 79/06)-

2. Implementing the Social inclusion strategy with report on the realisation of the programme of the fight against poverty and social exclusion, Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ljubljana, march 2002

Within the context of the programme of the fight against poverty and social exclusion there are numerous special educational programmes in the area of adult education which contribute to removing the causes of poverty and social exclusion:

Programmes for exercising of the special rights of minorities and adults with special needs. In 2001/02 there were 48 co-founding groups. There are several groups in different parts of Slovenia in which individuals (members of minorities and adults with special needs) are included. The special programmes with the aim to prevent social exclusion are partly financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

In chapter V.1. *Implementing measures* in a special passage on education (p.38), section 6, the necessity to reduce the drop-out rate is expressed:

“Drop-out is one of the key issues with which are faced in the area of vocational and technical education and training in Slovenia. The first group of pupils drop out of education while still at elementary school. These are those who as a result of having to repeat classes complete their eight years of compulsory schooling while still in lower classes, or those who complete elementary school but do not go on to secondary.” There are no data as to which ethnic groups these children belong because analyses on this basis are not prepared in Slovenia.

“Another group of pupils leave education at the secondary school stage. The data show that 13% of pupils enrolled in secondary education programmes for young people in the 1993/94 academic year had failed to complete their education within five years of their enrolment. The dropout rate in secondary education has fallen in the last years ...” However a longitudinal analysis for the period 1994–2000 showed that the drop-out rate of pupils from the 1<sup>st</sup> year to the 8<sup>th</sup> year of elementary school was on the constant decrease:

Academic year	From Year 1 to Year 8	Drop-out rate generation % of dropout of
1994/95	3,087	10.37%
1995/96	2,704	9.20%
1996/97	2,625	9.37%
1997/98	2,387	8.84%
1998/99	1,767	6.79%
1999/2000	1,720	6.76%

2000/2001	1,127	4.43%
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There is no systematic monitoring of young people after they leave the education system. It is to be envisaged that some find employment, some enrol in adult education programmes and others seek ‘alternative’ means of survival. Most however register with employment offices.

3. Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of Slovenia, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia and European Commission, Brussels, 18. December 2003

In the section on Education it is stated (p.10):

“... The educational level of young people (age group 25-29) has significantly improved ... More detailed analysis has shown that dropouts were higher in programmes in which pupils have enrolled from other programmes in which they have been unsuccessful. There are no fundamental differences by sex, although dropping out is generally lower among girls. There is characteristically high drop-out rate among the first-year pupils of the (upper<sup>5</sup>) secondary education, and in the fourth year almost none. Another indicator, the proportion of early school-leavers, shows an improvement in the situation in this field in recent years (in 1995 the figure was 10,8%, while in 2002 there was 5% of early school-leavers in Slovenia and 18,9% in EU). However it does not include the population below 18, where according to earlier data dropping out was higher. (When they drop-out they start working and then they include in the education as adults /authors’ remark.)

Dropping out of education process before acquiring an appropriate vocational qualification reduces any young person’s prospects of finding employment. This is clearly demonstrated by the structure of employed and unemployed according to the acquired level of education.”

Social inclusion in Slovenia faces the following particularly important challenges (p.15):

- Educational disadvantages:

“... Increased investment in education remains a key long-term policy to prevent poverty and social exclusion. Special attention should be devoted to developing and extending the lifelong learning culture. Inclusion of the young in education is increasing, while the dropout rate is still relatively high, mainly in vocational education. Since every person dropping out from the

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<sup>5</sup> See the structure of education in Slovenia: [http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas\\_of\\_work/education\\_in\\_slovenia/](http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/education_in_slovenia/) , [http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/pdf/shema\\_en\\_2007.pdf](http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/pdf/shema_en_2007.pdf), [http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas\\_of\\_work/](http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/) .

education process before acquiring an appropriate qualification reduces their prospects of finding employment, **reducing** (preventing young people from dropping out of school and bringing them back into learning) **the dropout rate from secondary schools is still one of the key strategies in the fight against social exclusion.”**

In the part of *Policy Issues dedicated to Education* (p.29) describes the measures already taken with an aim to reduce the drop-out rate:

**“The following measures are already being carried out to reduce the drop-out rate:**

- extending the network of schools and enrolment places in order to enable pupils to enrol in their preferred programme. This certainly contributes to greater motivation for education in programmes and thus to its successful completion;
- counselling service and vocational guidance (in addition to the task of vocational guidance, the school counselling service is involved in the search for, and possible forms of support and help to, families when social and economic pressures threaten a pupil's physical, personal and social development);
- introduction of the dual system in secondary school education (the ratio between theoretical/school knowledge and practical training in the apprenticeship system is 40%:60%. The drop-out rate of the generation that enrolled in 1997 was only 1,5%. The low drop-out rate is mainly attributed to greater motivation of pupils and the fact that they gain concrete, practical knowledge ...
- in-service teacher training, which contributes to a higher quality of educational process, which in turn can help reduce drop-outs;
- inclusion of other players in helping those who are leaving schools – advisers at the Employment Service invite pupils who abandon education during the academic year for a discussion in order to help them selecting a more suitable education programme, a more suitable method of education or in job seeking.....”

**Future policy has been set forward** with the following aims that are to be achieved (p.30):

- to continue to devote considerable attention to reducing the drop-out rate. ... there must be suitable coordination among all fields and institutions dealing with this question.
- to complete the content updating of vocational and professional education, mainly through the introduction of certificate system: ...This should lead to a reduction in the number of unemployed without basic professional qualifications, who include young drop-outs in particular ... It also provides a chance to solve the problems of a large number of dropouts.

A special paragraph (p.36) is dedicated to Roma ethnic community regarding the most relevant aspects of the current situation where Roma children are not successful in schools. The Commission encourages Slovenia to make greater efforts to integrate Roma children in the mainstream education. There are presented also the main policies and institutions that deal with Roma and the key priorities for future policy – employment and education are the key areas for the strategy of Roma.

4. National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (NAP/ inclusion) 2004-2006 Slovenia, Ljubljana, July 2004

Major trends and challenges (p.2) :

The structural problems of unemployment are:

- ... low education level of unemployed persons;
  - registered unemployment of disabled persons;
  - regional differences;
  - position of Roma (not favourable for Roma - lack of basic qualifications, functional illiteracy)

(p.4): The level of lifelong learning (structural indicator) measured through the inclusion of adults (25-64 years) in education and training was 8,8% in 2002 and is below EU average (see more in »Education and training 2010«, Draft joint report on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training system in Europe, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 2003.) The involvement of adults in education drops markedly after the age of 40. The low level of lifelong learning is probably also the reason for the low level of functional literacy.

(p.6.): Key challenges in Slovenia:

...Ensuring appropriate education:

“For this reason a further increase in investment in education of the population remains one of the key long-term policies for preventing poverty and social exclusion. Special attention must be devoted to developing and expanding a culture of lifelong learning. Inclusion of young people in education is increasing, but the drop-out rate is still relatively high, especially in lower level vocational education. Young people need to be turned back from giving up on education and training, and kept involved in the process of education or certified training ...

In the section on **Help for the most vulnerable** (p.20) the special part is dedicated to:

- help in education and including Roma in education
- help with social inclusion ( promote motivation for education as an activation).

In the section **Access to education** (p.27) the tasks set forward in the National programme of adult education are enumerated:

On the basis of several Slovene acts, i.e. Kindergartens Act (1996), Primary School Act (1996) Vocational and Professional Education Act (19 ), the Gimnazije Act (19 ) and Adult Education Act (19 ) the National Assembly adopted National programme of adult education there are several measures and priority tasks:

“1. Elementary and secondary education:

- changing education programmes in such a way that they are adapted to the target population (reduce the drop-out rate, since the highest dropping-out is frequent with programmes of lower and secondary vocational education);
- introducing the project of quality of education, where the emphasis is also on reducing the drop-out rate.

2. Vocational and professional education and lifelong learning:

- promotion of lifelong learning and vocational training needs to be continued,
- developing the possibility of gaining national vocational qualifications under the certificate system, which facilitates a proof of knowledge, skill and competence obtained in non-formal ways of lifelong learning ... Such system will reduce the number of unemployed persons without any basic vocation, which includes for the most part young who have abandoned education ... In this way the system would also offer possibility for reducing the high drop-out rate ...

In the section **Preventing other forms of exclusion** in the paragraph Ensuring access to school, safe transport or care the following priority task is noted:

- lack of provisions for transport to school also represent a risk of exclusion that must be prevented. For this reason people who live more than 4 kilometres from school, and all pupils of the first grade are ensured the right to free transport to school.

In the section **Help in education**, special paragraph is dedicated to successful inclusion of Roma (measures and priority tasks are enumerated- p.35-36).

4.1. First Annual report on the implementation of the national action plan on social inclusion - NAP/ inclusion Republic of Slovenia, February 2005

In the section Access to Education, among many objectives a task to reduce school drop-out rates was envisaged. It was reported that:

“With the aim to reduce school drop-out rates, Ministry of Education and Sport financed a special programme which was carried out experimentally by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training in pilot schools. A special attention was paid to Roma children.

5. National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008.

Republic of Slovenia

Among vulnerable groups of population potentially facing higher degree of risk of social exclusion and poverty the following are mentioned (p.8):

- the Roma (unemployment, low level of education ...),
- migrants and asylum seekers (poor knowledge of language, housing condition ...),

As an example of good practice the example of activation and employment of Roma is mentioned. The Programme of EQUAL community Initiative in Slovenia is exposed in the framework of which the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is financing several development partnerships whose activities are designed for the vulnerable social groups. The goals of the Roma Employment Centre Development Partnership are also:

... development of programmes for encouraging and motivating Roma for education and training and formulation of the education strategy ...

5.1. Amended National report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2006 - 2008. Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ljubljana, September 2007

There is no line about drop-out pupils in the Act. However the Roma Community Act is exposed as a measure aimed against discrimination dealing with the status of Roma community in Slovenia.

6. Programme for Children and Youth 2006 – 2016. Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ljubljana 2006

Among various objectives in the framework of educational policies that should ensure systematic conditions for a more successful inclusion, regarding children from socially vulnerable groups into educational system, also the objective to ensure equal possibilities for education and improve the accessibility to education are enumerated. Thus in order to implement lifelong learning on all educational levels, the objective

“...to implement effective preventive measures for reducing drop-out, especially in secondary vocational schools”, is to be achieved (p13).

7. Programme of education for unemployed persons for school year 2007/ 2008, Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Education and sport, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Document: 60302-4/2007/4, Ljubljana 23.08.2007 (Program izobraževanja za brezposelne osebe)

The Programme is going on already for 10 years and is based on the Slovene legislation regarding the employment acts, regulations on scholarship and Resolution on national programme of education of adults. The programme is financed according to the national legislation of Slovenia and encompasses the complete school vertical, programmes of elementary education, secondary and vocational education, education on university level which can be attended by the drop-outs.

8. National report of Slovenia on the implementation of the education and training 2010 – Work Programme, Ministry of Education and Sport of RS., Ljubljana, April 2007

In the chapter “Main Policy Measures” there measures targeting the needs of disadvantages groups are stressed. It is written (p.5):... among the recommendations for implementing learning in the early period, the strategy states the need for differentiation of method of work, especially for children with special needs, and counts among inclusive models of education also special care for migrant children and children from Roma families ... Carrying the specific activities for vulnerable groups will receive special attention in the year 2007-2013.

It is also mentioned (p.11) that in Slovenia, since the adoption of the strategy of education for Roma in 2004, there are no longer special classes for Roma pupils. Each year, the ministry, together with representatives of the Roma, prepares an action plan with specific measures for the implementation of solutions from the strategy: in 2005 a curriculum was prepared for Roma cultures, and by 2008, with the assistance of ESF funds some books in Roma language were elaborated, and it co-financed the introduction of Roma assistants in kindergartens and schools.

In the chapter 3 »Implementation of policy objectives in schools, higher education, vocational education and training and in adult education« there is paragraph on Achieving EU benchmarks (p.14):

“... The share of early school leavers in Slovenia is lower than in other EU members States (detailed information is in annex – p.28): ... the majority of students left for the first time, but around 29% for the second time, since they had previously been enrolled in another programme or the school. School failure or failing marks in one or more subjects are the commonest reasons to leave school early. One of the most important causes of failure and early leaving is absence from classes, as well as too little learning. A third group of early school leavers in the last school year 2005/6 stressed that no-one showed them how to learn. Around a fifth of students believe that nobody presented to them the technique of learning subjects. Students with learning and other difficulties usually turn to friends, instructors, school peers, less to teachers of subjects with which they are having difficulties. The Ministry of Education and Sports thus started systematically to encourage the counselling and mentor role of teachers. More than a third of students do not have a clear vocational or educational aim at the time of early leaving).

In the Report it is stressed: “...It will perhaps be necessary in future to devote more attention to the question of the sense of repetition and to activities for preventing school failure (some models and strategies have been already elaborated in the last 4 years).”

Along with this (p. 23) the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is enhancing access opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged (unemployed, disabled, Roma...) through measures of Active Employment Policy programmes, which include activities from the Human Resources Development Operational programme 2007-2013.

9. Nacionalna strategija za razvoj pismenosti /National Strategy for the Development of Literacy. Ministry of Education and Sport of RS, European Social Fund, Andragoški center /Adult Education Institute, RS Ljubljana, October 2005.

In 2005 a »National Strategy for the Development of Literacy« was adopted and has already began to apply its first measures ...

Among strategic goals (p.7) figures also "... stressing the role of literacy in achieving better social inclusion ...". The main orientations are connected also to the followings aim (p.8):

"... to enlarge the social care for the development of the literacy of the vulnerable groups (poor, less educated persons, migrants, refugees, Roma and adults with special needs)".

10. Reform Programme for Achieving the Lisbon Strategy Goals - implementation report 2007, Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana October 2007

... The second development priority is related to: effective creation, two-way flow, and the use of knowledge for economic development and quality jobs.

... The education structure of the population is still improving, thanks mainly to the high participation of youth in education, which is above the EU average. The participation in lifelong learning has also been rising and is relatively high, but it should include more elderly and less educated people. At the beginning of 2007 a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy was put forward for public discussion, providing the basis for planning concrete policies in this area.....

11. National programme of Development of the Labour Market and Employment to the year 2006 (NPZapos)<sup>6</sup>,

In the section "Priority measures for achieving the strategic objectives in the year 2006" (p.11) it is planned to decrease the drop-out rate from the vocational, secondary and higher educational system:

"We will decrease the drop-out rate from the vocational, secondary and higher educational system and the proportion of young persons who after primary school do not continue their

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<sup>6</sup> Official Gazette RS, no 92-4597/22.11.2001, p. 8989.

education, so that the share of those young who do not acquire any vocational education will fall below 5%. We will assure this with the following measures:

- modernization of the programmes of education and by ensuring their restructuring, so that the education programmes will be connected to the needs in the labour market,
- ensuring a more appropriate system of vocational counselling and teaching assistance to young persons with learning difficulties,
- strengthening the dual system of education ...”

In the paragraph “Assurance of equal access to the labour market” a special attention is given to Roma population... (p.18):

“For the integration of the Roma population and other less employable groups we will develop the following measures:

- the preparation of special projects for the employment of Roma,
- the introduction of adapted forms of preparations for employment,
- the issuance of publications on the position of Roma on the labour market ...”

## 12. Legislation on the special rights of classic ethnic communities

The most important acts, related to special rights of the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities:

1. Self-Governing Ethnic Communities Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 65/94),
2. Establishment of Municipalities and Municipal Boundaries Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 60/94, ..., 108/06),
3. Act on Enforcing Public Interest in the Field of Culture (Official Gazette RS, No. 96/02, ..., 77/07),
4. Financing of Municipalities Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 123/06, 101/07),
5. Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 7/99, ..., 63/07),
6. Local Self-Government Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 72/93, ..., 94/07),

7. National Assembly Election Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 44/92, ..., 54/07),
8. Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 101/07),
9. Kindergarten Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 100/05),
10. Elementary School Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 102/07),
11. Gimnazije Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 1/07),
12. Matura Examination Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 15/03, 115/06),
13. University of Primorska Charter (Official Gazette RS, No. 13/03, ..., 137/06),
14. Ordinance on the Establishing Centro Italiano di Promozione, Cultura, Formazione e Sviluppo – Promocijsko, kulturno, izobraževalno in razvojno italijansko središče (Official Gazette RS, No. 84/05),
15. Vocational and Technical Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 79/06),
16. Act Implementing Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities in the Field of Education (Official Gazette RS, No. 35/01, 102/07),
17. Librarianship Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 87/01, 96/02),
18. Act Regulating the Use of Funds Arising from the Proceeds Based on the Transformation of Companies Ownership Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 45/95, ..., 47/02),
19. Decree laying down criteria, conditions and procedures for the allocation of funds for the purpose of creating economic basis for indigenous national communities (Official Gazette RS, No. 33/97, 16/99),
20. Decree laying down criteria, conditions and procedures for the allocation of funds for the purpose of creating economic basis on ethnically mixed areas for year 2001 (Official Gazette RS, No. 62/01),
21. Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 93/05, 127/06),
22. Decree Ratifying the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Italian Republic on Cooperation in Culture and Education (Official Gazette RS, No. 49/02),

23. Statutes of ethnically mixed municipalities (Izola, Koper, Piran, Lendava, Moravske Toplice, Dobrovnik, Hodoš, Šalovci) in the Republic of Slovenia,
24. Act notifying succession to agreements between the former Yugoslavia and the Italian Republic (Official Gazette RS, No. 40/92),
25. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Official Gazette RS, No. 20/98),
26. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Official Gazette RS, No. 69/00, 44/07),
27. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Official Gazette SFRY, No. 31/67),
28. Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Official Gazette RS, No. 33/94),
29. London Memorandum (1954),
30. Osimo Agreements (1977),
31. Act Ratifying the Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights to the Slovene Minority living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette RS, No. 6/93),
32. Decree Ratifying the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Italian Republic (Official Gazette RS, No. 68/07).

The above mentioned legislation pays a special attention to promotion of the minority rights, underlying the positive discrimination principle and the collective rights. Based on the Article 64 of the Constitution entitled “Special Rights of the Autochthonous Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities in Slovenia” the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities and their members are guaranteed the right to freely use their national symbols and, in order to preserve their ethnic identity, the right to establish organizations, to foster economic, cultural, scientific and research activities, as well as activities associated with the mass media and publishing. These two ethnic communities and their members have, consistent with statute, the right to education and schooling in their own languages as well as a decisive role in planning and develop curricula for schools in the ethnically mixed regions. The State determines by statute those geographical areas in which bilingual education is compulsory.

The Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities and their members enjoy the right to foster contacts with the wider Italian and Hungarian communities living outside Slovenia, and with Italy and Hungary respectively. Slovenia gives financial support and encouragement to the implementation of these rights.

In those areas where the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities live, their members can establish autonomous organizations in order to give effect to their rights. At the request of the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities, the State may authorize their respective autonomous organizations to carry out specific functions which are presently within the jurisdiction of the State, and the State ensures the provision of the means for those functions to be effected.

The Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities are directly represented at the local level and in the National Assembly.

The status of the Italian and the Hungarian ethnic communities and the manner in which their rights should be exercised in those areas where the two ethnic communities live, is determined by statute. The rights of both ethnic communities and of their members are guaranteed without regard for the numerical strength of either community.

Slovene's international legal obligations to protect minorities are established also by bilateral agreements with Italy and Hungary.

### 13. Legislation related to children with special needs

- Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami / Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (Ur.l. RS/Official Gazette, št./No. 3/2007) <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=20073&stevilka=101> .

- Pravilnik o dodatni strokovni in fizični pomoči za otroke in mladostnike s posebnimi potrebami / Rules on additional expert and physical assistance to children and youth with special needs. (Ur.l. RS, Official Gazette št./No. 25/2006).

Curricular modernization of the school system has resulted in a range of new choices in the realm of education and instruction for children with special needs, and guaranteed more possibilities for their integration into the regular school system. Schools should carry out greater integration of children with special needs such that: (1) they set up suitable terms for inclusion, and (2) the organization of school life provides as many opportunities as possible

for social interaction with their peers and their greater social participation in the everyday life of the school.<sup>7</sup> The documents provide for an additional expert and physical assistance for children with special needs. The additional expert assistance is provided for different activities for individuals or periodically performed in a special group. All activities are designed for children included in programmes on the pre school level, at the level of the elementary school and at the level of secondary general and vocational education with the adapted programme. The extent of additional expert assistance for children with special needs ranges from 3-5 hours weekly.

## ***2.2. Projects and programs on social inclusion (selected)***

### 1. General on drop-outs in Slovenia

- Monographs Candidate Countries:

Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Slovenia,  
EFT (European Training Foundation), External communication Unit, 2002.

Regarding the drop-out rate it was stressed that in Slovenia there is considerable drop-out rate in elementary school and that in the past ten years there have been around 2000 to 3000 pupils each year leaving elementary school before the final year, i. e. about 10% of the elementary school leaving generation. As a rule these pupils are young, aged 15-16, having learning difficulties, with insufficient knowledge obtained in elementary school, living in bad social conditions and lacking any motivation for school-based education. A large number enrol afterwards in second-chance elementary school programmes for adults, but not all do so.

The second large group are those who drop out from secondary education. The drop-out rate is high after the short time vocational education. In the last years, due to different measures and state's strategies the drop-out is decreasing and the result is the higher level of education/qualification among the population.

The drop-out phenomenon has received more prominence in the light of strategic policy declarations aimed at providing more school-leavers with at least full secondary education.

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<sup>7</sup> Lebarič, N., Kolenc, J. (2004). Opportunities for social integration of pupils with special needs into ordinary schools. School field 15, Number 3/4, p83-98.

In the part: “Strategic goals of the labour market and employment development up to 2006” it is written that the key guidelines for reaching the strategic objectives that follow the guidelines agreed by common EU employment policy, will focus also on .... reducing the drop-out rate.

A special part is dedicated to drop-outs from secondary vocational and technical education (p.20- 21).

## 2. Research Projects

1. Social and Economic Inclusion of Deprived Groups. Possible measures to increase the employability of the most vulnerable categories of long-term unemployed and inactive people.

Financed by the Ministry of labour, Family and Social Affairs with the financial grant of the EU's Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion.

Report editor, project co-ordinator: Martina Trbanc, M.A. Faculty of Social Science, Ljubljana, October 2003.

2. Jana Rapuš Pavel: Ranljivost mladih pri soočanju z brezposelnostjo v sodobni družbi ..., / Vulnerability of young people confronted with the unemployment in modern society, 2005<sup>8</sup>.

3. Project of the European Commission Daphne II / Projekt Evropske komisije (Zmanjševanje vrstniškega nasilja v šoli - Bullying at school) 2006-2007. NSLE (Šola za ravnateljce).

4. The failure in the secondary school / Neuspeh v srednji šoli, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo / Institute for Education of the RS, Ljubljana 2002

Project leader: Tomaž Kranjc

The research gave the analyses of the situation regarding the drop-out problem in Slovenia. The analyses of the interviews among chosen pupils (all levels, different secondary schools) give the possible indications for the prevention/diminishing the problem. The study proposes

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<sup>8</sup> [www.zzsp.org/revija/2005/05-3-329-360.pdf](http://www.zzsp.org/revija/2005/05-3-329-360.pdf)

some measures which can be implemented in the school system or adopted to individual person:

- a need for preparing special seminars for teachers - to give them knowledge about the drop-out problem and the organization of special workshops where the concrete example should be discussed;
- to find special curriculum measures based on the experiences from the other countries; it is especially necessary to prepare a programme for the parents;
- to include in the work also local policy makers (different spheres) and to improve the economical situation of the place/region.

5. Drop-outs in the secondary school / Osip v srednji šoli, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo / Institute for Education of the RS, Ljubljana 2008

Report editor, project co-ordinator: Tomi Deutsch

The research project gives the detailed analysis of the most important factors which influence the drop-out problem in Slovenia. The results, based on the analyses of selected statistical data acquired by the secondary schools and by the analyses of the empirical data (interview among 1<sup>st</sup> year pupils of secondary school) stress also the out-school factors.

### 3. Activities of different institutions

1. TIN LJUBLJANA, Zavod za svetovanje in izobraževanje - an establishment for consulting and education, is a private, non-profit and non-governmental institution. It was established in 1998 with the purpose of performing the "Project-based Learning for Young Adults" ("PLYA") program or "PUM" in Slovene. Today they run programs helping young unemployed adults and students mostly in the way of non-formal education. They also place and host volunteers, organize workshops, summer camps, etc.

"PLYA" program involves young adults, who do not attend school or are unemployed - they either drop out of school or have few unfinished exams left, and that does not allow them to regularly attend school. Through daily workshops they are motivated to finish exams, enrol or re-enrol in school, or receive personal assistance in career and life planning.

In 2003 TIN started with their own developed program "Going on my own", a re-socialisation

program for the specific group of drop-outs, the ex-drug addicts and their partners, parents. The main goal of this program was re-integration of this specific group of drop-outs (cured drug addicts) into domestic and local environment and organisation of educational activities for the external co-workers and volunteers, which work with this target group. It was started with the help of Leonardo de Vinci program in a branch in Maribor and was running until late 2007.

## 2. Vzgojni zavod planina / Educational Institution Planina

In this institution a special attention is given to children (drop-outs) from different areas of Slovenia. Beside the drop-out problem all children have psycho-social problems. The goal of such a special programme is to enable pupils to finish elementary school and to finish the vocational education. We have visited them and asked them to answer some questions.

## 3. Different programmes- projects

In order to reduce early school leaving, two projects are taking place:

1. Measures for preventing early school leaving – MPESL - in which 20 vocational schools are taking part, and information and counselling for the young (ICY) , which established a counselling network intended for the young who have left the school system. A year and a half monitoring showed that 826 young people were involved in the information activity and 130 early leavers in the counselling activity.
2. The PLY- Project Learning for Young programme does not provide formal education and is intended for young adults who have left school early and have major difficulties in being included in both school and work. An evaluation study showed that 40,6% of participants were included in some form of education within one year or more of completing the programme, and 23,7% are employed on a fixed term or open contract.

### 3. Inclusion of Roma children

In the past, in Slovenia three possible ways of inclusion of Roma children into kindergarten and elementary school are practiced:<sup>9</sup>

- *homogenous* classes, formed in the beginning of schooling, attended by Roma children,
- *partly homogenous* classes, where Roma children only attend homogenous classes of Slovene language, mathematics and natural plus social science, while in other classes they are together with other pupils,
- *heterogeneous* classes with Roma and non-Roma children attending classes together.

Some schools had also so called *group work* without formal classes, where Roma children from different classes were joined into special groups for the study of mathematics, Slovene language and natural plus social science, which was supposed to contribute to better success and higher motivation<sup>10</sup>.

The above mentioned three approaches have been practiced in a number of individual elementary schools. As proven by their experience as well as by educational research homogenous Roma classes did not have the desired effect.

Early integration of Roma children into heterogeneous departments at the very beginning of a kindergarten and elementary school attendance proved to be the best choice. Several reasons can be enumerated in favour of integrated classes and against segregating children on the basis of ethnic adherence. Possibility of spontaneous learning among children, developing respect for each other's culture and language are among them. In such classes cultural pluralism and plurilingualism as two crucial European concepts can be practiced *in vivo*.

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<sup>9</sup> This integration is affected by different circumstances, the status of Roma community within the local community, and education plus awareness degree of parents.

<sup>10</sup> Žagar et al., p.61.

Since the school year 2003/2004 there is no legal basis for homogenous classes in Slovenia.<sup>11</sup> Roma children in all schools are integrated into heterogeneous classes, which is supposed to have a favourable effect in the future.

### 3.1. Background information

The majority of Roma in Slovenia are settled in the Dolenjska and Prekmurje region – some authors claim these two groups form the autochthonous Roma community in Slovenia. Some more or less nomadic groups are settling in the suburbs of major towns, especially Ljubljana, there is also an almost extinct group of Sinti in the region of Gorenjska.

Owing to the 2002 population census there were 3246 persons in Slovenia who declared Roma as their ethnic adherence and 3834 persons who claimed their language was Romani. Unofficial estimations, however raise their number to between 6 and 10 thousand. Owing to the 2002 census, in the generation under 19 years there were 1478 persons, 717 of them were of the obligatory school age ( between 6 and 15)<sup>12</sup>.

Table 1: Roma children of school age and below

	Roma
<b>TOTAL</b>	
0-4	454
5-9	364
10-14	353

<sup>11</sup> Primary Schools Act (Off. Gaz. of the RS, No. 70/05, 60/06) determines in Art. 40, in which forms of differentiation are described:

- that from 1. to 9. grade teachers in instructions and other forms of organized work differentiate lecture with pupils according to their capabilities (inner differentiation);
- from grade 4 to 7 it is possible (in the extent of 25% of lessons) to organize level instruction with mathematics and with Slovene, Italian and Hungarian languages in the ethnically mixed territories, as well as with the foreign language (flexible differentiation);
- in grades 8 and 9 lessons of Slovene, Italian and Hungarian in the ethnically mixed territories, as well as with mathematics and foreign language, can be organized in the following ways:
  - a) by distributing pupils into groups of instruction
  - b) by simultaneous lecturing of 2 teachers
  - c) as level instruction
  - d) as combination of differentiation forms from the above
  - e) the number of lectures, dedicated to implementation of differentiation in grades 8 and 9 must be the same, regardless of the form of differentiation, that is being implemented

Schools gained autonomy by this law, as the decision on the implementation of forms of differentiation in the second (grades 4-7) and the third (grades 8 and 9) periods, proposed by headmaster, is adopted by the school council as a rule for 1 schoolyear. Before the decision the school council obtains the opinion of teachers' and parents' councils. Any of the above options can be chosen to help the Roma children in consistence with the nature of their need. Among others, Roma assistant proved to be among optimal solutions.

<sup>12</sup> See also pages [http://www.stat.si/eng/novica\\_prikazi.aspx?id=1160-](http://www.stat.si/eng/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=1160-), [http://www.uvn.gov.si/en/minorities\\_national\\_communities/roma\\_ethnic\\_community/](http://www.uvn.gov.si/en/minorities_national_communities/roma_ethnic_community/),

15-19	307
<b>Footnote:</b>	
Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Census of Population, Households and Housing, 2002	
Use and publication of data is allowed provided the source is acknowledged	

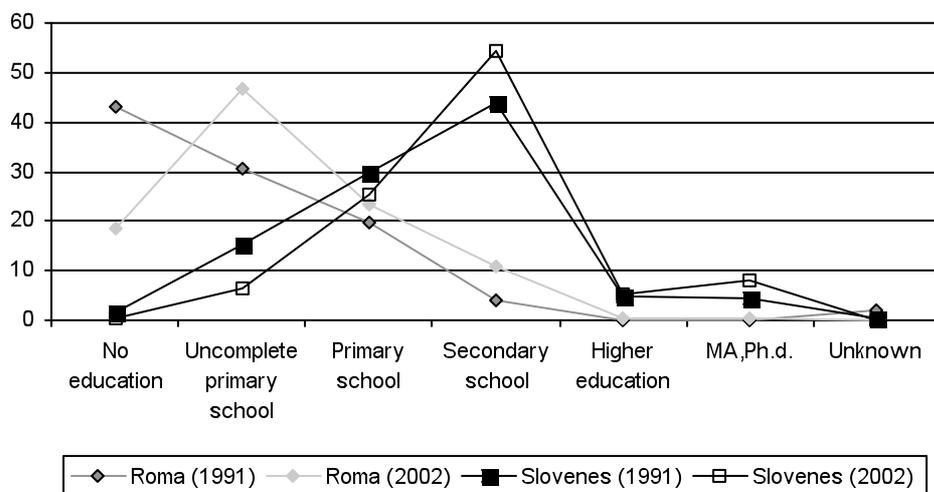
It is a well known fact that in any society (state) the process of the Roma integration is a complex and long lasting endeavour; owing to their predominantly nomadic way of life the inclusion of the Roma children in the educational system is a demanding scheme. For several decades now Slovenia has dedicated considerable efforts to the integration of the Roma, one of the ways being also the inclusion of their children into educational system. While in Prekmurje the level of integration is reasonably satisfactory - the beginnings of systematic integration of the Prekmurje Romas goes back to the sixties of the past century, systematic local attention being paid to this cause for decades (based also on research into their way of life, attitudes and perceptions) - the integration of Roma in the Dolenjska region lags behind, accompanied by many conflicts between them and the non-Roma local population. This fact is also reflected in the inclusion of the Roma children in schools: in 2008 there was a 90% inclusion in the Prekmurje and 39% in the Dolenjska region<sup>13</sup>.

Although a positive trend can be traced between the last two population censuses (1991 and 2002) with regard to the growth of educational level of Romas, the rise is very gradual and essentially lower than the progress of Slovenes. Proof of the fact that integration of the Roma children in the educational process is less than satisfactory may be found in the comparison and in the fact that the share of the Roma children, who successfully progress in the education vertical, is still essentially lower in comparison with the rest of Slovenia's population (Graph 1). The fact that the census data are related only to approximately one third of the estimated Roma population in Slovenia, allows for a more optimistic conclusion (or not).

Graph No. 3: Comparison of education structure amongst population above 15 years of age, declared as the Roma and Slovenes in the 1991 and 2002 population census; in % (Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Population Census 1991, 2002)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Radio News Val 202, 26. 1. 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Žagar, M. et al.



### ***3.2. Legal frames of the Roma inclusion into education***

In concordance with the Slovenian Constitution request<sup>15</sup>, the Roma Community Act was adopted in 2007<sup>16</sup>, by which special rights are granted to the members of the Roma community in the field of education, culture, employment, space managing, health and social care, information and participation in decision making<sup>17</sup>. In this vein Republics of Slovenia is obliged to create appropriate conditions for social inclusion of the Roma community members by consecrating a special attention to:

- raising the education level by intensifying the inclusion into the educational system and by appropriate scholarship policy;
- stimulating professional education and qualification and the employment;
- promoting the maintenance and development of the Romani language and the cultural, information and editorial activities of the Roma community<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates: "The status and special rights of the Roma Community living in Slovenia shall be regulated by law."

<sup>16</sup> Act on the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia, Official Gazette, No. 33/2007, p.4602.

<sup>17</sup> Article 3

<sup>18</sup> Article 4

In this context the establishment of the Roma Community Council in the Republic of Slovenia (Svet romske skupnosti RS) is of special importance, providing for the inclusion of the Roma representatives, and through them also the wider Roma community into the decision making process on their developmental issues. Thus the following tasks related to education and language are listed in the Council's regulations<sup>19</sup>:

- Discussing and framing proposals and initiatives related to the Roma community rights and status;
- Active participation in the developmental programmes realisation, especially those related to Roma issues;
- Dealing with the Romani language and the Roma culture maintenance issues;
- Attending to the maintenance of the Roma community's identity and specific features, especially in the field of socialization and education of Roma children, development of the Roma cultural and information activities;
- Stimulating participation of the Roma community members in the decision making about their special rights;
- ...

Active participation is granted also on the local level, where in concordance with the local self-government legislation a Roma representative is elected into the Municipality Council of the municipalities where they live (in 19 of 210 municipalities). For assessing of the Roma community's position, a special working body with a majority of the Roma members is established at the Municipality Council, in concordance with the article 7 of the Roma community act.

Protection of special rights of the Roma Ethnic Community is currently being implemented through eleven (11) sector-specific acts:

1. Local Self-Government Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 72/93, ..., 100/05),
2. Local Elections Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 72/93, ..., 22/06),
3. Voting Rights Register Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 52/02, 11/03, 73/03),
4. Act on Enforcing Public Interest in the Field of Culture (Official Gazette RS, No. 96/02),

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<sup>19</sup> Article 10 of the Regulations of the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia, Official Gazette, No. 94/2007, p. 12806

5. Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 98/05),
6. Kindergarten Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 100/05),
7. Elementary School Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 70/05),
8. Public Media Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 35/01, ..., 96/05),

### ***3.3. Education legislation and documents***

In 1996, with the educational reform the legal basis for special conditions governing the education of Roma children was incorporated in the reformed education legislation, and the Organisation and Financing of Education and Training Act<sup>20</sup>, Kindergarten Act<sup>21</sup> and Elementary School Act<sup>22</sup> were additionally amended from 2000 onwards.

In 2002, the *Supplement to the Kindergarten Curriculum for working with Roma children*<sup>23</sup> was adopted, which defines the approaches for kindergarten teachers in the creation of conditions for the implementation of rights of Roma children to equal opportunities in education. The Supplement states that in the formation of practical curricula for the work with Roma children in kindergartens, the following principles and aims are of special importance:

- the principle of openness of curriculum, autonomy and professional responsibility of the kindergarten staff (search for elements of Slovene and Roma culture);
- the principles of equal opportunities, respect for diversity, principle of multiculturalism;

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<sup>20</sup> The Act on organizing and financing of education in Article 25 states, among competences of the Expert Council of the RS for general education, formation of program of supplementary education for Roma children. Article 81 states that the state budget ensures »means for preparation and subsidizing of prices of primary school textbooks and learning materials, for national communities' education and education of Slovene minority members abroad and emigration, and for Roma« and »a part of the means for primary school education for Roma«. Article 84 states that the Minister determines special norms and standards for education of Roma children.

<sup>21</sup> Article 7 states that pre-school education of Roma children be performed in accordance with this law and other regulations. The chapter on transitory and final provisions states in Article 54 that for public service in the sphere of pre-school education and primary school preparation of children, the programs for pre-school Roma children can also be included until programs for pre-school children be adopted according to this law (in the mean time in December 2002, the Expert Council of the RS already adopted the Supplement to the Curriculum for Kindergartens for the work with Roma children). The means for its implementation are drawn from the state budget.

<sup>22</sup> Article 9: »Primary school education of Roma community members in the RS is performed in accordance with this law and other regulations.«

<sup>23</sup> Available on the www:

[http://mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci\\_Dodatek\\_-\\_ROMI.pdf](http://mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci_Dodatek_-_ROMI.pdf) (June 1, 2006).

- experiencing kindergarten as an environment, offering equal opportunities for integration into activities and daily life, regardless of gender, physical and mental constitution, national adherence, cultural origin, religion, etc. (diversity of children – wealth for kindergartens);
- the principle of cooperation with parents;
- the principle of active learning and ensuring the possibility of verbalizing and other manners of expression.<sup>24</sup>

In 2000 new *Instructions for the implementation of nine-year primary school program for Roma pupils* were adopted<sup>25</sup>, emphasising the need to apply modern methodological and didactic approach instead of lower demands for Roma children knowledge.

In May and June 2004 the "*Strategy for Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia*" was adopted by all three Professional Councils of the Republic of Slovenia for Education (for general education, vocational and professional education and for adult education)<sup>26</sup>. Participation of the Roma members in the process of the *Strategy* preparation is worth noticing, namely in concordance with provisions of the Roma Community Act, the Roma community was represented in the working group. The main challenge of the *Strategy* is to promote the integration of the Roma children into school by respecting their way of life, tradition and culture. The strategy is based on the principles of modern intercultural learning and is in concordance with the Council of Europe's and the European Union's concepts of educational policy striving for improvement of status of the Roma communities<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Žagar et al.

<sup>25</sup> Instructions for work in educational institutions that integrate minority children and Roma are adopted by the RS Expert Council for General Education

<sup>26</sup> Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji [Strategy for education of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia] (2004). Working group: Andreja Barle Lakote... [et al.]. Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport. Available on the www: [http://mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj\\_solstva/projekti/enake\\_moznosti/0721\\_strategija\\_Romi.doc](http://mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj_solstva/projekti/enake_moznosti/0721_strategija_Romi.doc) (April 25, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> The quality and possibilities of Roma children education are also affected by other social factors and living conditions, such as housing, etc., on which kindergartens and schools can have no direct impact. That is why for the improvement of inclusion of Roma children in the educational system, cooperation of different ministries is of utmost importance (Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of University Education, Science & Technology (scholarships), Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (social and family aid possibilities, scholarships, public works in education programs, vocational training programs), Ministry of Health (educational programs for nurses and home nursing, survey and possible supplements of legal foundations for necessary evidence, co-financing of research projects on links between lifestyle, health and education) and institutions at national level (National Education Institute, RS Centre for Vocational Training, Adult Education Centre of the RS, Health Protection Institute, Health Care Centre of the RS, Employment Service of the RS,

It is important to notice that the measures and priorities put forward in the Strategy are based on the results of the research, analyses and reports on the integration of Roma children into the mainstream education, prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Sport.

In the *Strategy for education of the Roma in the RS*, measures are defined with which more effective inclusion of Roma pupils into the educational system is to be obtained:

- additional financial means for individual or team work with Roma pupils are reserved,<sup>28</sup>
- more favourable standards for classes with Roma have been adopted,<sup>29</sup>
- food,<sup>30</sup> textbooks,<sup>31</sup> and excursions for Roma pupils are separately financed,
- financing of the first exercise book for the teaching of Roma language,
- within the National Education Institute a team of teachers specialized in teaching Roma pupils was formed.<sup>32</sup>

Each year a National actions plan, prepared by a special working group of the ministry, is adopted. The adopted solutions are to be executed through projects in the framework of the new financial perspective of the European social fund – Operative program of the human sources development 2007 – 2013, the 4<sup>th</sup> developmental priority Equal opportunities and suscitating the social inclusion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority direction “To increase the access and equal opportunities in the education system”.

The Strategy puts forward the following goals aiming at better integration of the Roma children into the educational system are put forward:

- Early inclusion of Roma children in pre-school institutions, at least two years prior to their enrolment in elementary school, (i.e. when they are four years of age at the latest).

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Chamber of Commerce of the RS, Chamber of Trades of the RS, different local institutions and Roma Association of Slovenia (*Strategy for Education of the Roma in the RS*, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> In school year 2003/04, the Ministry granted schools 512 hours for small group lessons; this form of help is according to schools absolutely necessary for successful work with Roma pupils.

<sup>29</sup> Within norms and standards for primary schools, valid till the end of school year 2002/2003, special norms were defined for the formation of Roma classes and classes including Roma children; since 2003/2004 norms no longer anticipate formation of Roma classes. The norm for a class containing at least 3 Roma pupils is 21.

<sup>30</sup> The Ministry for education and sport increases the means for the subsidizing of school meals to all primary schools, including Roma pupils.

<sup>31</sup> Primary schools are allotted by the MES 5,17 EUR per month per Roma pupil as an assistance in the covering of expenses of school materials, transports, entrance fees to cultural, biological, sports events, etc. Schools are autonomous in the finance distribution and with the co-financing of additional material expenses of Roma pupils, particularly considering the following criteria: social financial aid distribution according to regulations on social care, the amount of income per family member, the amount of family allowance, unemployment of parents, long-term illness in family, long-term social problems, and other specific features.

<sup>32</sup> Žagar et. all

The principal purpose of Roma children's inclusion in pre-school institutions is learning both Slovene and Roma language and with this earlier socialisation in an educational institution, which would help a child to an easier accommodation in the elementary school.

-The appointment of a Roma assistant to the classes with Roma children which should help to surmount the emotional and language barrier; he/she would represent a kind bridge between the kindergarten/school and the Roma community.

-Content adjustment of curriculum: introduction of the Romani language lessons in elementary school as an optional subject in the elementary school; application of an appropriate teaching approach to the Slovene as the second language; contents related to the Roma culture, history and identity.

-Permanent in-service training and additional education programs for teachers and other professionals.

-Non-segregation, i.e. integration of Roma pupils etc.

-Establishing a trustful atmosphere in school and anti-bias activities: each school prepares a plan of communication activities and cooperation with the Roma parents, and a plan for suppressing the stereotypes and prejudices of the majority population against Roma pupils.

-Adult education: a four year secondary education is considered the basic educational standard, to promote employment and permanent life-long learning of the adult Roma population. Counselling centres and networks for Roma in the local environment, help of a Roma coordinator, special normatives (number of pupils per class) and standards for the programs designed for adult Romas, free of charge programs and learning aids.

#### ***3.4. Projects related to the realisation of the Strategy goals***

As explained in one of the projects<sup>33</sup>, "Roma community differs from the majority in language, culture, traditions, and the question is how much and in what way the present

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<sup>33</sup> ŽAGAR, Mitja et al.. *The aspect of culture in the social inclusion of ethnic minorities : Evaluation of the impact of inclusion policies under the open method of co-ordination in the European union: assessing the cultural policies of six member states. Final report. Slovenia*, (ECMI Working paper, 32). Flensburg: European center for minority issues - ECMI: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 2006.

educational system takes this diversity into account. In many research studies the most frequent reasons for lower schools success of Roma children were as follows:<sup>34</sup>

- inadequate forms (for example homogenous classes) of inclusion of Roma children in primary school system,
- teachers are not adequate qualified to deal with specificities of Roma children,
- low expectations regarding the school results of Roma children,<sup>35</sup>
- stigmatising of Roma children from the part of the majority children,<sup>36</sup>
- ignorance or low command of the Slovene language,
- non-attendance of classes,
- non-encouraging domestic conditions,<sup>37</sup>
- education does not rank high amongst the values of some Roma parents,

distrust of Roma parents towards school, poor participation of Roma parents in the schoolwork processes.”<sup>38</sup>

Two kinds of project are being executed following the Strategy's guidelines, the research projects and the school projects.

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<sup>34</sup> More on this:

- Krek, Janez and Vogrinc, Janez (2005). Znanje slovenskega jezika kot pogoj šolskega uspeha učencev iz jezikovno in kulturno različnih ter socialno depriviligiranih družin – primer začetnega opismenjevanja romskih učencev. Available on the www: <http://ceps.pef.uni-lj.si/2005-krek-vogrinc.pdf> (April 25, 2006).
- Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji [Strategy for education of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia] (2004). working group: Andreja Barle Lakote... [et al.]. Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport. Available on the www: [http://mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj\\_solstva/projekti/enake\\_moznosti/07\\_21\\_strategija\\_Romi.doc](http://mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj_solstva/projekti/enake_moznosti/07_21_strategija_Romi.doc) (April 25, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> At the primary school education level in the past lower standards were set for Roma pupils. At the completion of primary school Roma children achieved 6th or 7th grade knowledge standards. This, however, made inclusion into more demanding forms of education (secondary) impossible. With the introduction of 9-year primary school, knowledge standards for Roma children are the same as for the others.

<sup>36</sup> In many Roma families, housing and hygiene conditions are bad, therefore some children come to school improperly groomed which makes them a target of ridicule and ignorance.

<sup>37</sup> In 1991 an extensive longitudinal research study on Roma environment and school success of Roma children in primary schools of Prekmurje was carried out. 411 Roma pupils were included. Analyzed was: domestic environment (living conditions, housing, own room, own bed ...); working conditions for studying at home (electricity); cultural standard (TV, radio, printed media); parents' education, parents' profession, parents' employment. A wholesome insight into domestic social environment of Roma pupils in Prekmurje leads to understanding of big, and often insurmountable problems Roma pupils are facing in primary school. The climate in school often prevents them from equal participation in learning process, as they enter school with far lesser knowledge and realize at the very beginning that their chances to compete with non-Roma fellow students are very small. School practice shows and confirms that as a rule the share of Roma pupils who manage to advance from grade to grade without repetition is low (Tancer 2003).

<sup>38</sup> In Žagar et al.

1. One of the important research projects designed with an aim to realise the Strategy's goals is related to the **Romani language planning**. In the project financed by the Ministry of education and sport of the RS, a vocabulary and a grammar of Romani language were prepared in order to facilitate the language problems of the Roma children in school:

KREK, Janez, ANTAUER, Živa, CECH, Petra, 2006, *Standardizacija jezika Romov v Sloveniji in vključevanje romske kulture v vzgojo in izobraževanje : zaključno poročilo o rezultatih opravljenega raziskovalnega dela na projektu v okviru ciljnega raziskovalnega programa (CRP) "Konkurenčnost Slovenije 2001 -2006"*. (Standardisation of the Romani language in Slovenia and the inclusion of the Roma culture into the education: final research report-) Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta, Center za študij edukacijskih strategij.

**2. The evaluation of the work of the Roma assistants** as special help to language and social problems of the Roma pupils and a possible solutions to higher percentage of completing the primary education was the goal of the target research project in which all Roma assistants in Slovenia, their teaching co-workers (teachers) and the principals at school were interviewed:

BREZOVŠEK, Marjan, 2008, *Reševanje romske problematike v Sloveniji s poudarkom na socialni inkluzivnosti Romov v šolski sistem : končno poročilo*. ( Solving the Roma problematics in Slovenia with an accent on the social inclusion of Roma into the education system: final report), Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Inštitut za družbene vede, Center za politološka raziskovanja.

**3. An action research was carried out by mentoring the success of integration of Roma children** through evaluation of the work of the Roma assistants, introducing anti-bias programs for teachers and attitude assessment of the Roma and non-Roma parents:

VONTA, Tatjana, RUTAR, Sonja, BALIČ, Fanika, VIDMAR, Jelena, REŽEK, Mateja, ŠTIGL, Simona, 2005. *Zagotavljanje enakih možnosti za izobraževanje romskih otrok : projekt ciljnega raziskovalnega programa "Konkurenčnost Slovenije 2001 - 2006"* (Granting equal opportunities for education of the Roma children: project report). Ljubljana: Pedagoški inštitut. As stated in the evaluation of this longitudinal research in which data were collected in two panels, the findings and recommendations are the following:

“Findings from this evaluation show that responses of the environment are positive towards integration; however the answers themselves suggest existence of ethnical distance towards

Roma children. Most participants consider that Roma children education is of major importance as a means for conflict management and for a smoother social integration of the Roma population. With regard to the expectations about the achievement we believe that there has been a phase of greater reality awareness. By that we would explain doubts of executive staff, teachers etc. that were not so strongly present in the previous evaluation.

The attendance of Roma children is more frequent now, but is still irregular. Research showed that engaging children in pre-school program influences more regular attendance later in primary school and accelerates their development. Judging by collected data, most of the children had shown balanced developmental progress. Schools have offered extra curricular activities also to Roma children.

Progress of teachers' quality according to ISSA and RWCT standards is evident, although substantial individual differences still exist. It was also concluded that children's progress is quicker when they are taught by a highly qualified teacher. With regard to this finding, special attention should be paid to professional development of teachers in future.

Although project has many positive effects and Roma children are responding positively, there are still problems with many Roma parents who rarely feel the need to cooperate with school and engage their children regularly. It is interesting, though not surprising, that Roma parents do not want Romany language in curriculum, but they approve the statement that other children should be acquainted with Roma culture and tradition. The role of Roma assistants at cooperation with Roma parents, Roma community and school did not strengthen with regard to the previous evaluation. It was asserted that Roma assistants have a very important effect on children as well as teachers, helping them actively in the classroom. They have a special role with regards to Roma language, culture and tradition. Evident progress of multiculturalism and bilingualism in classrooms can be attributed to their cooperation.

There are many positive impacts of the project stated by the head teachers such as starting to deal with Roma issue systematically, higher quality of teaching etc. On the other hand, in order for the integration to be successful, many things outside the school need to be paid special attention to in the future, such as: linking all institutions dealing with the Roma issue at local and national level, regulate the status of Roma assistants etc.”

**4. The ECMI final report on Slovenia**<sup>39</sup> shows similar outcomes and points to the important role of parents in communication with the educational institutions which is an important drive for a better inclusion of Roma children in schools as well as for a reduction of the drop-out share. Inclusion of Roma children at the earliest age into kindergartens seems to accelerate later inclusion in schools. Owing to the teachers' experiences and the empirical findings the integration of Roma children into kindergartens depends on the following measures:<sup>40</sup>

“Active contacts with parents. Contacts should be established before child's entry into kindergarten. Necessary are visits of teachers at a child's home and visits of parents in kindergartens. Teachers should gain parents' trust through positive communication, and by organizing different forms of social meetings.

Teachers should be specially attentive to the acceptance of Roma children by other children. Instead of emphasizing differences, they should direct children into understanding the benefits of diversity and the advantages of socializing with people of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Introduction of Roma assistants – this post has not been systemized yet. However, the experience with Roma speaking teachers has been favourable. Roma assistant originating from the Roma community could contribute to easier inclusion of Roma children into kindergarten. He/she could help establish a contact between teachers and Roma children, between Roma and non-Roma children and between kindergarten and Roma parents.

Permanent education of preschool teachers for the work with Roma children or children of minority communities, and elimination of prejudice and stereotypes, about other ethnic communities.

4. KLOPČIČ Vera, 2005, Romi v procesih evropske integracije/razvoj modelov izobraževanja in usposabljanja Romov za povečanje rednega zaposlovanja (Roma in the processes of the European integration/ development of the education and qualification models for the increased permanent employment of the Romas.

Within the project “Roma in the process of European integration/ development of models for education and professional training of Roma for increasing of regular employment ” there

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<sup>39</sup> ŽAGAR, Mitja, KOMAC, Miran, MEDVEŠEK, Mojca, BEŠTER, Romana. *The aspect of culture in the social inclusion of ethnic minorities : Evaluation of the impact of inclusion policies under the open method of co-ordination in the European union: assessing the cultural policies of six member states. Final report. Slovenia*, (ECMI Working paper, 32). Flensburg: European center for minority issues - ECMI: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 2006. 172 str., zvd. [COBISS.SI-ID [10543693](http://www.ecmi-eu.org?id=160); <http://www.ecmi-eu.org?id=160>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, , p. 85

was disseminated information on the international standards, focusing on the areas of employment, education and fight against discrimination. Some positive experiences and recent developments in the neighbouring countries are presented in the report, which are relevant for the process of shaping the appropriate models for professional training and employment of Roma in Slovenia.

Various studies and reports of international organizations and national NGO indicate that the position of Roma communities in Slovenia in the field of employment remains insufficient and that majority of unemployed Roma did not finish even elementary school. Two workshops were held in the area of Novo mesto, where the Roma community resides, in order to promote social inclusion and to improve mutual understanding in the area. Participants were national and international experts, representatives of Roma communities, representatives of local employment services, representatives of social care services, representatives of authorities and some project managers. At the first workshop, which was organized in the year 2001 within the regional /Council of Europe/ project aimed to improve the employment possibilities for Roma in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, important practical initiatives were endorsed aiming to improve efficiency of the work of local employment services. In order to promote Roma integration and to facilitate mutual contacts, after the workshop, two local employment offices employed two Roma as coordinators /consultants/. They were appointed in the areas of Novo mesto and Murska Sobota, where the majority of traditionally settled Roma in Slovenia live.

Specific recommendations were adopted: to create special funds for supporting further education of Roma in Slovenia, to support self-employment of Roma, to give employment priority to Roma who have successfully concluded their professional training or have obtained higher levels of education etc.

Results of the project “Roma in the process of European integration/ development of models for education and professional training of Roma for increasing of regular employment ” are establishing, maintaining and strengthening the network in the field, and contributing to the improvement of the position of Roma in the fields which are crucial for stable and long term co-existence among Roma and non Roma community in Slovenia, and for promotion of the identity of Roma.

## 6. School projects

It is important to underline the role of Roma Community Council in the Republic of Slovenia in the school projects. Namely, it is in cooperation with the Roma Community that school programs are prepared.

A number of projects related to the inclusion of Roma children into education are being executed in schools with integrated Roma pupils. Most of them are consecrated to good practices of inclusion of the Roma children into education: searching of appropriate ways, individual approach, simultaneous evaluation, consideration of the Roma way of life and culture, continuous contact and cooperation with parents work with the Roma assistants.

A three year project *Efficient inclusion of Romas into education*, financed from the European social fund is consecrated to the Roma assistants. The project is executed by the Roma Association of Slovenia together with schools in Prekmurje and Dolenjska region, Maribor and Kočevsko that integrate Roma children. In the current schoolyear there are 31 Roma assistants helping children to adapt and understand the academic contents, and also mediating between the school and the Roma community and also enabling their communication.

## **4. Inclusion of migrant children**

Each year children of migrants, asylum applicators, refugees and persons with a temporal protection are included into the education system of Slovenia. It was attested that these children and pupils (migrant children in the following text) have difficulties with following the curriculum contents and other kindergarten and school activities, consequently their inclusion into the social environment being limited as well. In the past this was attributed to their cognitive capacities and to the differences in their cultural upbringing. Recent research, however, has proven that the main cause for their deficient academic outcomes is connected to their underdeveloped communicative competence in the teaching language, i.e. Slovene, which is their second or even foreign language. This finding has only recently been paid due attention by the school authorities, hence discussions about the problem are more and more frequent and the number of schools in which an appropriate method for the Slovene language teaching is being applied under the surveillance of competent professionals are on a constant increase. On the other hand, attention is being paid to strategies and instruments for inclusion of the migrant children into education and the inclusion of their parents into the school and wider Slovene environment, which until recently have not been sufficiently developed.

The *Strategy of the inclusion of children and pupils into the system of education in the Republic of Slovenia*, adopted at the Ministry for Education and Sport of RS in May 2007 marks a turning point in the social inclusion history of the migrant children in Slovenia.

### **4.1. Background information**

There is no central evidence on the number of children of a non-Slovene Language since data on ethnicity and language of pupils are not registered at the inscription of a child into a kindergarten or school. (The reason is the sensitivity of this information.) However, a research prepared by the National Education Institute<sup>41</sup> - 30 kindergartens (10.27% of all kindergartens in Slovenia) 138 elementary schools (31.5% of all) and 29 secondary schools (11,74% of all secondary schools) responded to the questionnaire - showed that in 2006 there were 993 children that came to Slovenia from abroad and 1.977 children born in Slovenia whose first language is other than Slovene mother tongue.

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<sup>41</sup> See also the section *Projects related to the realisation of the Strategy goals*.

An exhaustive general information on demographic structure and the settlement of the migrant population (as well as the Roma) in the Republic of Slovenia is given in the ECMI final report on Slovenia<sup>42</sup>, which contains also many other information relevant to the social inclusion<sup>43</sup>. Inspection into language and ethnicity at the last Population census in Slovenia (2002) shows that the majority of the non-Slovene nationals are members of the ex-Yugoslav nations and nationalities. At the 2002 Population census (besides three minorities: Hungarian (6 243-0.32%), Italian (2 258-0.11%), and Roma (3 246-0.17%) expressly recognized by name by the Constitution of Slovenia), there were ethnic groups from former Yugoslavia: Croats (35 632-1.81%), Serbs (38 964-1.98%), Bosnians (21 542-1.10%), Macedonians (3 972-0.20%), Albanians (6 186-0.13%) and Montenegrins (2 667-0.14%), who migrated when the war broke out in the ex-Yugoslavia or were already established in Slovenia when the country declared its independence in 1991.

The share of the school-age children and youth from these groups shows that the most numerous among the migrant children population is the Slavic language group (table 1) while there are also 1286 Albanian school-age children (493 children in the 5-9, 473 in the 10 – 14 and 440 children in the 15 – 19 age group).

Table 2: *Migrant children of school age belonging to South Slavic ethnicity (and probably to Slavic languages)*

	<b>Bosnian s</b>	<b>Montenegrin s</b>	<b>Croat s</b>	<b>Macedonian s</b>	<b>Muslim s</b>	<b>Serb s</b>	<b>Undeclare d declared as Yugoslavs</b>	<b>Undeclare d declared as Bosnians</b>
5- 9	996	79	723	81	502	1.161	10	320
10 - 14	1.777	157	1.496	171	885	2.429	11	624
15 - 19	2.000	189	1.915	250	1.037	3.413	19	669

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Census of Population, Households and Housing, 2002, Use and publication of data is allowed provided the source is acknowledged.

<sup>42</sup> ŽAGAR, Mitja, KOMAC, Miran, MEDVEŠEK, Mojca, BEŠTER, Romana. *The aspect of culture in the social inclusion of ethnic minorities : Evaluation of the impact of inclusion policies under the open method of co-ordination in the European union: assessing the cultural policies of six member states. Final report. Slovenia*, (ECMI Working paper, 32). Flensburg: European center for minority issues - ECMI: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 2006. 172 str., zvd. [COBISS.SI-ID [10543693](http://www.ecmi-eu.org?id=160); <http://www.ecmi-eu.org?id=160>]

<sup>43</sup> The text is in the attachment

The integration of the migrant children in the Slovene educational system is, according to the existing possibilities, realized with the possibility of organizing the additional hour for learning Slovene language- the practice is 1 hour per week which means 35 hours per year. This possibility is in each school differently realized. There are no special provisions who teaches and how it is taught. In the Slovene legislation there is a difference regarding the type of migrant: economic migrant, economic migrant with Slovene citizenship, children of the parents asking for asylum, refugee.

Important document which defines the status of migrant child/migrant pupil is also the Resolution on migrant policy in Slovenia (Uradni list RS, št.40/99), which is prepared on the basis of the Law for the foreigners (Uradni list RS, št. 61/99, 9/2001 – ZPPreb and 87/2002)

The Ministry of Education and Sport in May 2007 prepared the

**Strategy of the inclusion of migrant pupils in the educational system of Slovenia.**

The document quotes the key problems regarding the inclusion of migrant children. The analyses show that these children have in many cases difficulties in schools and difficulties with their social inclusion. These problems are the consequences of the following facts:

- there is not enough legal foundation for providing funds and additional sustaining mechanisms to enable the successful integration of migrant children in the educational system,
- there is no well prepared strategy with all the instruments for the inclusion of migrant children in the educational system in Slovenia (the sustaining mechanism are not precisely developed- teacher training, missing the methodological and didactical tools for working with this target group),
- deficiency of the adequate competence and skills of teachers and other personnel for the collaboration with migrant parents,
- insufficient competence of Slovene language – this is also due to not adequate number of Slovene lessons as L2, there are no suitable curricula and school materials for the Slovene as the L2, the profile of the Slovene teacher is not defined , teachers have not adequate knowledge for teaching and communicating with migrant children and parents,

- unsuitable (non adequate) assessment of the importance of the maintaining the language and culture,
- non-sufficient inclusion of migrant children and their parents in wider school environment and broader social environment (not having knowledge about socio-cultural life of Slovenes, low level of the integrational willingness of Slovenes)

Among many principles which have to be respected in the educational system there is also: to assure the condition for achieving the goal and standard of knowledge (to introduce additional lessons and develop special methods of work for avoiding drop-out of these children)

#### ***4.2. Education legislation and documents***

The Slovene legislation stresses the right of each person to the education. Several laws directly mention only the right of the migrant child to be included in the educational system.

Two aspects of legal possibilities granting social inclusion of migrant children in education should be taken into consideration

##### **1. Inclusion into the system of education**

a. It is provided for by the article 2 of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act<sup>44</sup>, where the right of education without discrimination or exclusion is granted to everybody and creating of equal educational possibilities figure on the first place, i.e:

-granting an optimal development of an individual regardless of sex, social and cultural provenience, religion, ethnic adherence and physical or mental constitution.

-education for mutual tolerance, ... respect for otherness and cooperation with others,

...

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<sup>44</sup> Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 98/05, ).

Further on the right to inclusion of migrant children are dealt with in the education acts<sup>45</sup>. In a series of acts special attention is consecrated to the equal rights in education of foreign citizens, asylum-seekers, refugees, EU and non-EU workers, etc.,<sup>46</sup> who as the Slovene nationals of a non-Slovene ethnic adherence and language are included into the educational system under the same terms as citizens of the Slovene provenience. However, the facilities with regard of their language and culture (see below, point 2.) which are of special importance for their effective inclusion into the education system and for their optimal language and academic outcomes which condition their successful integration in to the society are slightly different for different migrant children groups.

2. Possibility to learn the L1 and acquire the Slovene language as L2 by appropriate L2 method.

For the last mentioned group learning L1 is settled in article 8 of the Elementary School Act, owing to which “children of the Slovene citizens, settled in the Republic of Slovenia, whose mother tongue is not the Slovene language, instruction of their mother tongue and culture is organized in concordance with the international agreements”.

For sake of a smoother integration into the school environment and for better academic outcomes “additional (supplemental) teaching/learning of the Slovene language can also be organized”.

Such a possibility is not offered to the migrant children whose parents are not the Slovene citizens.

Learning Slovene as L2 is also stipulated by the Act on the use of the Slovene language in public communication, stating in the article 13 that “Republics of Slovenia stimulates the Slovene language learning. For this purpose the Government of the RS adopts a programme,

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<sup>45</sup> Kindergarten Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 100/05), Elementary School Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 70/05), Gimnazije Act (Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, ..., 59/01), Vocational and Technical Education Act (Official Gazette RS, ... 35/01, 102/07).

<sup>46</sup> Zakon o začasni zaščiti razseljenih oseb (Act on temporal protection of displaced persons), Zakon o azilu (Asylum Act), Pravilnik o načinih in pogojih zagotavljanja pravic prosilcem za azil (Ordinance on modes and conditions of granting the rights of asylum applicants). (Possibility for inclusion into kindergartens, for instance is regulated by the relevant Education Acts and by the Ordinance on the rights and duties of refugees in the Republics of Slovenia). Zakon o urejanju **statusa državljanov drugih držav** naslednic nekdanje SFRJ v Republiki Sloveniji /ZUSDDD/ Act Regulating the **Legal Status of Citizens of Former Yugoslavia** Living in the Republic of Slovenia. (Ur.l. /Official Gazette RS, št. [61/1999](#), [54/2000](#) Odl.US: U-I-295/99-13, [64/2001](#), [36/2003](#) Odl.US: U-I-246/02-28)

which along with the mainstream education provides for improving the language proficiency of youth and adults, and the programmes designed for foreigners in Slovenia”.

When creating measures for optimal integration of migrant children into education, their rather diversified background with regard to language, age and social situation is taken into consideration. On this aspect the following choices are dependent: the scope of language courses of Slovene, the teaching approach/method, assessment of the outcomes, a child’s socialization, the ways of cooperation with parents, the choice of teaching materials, preparation of new materials and the use of already existent ones. Specific features of migrant children that are taken into account are the following:

- A child’s mother tongue (L1): children from the Slavic language groups
  - children from other language groups (German, Romance, other)),
- A child’s age and educational level (kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school),
- Social conditions.

Following this purpose the following measures figure in the Strategy document<sup>47</sup>, which are gradually being carried out:

1. preparing of regulations on the inclusion of migrant children into the education system, which should determine:
  - collecting of relevant data on migrant children in the kindergartens and schools,
  - the procedure of inclusion of children,
  - preparing of individual programmes,
  - the method and criteria for assessment of knowledge,
  - normatives and standards (c.f. the number of the Slovene language classes),
  - education and qualification of teachers for work with the migrant children.
  
2. Defining the scope, the forms and the modes of the curriculum modification in order to achieve a quicker and better inclusion into the education process.
  - Modification of approach and teaching strategies and preparing of a work program for migrant children which comprise:

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<sup>47</sup> *Strategy of the inclusion of children and pupils into the system of education in the Republic of Slovenia*, adopted at the Ministry for Education and Sport of RS in May 2007

- preparing of an individual programme in cooperation with the migrant child, his/her parents, the kindergarten educator or the form teacher in school, the headmaster and the social care service,
- defining the number of classes (hours) of Slovene as L2,
- selection of relevant teaching subjects and activities of curriculum (and daily routines) in which the migrant child can participate without major difficulties.

- Modification of the timetable – at the beginning a priority can be given to classes of Slovene as L2 in comparison with the number of classes of other school subjects.

- Preparing/composing the elements of the attainment assessment, comprising the initial diagnostical checking, continuous and final assessment.

- Preparing the appropriate criteria for the estimation of the achieved level academic knowledge of the migrant children, whereby the following is taken into account:

- learning of Slovene as L2, i.e. the development of the Slovene language competence,
- participation in the classes of Slovene as L1, with selected and appropriately modified contents,
- learning of other subjects of curriculum (and also the evaluation of attainments) by help of the child's dominant language provided the teacher also has some competence in that language (which is a common case when the South Slavic languages are concerned).
- Creation of the child's portfolio.
- Determining the period of accommodation to the Slovene education system.

3. In the framework of contacts with parents and their inclusion into the life of a school the following strategies are planned and being applied:

- strategies for work with the migrant children's parents and their participation in the work of a kindergarten or school,
- development of the Slovene language competence of parents on specialized language courses, i.e. parents and children simultaneously make progress in the L2 acquisition.

4. Stimulation of intercultural learning and developing of understanding and acceptance of diversity in kindergartens and schools through

- activities of kindergartens and schools and the wider environment, i.e. projects related to the intercultural learning,
- activities that contribute to the migrant children's language and culture maintenance, as well as to the development of appropriate attitudes of the wider environment,

- presentation of good practice at home and abroad to the school staff , which should stimulate the intercultural educational work and create positive attitudes towards diversity in kindergartens and schools,
- stimulating the staff and children to accept the migrant children on equal terms regardless of their social status or their country of origin,
- spreading the knowledge on integration and the migrant culture among the Slovene children's parents,
- introducing the content and formulation (discourse) changes into the curricula and the teaching materials.

5. Appropriate pace of Slovene as L2 being one of crucial migrant children integration issues, special attention is paid to it in view of

- its status and scope in the curriculum: defining the appropriate number of classes and teaching forms – additional/supplementary instruction, optional subject, guided activities in kindergartens, etc,
- defining of eventual language courses before a child is integrated into a school class,
- defining the competences of the Slovene L2 teachers,
- preparing the recommendations for the Slovene as the L2 language learning in kindergartens in schools,
- preparing of the Slovene as L2 syllabuses for kindergarten and school,
- preparing of appropriate materials for teaching and attainment assessment (tests, etc.).

6. The L1 of the migrant children promotion is granted through an appropriate attention to the following activities:

- creating of a normative basis and other conditions for teaching their L1 as an optional subject, in supplementary instruction form or on specialized courses,
- providing for the internet connexions and communication with kindergartens and schools in the country of a child's origin (when the asylum applicants and refugees are involved, it is prohibited to reveal the child's personal data to the country of origin,
- providing the possibility for acquiring the literature and other materials in the languages of migrant children.

7. Quality of education and professional qualification of the teaching staff is of the topmost importance for successful realisation of the planned activities. Therefore a special attention is being paid to

- continuous language and intercultural education of teacher and other school workers, working with migrant children, is provided for by way of consultations, seminars, counselling, etc. given by experts of the National Education Institute<sup>48</sup>, Centre for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language Centre for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language<sup>49</sup>, and other research And counselling institutions;
- qualification of professional workers – multipliers for work with teachers of educational institutions in which migrant children are integrated;
- introducing teaching contents, relevant for work with migrant children into the highschool and university programmes (education of kindergarten educators and school teachers);
- support of the research sphere to the migrant children education issues, i.e. participation of the experts of linguistics and other disciplines in relevant projects and events;
- stimulating of the kindergarten and school management to provide for participation of their teachers in the educational programmes that deal with contents such as Slovene as L2 teaching and learning, intercultural activities in kindergarten and school, work with the migrant children's parents, etc.

8. Responsible institutions (National Education Institute, Centre for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language, etc.) prepare annual action plans for execution of measures, stating

- activities and the goals,
- holders and performers of each activity,
- terms defined for execution of each activity,
- criteria and procedures for evaluation of each activity,
- financial plan.

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.zrssi.si/default.asp?a=1&id=919>, [http://www.zrssi.si/default\\_ang.asp](http://www.zrssi.si/default_ang.asp)

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.centerslo.net/>, <http://www.centerslo.net/index.asp?LANG=eng>

### ***4.3. Projects related to the realisation of the Strategy goals***

Some projects<sup>50</sup> are worth mentioning since their results served as a basis for the Strategy design and also present some answers to our questions in the section on the Inclusion as realised in educational settings<sup>51</sup>.

1. In April 2006 a questionnaire was sent to all kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools in Slovenia by the National Education Institute, with an aim to collect the data on the number of the integrated migrant children (see above) and the perceptions of the professional staff about their inclusion into education. The following critical aspects were exposed in the collected answers:

- the Slovene language competence: poor competence of the Slovene language, poor receptive competence, poor vocabulary;
- curriculum: differences in the education systems; the programme is not adapted to the migrant children, along with insufficient competence of Slovene there are difficulties with learning other subjects of curriculum as well as the assessment of the attained knowledge; problematic initial knowledge of the curriculum contents in general;
- teaching materials, deficiency of materials for teaching Slovene as L2/foreign language, deficiency of materials for individual work with pupils;
- assessment: there are no appropriate criteria for the assessment of the migrant children's attainments;
- communication and work with parents: communication with parents is difficult because they often do not understand Slovene, they do not come to school or they are in another country; it is necessary to stimulate parents to cooperate with school;
- culture: cultural shock, cultural differences, different values, norms, socialization patterns;

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- <sup>50</sup> Vzgojno-izobraževalno delo z učenci priseljenci v osnovnih šolah (*mag. Marta Novak*, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo),
  - Projekt Izobraževanje migrantov na ACS (*dr. Natalija Vrečer* in *mag. Ester Možina*, Andragoški center Slovenije),  
See: <http://www.zrss.si/pdf/JR-Uspe%C5%A1no%20vklju%C4%8Devanje%20otrok,%20u%C4%8Dencev%20in%20dijakov%20migrantov%20v%20vzgojo%20in%20izobra%C5%BEevanje%20za%20obdobje%202008-2011.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> See the reference N0 44, the part No. 6 (Further Steps)

- material sources: should be clearly defined and assured.

2. Bilateral cooperation with educational authorities of the country of origin has become a common practice also when evaluation of the educational work with migrant children is concerned. Thus for instance the following crucial issues of educational work with migrant children were discussed on an international conference on the Slovene and Croatian education system. It was stressed that teachers at all levels of education confronts with the following questions:

- How to include children /migrants in Slovene educational system?
- How to stimulate the intercultural communication among children, pupils, and parents?
- to take special attention to the perception of identity and to stimulate experts, teachers about the importance of somebody's own culture, language,
- To do everything for the integration of migrants , and not for assimilation
- How to evaluate the progress in Slovene language (within Slovene as the subject) with migrant children/pupils
- How can school help migrant children in their integration in Slovene cultural surrounding. (mag. Marta Novak, senior consultant at the RS institute of Education, International Conference on Slovene- Croat educational system: the educational work with migrants, Kostanjevica, 10.4.2006.)

3. In 2008 the public call for tender of projects on successful inclusion of migrant children and youth in the educational system of Slovenia was published by Ministry of Education<sup>52</sup> The total amount of 444.764,00 EUR was reserved for projects developing methods and approaches for a better inclusion of migrant children and youth into education which would contribute to a more prospective inclusion into the society in general and improve their chances on the labour market. One of the main aims of the tender is to develop professional bases, didactic approaches and didactic materials for the Slovene L2 teaching and learning and to verify them in practice. At the same time strategies and models for working with the migrant children and youth are to be created. Two kinds of tasks are to be fulfilled for realisation of these goals:

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<sup>52</sup> Javni razpis »Sofinanciranje projekta za uspešno vključevanje otrok, učencev in dijakov migrantov v izobraževanje, 6.6.2008

1. Proposals of the curriculum for the Slovene L2 teaching for all levels of the education vertical ( up to the higher education) should be prepared, together with the corresponding textbooks and other didactic materials. Along with this, the program of qualification of teachers of the Slovene L2 teaching (in the framework of the permanent education and qualification of teachers) should be prepared. A sum of 240.764,00 EUR has been reserved for financing of projects on the language issue.

2. In concordance with the Strategy's measures, activities enabling a better integration of migrant children should be integrated into the curricula.

3. One of the applications is related to a joint project of several schools<sup>53</sup> investigating the inclusion issues of the migrant children project *Intercultural learning and acceptance of diversity for successful learning*. The main aim of the project is the introduction of activities contributing to a better inclusion of the migrant children into the education system and hereby to a more effective accommodation of young people for employment in Slovenia. Activities such as preparation of curriculum for migrant pupils, preparation of teaching materials, courses for teachers for curriculum realisation, programs for the migrant pupils' parents figure on the list of this project, which is to be realised in the period between 2008 and 2010.

Some further research is pointed to in the next section of the report.

In the DG Research IP project INCLUDE-ED Slovenia is participating within the following theme:

- to study how educational exclusion affects diverse areas of society (i.e. employment, housing, health, political participation) and what kind of educational provision contributes to overcome it.
- to investigate, how does educational inclusion/exclusion impact inclusion/exclusion from diverse areas of society such as employment, housing, health and political participation.

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<sup>53</sup> Participating schools: Srednja ekonomska šola Ljubljana, Ekonomska in trgovska šola Brežice, Ekonomska šola Kranj, Ekonomska šola Novo mesto, Srednja ekonomska in trgovska šola Nova gorica, Srednja ekonomska šola Maribor, Srednja gradbena, geodetska in ekonomska šola Ljubljana, Srednja strojna in poslovna šola Maribor, Srednja šola za farmacijo, kozmetiko in zdravstvo Ljubljana, Srednja šola Zagorje, Srednja zdravstvena šola Ljubljana, Šolski center Ljubljana, Šolski center Postojna,

## 5. The case of bilingual education in Prekmurje

In addition to presentation of documents, statistical data and research outcomes on the inclusion issue in education, different standpoints were collected with an aim to provide for possible explanations of the policy makers and holders of activities. The main aim of the interviews was to present the opinion of people who have direct influence on strategies and programmes on the social exclusion problems in Slovenia and/or who actively participate in their realisation. By choosing the bilingual education model in Prekmurje, we wanted to test the statement (see pages 5,6, 19) that owing to an appropriate distribution of languages of instruction the social inclusion/exclusion in education is not an issue when the Hungarian minority is concerned.

**5.1. The interview: Sample and method.** The sample includes individuals who – due to their function – have free access to data concerning inclusion/exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving, and who – as holders of activities – are able to exert influence upon the decrease and prevention of the problem with different programs and strategies.

Included were individuals from different levels<sup>54</sup> :

- the level of elementary school (pupils aged from 7-15)
- the level of secondary school (students aged from 15-18)
- regional/municipal level: The National Education Institute  
Centre for Social Care
- state level: Office for National Minorities  
Education Development Office

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<sup>54</sup> Individuals included in our interview::

1. Blanka Horvat, psychologist/pedagogue at the bilingual elementary school ( Dvojezična osnovna šola Lendava)
2. Stanko Režonja, headmaster of the bilingual secondary school (Dvojezična srednja šola Lendava)
3. Irena Kumer, director of The National Education Institute, regional unit ( Zavod za šolstvo RS, OE Murska Sobota)
4. Jozef Varga, president of the Education Committee of the Pomurje ethnic community, (Pomurska narodna skupnost, Član Strokovnega sveta, Komisija za narodnosti)
5. Borut Horvat, Center for Social Care, Lendava
6. Stanko Baluh, director of the Office for National Minorities of the Government of Slovenia)
7. Andreja Barle Lakota, director of the Education Development Office
8. Göncz László, the Hungarian minority representative in and member of the Slovene Parliament,
9. Vera Galičič, director of the non-governmental organization - TIN, project PUM

- representatives of minority communities
- participants in expert bodies at the state level – elected delegates
- non-government organizations

Concerning the selection of individual institutions, we chose (as an example, case study) a bilingual elementary school and a bilingual secondary school, located at the ethnically mixed territory of Lendava. We also asked minority members (Hungarian ethnic community), participating in expert bodies. The sample also includes the director of the National Education Institute, Murska Sobota branch, responsible for the minority education. The topic being closely related to the sphere of social problems, an expert collaborator from the Lendava Social Care Centre was also put into the sample.

As for the state level, an interview was made with the directors of the Office for National Minorities and Education Development Office, respectively, who – within their competence – are able to influence the creation of programs and strategies, aimed at prevention of dropout and social exclusion.

The interview also includes the non-government organization, preparing programs, the members of which are voluntary individuals facing social exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving.

Our selected method was guided interview comprising 10 questions. The answers were recorded. Average time of each interview was 2 hours.

## ***5.2. Analysis of statements***

### ***1. Question:***

#### ***1.1. General information on dropouts***

The interview analysis showed that all the respondents are familiar with the problem of inclusion/exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving. Data on the number of children/adolescents having left school or having been excluded from education are available, although they are not systematically collected. They are acquired on the basis of projects and

samples.<sup>55</sup> In Slovenia every year over the last decade between 3% and 3.5% (of the slightly over 100.000 enrolled pupils) decided to leave school. Our collocutors mention the study in which it is reported<sup>56</sup>:

‘In 2004 schools in Slovenia reported that 2287 pupils leave school during the school. Their share (3.1%) was lower than the long-term average, which was 3.4 % of the population. Luckily over half of them reacted proactively and found themselves a different possibility to complete their education. Approximately 1.2% of the secondary school population left the school and started with a different educational programme in the following year. Approximately 0.4 % of all secondary school pupils left and transferred to a different school with the same programme. 1.5 % of secondary school pupils fail to continue with their education. This is approximately 1000 pupils every year. These former pupils take a few years off and might try to complete their missing education in some other way - through one of the numerous possibilities offered by lifelong learning institutions - or they can simply stay ‘on the road’ and seek casual employment (in most cases). This is the most vulnerable group as regards all criteria.

In Slovenia the share of pupils who leave school does not reach the shares found in the original EU member countries. Within the group of individuals who leave school in 2004 almost one half (48 %) do not continue with their education, 40% of the pupils who leave sought a new programme or vocation immediately, while 13% of the pupils who leave continued with the same programme but transferred to a different school, hoping that the environment and school climate might be more encouraging, safe or less conflictive.’

According to the Slovene legislation there are no data separating these children/adolescents with respect to ethnic adherence. Slovene data on this topic differ from those in the other European states in this respect. As the data in our country are not collected with regard to individual groups, the topic of dropout is concealed; therefore we find it hard to compare our situation with foreign experience, because elsewhere in Europe and the world the programs

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<sup>55</sup> It is necessary to mention:

1. Kranjc, T. (2003). Uspešnost srednješolcev in popravni izpiti v letu 2003, Poročilo.

[www.zrssi.si](http://www.zrssi.si)<<http://www.zrssi.si>> 2

2 Kranjc, T. (2007). Poročilo o uspešnosti srednješolcev po popravni in predmetni izpiti v letu 2006.

[www.zrssi.si](http://www.zrssi.si)<<http://www.zrssi.si>> (19. 2. 2006)

<sup>56</sup> Kranjc, T. (2007). Poročilo o študiji Vzroki za izstop srednješolcev. [www.zrssi.si](http://www.zrssi.si)<<http://www.zrssi.si>> 2008

for dropouts are usually intended for immigrants and similar target groups (see the research study Gregorič Brezavšček Barbara, 2002)<sup>57</sup>:

The share of dropout in Slovenia is lower than in most other states, which is positive from the viewpoint of the whole, although it can also bring about some negative effects. Due to the small reference group of the dropouts, which is marginalized in several ways, individuals suffer from greater stigmatization from the part of their surroundings; identification with identity group, which could disburden an individual, is difficult, if not impossible. The fact that the phenomenon began to be classified as part of the school system and society as a whole, and that solutions are sought in this very context, is in itself a progress in such situation.

The respondents emphasized that with the study of dropout one fact should not be forgotten: that the secondary school system of education (formal education) cannot and does not have the inclusive right to prepare the young for a »grown-up business life«, let alone that it is the only qualified system for this purpose. We should therefore be aware of the fact that this finding leads to certain ambiguities in the identification of the phenomenon; the object of study should be placed within a wider educational, economic and social context, which is closer to the concept of the lifelong learning in the methodological sense.

With regard to the understanding of dropout in Slovenia it is necessary to ascertain the number of premature interruptions of secondary-school education, along with the causes of this phenomenon. Should these be sought with pupils, parents, school system, society as a whole or in the mixture of everything? The dropout in secondary schools is rather specific with regard to other comparable European states, its main characteristic being that it is less frequent than in most other states, and consequently more concealed for the analysis. Specifically mentioned was an in-depth study of secondary-school dropout, clarifying some basic relations between the factors of dropout and dropout itself, which cannot be superfluous for the further study and elimination of the phenomenon.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Gregorič Brezavšček Barbara (2002) Problematika osipa v Sloveniji z vidika poklicnega svetovalca psihologa na Zavodu RS za zaposlovanje-. V: Katarina Bergant in Kristijan Musek Lešnik (ur.): Šolska neuspešnost med otroki in mladostniki. Ljubljana, Inštitut za psihologijo osebnosti, str. 126-129..

<sup>58</sup> Gregorič Brezavšček Barbara (2002) Problematika osipa v Sloveniji z vidika poklicnega svetovalca psihologa na Zavodu RS za zaposlovanje. V: Katarina Bergant in Kristijan Musek Lešnik (ur.): Šolska neuspešnost med

## 1.2. Selected Cases

As an example at the level of elementary school we chose the bilingual elementary school from the ethnically mixed region of Lendava, where there is no dropout/exclusion (according to the statistics), because the legislation (The Law on Elementary School) demands that pupils be helped to complete their schooling. According to the psychologist/pedagogue of the bilingual elementary school: »A few years ago a Roma pupil stopped attending school in the 7th class and could not be reintroduced to school despite all the efforts of the Social Care Center. Five years ago one pupil completed elementary school obligation in the 7th class, and continued schooling in specifically adapted secondary school program. There were a few single cases a few years ago, that pupils took lower classes twice, yet they all – except the above mentioned one - managed to finish the eighth or the ninth class, respectively. Until this year pupils from the 1st to 6th class could not take the same class twice as a rule, except with parents' consent. However, from this year on this is allowed from the 3rd to 6th class even without parents' consent, but only with substantial reasons (Regulations on knowledge verification, evaluation and progress of elementary school pupils OG RS no. 73/2008).«

Results at the secondary school are slightly different. We took the bilingual secondary school in Lendava as an example, because both levels – elementary and secondary – had to be from the same social setting. According to the data of the school headmaster, who participated in our interview, 5 pupils left school before the end of the 2007/08 school-year, as illustrated by the table below:

**Table 3: The dropouts in the bilingual secondary school in Lendava in 2007/2008**

Programme	I.	II.	III.	IV.	Total
Comprehensive			1		1
Economy technician	1				1
Machinery technician					

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otroki in mladostniki. Ljubljana, Inštitut za psihologijo osebnosti, str. 126-129..

General secondary education programmes		2			2
Economy technician PTI					
Final exams course				1	1
Total	1	2	1	1	5

Source: Yearly report – school year 2007/08 of the bilingual secondary school in Lendava

Even the other respondents (director of the Office for National Minorities, president of the Education Committee of the Pomurje ethnic community, delegate of the Hungarian ethnic community) are not familiar with the data on dropout/exclusion, referring to the ethnic origin of elementary and secondary school pupils, neither was the problem discussed within the framework of the respective bodies/institutions, which can be understood that the problem is not acute.

From the interview carried out with the non-government organisation TIN- institution for consulting and education we have learned that the programme Project Learning for Youth ( PUM- PLY) <sup>59</sup> has been performed for the last 11 years. This project included youth who left/abandoned secondary education from various reasons.

The youth enrolled into this free programme on a voluntary basis, and they could enrol even in mid-term. With the help of their mentors and through applying different methods they successfully returned to school. As the long-term programme leader/director stated in our interview the PLY programme evaluation has shown that between 60 and 70% of all participants re-start their education process, complete it or find employment every year. As an example we can state that in the school year 2006/7 74 individuals were included in the programme; most of them were younger than 18 (44, a greater share of men), and they were followed by the 18 to 25 group, in which men prevailed once more. Most of them did not complete primary school. The 11 years of the programme has seen 517 individuals enrol. Their reasons for the previous abandonment of education were social-economic. Asylum seekers also enrolled into these programmes – once they obtained the asylum status and completed the programme most of them enrolled into full time education.

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<sup>59</sup> From 2009 onwards the PLY is performed individually within the frame of the activities carried out by the Ministry of Education and Sport - Department for Adult Education.

## ***2. and 3. Question: The role of teachers***

All the respondents, regardless of their jobs, pointed out the extremely important role of teacher in prevention of exclusion/inclusion. They all emphasized that school (teachers, pedagogues, social workers, headmaster) helps pupils with different forms of consulting. They also pointed out the ethical codex of teachers, demanding teachers help pupils facing problems. The first phase of assistance is individual, to be joined in by the school counselling service in the later phase (psychologist, social worker), headmaster and parents, and finally also by the Social Care Center.

There are programs and tasks for teachers (prepared by the National Education Institute), related to Roma pupils, ethnic communities, children with special needs and migrants. Within these complex tasks which are more focused on the curriculum and didactics, the social inclusion of these pupils is certainly important. It includes different forms of training for expert workers in schools. Such training is indirectly focused on the prevention of prejudice, as stated in the Yearly Work Plans and Financial plans of the National Education Institute. According to our respondents, these tasks are numerous and systematically carried out.

The following project from 2007-2008 was given as an example: Migrants – preparation of concept for education and training of professionals in kindergartens and schools (prepared as guidelines for the teaching and learning of foreigners' children).

In 2009 the following projects are to be carried out:

- Migrants and intercultural dialogue
- Ethnic communities: expert support to kindergartens and schools. (permanent programme). A document was prepared within this project, titled Executive instructions for the 9-year bilingual elementary school (2001, 2002). At the moment Executive instructions for the bilingual secondary school are being prepared.
- Project (also a permanent one: 2007, 08, 09): Education of Roma (serves as a basis for models of Roma education).

The National Education Institute is also in charge of permanent training for professionals, this year a seminar for the education for responsible citizenship, for example, Social learning, Education of Roma in elementary schools, By playing to tolerance and understanding of diversity.

Also mentioned should be topical conferences (8-hour or longer education for school staffs): Intercultural dialogue in kindergarten, school, class (inclusion of children of different languages, cultures and religions in groups) or Work with parents of children/pupils of migrant background (See the Catalogue of The National Education Institute on education and training in the school-year 2008/09).

There is also the project »Let us overcome prejudice«, aimed at sensitizing individuals for prejudice and stereotypes. The project is organized by the Ministry of internal affairs, and it includes policemen and judges apart from teachers.

Regarding the special role of teachers, a study was mentioned, including opinions of unsuccessful pupils on the role of teacher<sup>60</sup>. In the Survey of non-successfulness of secondary-school<sup>61</sup> unsuccessful pupils consider teachers one of the major reasons of their failure:

- they dislike them
- the teacher doesn't like them
- the teacher did not help or stimulate them

#### ***4. Question: The role of head teachers***

Government institution representatives emphasised the importance and role of the head teacher and the leader of pedagogue services. In the context of the headmaster's role, the work of the School for the headmasters should be underlined.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Kranjc, T. (2002). Pregled stanja (ne)uspešnosti srednješolcev in nekateri psihosocialni vidiki neuspešnosti. In: Zbornik Šolska neuspešnost med otroki in mladostniki (ed. Musek Lešnik, K. and Bergant, K.), Ljubljana: Inštitut za psihologijo osebnosti in založba Educy, ISBN 961-6406-02-7 5.

<sup>61</sup> Musek Lešnik, K. in Bergant, K.(ed), Ljubljana: Inštitut za psihologijo osebnosti in založba Educy, ISBN 961-6406-02-7 5.

<sup>62</sup> The NSLE (Šola za ravnatelje) was established in 1995 by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the training and professional development of head teachers and candidates. The NSLE activities include professional development, training and other education programs, publishing books, journals and proceedings, and research

They all stated that the head teachers collaborate very much with National Education Institute in preparing strategies, they are actively solving the problems on the individual level, they are communicating with parents and with the surrounding. When needed, they work in close contact with the local Center for Social Care.

### ***5. Question: The role of pupils***

The responses have shown that all exposed the importance of pupils at the prevention of dropping out of school. The pupils have to continuously face various prejudices and the school has to - in the broadest possible sense – establish a climate for accepting differences, accord.

They have also stated that merely the curriculum is not enough and that numerous extra curriculum activities are needed – there should be a greater variety of them. The opinion prevailed that society – in the broadest meaning - does not do enough to create a harmonic environment. In this context the project »Dosta” (“Enough”) was mentioned. The cooperation between educational institutions and the Centres for Social Care which perform programmes that include pupils within their activities was underlined.

Two programmes need to be mentioned:

1. In 2003 a voluntary programme started that included good pupils (as regards their grades) who volunteered to help the poorer primary school pupils with their studies (in 2008/9 such a programme of the Centre for Social Work Lendava included 12 children – including Roma and immigrant children (from Bosnia)).
2. The second innovative programme (Help at home) was introduced only this year in the Centre of Social Care Lendava. This programme employs a sociologist through public works. The programme includes children/pupils as well as their parents. It is mainly oriented towards families – it tries to teach them how to solve various family problems and through this prevent the child from being excluded.

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and experimental development in education. The NSLE is public service the implementation of which is in public interest. <http://www.solazaravnateljje.si/eng/>

**6. Question: How many children from elementary school are appointed to the school for children with special need?**

As there were many children in the past, especially Roma and migrant children appointed to the school for children with special need, we were very much interested if this phenomenon was still present in the ethnically mixed areas. All the respondents unanimously rejected such possibility.

**7. Question: The role of the language in the social exclusion/inclusion**

The respondents from the ethnically mixed area were of the opinion that from the data or information at their disposal, language does not play an important role – or is not the reason for the individual's exclusion or premature leaving school, as the school regulations stipulate that an individual who has enrolled in a school in which lessons are thought in a language that is not his mother tongue, can have a 2 year adjustment period, while he takes extra lessons in language.

All respondents from a nationally mixed environment emphasised that the reason for the exclusion can most often be found in the intellectual capabilities of the pupil or in the family conditions and not in the poor social conditions or the family's status. There are no great social differences between families in that environment.

With migrants and asylum seekers the language is the most important obstacle for the inclusion. Thus the non-governmental organization has organized special, free of charge, forms of learning the Slovene language – a special programme named “The Help”. The Slovene speaking drop-out children actively participated in the programme and helped with the Slovene language competence of the migrant children. Such experimental approach developed the sense of responsibility and cooperation, and promoted intercultural dialogue.

**8. Question: The role of parents**

The parents are included into this issue within the frame of the school – within the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings as well as meetings one on one with the teacher, school psychologist or members of the school management. In the event that the issue cannot be solved within the school, institutions from the outside are involved – especially the Centre for Social Care, which deals with the problem of exclusion / early school leaving on an individual basis.

The schools regularly organise lectures for parents (usually within the frame of PTA meetings) that usually deal with creating a harmonic environment, accepting differences, the fight against prejudices ...

The respondents drew special attention to the fact that in the recent years the state has become aware of the importance of involving parents and thus the Institute for Education is engaged in permanent training of teachers to work with parents of immigrant children/pupils (on this see the catalogue published by The National Education Institute of Slovenia for education and training in the school year 2008/09).<sup>63</sup>

#### **9. *Question: The role of surroundings:***

All the respondents exposed the linkage pupil- school- parents and when this triangle is not successful, it is necessary to include outside factors, centres for social care, centres for the employment, non-governmental organization and local education institutions.

#### **10. *Question: Comments***

The response and the attitude of the interviewees were very stimulating. They appreciated the fact that the social inclusion questions in education, especially those related to otherness are being dealt with in a project. Some of them expressed the importance of such a research for the improvement of the general atmosphere in Slovenia, where due to the rather closed system the Slovene society is not yet mature enough for acceptance of diversity and otherness. Such research help to surmount the lack of understanding and the fear of globalisation, i.e. an ever

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<sup>63</sup> <http://193.2.248.53/katis/reporti/katalog/KATALOG0809.PDF>.

growing interwoven pattern of cultures, languages and ethnic diversity on national/local level as a consequence of mobility of workers.

Many of our collocutors underlined the necessity that a national follow-up study should be prepared. Following this initiative the authors of the present report will apply for a project dealing with the education and social inclusion in the ethnically mixed area of Prekmurje.

## 6. Conclusive remarks

The main purpose of this report was to provide a general overview of policy measures promoting social inclusion of ethnic minorities into the educational system of Republic of Slovenia and to present a summary of selected studies/projects aimed at the evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy measures.

It is evident that the problem of social inclusion is most urgent with the Roma children, tightly followed by the issue of the migrant children inclusion. The situation in the ethnically mixed regions of Prekmurje (Slovene Hungarian) and in the Slovene Istria (Slovene Italian) does not seem to rise any serious concern, since the drop-out rates are comparable to and even lower than the national average.

It is reasonable to claim that legal and strategy measures of the inclusion of the vulnerable groups (in our case Roma and immigrant children) are in general well designed. However, a discrepancy among the stated aims and measures in the adopted legislation and different strategies and their practical implementation is evident. As underlined in the majority of the research projects<sup>64</sup> numerous activities are necessary to secure their active application in practice. Among others the following recommendations are repeatedly underlined:

- measures and priority tasks accepted by different documents should be adequately developed and prepared for all levels of education;
- programmes for Roma and migrant children/pupils prepared by National Education Institute and the Ministry of Education and Sport should be included in the obligatory programmes of the schools at all levels. The financing of these programmes should be guaranteed by the state;
- permanent education for teachers (lectures, one day workshops, presentations of different experiences and good practices) developing their intercultural awareness, along with specialist qualification (modern methodical and didactic approaches to the L1 and L2 teaching, modern interaction in class, etc.) should become a regular practice in the schools at all level;

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<sup>64</sup> Žagar, M. et al.; Nećak, Lük, Vonta, T., Breclj; Nećak Lük, Novak Lukanović in the present report, etc.

- inclusion of the parents into the school work and communication with them about different inclusion issues should be strengthened and special programmes (workshops) need to be prepared;
- in the process of prevention of segregation and self-segregation, the representatives of the affected communities play a decisive role as mediators in communication between parents and school;
- collaboration / cooperation of teachers, pupils, parents, social workers has to be improved;
- the meaning and the significance of inclusion of vulnerable groups into education should be explained also to all parents, also those from the majority population; with an aim to diminish the ethnic and social distance which certainly, although indirectly, also affect the results of the vulnerable groups' inclusion into education, schools should prepare lectures on effective struggle against discrimination and anti-bias programs for parents and local population.
- a more systematic approach to education and sensitising of all concerned populations from kindergarten onwards is necessary. Knowledge about and acceptance of cultural and language pluralism as an opportunity, challenge and source of creative potential should be spread on all levels of education and among everybody concerned, pupils, teachers, parents, community representatives and local population.
- there are several out-school programmes realized by non-governmental organizations of substantial value which should be supported and also (co)financed ;
- the existing practice should be permanently evaluated, the results of good practice disseminated and innovation should be supported;
- follow-up research projects need to be financed.

## 7. References

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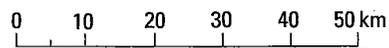
**[http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti\\_pdf/sempril\\_ess.pdf](http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti_pdf/sempril_ess.pdf)**

**ANNEX 1.**

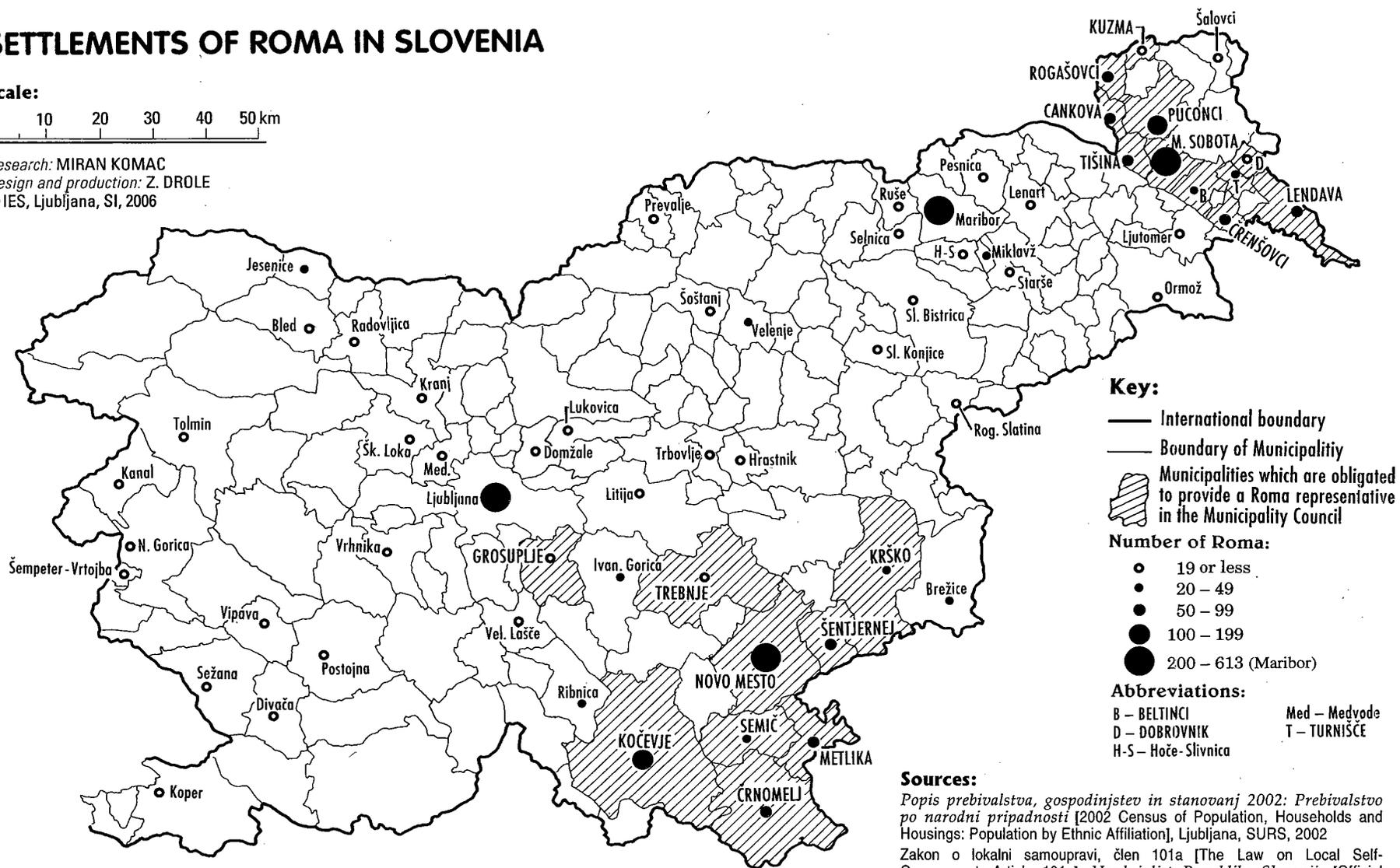
**Territorial distribution of Roma population in Slovenia, 2002 Population Census**

# SETTLEMENTS OF ROMA IN SLOVENIA

Scale:



Research: MIRAN KOMAC  
 Design and production: Z. DROLE  
 © IES, Ljubljana, SI, 2006



### Key:

- International boundary
- Boundary of Municipality
- Municipalities which are obligated to provide a Roma representative in the Municipality Council

### Number of Roma:

- 19 or less
- 20 – 49
- 50 – 99
- 100 – 199
- 200 – 613 (Maribor)

### Abbreviations:

- B – BELTINCI
- D – DOBROVNIK
- H-S – Hoče-Slivnica
- Med – Medvode
- T – TURNIŠČE

### Sources:

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## **ANNEX 2**

### **Questionnaire on social inclusion/ exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving**

**1. Do you have / are there any data on inclusion/exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving (at the level of elementary, secondary school)?**

**2. What is the teacher's role in prevention of social inclusion/exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving?**

**3. Do teachers enjoy any support in the prevention of...**

- special instructions
- training
- assistance
- training programmes against different kinds of prejudice

**4. What is the role of the head teacher?**

- programmes
- strategies

**5. How do pupils accept, do they participate in actions against social exclusion, what forms/methods are being used?**

- How are they prepared for the acceptance of different/integrated children (special needs, Roma, migrants)?

**6. How many children from the ES are appointed to the school for children with special needs?**

- in which class
- reasons

**7. The role of the language in the social exclusion/inclusion does language have any role here?**

## **8. What are the parents' role and activities?**

- Do they participate in the problem solving?
- How do they participate?
- Are there any trainings/seminars/education/workshops for parents against any kind of prejudice?

## **9. Services dealing with the issues of social inclusion/exclusion, dropout and premature school leaving?**

- municipal services
- state services

## **10. General Comments ...**