

**Beyond anti-Roma Stereotypes:
the World is not Just White and Black**



**TO TOUCH THE UNTOUCHABLE:
COMBATING TRADITIONAL AND NEW ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES
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and Tolerance**

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Table of Contents

TO TOUCH THE UNTOUCHABLE: COULD THE ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES BE COMBATTED?	7
<i>PART ONE. THE ROMA STATELESSNESS IN THE NETHERLANDS</i>	15
Introduction	15
1. Statelessness in Europe	16
2. The Dutch policy on statelessness	19
3. The arrival of the Roma in the Netherlands	26
4. Netherlands and Roma: mutual incomprehension	29
5. Conclusions and recommendations	33
<i>PART TWO. TRADITIONAL AND NEW STEREOTYPES AMONGST LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN NEAMT COUNTY, ROMANIA, REGARDING THE ROMA MINORITY</i>	35
1. Context	35
2. Research purpose and specific objectives	35
3. Research methodology	36
4. Obtained results	37
4.1. Quantitative results	37
4.2. Qualitative results – Focus groups	49
4.2.1. Personnel from the health area	49
4.2.2. Personnel from the education area	54
4.2.3. Personnel from the social area	59
4.3. Case studies	63
5. Conclusions and final recommendations	69
<i>PART THREE. THE ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES IN BULGARIA</i>	74
Methodology of the survey	74
1. The country context	75
2. The image of ethnic groups	77
2.1. Armenians	77
2.2. Bulgarians	78
2.3. Jews	79
2.4. Pomaks	80
2.5. Roma	81
2.6. Turks	81

3. The stereotypes about Roma people	82
3.1. Basic stereotypes	82
3.2. Stereotypes about the Institutional integration	95
3.3. Stereotypes about the Education	108
3.4. Stereotypes about the Roma women	119
3.5. Stereotypes about the Roma healthcare	126
4. Professional problems when working with Roma	129
5. Conclusions and recommendations	130
 <i>PART FOUR. COMBATTING THE ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES:</i>	
ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS	135
The institutional framework	135
Anti-stereotypes training	140
Public awareness campaigns	143
The change achieved	150
 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION	
Main conclusions	160
A. General recommendations	161
B. Recommendations for institutional partnership between educational, health and social institutions	163

TO TOUCH THE UNTOUCHABLE: COULD THE ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES BE COMBATTED?

The officials and field workers in the sphere of public services (especially in the sphere of education, health and social care) from countries with significant number of Roma population often share deep prejudice against the Roma people. For some countries like Bulgaria and Romania, this prejudice roots in the traditional stereotypes since the Middle Ages, when the Roma people were called “the untouchables”, i.e. the people, who nobody should even touch. In other countries, especially the ones in Western Europe, where Roma immigrants recently increase in number, these stereotypes are new. Nevertheless, they have one and the same result: the Roma citizens face discrimination and the public policy for Roma integration has no public support that appears as strong obstacle that prevent its implementation. The service providers (especially in the field of education, healthcare and social inclusion) could not fulfil effectively their job in Roma community and the Roma citizens could not receive quality services.

Having all these in regard, the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “AMALIPE” (Bulgaria), Justitia et Pax (the Netherlands) and Roma Center for Health Policies SASTIPEN (Romania) initiated the project “TO TOUCH THE UNTOUCHABLE: combating traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes”. The project was two-year initiative starting from February 2011. It was financed by DG Justice of the European Commission within Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Program.

The idea of the project was to fight against racism and anti-Roma attitudes, based on traditional and new stereotypes among the people providing public service in the sphere of education, health and social care. It aimed to fight traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes on behalf of educational, social and health field workers in Bulgaria, Romania and the Netherlands, as well as to encourage the mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue between Roma communities and field workers, follow-

ing principle № 3 of the conclusions of the European Council, dated 8th June, 2009. Main purpose of the project was to create a model for efficient usage of public services by Roma people, which should guarantee that all members of vulnerable communities enjoy their main rights.

The project set three main objectives:

- Change of the attitude and stereotypes (traditional and new) of the state employees and field workers towards Roma people. A system for trainings, meetings and joint activities was set to increase the information level of state employees and field workers regarding the specifics of Roma community, how they could work more efficiently with it and how to overcome cultural barriers;
- Change in the way of thinking and the negative stereotypes on behalf of Roma communities towards state employees and field workers.
- Creation of a model for cooperation with Roma community, following principle 10 of the conclusions of the European Council, dated 8th June, 2009 – “Active participation of Roma people”.

MAIN WORKING MODULES

The project activities were implemented within 6 Working modules

Working module 1: *Research of the traditional and new stereotypes of state employees and field workers*

Aims:

Obtaining clear picture of the situation within the geographical regions and areas of activity, where the project will be implemented: mapping traditional and new stereotypes.

Research activity – by means of focus groups and questionnaires a map of prejudice and traditional and new stereotypes was created. The research was carried among employees from different administrative levels, as well as among field workers – teachers, social employees and deliverers of social services, health system employees.

Working module 2: *Change of the attitude of state employees and field workers in the sphere of education, health and social care*

Aims:

Increasing the awareness and knowledge about main rights and about intercultural and based on the rights approaches for solving problems in the Roma communities, in various administrative and managerial levels of state employees and field workers in the sphere of education, healthcare and social services;

Decreasing the level of traditional and new stereotypes against Roma people in Bulgaria, Romania and the Netherlands;

Creating a model for inter-sectoral comprehensive work approach in Roma communities.

For achieving this aim, the following activities were implemented:

1. Creation of **JOINT TASK FORCE GROUPS**. A Joint Task Force Group (JTFG) was created in each pilot region (six districts in Bulgaria and one county in Romania). It included representatives from the three main spheres – education, social care and healthcare. As a result, each JTFG included one expert from the Regional Inspectorates of Education, from the Regional Directorates for Social Assistance and from the Regional Health Inspections. The six teams from the six planning regions in Bulgaria were trained together with their Romanian colleagues. Moreover, the Roma formal and non-formal leaders in each area were invited to facilitate laying of bridges between the officials and Roma communities.

JTFG had two main tasks:

- To organize supervening trainings for their colleagues in their institutions or for field workers in certain spheres in order to help them overcome their prejudice and discrimination;
- To react to cases of discrimination against Roma people on site or in other institutions and to apply multi-sectoral approach for their solving.

Working module 3: *Establishing cooperation with Roma community*

Aims: Creation of mechanism for cooperation between Roma community and field workers.

For achieving this aim, the following activities were implemented:

1. Organizing series of civil – educational training for formal and non-formal Roma leaders, non-profit organizations and public officials to guarantee that they have knowledge about their main rights and about the mechanisms for application and upholding.

2. Organization of monthly consultations on regional level with the participation of the officials, field workers, non-profit organizations, active members and leaders of Roma community. The Multi-sectoral teams were responsible for implementation of information campaigns and for solving specific cases in case of refusal of public services by the respective employees, using administrative mechanisms.

Working module 4: *Public campaigns*

Aims:

1. Increasing the public knowledge of state employees and field workers about recognition of prejudice, stereotypes and the struggle with them to create positive tolerant multicultural environment;

2. Decreasing the stereotypes, both on behalf of state employees towards Roma people, and on behalf of Roma people towards state employees.

For achieving this aim the following activities were implemented:

- Printing materials for struggle against Roma stereotypes, educational materials and materials for encouraging the mutual understanding.
- Public awareness campaigns against anti-Roma stereotypes – diverse range of activities in the sphere of education, healthcare and

social services were undertaken within the frames of large public campaigns. They were directed towards all users of education, health and social services, as well as towards the wide public. The campaigns were organized by JTTFG.

Working module 5: *Exchange of experience among Bulgaria, Romania and the Netherlands*

The aim of this module was to summarize the experience gathered in the three countries within the project and to define policy oriented recommendations

For achieving this aim the following activities were implemented:

1. Establishing International Project Steering Committee: it not only helped in coordination and management of the project, but also helped the exchange of know-how among different stakeholders from the three participating countries;

2. Participation in International conferences – organized by the Roma Decade Secretariat, European Commission, etc.;

3. National conferences – conferences were held in each of the partner countries not only to coordinate the management efforts of the project. They were also used to share experience and to compare good and bad practices among the partners, regarding the project implementation. Concluding conference was organized in Sofia. It summarized the experience gathered in the three countries within the project and defined policy oriented recommendations. Representatives of the 3 partner organizations, Steering Committee members and the stakeholders from Bulgaria, Romania and the Netherlands took part in the conference. The final recommendations were presented to the national governments and to the European Commission;

4. Web page – a special web page was prepared to inform about the project implementation – news, publications, media appearances, successfully redressed cases, etc.: <http://totouchtheuntouchable.com/>

Working module 6: *Activities in the Netherlands*

The general objective of the workstream was to obtain citizen rights for the Roma in the Netherlands and to combat the withholding of access to social, economic and legal provisions to Roma as full-fledged citizens of The Netherlands. The specific objectives were (i) researching the status of the so-called undocumented – often called by the municipalities “stateless” – Roma. This research served as a basis to document and argument (ii) the advocate trajectory targeted at the Dutch government and the municipalities. This research was focused on the legal aspects of withholding Roma without papers in the Netherlands, the so caued “status of statelessness”.

For achieving this aim the following activities were implemented:

1. Research of the statelessness/illegality of Roma in the Netherlands;
2. Meeting in the Netherlands with the partners from Bulgaria/Romania;
3. Advocacy strategy/trajectory: an advocacy strategy, targeted at the Dutch parliamentarians in order to influence the government and officials, responsible for the regulations of Roma citizenship was prepared. The strategy included also activities for informing the broader Dutch public about the content of the guidelines and about the existing discrimination against Roma; formulation of the recommendations to the Dutch government; developing a fact sheet and recommendations to be broadly distributed; organizing a lobby tour to the Dutch parliamentarians and the decision-makers in the government, together with the Dutch Roma representatives.

An important feature of the project “TO TOUCH THE UNTOUCHABLE: combating traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes” was that it was being realized in partnership with the main stakeholder institutions in Bulgaria, Romania and the Netherlands. The Ministries of Labor and Social Policies, the Ministries of Education, the Ministries of Health in Bulgaria and Romania, the State agency on Roma in Romania, the National Council for cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues in Bul-

garia, and a number of other institutions actively participated in the activity of the Managing Committee of the project and in the implementation of the main activities. The preliminary conclusions of the present report were consulted with them, and their comments were taken into account in the elaboration of the final version of the report. The implemented partnership and interaction between the pointed key national institutions and non-governmental organizations from these countries gives hope for a sustainable and complete policy, targeted at overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes.

The present report provides main conclusions of the activities that were realized within the frames of the project “TO TOUCH THE UNTOUCHABLE: combating traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes”. Part One reviews the legal, normative and institutional frame, linked with the problem of citizenship in the Netherlands, as well as information about the Roma community and the problems met with the citizenship of Roma. Part Two contains information about the research and the project activities in Romania. Part Three is about the national sociologic research of the anti-Roma stereotypes among teachers, social workers and health workers in Bulgaria and its main outcomes. The following Part 4 describes the main elements from the model for overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes, applied within the project, the activities undertaken and the results achieved. Main conclusions, recommendation and directions for prolongation – on national and European level- are presented in Chapter 5.

PART ONE

THE ROMA STATELESSNESS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Introduction

The Roma are, estimated to comprise of 12 million persons, the biggest minority of Europe. The Roma predominantly live in Romania, Bulgaria and the former USSR, but also in West European countries, such as the Netherlands. Estimates of the number of Roma in the Netherlands vary from around a few thousand¹ to forty thousand². Discrimination and poverty are great problems for the Roma community. They barely have access to healthcare, education and proper housing. According to the Roma, this is principally due to their status of statelessness; many Roma do not possess a passport or even a residence permit, and are not being considered as citizens by the authorities of European countries. This means that they cannot fully participate in society and politics, creating a feeling of being ignored and left behind by the authorities. This often drags them into conflicts with local authorities, and contributes to the creation of distrust of Roma by the local communities and vice-versa. In the Netherlands, a relative small group of Roma is in this poignant situation. Some families have been stateless for generations. Justice and Peace (the Dutch partner in the project “To touch the Untouchable: combatting traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes”) has been doing research on what the effect of statelessness has on this group of Roma, and if, indeed, this is the greatest obstacle towards their integration and full participation in civil society. Moreover, we have analysed what policies could improve their situation.

¹ Jaarrapport Integratie 2009, Sociaal Planbureau (Yearly Report on Integration 2009 Social Planning Bureau).

² Council of Europe.

Justice and Peace discovered that there has been a widening gap between the Dutch authorities on one hand, and the NGOs, supporting the Roma, on the other hand. According to Roma, one of the consequences of this gap is that governmental policies on Roma are being formulated without their advice, or even consultation. A good illustration of this is the letter³ and memorandum⁴, that the Dutch minister of immigration, integration and asylum, Leers, sent to the Dutch House of Representatives in December 2011. When those governmental notes became available publicly, several Roma organisations indicated that their input had not been used in the formulation of the notes.

Justice and Peace holds that it is crucial to underline the importance of dialogue between the different parties; every possible solution for closing the gap should start with discussion. It is not only important that they listen to each other's arguments, but also that both parties consult each other in the creation of governmental policy. Justice and Peace would, through this research, like to contribute in a positive way to this possible dialogue.

1. Statelessness in Europe

Stateless people are persons who are not being recognised as citizens by any state; they do not have a nationality or the judicial membership of a state. The possession of a nationality is of great importance in Europe, as it is a necessity for obtaining citizenship, and citizenship is in turn important for obtaining rights, considering that most rights are civil rights. The lack of possession of nationality denies an individual access to a great number of rights; in many European countries, stateless people do not have access to education after 18 years of age and cannot work, or purchase property, wed, travel or have a pension. It is also very difficult

³ Ministerie van Binnenlandse zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, Kamerbrief over de Nederlandse inbreng ten behoeve van de sociale inclusie van Roma, 21-12-2011 (Ministry of interior affairs, and royal relations, letter to the Dutch Lower House on the Dutch efforts for social inclusion of the Roma).

⁴ G.B.M. Leers, Nederlandse bijdrage in het kader van de Nationale Roma-strategie, 21-12-2011 (G.B.M. Leers, Dutch efforts in the national Roma framework).

to acquire assistance in hospitals, and it is often impossible to open a bank account. Stateless persons often do not even have an official name. To put it short: a stateless person does not exist in the juridical system.

The consequences of statelessness became clear during the second world war, when the Nazi regime stripped many Jews, Sinti and Roma of their nationality, and thus of their civil rights. With the disappearance of their civil rights, people also lost the right of life, liberty, freedom of religion. Since these rights were civil rights, other states did not have grounds on which to criticize Germany on these practises.

This is why the possession of a nationality is part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as they were formulated in 1948. In article 15 states:

1. *Everyone has the right to a nationality.*
2. *No one shall arbitrarily be deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.*⁵

Although the right to a nationality has been stated, the declaration does not mention which state should grant a nationality to an individual who is stateless, nor under what condition this granting should occur. This is understandable in its historical context; the article was written in order to prevent the stripping of nationality. This however does, not mean that the possession of nationality is not a human right. The article in itself thus leaves a lot open; when a great number of persons lose their nationality simultaneously, or when, for example, a state collapses, few countries are willing to grant those stateless persons a nationality.

There are different ways for an individual to become stateless. Whenever states dissolve, and new states emerge, the possibility that some groups and individuals get stripped of their nationality, and do not obtain a new one instead, is a real risk. This happened to millions of persons when the USSR collapsed into fifteen different states. Armed conflicts can also contribute to statelessness. It is furthermore possible that someone is born stateless; if, for example, someone's parents are stateless, the child doesn't automatically get, if it is born in the Netherlands, the Dutch nationality. This way, statelessness can proliferate generation after generation.

⁵ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

On these grounds, there exists numerous stateless persons in Europe; in 2010 the estimated number of stateless persons was a half million.⁶ The exact number is unknown however, since stateless persons are often not registered and thus do not appear in official statistics.

In the 2011 report of the UNHCR on statelessness in the Netherlands, Antonio Guterres (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and Louise Arbour, (former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) state that:

“The issue of statelessness has been left to fester in the shadows for far too long. It is time to take the necessary steps to rid the world of this bureaucratic malaise that is, in reality, not so difficult to resolve. It is simply a question of political will and legislative energy”⁷.

Statelessness is, according to these (former) high commissioners of the United Nations, an issue that has been neglected for too long. This is unfortunate, because according to Guterres and Arbour, the problem is actually not difficult to solve. It takes only political will and ‘legislative power’. If countries have the political will to acknowledge the problem, they can change the law in order to give those who are stateless a nationality. Thomas Hammarberg, the European Commissioner for Human Rights seems to subscribe to this view. He writes that: *“no one should be stateless in Europe”⁸.*

Justice and Peace agrees with Guterres’, Harbour’s and Hammarberg’s analysis that statelessness is essentially a political issue. As mentioned above, the problem is legally spoken, relatively simple to solve, it is only that the political will for these steps is lacking in Europe. The drafting and signing of the statelessness treaties in 1954 and 1961 were a step in the right direction, but in practice, Europe is still not able to adequately cope with the problem.

The Netherlands has also not been able to find a suitable solution to this problem. Since the end of the 19th century, when the “wet op Nederlanderschap 1892” (the law on the Dutch nationality 1892) came into force, the criteria that defines who is entitled to Dutch citizenship

⁶ UNHCR, *Action to address statelessness; a strategy note*, 2010 p. 4.

⁷ UNHCR, *Statelessness in the Netherlands*, (The Hague 2011) 58.

⁸ T. Hammarberg, Viewpoint, 9th of June 2008.

have drastically expanded.⁹ Citizenship, the legal expression of the expression of the Dutch nation state, is based on a principle of descent, known as *jus sanguinis*. The Dutch nationality is obtained when one of the two parents has the Dutch nationality. Being born on Dutch soil is not sufficient for an individual to claim the Dutch nationality. In this way, statelessness is proliferated generation after generation.

2. The Dutch policy on statelessness

The possession of a nationality is a human right that is mentioned in article 15 of the Universal Declarations of human rights. In order to promote this human right, the Netherlands has signed and ratified the treaty of New York, which aims to reduce statelessness, as much as possible, and shelter stateless persons.

Stateless people can be classified into two categories: those that are stateless “de jure”, and those that are stateless “de facto”. “De jure” stateless persons are stateless according to law; they are not officially recognised as a citizen by any country in the world. In some cases, someone has a nationality, but does not enjoy all rights that are usually granted to persons of that nationality; he or she does not, for example, have the right to return to their country, or the right to live in their country. In those situations we speak of “de facto” statelessness. The difference between both categories of statelessness has proved to be hard to distinguish in practice.

Beside the fact that “de facto” statelessness can be grounded in the rejection of someone’s nationality by the authorities of the country of origin or residence, it can also be grounded in the rejection of the nationality by the person in question himself. This further complicates the notion of “de facto” statelessness. One can claim, for various reasons, statelessness in cases in which “de jure” doesn’t exist. A nationality includes, besides rights also duties (to return to the country of origin, for example) which someone might not want to accept. In these cases, it is easier to claim statelessness, even if one is not. These practices explain

⁹ J. Lucassen & R. Penninx, *Nieuwkomers, nakomelingen, Nederlanders. Immigranten in Nederland 1550–1993* (Amsterdam, 1999) p. 129 (newcomers, offspring, Dutch. Immigrants in the Netherlands from 1550 to 1993).

why governments require that one proves one “de facto” statelessness by “de jure” statelessness, or that the stateless person at least makes this feasible.

This is why Justice and Peace focuses on “de jure” statelessness in this report: stateless Roma who are not being officially recognised by any country as citizens. However, this does not mean that the recommendations of this report are not applicable to “de facto” stateless people.

The Dutch policy for aliens is in principle a policy on “volunteer return”; it departs from the supposition that all aliens and all stateless can return to their country of origin, or to a place of previous residence. Statelessness does not give right to settle in the Netherlands. Only the aliens and the stateless who *can prove* that “through no fault of their own” they cannot return to their country of origin, can become eligible for a so called “no fault” residence permit. However, there is a problem in demanding such evidence. A stateless person does not only have to provide documents proving that he or she is stateless – which is difficult, because statelessness often goes together with lack of registration with one or the other government – but she or he also have to provide evidence that they cannot return to their country of origin or their last place of residence, “through no fault of their own”.

As mentioned previously, one can only automatically obtain the Dutch nationality, if one of the parents is Dutch. This *jus sanguinis* principle makes that the children of stateless people will also be stateless, as they cannot gain a nationality through their parent. Article 1 of the Convention of New York states the following Regarding this:

1. A Contracting State shall grant its nationality to a person born in its territory who would otherwise be stateless. Such nationality shall be granted:

(a) at birth, by operation of law, or

(b) upon an application being lodged with the appropriate authority, by or on behalf of the person concerned, in the manner prescribed by the national law. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of this article, no such application may be rejected.¹⁰

¹⁰ Convention on the reduction of statelessness, New York 30th of August 1961.

The Netherlands has chosen to provide stateless people who are born in the Netherlands with the Dutch nationality through a different means. This manner is the so called “option right” (“optierecht”), the obtainment of the Dutch nationality by option. This is described in Dutch state law on the Dutch nationality as:

“After completion of an appropriate written statement obtains [...] the Dutch Nationality [...]

The alien who, in the Netherlands, Dutch Antilles or Aruba, is born and had admission and main residence there for a continuous period exceeding three years, and is stateless since birth”¹¹.

The main obstacle here is the term “admission”. Stateless persons generally reside illegally in the Netherlands, since it is extremely difficult to complete the asylum procedure, if one has no nationality.¹² They have never been granted access to the Netherlands. Because the legal residence status of the children is closely linked with the one of their parents’, those children often do not receive admission to the Netherlands either. With this, the possibility for obtaining the Dutch nationality at birth from stateless parents is virtually nil. Hereby, the Dutch policy is contrary to article 1 of the Convention of New York.

Besides the Convention of New York, the Netherlands has also ratified the European Convention on Nationality on the 21st of March, 2001. This convention describes the duties of the Netherlands towards stateless children in the following way:

“Each State Party shall provide in its internal law for its nationality to be acquired by children born on its territory who do not acquire at birth another nationality. Such nationality shall be granted:

a. at birth ex lege; or

¹¹ Rijkswet op het Nederlanderschap, Art 6, lid 1, sub b (State law on the Dutch nationality, art. 6 paragraph 1 subparagraph b).

¹² There are examples of Roma in the Netherlands that are stateless, but have or had a residence permit. In the case that they still have a residence permit, they are staying legally in the Netherlands, but cannot yet demand the Dutch nationality or social services. Furthermore, there have been Roma who have been stuck in the asylum procedure. Those individuals on one hand do not have any nationality and cannot be deported, but do on the other hand not have a residence permit; they have through unclear procedures been made illegal.

*b. subsequently, to children who remained stateless, upon an application being lodged with the appropriate authority, by or on behalf of the child concerned, in the manner prescribed by the internal law of the State Party. Such an application may be made subject to the lawful and habitual residence on its territory for a period not exceeding five years immediately preceding the lodging of the application.”*¹³

This article is stricter than the provisions of the Convention of New York; since here, next to legal residence habitual residence is seen “as a sufficient condition for obtaining a nationality if the parents are stateless.” On these grounds, all those who are born stateless in the Netherlands would be entitled to the Dutch nationality, whether their parents are residing legally in the Netherlands or not.¹⁴

As described in the first chapter, statelessness has in many countries vast consequences for the rights which an individual is entitled to. This is also the case in the Netherlands. Many of the Dutch rights are civil rights, which one can only appeal to, if one is in possession of a Dutch or other nationality. When one is registered as foreigner one receives a number of rights. A foreigner in the Netherlands is not without rights. If someone, as a stateless person doesn’t have legal residence, s/he cannot appeal to the right of job, property, access to education, healthcare and so on. Statelessness and illegality lead, in these cases, to lawlessness. Ratification of the Convention of New York should have, as consequence, that children who are born stateless on Dutch territory are entitled to the Dutch nationality.

In spite of Dutch policy being contradictory to the Convention of New York and the European Convention on Nationality (by making it difficult for stateless children to become Dutch), it is also very hard to be registered as stateless in the Netherlands.

In theory, all inhabitants of the Netherlands are registered in the Municipal Basic Administration¹⁵. Foreigners that have legal residence in the Netherlands, for a period exceeding six months, are also registered in

¹³ European Convention on Nationality, Strasbourg, 06-11-1997, article 6 paragraph 2.

¹⁴ Migrant law 9, p. 314-315.

¹⁵ ‘Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie’, hereafter GBA.

the GBA. Registration takes place on request of either the foreigner or the municipality. Asylum seekers that stay for more than six months in an asylum seeker centre are also registered in the GBA. Children who are born in an asylum seeker centre are directly registered in the GBA. When someone who is stateless is registered, his statelessness should be registered as well. But the ‘Manual execution procedures’¹⁶ of the GBA do not mention any procedure that should be followed, if no nationality can be determined.¹⁷ The status ‘stateless’ is only registered, if this can be accurately documented. The burden of proof for this accurate documentation is placed on the claimant. Proving statelessness by accurate documentation is nearly impossible; most stateless people are stateless, because they don’t have proper papers. Furthermore, it remains unclear which specific law or policy requires the burden of proof for statelessness to be this heavy. Fact is that the procedures of the GBA require this burden of proof. But even if the stateless individual managed to get him/herself registered as ‘stateless’, this would still only have limited legal consequences; although the data of the GBA is leading for all other Dutch authorities, it is not binding.¹⁸

The uncertainty concerning where and how a foreigner should register as stateless is problematic, given the fact that the Netherlands is bound to the conditions of the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons that it signed in 1954 and the Convention of New York. If the Netherlands wants to be able to properly fulfil its duties in accordance with the conventions it has signed, it is essential to have a clear, accessible and efficient procedure that can register statelessness. The procedure and decisions regarding this issue should be taken by a, yet to be created, independent body. This criticism is also brought forward in the previously mentioned report *Statelessness in the Netherlands*, which states:

¹⁶ ‘Handleiding uitvoeringsprocedures’

¹⁷ UNHCR, *statelessness in the Netherlands* 18: “When it comes to statelessness: in the manual it does not specify how this should be registered, and the word stateless does not appear anywhere in the GBA law. The manual does however state that statelessness “nearly never occur”.

¹⁸ UNHCR, *Statelessness in the Netherlands*, 17-18 valid for the whole paragraph.

“The lack of uniformity as to the qualification and registration of statelessness is one of the most problematic aspects of the current Dutch approach to statelessness in law and policy.”¹⁹

The absence of a clear and uniform procedure for determination of statelessness is, thus, a great omission in the law and policies of the Netherlands. Moreover, the Netherlands also has no separate procedure for the granting of citizenship or residence to stateless immigrants.

After examining these findings the Dutch Government maintains the position that in the Netherlands, both the registration of statelessness, as well as issuing citizenship or residence permit to the stateless immigrants is sufficiently regulated. According to the Government the local municipality administration (GBA) provides adequate means for registration of statelessness. A stateless person, in case that he or she disagrees with the data which is registered in the GBA, can request amendment of that information, if necessary through a court ruling.

However, Justice and Peace Netherlands maintains that the content in the guidelines of GBA procedures does not offer any clarity on how should statelessness be established. In there it is only written about establishing whether the person in question is indeed without any nationality. This has to be made evident by an official document, court ruling or a valid national passport.²⁰ To prove statelessness with documents is possible only in some cases, but there are also cases of statelessness which are not registered by any state official body. In such a case, it is difficult to register statelessness through GBA. It should also be noted when the researchers of UNHCR could not clearly understand this procedure, the procedure may also be unclear to the municipality practitioners.

In the Netherlands, the only possibility for obtaining asylum or a residence permit on the grounds of statelessness is a follow-up procedure of the residence permit procedure. In order to qualify for this follow-up procedure, it is necessary to see his/her request for a residence permit as being denied. Only then can an individual, through the ‘no fault procedure’,²¹ obtain a regular residence permit. This only happens, if “the

¹⁹ UNCHR Statelessness in the Netherlands, 19.

²⁰ Handleiding uitvoeringsprocedures, Basisadministratie Persoonsgegevens en Reisdocumenten, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 3.3.12.2.

²¹ Buitenschuldprocedure

residence permit may be granted under the restriction ‘residence as an alien who cannot depart from the Netherlands through no fault’ (...) either automatically or on request.”²² This procedure allows a stateless individual to obtain a residence permit, but in order to do so s/he must first prove his statelessness with official documents. Beside this, the foreigner must satisfy the following conditions:

“1. He has demonstrably tried to request assistance from the authorities of the country (countries) he possesses the nationality of, or where he as stateless has previously resided, and/or countries of which can be assumed that will grant him/her access.

2. He has been in touch with the international organization for migration for facilitation of his departure, and this organization has declared that they are unable to carry this departure out as the foreigner does not have travel documents in his possession;

3. He has requested mediation of the DT&V²³ to obtain documents from the authorities of the country where the individual is allowed to go, and the intervention has not been successful (...);

5. He resides in the Netherlands without a residence permit and does not meet other conditions for a residence permit.”²⁴

It is clear that it is hardly possible for a stateless person to satisfy these conditions. For Roma, this is also the case. Stateless Roma first

²² Vreemdelingen Circulair B14/3.4.1

²³ DT&V: ‘Dienst terugkeer en vertrek’; The Dutch Repatriation and Departure Service.

²⁴ Vreemdelingen Circulair B14.3.2: “1 Hij heeft zich aantoonbaar gewend tot de vertegenwoordiging van het land of de landen waarvan hij de nationaliteit heeft dan wel het land (de landen) waar hij als staatloze eerder zijn gewone verblijfplaats had en/of tot andere landen waarvan kan worden aangenomen dat hem daar toegang zal worden verleend;

2 hij heeft contact opgenomen met de Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie voor facilitering van zijn vertrek en deze organisatie heeft aangegeven dat zij niet in staat is het vertrek te regelen omdat de vreemdeling stelt niet te kunnen beschikken over reisdocumenten;

3 hij heeft eventueel via de DT&V verzocht om bemiddeling bij het verkrijgen van reisdocumenten van de autoriteiten van het land waar hij naar toe kan gaan en de bemiddeling heeft niet het gewenste resultaat opgeleverd en (...)

5 hij verblijft zonder verblijfstitel in Nederland en voldoet niet aan andere voorwaarden voor een verblijfsvergunning.”, Vreemdelingen Circulair B14.3.2.”

have to prove that they are stateless; that they, for example, originate from Czechoslovakia, and are not being recognized as such now. The lack of clear and uniform procedures of what is considered sufficient proof of statelessness makes it very hard to prove one's statelessness. Furthermore, stateless Roma in the Netherlands do not have a birth certificate due to their itinerant existence. According to Mila Michelle van Burik (then of the Triana foundation) Roma were sent away when they wanted to register themselves.²⁵ In addition, the Roma have no written tradition and they have been reluctant to register themselves due to a history of discrimination and persecution.

Although authorities are in the strict legal sense right to impose these conditions, Justice and Peace Netherlands wonders whether this procedure is morally justified. Is it just that the Dutch state requests second and third generation stateless Roma to return to the country of origin of their ancestors? This status of statelessness is the result from, firstly, the negligent attitude of previous generations of Roma, and, secondly, the Dutch government that did not comply with its obligation that followed from international law to those who are born stateless; in practise it seems that the scope of 'option right' is not sufficient to provide those who are born stateless with the Dutch nationality.

3. The arrival of the Roma in the Netherlands

It should be noted that the problem of statelessness in the Netherlands is not solely limited to stateless Roma. Stateless people from Somalia, Palestinian territories, Syria and the former USSR often appeal to the Dutch legal system on the issue of their statelessness. For this reason, these groups appear more in the jurisprudence on statelessness than lawsuits, where the claims of stateless Roma are treated. The Roma suffer from a social exclusion, which is due to the inward orientated attitude of the Roma towards a society, keeping them at a distance. For these reasons, Justice and Peace focuses this report on Roma. Although only a

²⁵ Discussion with Mila van Burik of the Triana foundation (Roma organization), in Utrecht on the 9th January 2012 (Triana Foundation has been dissolved in (2012), a new foundation which replaces it is called Dutch Institute for Roma Integration.)

small minority of the Roma is stateless, the subject is often presented as a cause for various integration problems, and for this specific group of Roma makes the issue of statelessness problematic.

The Roma that emigrated from East and South-Europe to the Netherlands are not a homogenous group. This community consists of different groups that differ from each other, each with their own tradition, language / dialect and culture. The fact that the Netherlands does not acknowledge this diversity complicates the integration process.

The issue of stateless Roma originates from the sixties and seventies of the previous century. The first Roma arrived around 1960 from Italy, former Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey to the Netherlands. Soon, these groups were seen as “undesirable aliens”.²⁶ In the fall of 1978, there was, for example a banner in Ede reading: “*We do not want gypsies. Let us sleep in peace*”.²⁷ Despite all these emotions, the government van Agt decided to legalise the Roma, who were in the Netherlands through “general amnesty” (generaal pardon).²⁸ A total 570 Roma received a residence permit in the so called Roma municipalities²⁹. Condition for this permit was that the Roma would register themselves, and settle on a permanent location.³⁰ But this registration did not occur without obstacles: The Dutch government gave the Roma immigrants only a period of three days to register themselves. This short period was necessary according to the government, to prevent Roma from other European countries settling in the Netherlands and applying for registration. The group that gained a residence permit through this procedure are known as the Roma from 1978.

²⁶ W. Willems, L. Lucassen, *ongewenste vreemdelingen. Buitenlandse zigeuners en de Nederlandse overheid, 1969–1989* (Den Haag 1990) (unwanted foreigners. Foreign Roma and the Dutch government, 1969–1989)

²⁷ H. van Hout & J. van der Zandt, *Door alle tijden. De Roma, zoekend naar houvast in kerk en samenleving*, (Berne-Heeswijk 2011) p. 22. (Through all times. The Roma, looking for support in church and society)

²⁸ Letter to the Dutch parliament “approach concerning Roma in the Netherlands

²⁹ C. de Vos “*integrated approach Roma in the Netherlands*” in M. Flasikova-Benova, H. Swoboda, J.M. Wiersma, *Roma: a European minority. The challenge of diversity* (EU2011) 127.

³⁰ H. van Hout & J. van der Zandt, *Door alle tijden. De Roma, zoekend naar houvast in kerk en samenleving*, (Berne-Heeswijk 2011) p.21. (Through time. The Roma, looking for support in church and society)

The government promised that after a period of ten years the Dutch nationality would be given to them.

Not all Roma in the Netherlands could profit from this 1978 amnesty, as some Roma were incapable of registering themselves in such a short period of time. Other Roma only heard that the amnesty existed, once it was already too late. There are known cases where one part of a Roma family managed to register themselves, while another did not. This was the reason why the Dutch government organised some years later an after-registration, for all of those that did not manage to register themselves in 1978. Unfortunately, a lot of problems occurred during this ‘after-registration’, and the possibility to obtain citizenship in 1988.³¹ It resulted in some Roma obtaining a residence status but no nationality, and that others neither had a residence status, nor a nationality.³² The exact number of Roma who are in the latter situation is hard to tell, the estimations range from a few hundreds to approximately a thousand Roma, who couldn’t profit from the general amnesty or it’s effect and don’t have valid documents or a valid residence permit.³³ The situation of these Roma is severe; they are not registered anywhere or only have a residence permit that does not allow them to work. These people are “de facto” stateless. This group of persons does not qualify for welfare payments, healthcare insurance or education, since they don’t exist legally.

In 1979 a new group of Roma came to the Netherlands. At first the Netherlands tried to give them a temporary resident permit for a year, but quickly it turned out that this was not a solution; this group also managed to stay permanently in the Netherlands, with a permanent permit.³⁴ Not much is known about the 1979 Roma that did not obtain a permanent residence permit.

³¹ Doctors of the world, *stateless makes desperate*, 4.3

³² P. R. Rodrigues & M. Matelski, *Monitor racism & the extreme right Roma and Sinti*, Amsterdam Uitgeverij Anne Frank House 2044, p. 14-15.

³³ H. van Hout & J. van der Zandt, *Door alle tijden. De Roma, zoekend naar houvast in kerk en samenleving*, (Berne-Heeswijk 2011) p. 24. (Through all times. The Roma, looking for support in church and society)

³⁴ P. R. Rodrigues & M. Matelski, *Monitor racism & the extreme right Roma and Sinti*, Amsterdam Uitgeverij Anne Frank House 2044, p. 16.

Another vast group of Roma came to the Netherlands in the nineties. This group are part of a bigger group of asylum seekers and refugees from Yugoslavia, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The position of this group of Roma differs from the previously mentioned groups; they were housed immediately, often had access to education, and had worked in the country, they originated from. This made their integration into Dutch civil society relatively easy.³⁵

Although the latter group is well integrated into Dutch society, the first two groups often mention the issue of statelessness and the impossibility to deport them as the main cause of their integration problems. Out of the ashes of the Yugoslavian state, rose new states such as Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and so on. The registration offices of those states were “cleaned” and the Roma population was put out of the registers. Since that moment those people have been “de facto” stateless and that is why it is difficult for the Netherlands to deport people. Children of these stateless Roma are not able to obtain the Dutch nationality, because of the *jus sanguinis* principle and are thus also stateless.

4. Netherlands and Roma: mutual incomprehension

The continued statelessness of generations of Roma and the absence of a solution to this problem shows that the relation between the Roma community and the Dutch government is not smooth. Crucial to this difficult relationship are the cultural differences, and expectations regarding how the ‘other party’ should behave.

At first, when the first Roma arrived in the seventies, some municipalities were optimistic about integration. Cor de Vos, then mayor of Nieuwegein and chairman of the platform for Roma municipalities, said the following regarding this:

“The local authorities presumed that the Roma families would integrate within a three or four year period. By providing permanent accommodation and by offering good schooling and integration programmes, it was expected that the families would adjust easily to Dutch society. But these expectations did not become reality. After

³⁵ In *ibid.*

*more than thirty years we have to conclude that compared to other groups in society, the Roma population of Nieuwegein has made the least use of opportunities for employment, schooling and participation in general.”*³⁶

According to the Roma the causes of their failed integration lay somewhere else; the governmental deportation policy, where the bureaucratic approach in the immigration process did not allow for an adequate registration of statelessness. This statelessness, according to the Roma, prevented them from attending to school, working (legally), and for these reasons, has hindered their participation in society.

Municipalities, however, have another point of view; they think that Roma themselves stall the integration process. The culture of the Roma, according to the municipalities, can be difficult to reconcile with Dutch government structures and expectations, that Dutch society has of anyone who wishes to participate therein:

*“Roma find it not important that their children attend education after primary school. They are satisfied when their children can read and write.”*³⁷

*“Criminality has no part in Roma culture but it is ‘common use’ within some subgroups, peer pressure to persist this practice is high and alternatives are often not seen.”*³⁸

According to the Roma, the above mentioned problems are also rooted in statelessness; the lack of possession of a nationality makes it difficult to access education, and thus finding a legal job. However, noteworthy is the Roma mentality of “entrenchment”. This defensive way of thinking comes forward in an interview with Roma woman on the topic of forced marriages:

³⁶ C. de Vos “integrated approach Roma in the Netherlands” in M. Flasikova-Benova, H. Swoboda, J.M. Wiersma, *Roma: a European minority. The challenge of diversity* (EU2011) 127.

³⁷ Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG), *project proposals platform Roma municipalities*, March 2010, p. 11.

³⁸ 2de halfjaarrapportage integrale aanpak Roma problematiek 2009 (20 April 2010), p. 4 (Second biannual report on the approach of the Roma issue) 2009 (20 April 2010), p. 4.

“It is maybe hard to grasp for an outsider, but in our Roma-culture a twelve year old girl is ready to marry. For this she is prepared for around her 11th year. This involves learning how to be a good housewife and mother. I know that other rules prevail in the Netherlands, but we live in our own culture, and I think that one should respect that.”³⁹

These kinds of statements do not assist in improving mutual understanding between the Roma and the Dutch government. It gives the state the possibility to place all the different Roma problems that emerge around the integration process under one denominator: the Roma culture. The culture of the Roma and uncertainty about the interpretation of their own identity in Dutch society is seen by the Dutch authorities to be the principle cause of many of the problems:

“The Roma themselves are wrestling with the question whether they should try to become “just like others” or try to preserve their own identity. Are they different or the same? Do they want through forms of positive discrimination or affirmative action to be discriminated positively in order to fill the gap, or do they want to stand on the side of discriminated groups and promote jointly a diversity policy which is for everyone?”⁴⁰

By placing the cause of the integration problems within the Roma culture, the government puts the solution to these problems outside of its responsibility. Since, if it is the culture that is the problem, then this should be changed and that can only be done by the Roma themselves.

By speaking of *one* Roma culture, the government alienates itself from the different Roma groups.

Although the Roma have the same origin and partly share the same history, one must also consider that the Roma groups have differences of

³⁹ H. van Hout & J. van der Zandt, *Door alle tijden. De Roma, zoekend naar houvast in kerk en samenleving*, (Berne-Heeswijk 2011) p. 34 (Through time. The Roma, looking for support in church and society)

⁴⁰ C.C.J. van den Heuvel, *Wisselgeld. Intensieve begeleiding voor multiprobleem-gezinnen met een Roma achtergrond. “Zonder perspectief valt niets te coachen”* (Juli 2008 gemeente Nieuwegein) p. 1 (change. Intensive counseling for Roma households with multiple problems).

culture, tradition and language. By classifying all these different Roma groups as one group, the Dutch government ensures that all of the Roma groups attract this criticism; where in fact it could well be that the criticism was meant for some members of another Roma group.

The assumption that the cause of the integration problems only lays in the culture of the Roma is unjustified. The UNHCR report states that the immigration of stateless persons is poorly regulated in the Netherlands, potentially leading to grave consequences. The absence of a clear and uniform procedure for the determination of statelessness makes it difficult to be registered as such. If these procedures are unclear for the researchers of UNHCR and Dutch civil servants who work with the GBA,⁴¹ it should not be expected that immigrants who do not have a written tradition could use these procedures successfully.

According to Roma, the policy concerning the Roma is determined by the government and not in cooperation with the Roma themselves. An example of this is the letter⁴² and memorandum⁴³ on the Roma, that the Dutch minister of immigration sent to the Dutch House of Representatives. The premise and the title of the memorandum were: “promoting the social inclusion of Roma”. Promoting social inclusion is something both the Roma and the government wish to pursue, but promoting this inclusion requires that both parties listen to each other, act within their mandate and work towards a consensus. In his letter, the minister writes, that in preparation of the memorandum, there has been contact with the Dutch Institute Sinti and Roma (NISR) and the Roma community. This contact has not led to a fruitful dialogue. Roma (self-) organisations said the memo itself does not take into account the ideas and suggestions, which they had. According to them, the memorandum does not take the background and statelessness status of Roma into account. This led to misunderstanding within the Roma community.

One can understand the misunderstanding and mistrust between the Roma and the government, however it is evident that change is necessary.

⁴¹ UNHCR, *Statelessness in the Netherlands*, p. 17-20.

⁴² G.B.M. Leers, *Nederlandse bijdrage in het kader van de Nationale Roma-strategie*, 21-12-2011.

⁴³ Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, *Kamerbrief over de Nederlandse inbreng ten behoeve van de sociale inclusie van Roma*, 21-12-2011.

The problem of integration of the Roma lies not only with statelessness, nor in Roma culture, but is additionally compounded by this strained relationship.

Until now, a true dialogue between government and society on the one hand and the Roma on the other, lacks. This became very clear in the Roma conference, organised by the Clingendael Institute on the 14th of June, 2011. The emphasis that governmental representatives put on the Roma's own responsibility to improve their position in society, is not necessarily invalid. For a community that has lagged behind, it is to their own advantage to acknowledge this backlog, and to do everything in their power to change this. This can, for example, be done by focusing on people within the community that can serve as positive role models for the Roma youth. The government can alleviate the obstacles that stand in the way of emancipation of the Roma community. The issue of statelessness and the administrative problems that come with it, brings to question, whether this is at all attributable to the Roma themselves.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The Dutch government and the Roma do not talk with, but rather only about each other. The lack of good practices and a dialogue is understandable, but it frustrates the efforts for a good solution, that is acceptable for both parties. The Roma are, according to Michelle Mila van Burik (spokeswoman of the former Triana foundation), systematically held out of the LOM (National Platform for Minorities)⁴⁴ and the LIZE (consultation partner of the government for South European communities),⁴⁵ and are only occasionally consulted.⁴⁶

As long as both parties are unable to enter into a dialogue with one another, the problems regarding the integration of the Roma will persist. It is even possible that with the new governmental policy to criminalise people living illegally in the Netherlands, these problems will be exacer-

⁴⁴ Landelijk Overlegorgaan Minderheden.

⁴⁵ Overlegpartner Rijksoverheid Zuid-Europese Gemeenschappen.

⁴⁶ Discussion with M. van Burik 9th of January 2011.

bated.⁴⁷ It is for this reason, important that the dialogue between Roma and the Dutch government start as soon as possible.

Based on what has been previously formulated, Justice and Peace Netherlands would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Statelessness is considered by the Roma as *the* obstacle to a smooth integration into Dutch society. The “through no fault of their own procedure” is insurmountable for stateless Roma that have been residing in the Netherlands for over thirty years. The Netherlands should respect its obligations as formulated in the 1954 and 1961 stateless treaties, and create a special body that adjudicates and assists the stateless persons in their claims.

If one wants to tackle the problem of statelessness, one should start with the alien judicial position of stateless Roma. Important here is that statelessness does not directly lead to a residence status, but is applicable in the “No Fault”-criterion (*buitenschuld criterium*), which can subsequently lead to legal residence.

2. All these administrative procedures, ranging from the proving of statelessness to obtaining a residence permit, should be dealt with individually by the Dutch administration. It is only through intensive individual and legal counselling, and a benevolent attitude of the administration, that (judicial) integration can be successful.
3. For dialogue to succeed, it is crucial that the Dutch government enter into discussion with the Roma, as to include them in the cooperation for the formulation of policy concerning Roma.
4. The Roma are advised to organise themselves in order to talk in unison, and thus successfully cooperate in the formulation of policy on Roma.

⁴⁷ Regeerakkoord VVD-CDA, 2011, Hoofdstuk 6 (coalitional agreement VVD-CDA, 2011, Chapter 6).

PART TWO

TRADITIONAL AND NEW STEREOTYPES AMONGST LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN NEAMT COUNTY, ROMANIA REGARDING THE ROMA MINORITY

1. Context

The study „Traditional and new stereotypes amongst local authorities in Neamt County regarding the Roma minority” was realized within the project „To touch the untouchable: combating traditional and new anti-Roma stereotypes”, implemented by Amalipe (Bulgaria), as a beneficiary of the financing contract, in partnership with Sastipen (Romania) and Justitia et Pax (Netherlands). Taking into account the terms of reference of this project, during June–August 2011, with the support of Sastipen team, we have realized this study, which allowed us to identify the traditional and new stereotypes amongst the public clerks from the local administration regarding the Roma minority. The report’s results will constitute a starting point in the process of realizing local/county strategies, which aim to improve the situation of Roma, having as a base equal opportunities and nondiscrimination as working principle.

2. Research purpose and specific objectives

The research general objective was to identify the prejudices and stereotypes of local authorities, representatives from Neamt County, towards the Roma minority, and to determine the communication process between the representatives of local authorities in relation to the Roma beneficiaries.

The research **specific objectives**:

- To realize an X-ray regarding the traditional and new stereotypes amongst the representatives of local authorities/field workers in

the areas of education, social, and health towards the members of Roma communities;

- To identify the problems, which the representatives of local authorities/field workers in the areas of education, social, and health are confronting with in relation to the members of the Roma communities, thus leading to strengthening the stereotypes towards Roma;
- To identify the main sources of satisfaction/dissatisfaction amongst representatives of local authorities/field workers in the areas of education, social, and health towards the public policies, addressed to the Roma community members;
- To analyze the knowledge degree amongst the representatives of local authorities/field workers, regarding the antidiscrimination legislation and equal opportunities in Romania.
- To identify possible solutions, which would contribute to combating traditional and new stereotypes towards the members of Roma communities and, subsequently, to combating the discrimination against Roma.

3. Research methodology

Research method by questionnaire

(please see appendix 1 – Questionnaire Model)

There have been realized 30 interviews/questionnaires, applied to a number of 30 field workers among the local authorities, as follows:

- 10 interviews with the personnel in health area;
- 10 interviews with the personnel in social area;
- 10 interviews with the personnel in education area.

Note: The selection of the 30 clerks/field workers has been realized with the support of Mr. Daniel Raducanu, the personal counselor on Roma issues of the Neamt County Prefect.

Research method Focus group, based on administered questions

(please see appendix 2 – list of questions)

There have been organized 3 focus-groups to which have participated 21 people, respectively: 7 persons from the health area, 7 persons

from social work area, and 7 persons from education area. Taking into account the fact that the analyzed subject is rather pretentious, the people who participated to the focus-groups have requested that their results would be confidential and kept anonymous. In order for the results to be real, the research coordinator has complied with the participants' request, yet they agreed that their answers would be used in the research report.

Realizing relevant case studies with Roma people

There have been realized 3 case studies on restricting the access of traditional Roma women to medical care services. These case studies highlight the fact that, due to prejudices and stereotypes, the doctors discriminate Roma patients.

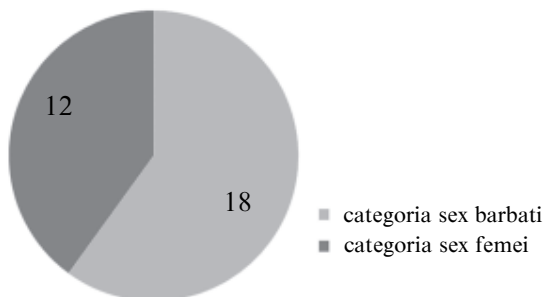
4. Obtained results

4.1. Quantitative results

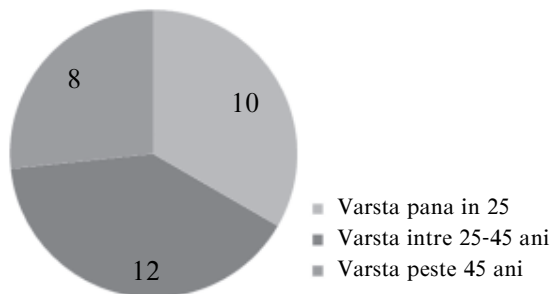
There have been applied 30 questionnaires, the respondents being chosen amongst the field workers/public clerks within county and local services from the areas: social, education, and health

General data on the respondents

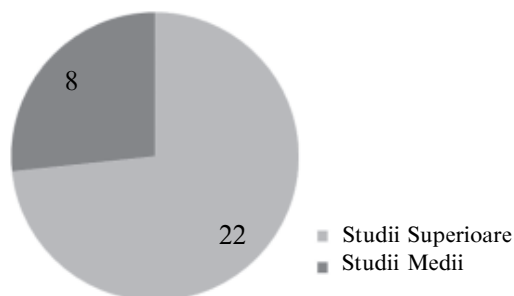
1. From the 30 respondents, 18 were men and 12 were women.



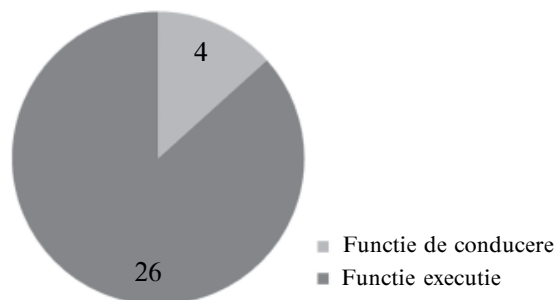
2. From the 30 respondents, 10 were under 25 years old, 12 were between 25-45 years old and 8 were above 45 years old.



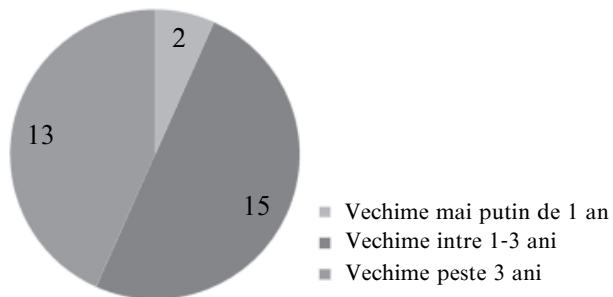
3. Level of studies: 22 respondents had higher education studies and 8 had medium studies with experience in the area;



4. Regarding the held positions: 4 people held management positions and 26 held executive positions.

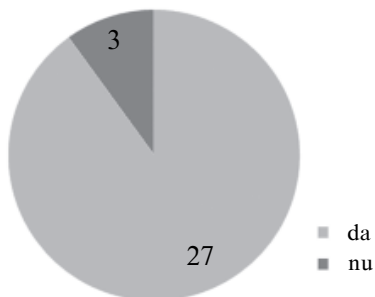


5. Experience within the institution: 2 respondents had less than 1 year experience within the institution, 15 respondents had less than 3 years experience within the institution and 13 respondents had over 3 years of experience within the institution.



**While carrying out your work activities,
do you often meet Roma beneficiaries?**

From the analyzed results, 27 people meet often Roma beneficiaries. The rest responded that they do not meet often Roma in their daily work.



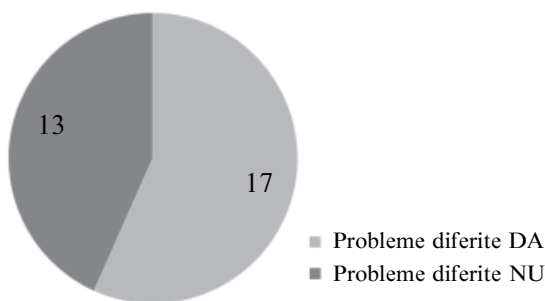
What types of problems do the Roma beneficiaries confront with?

- Lack of identification papers: 10 answers;
- Lack of health insurances: 21 answers;
- Lack of incomes and jobs: 18 answers;
- Discrimination: 2 answers;

- Lack of access to education: 12 answers;
- Lack of stable domicile: 15 answers;
- Early marriages: 1 answer.

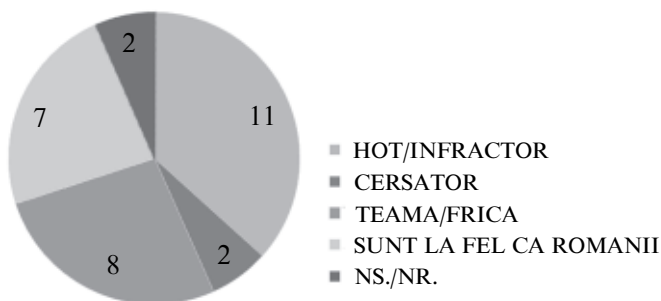
Are the problems, highlighted by the Roma beneficiaries, different from the problems of non-Roma beneficiaries?

17 respondents replied that the problems that Roma are facing with are not different from the problems of non-Roma. 13 respondents from social and education areas mentioned that the problems are different and related to the Roma lifestyle.



Starting from the labeling theory, when you see a Roma person, what comes into mind?

More than half of the respondents have provided answers based on stereotypes and prejudices induced by the public opinion regarding the Roma minority.



**Do you have any Roma friends/acquaintances?
If your answer is YES, what is your opinion about them?**

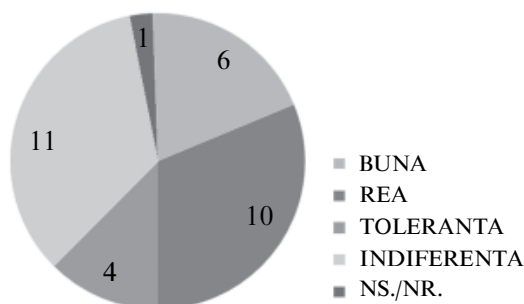
Most of the respondents (24 people) mentioned that they have Roma friends and that their opinion about their Roma friends is good. They have no problem in communicating with their Roma friends, because they are assimilated and share the same values and rules.

Can you give us some examples of stereotypes and prejudices regarding the Roma community members?

- “Gypsies are thieves and they are not trustworthy”: 2 answers;
- “Gypsies embarrass Romania when going abroad”: 2 answers;
- “Gypsy women with skirts are thieves and dirty”: 3 answers
- “Gypsies ruin our image in Europe”: 2 answers;
- “If your not going to behave, I’ll give you away to the gypsies”: 10 answers;
- “You’re drowning like the gypsy before reaching the shore”: 4 answers;
- “The gypsies do not like going to school”: 9 answers;
- “The gypsies have their own law, their own Courts, and they do not comply with the Romanian laws”: 1 answer;
- “The gypsies do not want to integrate in the society and they embarrass our country”: 6 answers

What is the opinion of your friends/acquaintances regarding the Roma minority in Romania?

Most of the friends/acquaintances of the respondents are indifferent regarding the Roma minority. A similar percentage has a bad opinion towards the Roma minority from Romania.



Do you think that Roma need special measures in order for their situation to be improved? Can you provide explanations?

The answers to this question were divided. A number of 12 respondents (social and education) replied that there are needed special measures in order to support their integration into society. A number of 18 respondents said that there are not needed any special measures due to the fact that Roma are Romanian citizens and there should be equality, regarding the rights.

The respondents referred to the special measures in education, specially allotted places for Roma in high schools and universities.

The respondents also referred to the programs, implemented by the local authorities in order to obtain identification papers for Roma and other social benefits.

Do you have any knowledge on the political policies which regulate the improvement of the situation of Roma in Romania

Out of the 30 respondents, 9 of them did not respond to this question.

- National Strategy for improving the situation of Roma: **17 answers**
- Decade of Roma Inclusion: **2 answers**
- Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM)
- National Antipoverty plan and promoting social inclusion (PNAinc)
- Others – **Special allotted places for Roma in high schools and faculties: 2 answers**

Can you distinguish a traditional Roma from another Roma who lost/doesn't keep the customs/tradition? How?

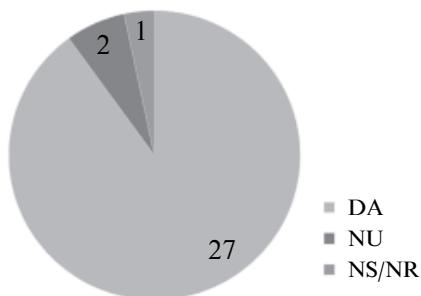
The distinction between traditional Roma and assimilated Roma is made according to the traditional clothes and the skin color. The respondents mentioned that traditional Roma are the ones that wear the traditional clothes (28 answers), while the assimilated ones have a darker skin (29 people).

**Do you think that the traditional Roma clothes constitute a communication barrier between the public clerk and the Roma beneficiary?
Can you provide an explanation?**

Most of the respondents consider that the traditional clothes represent a barrier, while providing the following explanation:

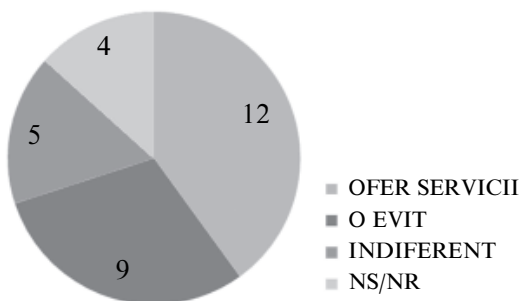
- traditional clothes create fear amongst public clerks;
- traditional clothes, especially worn by Roma women, lead to a bad impression regarding personal hygiene.

If a person (from majority population), who addresses your services is wearing the traditional Moldavian clothes, how will you react?



Which are the problems you are confronting with in relation to the Roma beneficiaries?

I will provide services	I will avoid the person	Indifferently	Don't know/Won't answer
12	9	5	4



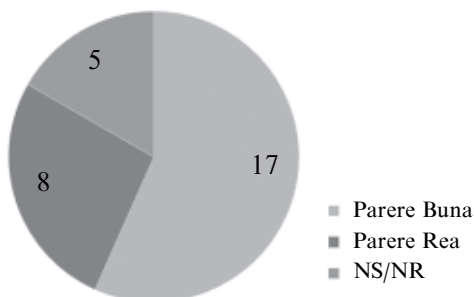
PROBLEMS	ANSWERS
Their lack of trust regarding our professionalism in delivering services	12 answers
Their aggressive manners in communicating and behaviour	7 answers
Romany language is a communication problem	2 answers
The legislation in discrimination area provides them certain rights, and it is always invoked in relation to the clerks	3 answers
Lack of a cultural mediator between the authorities and the community	6 answers

What would be the solutions for resolving the problems you are confronting with in relation to the Roma beneficiaries?

SOLUTIONS	RASPUNSURI
More informing actions amongst Roma communities	10 answers
To participate to training courses regarding Roma	8 answers
To organize more often meetings with representatives of Roma	3 answers
To collaborate with Roma cultural mediators	2 answers
To be informed on the specifics of Roma subgroups	7 answers

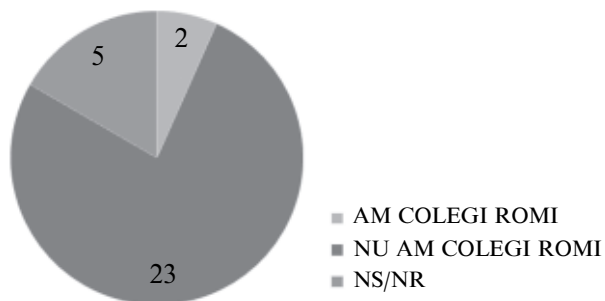
What is your opinion on the fact that Roma benefit from specially allotted places in high schools and universities?

Out of 30 respondents, 17 have a good opinion, 8 have a bad opinion, and 5 do not know how to answer or will not answer.



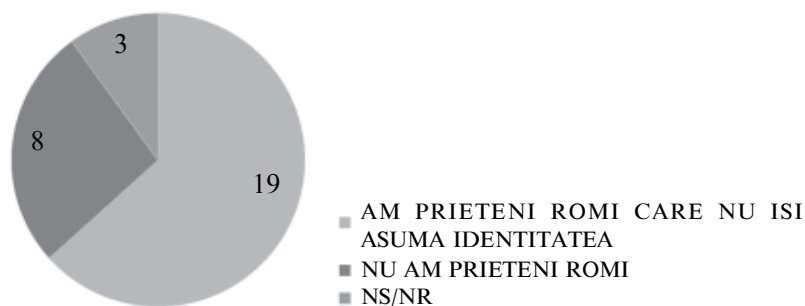
Do you have any Roma co-workers? If your answer is yes, how do you relate to them?

Out of the 30 respondents, only 2 people mentioned they have Roma co-workers. Regarding the manner in which they relate to them, the respondents said they have a good relation, as colleagues, and no incidents occurred.



Do you have any Roma acquaintances/friends who do not assume their Roma identity?

Out of 30 respondents, 19 have Roma acquaintances/friends, who do not assume their Roma identity, 8 respondents do not have any Roma acquaintances/friends, while 3 respondents do not wish to answer.



What are the stereotypes and prejudices, that the majority population has, which affect the Roma community in Romania?

Please provide examples

- Gypsies embarrass Romania when going abroad;
- Gypsies ruin our image in Europe;
- If you will not behave, I'll give you away to the gypsies;
- You're drowning like the gypsy before reaching the shore;
- Gypsies don't like to work;
- Gypsies do not comply with the Romanian laws;
- Gypsies are lazy.

From the received answers, we conclude that the stereotypes and prejudices of the public opinion towards the Roma minority are present amongst the stereotypes and prejudices which the respondents have.

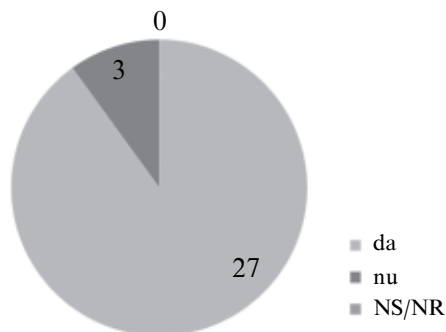
Do you think that the media is fuelling the prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma?

If your answer is yes, what is the solution for these stereotypes and prejudices towards Roma to disappear?

The respondents have mentioned that the media is fuelling the public opinion regarding the situation of Roma in Romania, but from a negative point of view. Daily, there are being presented news and articles about Roma who are making different problems and are arguing with the law.

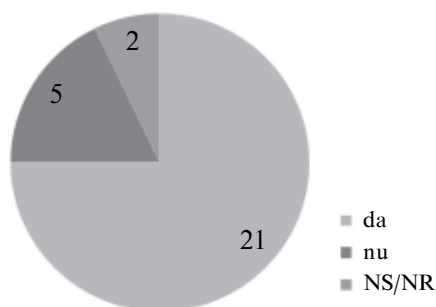
This is affecting the public opinion and creates into the respondent's mind a feeling of panic, when they interact with the Roma population. As solutions, the respondents mentioned:

- Work meetings with journalists who are opinion creators;
- Implementing a media campaign that would present the positive elements from Roma communities;
- Attracting spokespersons amongst the majority population as messengers and behavior changers.



Do you think that the Romanian State is involved sufficiently enough in order to improve the situation of Roma?

Out of 30 respondents, 21 respondents think that the Romanian state is involved sufficiently in the process of improving the situation of Roma, while 5 respondents have the opinion that the Romanian state is not involved enough, and 2 respondents do not know how to answer or do not wish to answer this question.

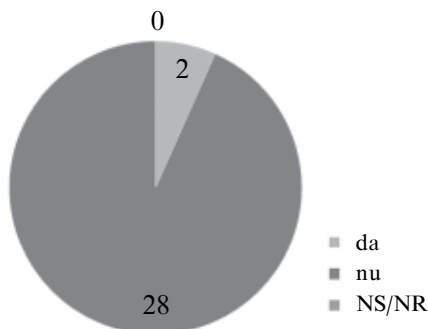


What is the Romanian institution that sanctions all forms of discrimination?

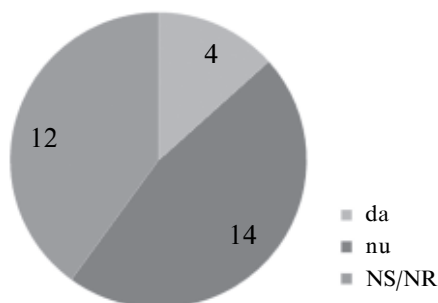
From the received answers, 22 respondents mentioned they do not know which institution is, and that the court is dealing with this issue. 8 respondents mentioned the National Council for Combating Discrimination as a responsible institution for applying the legislation in antidiscrimination area.

Have you ever participated before to a training course in the area of antidiscrimination and equal opportunities?

Out of 30 respondents, only 2 have participated to a training course in the area of antidiscrimination and equal opportunities, while 28 respondents did not participate to such courses.



Have you ever felt discriminated? If the answer is yes, can you describe the feeling you had at that moment?



Only 4 respondents mentioned they felt discriminated against. **Especially the ones that are over 45 years old** who have tried to obtain another job. The age is a reason for discrimination, and the ones who felt discriminated said that they wish to never happen to them again.

“I felt like the last person on the planet when they told me at the interview that I am too old for this position. I didn’t feel like a person for a whole week. I can’t believe it even know what I had to go through.”

“It’s a very bad feeling. Like a hole in your stomach and strong emotion. I felt so very embarrassed”.

It’s very difficult to be in this situation. Not having access to a job, only because you have a certain age and you look different than others? It was very humiliating for me.”

“I don’t even want to remember this situation. I went through it twice and thought it was a joke. Only after that I realized that it didn’t happen something good at all and that I was actually being humiliated.”

4.2. Qualitative results – Focus groups

4.2.1. Personnel from the health area

Question: *While carrying out your work activities, do you often meet Roma beneficiaries? What types of problems do the Roma beneficiaries confront with?*

Asis. 1 “Mainly they have health issues. No one comes to the hospital because he’s feeling good”.

Asis. 2 “They have no health insurance and they come straight to the hospital, to emergency room”.

Asis. 3 “This is not a big issue, yet they come and they make a lot of noise on the hallways, and they do not want to wait for their turn. You know we have big issues coming at the emergency room and we cannot provide support to them first”.

Asis. 4 “You asked about problems? They do not have any special problems comparing with the rest of the patients. Their problem is that they have no discipline and they do not wait in line. If they have no family doctor, they do not know their diseases, and we must make investigations, which take a lot of time. They get angry and start screaming at us”.

Question: *What do you know about the Roma from Romania?*

Asis. 5 “I do not know too many things, because I did not have any time to get to know their history, but I know there are two kinds: traditional and integrated”.

- Asis. 6* "I saw certain shows at the television with Roma, and I know there are many of them in Romania. They have an emperor, they have also a king. I do not understand these aspects of their lives, but I know they have the best musicians".
- Asis. 7* "Musicians and very big weddings. I saw how they manifest at weddings and baptisms and they come complaining to us at the hospital that they do not have any money to pay for the health insurance"
- Asis. 1* "Here, in Neamt, the Roma are very poor. Gypsy. I cannot call them <Roma>. They are very poor gypsies who do not have any money to pay. There are the ones with long, colored skirts".

Question: *Do you know the difference between "Roma" and "Gypsy"?*

- Asis. 1* "For me it is the same thing. What's all this ruckus with <Roma>? Since I've been around they are called gypsy. I think it's about the European Union. They call themselves gypsy among them".
- Asis. 6* "I don't know the difference. I think they want to be confounded with the Romanians, when they want to leave abroad".

Question: *Can you give us some examples of stereotypes and prejudices regarding the Roma community members?*

- Asis. 1* "Gypsy are mean and thieves. I think this is a stereotype. There are a few saying regarding Roma: you're drowning like the Roma to the shore; if you won't behave, I'll give you away to the gypsies. The last one does not have any effect on the children anymore".
- Asis. 5* "I think it is human nature that is built this way to judge the people before we know them. Yes, I admit I am afraid when I see a gypsy woman with colored skirts in the hospital. They do not know how to speak calmly and normal. They yell. And this leads to fear".

Asis. 7 “Many times their behavior makes us judge them first. It’s only normal that when one of them is screaming, I become afraid. Gypsies are bad by their nature. Society tells us to be more tolerant. Why can’t they be more tolerant”.

Asis. 6 “Now we’re even afraid to say something, just because they’ll tell on us to the organizations dealing with discrimination. As soon as you tell them something they say you are discriminating them and they’ll call the ones in Bucharest to give us a sanctioning”.

Question: *Do you think that Roma need special measures in order for their situation to be improved? Can you provide explanations?*

Asis. 1 “What are these special measures? To benefit only them? I think us, Romanians, need special measures too. We all live in Romania and we all have the same situation. As far as I know, they have special places in faculties. I never understood why, but I think it’s good. Maybe, they’ll become more educated this way”.

Asis. 2 “I think it is needed much more involvement on their behalf. This can be for me special measures. If they wait for someone to come and help them, they’ll wait for a long time. Yes, I can understand the poor ones who do not have any means. But the ones with money? Why should they need any special measures?”.

Asis. 4 “I don’t think they should have any special measures. They should integrate as we all are. To respect all the same laws, not to have special laws for the gypsies”.

Asis. 6 “I know some cases of women who need special measures. I’m referring to the women who marry very young. There should be done something in this purpose. You cannot become a mother at 11 years old. That is what, I think should be done. To educate them to be like the rest of the world”.

Asis. 7 “I don’t think I can respond to this question, because I do not think it’s normal that every population to have its own law, especially since we’re living in the same country”.

Question: *How do you react when a Roma traditional woman, with colored skirt, comes to you and requests your support?*

Asis. 3 “I’m used to them. I know what they want. At first, I was afraid of them and I didn’t try to discuss with them too much. But I worked in the emergency room and I got a lot of emergencies, regarding Roma women with skirts. Beside the ruckus caused outside by their families, they were quite calm. They did not talk too much and this made change my opinion about them.”

Asis. 7 “I made a mistake once. One day came to the doctor, I’m working with a woman with a colored skirt. I thought she was gypsy and I let her come in to the doctor. When she came in I was shocked that she was the best friend of Mrs. Doctor”.

Asis. 6 “I think we’ve all been skeptic when interacting with Roma women with skirts for the first time. We were afraid. I don’t have any problem now, because I know they cannot do anything to me. They are as normal as we are. And they are much cleaner than the gypsy women who do not wear those types of skirts”.

Question: *If you could change anything regarding the Roma tradition and culture, what would it be?*

Asis. 2 “I think early marriage. Ypu just cannot do such a bad thing to your children and marry them early”.

Asis. 3 “I agree to him. I’ve had an emergency with a 12 year old girl who came with her mother-in-law to come see if she’s a virgin anymore. When I heard what she wants from me I was stunned. I sent them to a specialized office, but if I could change something it would be this custom of marrying young girls.”

Question: *Do you think that the Romanian State is involved sufficiently enough in order to improve the situation of Roma. If your answer is YES, please provide arguments for your answer.*

Asis. 6 “I saw that there is a health mediation program for them, financed by the Ministry of Health. I think it’s good that there is someone to deal with them. The State should develop other programs as well for Roma to change their mentality”.

Asis. 1 “I participated to a meeting at the PHD, and I learned there is a Strategy for Roma. If they have this strategy, it is enough. Just to make something good out of it, and they get out of this difficult situation”.

Asis. 7 “I don’t think it is up to me to tell this, but I think they should help amongst them. Because some of them have lots of money, and they could do something for their own kind”.

Question: *What is the Romanian institution that sanctions all forms of discrimination?*

Asis. 4 “Court? They deal with these cases in court, right?”

Asis. 6 “I think their organizations know better. I saw once in the television that there are Roma organizations who deal with this issue. I don’t know about the institution, but I know there was a doctor from Tg. Neamt who was sanctioned from Bucharest for discriminating a gypsy woman”.

Question: *What would be the solutions for relations between you and the members of Roma communities to improve?*

Asis. 5 “I think the program with the health mediator is a step forward. We learn about them and they have someone to help them”.

Asis. 6 “In my case I don’t think there is needed another solution. I saw you can communicate with them without yelling and threatening. I think that if you speak nicely to them and show them you are not afraid of them, it won’t be any problem”.

- Asist. 3* “We also must do more and understand better. There must be a joint, common effort. If I want what is best for you, why do you have to behave badly? I think education has a big importance. I’ve had gypsy women patients who were exceptional as patients. I didn’t have any problems with them. The problem comes when there are women who don’t know Romanian language and they come from closed communities”.
- Asis. 2* „A solution would be that they should understand we are as vulnerable as them”.

4.2.2. Personnel from the education area

Question: *While carrying out your work activities, do you often meet Roma beneficiaries? What types of problems do the Roma beneficiaries confront with?*

- Prof. 1* “Yes. Generally, we interact with the children’s parents. They do not have special problems. The lack of financial resources is a distinct problem. I’m saying this, because in the classroom where I am headmaster, I have two Roma pupils who never participated to extracurricular activities, because of the lack of money”.
- Prof. 2* “I teach at a school close to a Roma neighborhood. I work in the education system for 10 years. Until 2 years ago, most of the Roma children were dropping out of school at 12-13 years old. I don’t think we even saw their parents more than once per year if even once. They did not come to school, and they did not care about their children in school. Now there is a Baptist parson and they repent. Since then I have a different relation with them”.
- Prof. 3* “The school I teach at has about 70% Roma children. They are not traditional Roma. They are assimilated Roma. Beside the financial problems, they do not have any special problems. We make efforts to provide after school lessons in order to ensure that these children benefit from a good educational environment.”

- Prof. 4* "I can say that I'm meeting with Roma parents daily. They have big financial problems but I like it that they work by day, and they send their children to school. We have cases of school drop-out, especially amongst younger girls, 12-13 years old who go away with their parents for seasonal jobs".
- Prof. 5* "I don't know, if the Roma I am interacting have any problems, because they are the same as all the other parents. They come to school, they take interest in their children and are peaceful."
- Prof. 6* "I have problems with Roma parents. I think it is the lack of money that could allow them the day by day living. They do not come to school to learn about their children, they do not help them with the homework, some of them are even illiterate".
- Prof. 7* "I think we must find a solution, because there are also parents that want a second chance program. I have children in my classroom that learn along with their parents".

Question: *What do you know about the Roma from Romania?*

- Prof. 2* "Now, at hours-meetings we talk about this subject. We know their history and we even know famous Roma people"
- Prof. 3* "After I was trained on this subject, I organized an open session with my children, and I was stunned that they are not even interested about their history. I didn't continue but it seems it is a problem within the Roma community. They do not know their own history and traditions".
- Prof. 6* "I also teach in school lessons of Roma history and culture".

Question: *Do you know the difference between "Roma" and "Gypsy"?*

- Prof. 7* "The term gypsy comes from Greek, meaning <not to be touched> and it is used with pejorative meaning".
- Prof. 5* "Roma is found in the Romany language vocabulary and it is used only by the ones who speak the language".

Question: *Can you give us some examples of stereotypes and prejudices regarding the Roma community members?*

- Prof. 1* "Gypsies ruin our image in Europe".
- Prof. 2* "The gypsy when he gets to be an emperor, he will kill his own mother".
- Prof. 3* "Wel... the old popular sayings referring to Roma-Gypsies: if you do not behave, I'll give you away to the gypsies; the gypsy is a gypsy even on Easter day; you're drowning like the gypsy at the shore; the gypsies are bad and they steal".
- Prof. 4* "The stereotypes and prejudices are related generally about their traditional clothes. At least this is what the public opinion sees. Automatically when you see a gypsy who wears his traditional clothes you will be afraid of him".
- Prof. 5* "The gypsies are not Romanian. The word Roma is only an invention which appeared after the Revolution".
- Prof. 6* "The gypsies do not go to school and they are filthy".
- Prof. 7* "The gypsies do not want to become integrated and live like us, Romanians. They like to live off other's back".

Question: *Do you think that Roma need special measures in order for their situation to be improved? Can you provide explanations?*

- Prof. 1* "Yes, they need them. Because they cannot integrate in the society without being helped. They are famous for music, dancing and other things that are not honoring them. If the society doesn't help them, how will they overcome all these issues and integrate?"
- Prof. 2* "At least in education area they need special measures. I know there are special places in high schools and faculties but there should also be at the level of secondary schools. Many of them need a warm meal and a place to do homeworks".
- Prof. 3* "I don't know if they have special needs that would require special measures, but I think that society is making a big mistake when they consider them helpless. There are many Romanians who have a similar situation with the Roma and they do not benefit from any help. I do not agree with special measures for Roma".
- Prof. 5* "Yes. They need them, because they have a serious situation".

Question: *How do you react when a Roma traditional woman, with colored skirt, comes to you and requests your support?*

Prof. 1 "I have no problem with that. I feel a little embarrassed in this situation, because I do not know if she speaks Romanian and if she understands me".

Prof. 2 "In my classroom there are children who come from this type of family, and I am interacting with their mothers. There is no problem in that. We are all normal people".

Prof. 3 "At the beginning I was afraid when I saw women dressed in the traditional clothes. I saw on the television how they steal while using their skirts, but after I started to related with 2 mothers I did not have problems anymore."

Prof. 4 "I'm reacting normally because I know them. At least the ones who have children in our school".

Prof. 5 "No problem. If she comes to me and requests my help, I help her".

Question: *If you could change anything regarding the Roma tradition and culture, what would it be?*

Prof. 1 "I wouldn't change anything because this is what defines a community".

Prof. 4 "The thing about early marriages, I'd try to change that. So that they would marry at normal age and make children when they need to".

Prof. 5 "They have this other thing with the gypsy court/judgement. I think it's not normal to happen when there is a legislation. They must respect the law".

Prof. 6 "I noticed that all their traditions are very nice and I do not agree to change anything. Only the things that are too obvious and disturb public opinion".

Prof. 7 "Their beliefs should change. They should become penitents and live after God's law. I saw what kind of changes can the Church do when people convert to another religion/belief".

Question: *Do you think that the Romanian State is involved sufficiently enough in order to improve the situation of Roma. If your answer is YES, please provide arguments for your answer.*

Prof. 3 “They are not involved at all. And these people need support, even if apparently they have all they need. Some of them”.

Prof. 1 “What can the state do for gypsies and what can it do for Romanians? I think the Romanian state should help all the state’s population”.

Prof. 2 “As long as there is legislation for Roma, strategies and programs, I think it is enough”.

Prof. 5 “I think is needed more involvement from the government and local authorities. It is not enough to only give them social welfare. They need a job”.

Question: *What is the Romanian institution that sanctions all forms of discrimination?*

Prof. 1 “National Council for Discrimination? Is that correct?”

Prof. 2 “Council for discrimination and court authorities.”

Question: *What would be the solutions for relations between you and the members of Roma communities to improve?*

Prof. 3 “I think that a better knowledge on the Roma customs and traditions would do good on the communication relations. We are afraid of them and they are afraid of us. If you do not know yourselves, of course there will be communication problems”.

Prof. 4 “This thing about school mediators is good for communication relation with Roma. If I cannot get to an agreement with them, then I go to ask the support of the school mediator”.

Prof. 5 “It depends a lot on the community members. If they are bad, it’s only normal that you cannot communicate with them. You have to make efforts to befriend them”.

4.2.3. Personnel from the social area

Question: *While carrying out your work activities, do you often meet Roma beneficiaries? What types of problems do the Roma beneficiaries confront with?*

- As. 1 “Yes. Around 30 people every day. They are beneficiaries of the law of minimum income guaranteed, and they come to the City Hall to ask for their rights”.
- As. 2 “I think that all of us meet daily Roma beneficiaries. The lack of income, lack of identification papers, children left into the grandparents’ care, because they left to work in other places, these are all problems which I confront daily”.
- As. 3 “In our locality there are gypsies but they have no stable domicile in the village, and they cannot benefit from social welfare. They come to the city hall and request support, but we cannot do anything”.
- As. 4 “They have serious, complementary problems. They request social welfare just to have medical insurance. They do not carry out with the necessary hours, according to the legislation, and when the city hall cuts off their social welfare they start to become violent”.
- As. 5 “The most important issues are related to the living situation. They are living too many people in the same house, and some of them have the same name. It is very difficult for us to interact with them and resolve their problems”.
- As. 6 “They have goods which they cannot prove to be theirs. I was yesterday at a social investigation, and we found in their courtyard a luxurious car. I asked whose it was and they told me that it was not theirs, even if I saw the head of the family driving the car around the village”.
- As. 7 “They have issues related to the living situation. They have issues related to the identification papers. They have issues related to the lack of jobs. They practice day jobs which do not offer them too many satisfactions. We have tried together with the County Office for Employment to hire them at different companies, but they did not want that. And this is a

problem of the Roma community, because they do not want to work with a labor contract”.

Question: *What do you know about the Roma from Romania?*

- As. 1 “From a historical point of view? They come from India, they are divided in different subgroups, and there are many who are assimilated due to communism. General things”.
- As. 2 “After the revolution they called themselves Roma. I do not know why, but there is a total confusion”.
- As. 3 “Yes. They have kings and emperors. And NGOs who work for them”.
- As. 5 “In our village there are kalderash Roma. They wear the traditional clothes, but they are good people and they do not get into conflicts with the rest of the population”.
- As. 6 “They are well-known for their music and their custom of marrying at a very young age”.

Question: *Do you know the difference between “Roma” and “Gypsy”?*

- As. 4 “There is no difference. Only the fact that after the Revolution they called themselves Roma. And we must use this term: Roma.
- As. 7 “I think they don’t even know themselves what is the difference. They call themselves gypsy as well when they talk to us”.
- As. 1 “I think that we must call them gypsies again, because there shouldn’t be made any more confusion when we talk about them. For me it is very hard to use the term: Roma”.
- As. 3 “In 2002 I was a censor at the national census, and when I asked a family if they were Roma, they told me that they were gypsies. I did not know what to fill in the form”.

Question: *Can you give us some examples of stereotypes and prejudices regarding the Roma community members?*

- As. 1 “Gypsies ruin our image in Europe”.
- As. 2 “If you do not behave, I’ll give you away to the gypsies”.

- As. 3 "You're drowning like the gypsy at the shore, which means you cannot do almost anything".
- As. 4 "The gypsies are thieves, bad and filthy".
- As. 5 "The gypsies do not like school".
- As. 6 "The gypsies have their own law, their own courts, and they do not comply with Romanian laws".
- As. 7 "The gypsies do not want to integrate and embarrass our country".

Question: *Do you think that Roma need special measures in order for their situation to be improved? Can you provide explanations?*

- As. 1 "I know there is a strategy for Roma. I did not understand why there is this strategy, but we are obliged to respect it. I do not know if they need special measures".
- As. 2 "They need them because they are left behind with education. In that domain they need special measures, and I know that it is being made something for this purpose. There are special places in faculties and high schools".
- As. 4 "They certainly need these measures. If we do not help them, then later it will be hard to interact with an illiterate population".
- As. 5 "I also agree that they need special measures because we confront with the field situation daily".

Question: *How do you react when a Roma traditional woman, with colored skirt, comes to you and requests your support?*

- As. 4 "I do not have anymore problem now. At first, I was afraid to work with them because those dresses made me feel vulnerable."
- As. 7 "They are very nice. I am also a woman and I have worn very colored dresses. I know what it means to enter a shop and the people staring at me weird. At first, I did not understand, but when a friend of mine told me that I'm dressing like a gypsy,

I realized what kind of a burden does a Roma woman have. And I aimed then that I should be better to them”.

As. 3 “I am afraid of her reaction. I am not interested in the skirt, but usually, these traditional women have a specific way of approaching you; they want to read in your palm or steal from you. I’m skeptic about these types of women”

Question: *If you could change anything regarding the Roma tradition and culture, what would it be?*

As. 1 “Probably the lifestyle. And if you change the lifestyle, automatically it is being changed culture and tradition”.

As. 2 “These marriages of theirs are a problem. If these are part of their culture, I’m certain that we could change them”.

As. 3 “I also think that should be changed this tradition of early marriages. What kind of family can 2 children have when they are themselves of 9 to 13 years old? Let’s get real”.

As. 5 “I had a case of a 12 year-old girl who was pregnant with a 21 year-old boy. I initiated the legal procedures, but the family covered the act and denied everything. I would change that in favor of the child protection”.

Question: *Do you think that the Romanian State is involved sufficiently enough in order to improve the situation of Roma. If your answer is YES, please provide arguments for your answer.*

As. 4 “The state does what it can do. It is involved as much as it is involved for the general population”.

As. 5 “Yes. It is sufficient, if it allocates money for the Roma strategy and implements projects and programs for them. We had in our village a program for Roma regarding identification papers. It was very good because it covered the costs, yet I don’t know if they were aware of this help.”

As. 7 “We must do more for them. If they have problems, we have problems. They must live as well and offer something to eat for their children. We must help more”.

Question: *What is the Romanian institution that sanctions all forms of discrimination?*

As. 1 “National Council for Combating Discrimination”

Question: *What would be the solutions for relations between you and the members of Roma communities to improve?*

As. 2 “More informing actions amongst the Roma communities”.

As. 3 “I think that if we would have Roma colleagues, the situation would change. We would understand how to relate better with them.”

4.3. Case studies

Case 1

A first situation targets Mrs. L.L., a Roma woman, two-months pregnant. According to her statement¹, during 28th August – 1st September 2009 she went repeatedly to the Obstetrics-Gynaecology department within Targu Neamt City Hospital in order to benefit from a specialized consult, taking into account the fact that she did not feel well. On 28th August 2009 she went to Dr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae, who carried out a consult and sent her home, specifying that she is fine, respectively “this is how you, gypsies, are like!”².

Due to the fact that during 28th – 30th August the woman didn’t feel well at all, on 31st August, around 11.00, L.L. went again to the obstetrics-gynecology department within Targu Neamt Hospital. Before her, in the doctor’s office, there was consulted another patient who belonged to the majority. After the consultation was finished, L.L. addressed the doctor, telling him that she feels bad, yet the doctor refused to consult her, specifying the following: “Today I won’t talk to anyone”³.

As she intended to go home, the victim noticed at the entrance to the doctor’s office that there were many patients (belonging to the majority),

¹ Taken on the occasion of a documenting visit, carried out by Sastipen on 2nd September 2009.

² Quote from Mrs. L.L.’s statement.

³ Quote from Mrs. L.L.’s statement, taken on the occasion of a documenting visit, carried out by Sastipen on 2nd September 2009.

who were waiting to be consulted and who, according to her statement, went into the doctor's office, respectively the office of Dr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae, and they were consulted by the doctor. In the evening, around 21.00, the victim together with her husband and mother, went again to the obstetrics-gynecology department within Targu Neamt Hospital, where the same doctor was on duty, Mr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae. When the doctor noticed the three people, he specified the following: "Go home, I don't want to catch you around here anymore!"⁴. At the victim's and her mother's pressing, the doctor sent a nurse to make her an injection. The victim stated that the injection was done to her without being seated, yet "standing up", while she was standing next to a radiator.

On 1st September 2009, around 10.00, L.L. went to a private doctor's office in Targu Neamt city, in order to be made an ultrasound to see what is the reason for which she is feeling unwell. The result of the ultrasound highlighted the fact that there was an intra-uterine pregnancy which was "stopped in evolution"⁵. Taking into account the result, as well as the recommendation of the doctor who made it, to be consulted by a gynecologist, L.L. went again with her husband to the obstetrics-gynecology section within Targu Neamt Hospital, where Dr. Dumitrescu Dan-Nicolae was on duty. At the husbands' insinuations for his wife to be consulted, the doctor stated that the husband might be tired and L.L. is fine⁶.

Seeing the reaction of Dr. Dumitrescu, the two of them headed to the office where the ultrasound was made, in order to request advice from the doctor there. He sent L.L. to the emergency room of Targu Neamt Hospital, where she was received and administered a perfusion. After the perfusion was done, she went again to the obstetrics-gynecology section, yet in the yard they found Dr. Dumitrescu, who had finished his duty program, and who said to the victim's husband: "You ask me to help you, yet your father-in-law (the victim's father – r.n.) threatens me to call Bucharest"⁷.

⁴ Quote from Mrs. L.L.'s statement.

⁵ Quote from Mrs. L.L.'s statement and the Medical Analysis Bulletin no. 2616/01.09.2009.

⁶ According to the statement of the victim and her husband, who has witnessed the event.

⁷ Idem.

On 2nd September 2009, around 12.30, taking into account the fact that she was feeling bad, L.L., accompanied by her mother and aunt, as well as a member of Sastipen⁸, went to Targu Neamt Hospital in order to be consulted by a gynecologist doctor. After waiting for about 10 minutes at the office entrance, when Dr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae saw her, he stated: “What’s wrong with you? You’re fine. Go home or I’ll get my hand on a bat”⁹. After that, when he learned about the existence of Sastipen delegation, the doctor consulted the woman and wrote a prescription, yet according to the victim’s statement, he told to the medical nurses: “Do not receive gypsies anymore! Beat them with the broom, as soon as you see them on the stairs”¹⁰.

Case 2

The second situation of restricting the access of Roma women to health services provided by the obstetrics-gynecology section of Targu Neamt City Hospital, targets Mrs. L.I.. According to her statement, during May 2009, while being 4 months and a half pregnant and feeling unwell, she went with her husband to the mentioned hospital department, where Dr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae was on duty. At first, she talked to the doctor and said to him that she is feeling very bad, thus he sent a medical nurse to her in order to carry out a consultation. After it was carried out, the nurse told L.I. that she should be hospitalized due to the fact that there is the risk of her losing the pregnancy. Afterwards, the nurse went to the doctor’s office in order to discuss the possibility of hospitalization, yet the doctor refused, telling the nurse to only write a prescription for the patient. Then, the doctor addressed to L.I.’s husband the following words: “do not come to me anymore, because I am tired of gypsies”¹¹. He also told the nurse the following “if I see gypsies around here again, you will be leaving with them as well...!”¹². After two weeks of

⁸ Part of the delegation which was on a documentation visit to Targu Neamt.

⁹ According to the statement of the victim and the witnesses to the incident.

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ Quote from statement of Mrs. L.I.’s and her husband, witness to the event, taken on the occasion of the documentation visit made by Sastipen – Roma Center for Health Policies, on 2nd September.

¹² Idem.

following the treatment, prescribed by the doctor, L.I. was still feeling unwell, thus she went again to the Obstetrics-Gynecology department of Targu Neamt Hospital, where Dr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae was on duty. After the victim and husband insisted for quite some time, the doctor hospitalized the patient for 6 days. During the time she was hospitalized, the victim did not benefit any consultation¹³, thus during the daily visits of the doctor in the ward, he did not come all the way to the victim's bed (which was in the back of the ward), only finding out information about L.I.'s state of health from the other hospitalized patients (who were located in the front part of the ward). Additionally, the victim stated that during the time she was hospitalized, she was only administered injecting ampicillin, and when she was telling the doctor that she does not feel well, he would reply "I provided you enough treatment! Only you, gypsies, say that it is not good!". On the day she was discharged, after making an ultrasound, Dr. Dumitrescu told L.I. the following: "There's nothing for you here anymore and don't bring your mother around here because if she comes again, I'll take the gun out and shoot her!"¹⁴.

Case 3

The last situation of restricting the access of Roma women to services provided by the Obstetrics-Gynecology section within Targu Neamt Hospital is the one of Mrs. L.M. who, according to her statement, went to the mentioned hospital unit in July 2009, in order to benefit from a gynecological check-up, considering the fact that she was feeling bad. In the hospital's yard, she met with Dr. Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae, telling him the reason for her visit to the hospital, yet he replied "Go wherever! You have nothing to receive from here, because I am tired of some many gypsies. If you ever enter the hospital again, I'll take the gun out and shoot you"¹⁵. After this incident, L.M. did not come again, only benefiting from the services of a private medical office in Targu Neamt city.

¹³ According to her statement.

¹⁴ Quote from Mrs. L.I.'s statement taken on the occasion of the documentation visit made by Sastipen – Roma Center for Health Policies, on 2nd September 2009.

¹⁵ Quote from the victim L.M.'s statement.

Intervention

On 14th September 2009, Roma Center for Health Policies – SASTIPEN, submitted to the Public Health Authority Neamt letter No. 145/14.09.2009, through which it has been brought to the institution's attention about the three situations of "restricting the access of Roma women, from the local communities of Targu Neamt and Vanatori Neamt, to the public health services provided by the Obstetrics-Gynecology department of Targu Neamt City Hospital"¹⁶. There was requested from them an official point of view, from the Public Health Authority Neamt, regarding the signalized aspects, as well as carrying out an administrative investigation to Targu Neamt City Hospital, which would have the aim to clarify the aspects regarding the state of fact of each signalized case and holding responsible the ones guilty of creating the documented situations.

Similar letters, through which there were requested official points of view and carrying out administrative investigations within Targu Neamt City Hospital, have been sent to the attention of the Hospital's manager and to the Ministry of Health,

On 23rd September 2009, Sastipen has submitted two complaints to the National Council for Combating Discrimination, regarding the appli-
ance of a discriminatory treatment, by violating the right to personal dignity and restricting the access of Mrs. Lacatus Iulian and Lacatus Lacramioara, to the services provided by the Obstetrics-Gynecology Section of Targu Neamt City Hospital, based on the criteria of their belonging to the Roma ethnicity.

There could not be submitted any complaint in the third case due to the fact that the evidences collected by Sastipen were not sufficient enough to demonstrate the case of discrimination. Also, fearing the consequences at local level, the victim withdrew her complaint.

Considerations on solving the cases

Throughout realizing the investigations, the respective doctor tried various ways to demonstrate his innocence in the two cases of discrimination. There have been used methods to intimidate, harass the victims,

¹⁶ Quote from the statement transmitted to the attention of PHA Neamt, no. 145/14.09.2009.

mediate and try to solve peacefully the two situations, hoping that the charges would be dropped.

For example, in order to prove his innocence, the doctor requested to one of the victims who was in the hospital due to a serious situation (she was hospitalized for giving birth), to provide a statement that it is not true what she declared before the National Council for Combating Discrimination, and then receive medical care. Thus, the two statements taken within the Hospital, and written down by the medical nurses, who were employees of the department of Obstetrics-Gynecology – Targu Neamt City Hospital, have been included in causes' file, yet the doctor did not take into account the fact that the victim did not know how to read nor write. Although the victim did not know nor to read or write, when the statement was being made, there was no one close to her (who would know how to read or write, like the leader of local community”), respectively no family member who would invoke a feeling of trust to the victim, there were only present the two nurses who were subordinated to the doctor.

The complaint addressed by Sastipen on 23rd September 2010 to the National Council for Combating Discrimination, regarding the petitioner **Lacatus Lacramioara**, was the subject of file no. 383/2009. On 7th July 2010, by the Decision of the Directive College of NCCD, no. 149, there have been decided the following:

“a. The seized aspects regarding the manner in which the reported party (Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae – n.n.) addressed to the petitioner Lacatus Lacramioara, considering her ethnical origin, falls under the provisions of art.2, paragraph 5 within the Government Ordinance no. 137/2000, regarding the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, republished;

b. Sanctioning the reported party, Dumitrescu Dan Nicolae, with a warning ...”.

The other case, which is the object of file no. 382/2009, regarding the petitioner **Lacatus Iuliana** has been solved by the National Council for Combating Discrimination on 11.05.2011, by Decision no. 180. According to the Decision “The highlighted aspects... are subject to the provisions of art. 2, line 5 of the GO 137/2000, regarding the prevention and

sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, republished”. Also, there was disposed to sanction the accused party with a warning.

Even though there were two decisions of NCCD in the cases of Dr. Dumitrescu, Neamt College of Physicians refused to sanction him for reasons which can be easily understood. The respective doctor was a leading member of Neamt College of Physicians, and in the same time, he a local counselor position within the Local Council of Thargu Neamt. His local popularity is priority in report to the local popularity of the members of Roma communities who “...embarrassed our locality in Bucharest..”, quote by the leader of Tg. Neamt locality.

5. Conclusions and final recommendations

Equal opportunities is based on ensuring the access and full participation of any person to public, economic, and social life, without any difference based on ethnicity, sex, religion, age, disabilities, or sexual orientation. In the concept of equal opportunities, the prejudices and stereotypes cannot be associated not taken into consideration.

From a legal point of view, the Romanian legislation defines the concept of “equal opportunities for women and men” as being “to take into consideration the various capacities, needs, and aspirations of men and women, treating them equally”.

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men is developed within the Romanian legislation in the following areas:

- Labor;
- Access to education, health, culture, and information;
- Participation to taking decisions, providing and having access to goods and services

The European Union promotes fundamental rights, nondiscrimination and equal opportunities. The EU states must analyze the EU recommendations and put into practice the principles of nondiscrimination and equal opportunities. As a Member State, Romania undertook to respect these rights and promote diversity, and for this purpose has issued a series of official documents which promote nondiscrimination and equal opportunities. Promoting equal opportunities in social life for both sexes is an essential request for the Romanian society, being considered a basic

component of being preoccupied for respecting the fundamental rights of people.

Social, political, and economical transformations, which occurred in Romania after 1990 have affected differently the situation of women in comparison to the situation of men. The level of participation of women and men to public life and to the process of taking decisions is significantly different. Men predominate in public life and in the process of taking decisions. The specialized studies prove this affirmation and supports the need to put into practice the objective assumed by EU, respectively ensuring the principle of equal opportunities to public life and to the process of taking decisions both for women and men.

The national legislation guarantees equal rights for citizens for participating to economics and social life and for enjoying the social protection in certain conditions, having access to education, health and training. Also the legislation from Romania sanctions all forms of discrimination through the National Council for Combating Discrimination, which is functioning based on the Ordinance no. 137/2000, republished, on sanctioning all forms of discrimination. Still, in practice, there are being registered differences based on sexes, both in employment and incomes, there are being made differences between citizens based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, thus leading to a reduced participation of citizens to public, social, political, and economical life.

In public speech, the concept of equal opportunities is omnipresent. Public persons at central level and local level promote in their interventions in the media, as well as other public environments, the principle of equal opportunities. They assume the application of measures that would contribute to participation of all citizens to public life. In reality, most of these speeches have no content, they are like clichés.

Contemporary Romanian society, while lacking progressist models, tends to become oriented in building relations between women and men, both in family and public life, towards a patriarchal model. This cultural model generates discriminatory social behaviors and practices, being in contradiction totally with the elementary principles of democracy.

Many times, within the public speech, the principle of equal opportunities strictly refers to the principle of gender equality. Politicians, public persons, many times confound the two principles. If it is not documented

in-depth the equal opportunities principle, when discussed by equal opportunities, it is being referred only to the relation between women and men, not taking into account the fact that equal opportunities is a wider principle which refers to ensuring the access and full participation to each person to public, economic, and social life, without any distinction of such as: ethnicity, sex, religion, age, disabilities or sexual orientation.

Taking into account the social changes which appeared as follow to assuming the intention of Romania of being a member state of the EU, the nondiscrimination principles, equal opportunities, gender equality, multiculturalism and so on, if we're considering the speeches, these principles have been integrated in the system rapidly. Taking into account the country reports realized by EU, signaling the fact that Romania does not respect the principles of nondiscrimination and equal opportunities, and considering the fact that the EU recommendations for Romania were mandatory, the Romanian state complied to this recommendations and issued a series of official documents (laws, strategies and so on), which would promote these principles, demonstrating that Romania has the capacity of becoming a member state of EU, functioning by the principle of modern democracy.

In practice, these principles were assumed only at the level of public speech, without existing in practice any actions meant to contribute to changing the population's mentality. One example that supports this affirmation is the National Strategy which aims to improve the situation of Roma. In the text realized by the Government of Romania in 2001, within the directive principles chapter, it is not mentioned the principle of equal opportunities, only referring to the principle of equality, yet with a slightly different meaning, that the protection of Roma citizens must not affect the rights and freedoms of other Romanian citizens.

The Roma minority in Romania has been and is being the subject of intense debates both at national and international level. Due to the poor situation which most of the members of this minority is confronting with, in the context of modern democracy and European context, both the Romanian Government and the European institutions have realized a series of public policies documents meant to contribute to improving the situation of this minority, based on the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

Within the national strategy on the situation of Roma are included measures that should combat discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for the members of Roma communities in various domains, such as: health, education, housing, employment, and also in the decision-making process. Yet, even if at the level of speech and public policy documents, the situation is more than satisfactory, in real life Roma, and especially Roma women, are confronting with a serious discrimination phenomenon in the process of accessing services.

The lack of a complete and coherent legislative framework, referring to the status of national minorities, deficient in applying existing legislation at national level, and especially local level, a low representation of Roma women in public life, the negative stereotypes which refer to the Roma minority in the public opinion, and especially in the media, the lack of promoting identity and cultural diversity, there are a few reasons which contribute greatly to the social exclusion of Roma, and to discrimination against them.

The health area is one of the priority domains within the strategy for improving the situation of Roma. The studies and researches which analyze the situation of Roma in Romania, highlight the fact that Roma women are confronting with many barriers, when they are addressing health services. From the point of view of the medical personnel, Roma, and especially Roma women, are considered to be the most difficult patients due to the fact that they are known as being the biggest consumers of emergency services.

The case studies presented in this research report are eloquent and highlight the fact that discrimination is closely related to stereotypes and prejudices which the representatives of local authorities and public clerks have towards Roma. The experts in human rights area are making great efforts in order to demonstrate discrimination in the cases of discrimination which occur in the health system regarding Roma. Harassment and intimidation are practices which are frequently met in the cases of Roma who dare to signalize cases of discrimination to NCCD. Fear of being stigmatized and oppressed result in Roma having to hold themselves from reacting and overlook such practices. Additionally, the legislation in discrimination area does not provide protection to the victims in order for them to not want to drop out throughout the process.

Roma women are confronting with the most serious level of discrimination when addressing the gynecology and pediatric services. Things such as special wards for Roma women in maternities and pediatrics sections, degrading treatment, hard words addressed to Roma women, are all part of the “daily menu” in the context in which, at the level of political speech, Romania is the country which promotes equal opportunities, nondiscrimination, being in line with the European regulations in this area.

Due to the poor situation in which they are finding themselves, Roma women constitute a disadvantaged category, needing a lot of support in order to overcome the situation in which they are. The causes which lead to this situation are: existence of a patriarchal system and community norms, which do not allow Roma women to develop, as well as negative image promoted by the media, referring to Roma women.

In order to overcome this situation it is needed the constant and systematic promotion of participation in equitable manner of Roma women, both in public and private life, starting from the principles of equal opportunities, gender equality, and nondiscrimination.

The stereotypes and prejudices of local authorities towards Roma affect the relation with the members of Roma communities, leading to aggravation of the situation of this community.

The public policies addressed to the members of Roma communities must start from these principles, not only from the point of view of speeches, but also from the point of view of implementation.

PART THREE

THE ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES IN BULGARIA

Methodology of the survey

The data in this report is gathered on field in the period October – December 2011 by anonymus questionnaires, distributed by the team of CMDT Amalipe – Veliko Tarnovo. The respondents are chosen based on regional lists of experts; with a systematic step in order to secure equal chance to each expert to be drawn out from the list. A stratified sample was made based on the number of experts in each region and requirement for at least 30 respondents of each target group in the smallest regional sub-samples.

The planned theoretical sample had the following structure

	Doctors	Social workers	Teachers	Total
Burgas	161	50	68	279
Veliko Tarnovo	40	45	39	124
Vratza	87	30	56	173
Pazardzhik	30	42	30	102
Sofia	120	37	31	188
Shumen	108	30	36	174
Total	546	234	260	1040

Due to some administrative fieldwork problems the executed sample looks as follow:

	Doctors	Social workers	Teachers	Total
Burgas	136	48	67	251
Veliko Tarnovo	17	53	44	114
Vratza	48	26	55	129
Pazardzhik	14	0	31	45
Sofia	0	37	31	68
Shumen	72	30	28	130
Total	287	194	256	737

1. The country context

Saving the lives of the Bulgarian Jews during the WWII and undergoing a peaceful post-communist transition alongside the conflicts in the Western Balkans, Bulgarians got used to living with the cliché that Bulgaria is ‘the most tolerant nation in the Balkans’. However, a series of social distance surveys show up that the Bulgarian are tolerant only towards the other Slavic nations, EU(“white”) citizens and some traditional minorities (form the Ottoman past) – Armenians, Pomaks, Jews. On the other hand, the social distances towards the Roma people, towards the South-Eastern Asian immigrants (Chinese and Vietnamese), and towards the people with African origin (regardless of their American, European or African citizenship) are extremely high¹. Nevertheless, we need to point out a positive trend in the social distances towards Roma during the past five years in comparison with the survey data from the beginning of the transition period.

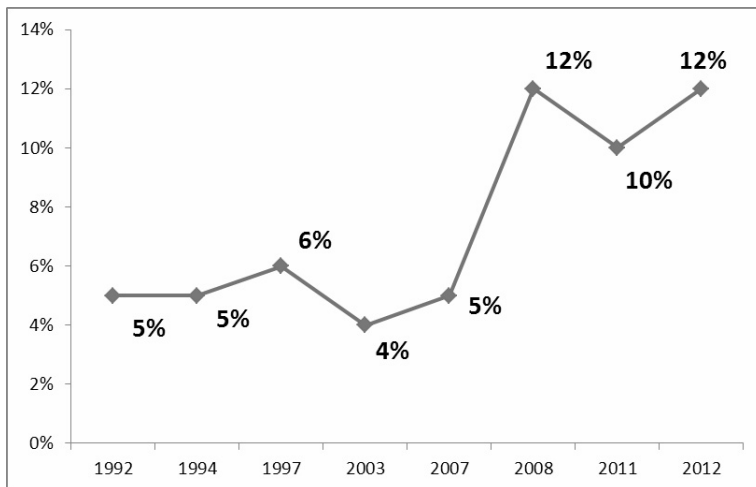


Figure 1. *Proportion of Bulgarians agreed to marry Roma person*

¹ Pamporov, A. (2009) “Social distances towards the new immigrants in Bulgaria”. In: Migration from and to Southeastern Europe. Eds. A. Krasteva, A. Kasabova and D. Karabinova. Ravena: Longo editore, pp. 79-92

In fact, the positive trend is observed in the past several years and it concerns not only Roma people, but as well most of the other minorities². For example, the level of agreement of the respondents with Bulgarian identity, to live in one and the same neighborhood and city with certain ethnic groups, shows a slight but a stable increase.

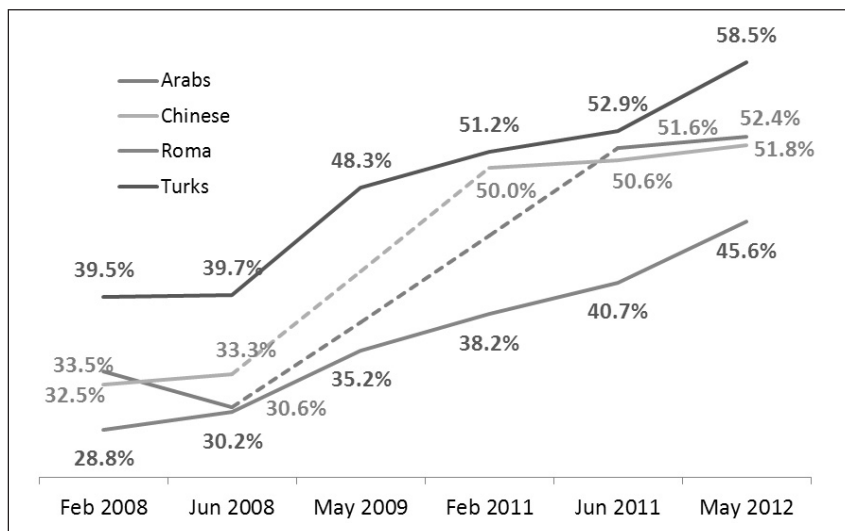


Figure 2. *Proportion of Bulgarians agreed to live in same neighbourhood with some ethnic minorities*

However, one has to keep in mind that the public opinion is depend-able on the mass media publications. Unfortunately, the mass media impose an extremely negative stereotyped image of Roma, focused mainly based on their lifestyle. The stereotypes are interrelated within a meta-story that more or less sounds like that: *The drunken swarthy offenders live in illegal ghetto houses and do not pay their utility bills. They live in large family clans that fight each other depending on the interests of the big bosses*³. Therefore, the lowered social distances in the past years are

² Public opinion and social attitudes in Bulgaria in May 2012. OSI-Sofia (in Bulgarian), URL: http://opendata.bg/data/file/Public_opinion_June2012_final.pdf

³ Pamporov, A. The Drunken Swarthy Offenders. The Image of the Roma in the Bulgarian Press in a Pre-election Context. *Naselenie, special issue 2011*.

may be due to the fact, that there are no big social struggles. We need to measure the social distances in May/June 2013 (just few months before the next parliament elections) in order to estimate there a really stable trend towards increasing tolerance or it was a case of lack of political tensions.

2. The image of the ethnic groups

In 2008 survey on social distances and stereotypes, the research team of Open Society Institute – Sofia applied the method of associative open question answers. The main reason for this is the fact that in Bulgaria is observed a dynamic social situation over the past 25 years (including so-called “Revival process”), which leads to a constant redefinition of the ethnic minorities – of their rights, obligations and their image as a whole. The shifting social context requires a more flexible method and thus a finite list of characteristics – such as the Katz and Braly checklist – may be inadequate and misleading⁴. Although it is a more time consuming method (due to a long recoding and further statistical development procedures), the Amalipe’s survey on medical doctors, teachers and social workers decided to apply the same tool in order to secure comparison between the stereotypes of the three target groups and the rest of the Bulgarian population. Further down a comparison is provided based on the shared stereotypes towards six “traditional” for Bulgaria ethnic groups: Armenians, Bulgarians, Jews, Pomaks, Roma, and Turks. It is important to grasp such “Geshtalt” images in order to get better understanding about the prejudices towards Roma in comparison with the other ethnic groups in the country.

2.1. Armenians

The stereotypes of the three target groups almost fully overlap with the national stereotypes about the Armenians. The Armenians are seen as

⁴ Pamporov, A (2009) **Social distances and ethnic stereotypes towards the minorities in Bulgaria**. Sofia: OSI [in Bulgarian], URL: http://ethnos.bg/data/file/Documents/Researches/July_2009_SocialDistancesReport.pdf

tricky⁵ and intelligent hardworking jewelers or traders, which are rich but misers. Due to the occupation of particular famous people with Armenian origin in Bulgaria, some solitary instances such as “culinary”, “ear for music” and “art” appear. Unlike the national set of stereotypes about the Armenians, the medical doctors, teachers and social workers look at the Armenians as “knit together” community. This is a sign about perceiving the Armenians as an “other” (i.e. not “our”) community. Such an understanding is a good base about social stereotyping due to an everyday “natural” logic – the knit together communities share same social features, which weld them together.

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social workers		National survey	
tricky	29.6%	tricky	38.3%	tricky	23.7%	tricky	20,1%
intelligent	19.9%	intelligent	18.0%	jewelers	21.1%	misers	12,8%
jewelers	13.9%	ear for music	16.8%	intelligent	18.6%	traders	12,5%
hardworking	15.3%	hardworking	16.0%	merrymaker	14.9%	friendly	12,5%
rich	13.9%	traders	15.6%	hardworking	12.9%	merrymaker	11,6%
traders	11.1%	religion	14.5%	knit together	12.9%	jewelers	10,3%
misers	8.4%	misers	12.1%	misers	12.9%	intelligent	8,8%
knit together	9.4%	rich	11.3%	craftsmen	12.4%	rich	8,5%
goodhearted	8.7%	jewelers	11.3%	art	11.9%	hardworking	5,2%
culinary	8.4%	knit together	10.2%	rich	11.3%	inventive	5,2%

2.2. *Bulgarians*

The ethnical auto stereotypes of the three target groups in high degree repeat also the national stereotypes about Bulgarians. They are (self-) seen as hardworking, intelligent, tolerant, and hospitable, but poor and envious. As distinct from the national survey, the doctors, teachers and social workers consider Bulgarians to be “well-educated” (probably due to their own higher educated social circles).

⁵ The word “tricky” has a positive denotation in Bulgarian language close to the English idiom “sharp as a needle”, however its connotation consist the idea about an potentially dangerous person, if it is not a friend.

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social workers		National survey	
hardworking	34.8%	Hardworking	52.7%	hardworking	43.3%	hardworking	30,8%
envious	21.6%	Tolerant	27.3%	well-educated	22.7%	hospitable	14,2%
intelligent	18.8%	Intelligent	18,0%	intelligent	19.1%	good-natured	12,5%
lazy	11.5%	Hospitable	16.8%	tolerant	17.0%	intelligent	11,9%
well-educated	11.1%	Envious	14.8%	patriots	16.5%	envious	10,8%
beautiful	10.8%	Traditions	13.7%	hospitable	16.0%	tricky	8,9%
tricky	10.1%	Studious	12.5%	traditions	11.9%	poor	8,3%
tolerant	9.1%	Inventive	10.5%	poor	11.9%	tolerant	8,3%
malicious	7.3%	well-educated	9.4%	envious	7.7%	lazy	8,1%
poor	6.6%	Poor	9.4%	culinary	7.7%	beautiful	5,0%

2.3. Jews

The stereotyped Geshtalt of the Jews in Bulgaria looks very similar to one about the Armenians. The Jews are also seen as tricky and intelligent, rich traders that are misers. This image is shared also by the three target groups of the study. Moreover, the doctors, teachers and social workers consider them as money-lenders, which are knit together and having distinct religion. The teachers and social workers associate the Jews with the Holocaust (although the Bulgarian Jews were saved during the WWII) that is corresponding to the “tortured people” in the national representative survey.

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social workers		National survey	
misers	35.2%	rich	34.0%	rich	33.5%	rich	25,3%
tricky	28.2%	money-lenders	29.3%	Holocaust	26.3%	tricky	23,3%
rich	27.5%	traders	27.7%	religion	25.8%	traders	19,8%
intelligent	24.7%	tricky	27.7%	intelligent	25.3%	misers	18,0%
money-lenders	12.9%	misers	26.6%	tricky	25.3%	intelligent	11,0%
religion	12.2%	religion	26.2%	misers	23.2%	tortured people	6,4%
traders	10.5%	intelligent	22.3%	traders	20.6%	jewelers	6,1%
hardworking	8.4%	Holocaust	18.8%	money-lenders	20.6%	money-lenders	5,8%
knit together	6.3%	knit together	10.9%	knit together	15.5%	enterprising	4,4%
lordship	5.2%	malicious	7.4%	hardworking	10.8%	grasping	2,6%

2.4. Pomaks

The Pomaks are Bulgarian speaking Muslim group, officially (and incorrect) labeled as “Bulgaro-Mohamedans⁶”. In fact, they do not have an official status of an ethnic group and during the censuses are considered being Bulgarians. However, they live concentrated in two regions of the country and non-officially the local population considers them as having different ethnicity. In fact, as a population size, they are the third biggest ethnic minority group after Turks and Roma. At a national level there is only one extremely shared stereotype about the Pomaks – they are hardworking people. This stereotype appears into the opinion of the three target groups as well. Due to their religious affiliation, some associations are made about the Islam that also explain another stereotype – about the traditional clothing (here recoded: shulwars, yashmak, kerchief). Both the target groups of the survey and the total population in the country consider them knit together (i.e. one more confirmation of their actual ethnicity status). However, the Pomaks do not look as the dangerous other because they are considered to be good-natured, humble, honest and hospitable. In fact the stereotype image of the Pomaks is a very positive one.

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social workers		National survey	
hardworking	57.5%	hardworking	63.7%	hardworking	43.8%	hardworking	45,1%
religion	16.4%	religion	31.3%	religion	32.0%	good-natured	10,9%
good-natured	16.0%	good-natured	19.1%	heavy labour	18.6%	humble	7,9%
traditions	13.2%	heavy labour	11.7%	knit together	16.0%	religion	7,9%
given region	11.5%	traditional clothing	11.3%	traditional clothing	11.3%	bulgarian brothers	7,5%
knit together	11.1%	hospitable	10.9%	honest	9.8%	honest	5,3%
stupid	10.8%	knit together	9.8%	hospitable	9.8%	traditional clothing	4,9%
poor	9.4%	traditions	9.4%	traditions	9.3%	knit together	4,9%
honest	8.0%	inert	9.4%	good-natured	8.8%	obedient	4,5%
humble	6.6%	non educated	8.2%	given region	8.2%	poor	4,1%

⁶ According to a governmental logic in a long run since XIX century, the followers of Islam are not Muslims but Mohamedans, similarly to the logic of the word “Christians” (i.e. followers of Jesus Christ).

2.5. Roma

The stereotyped image of Roma people is set up to the opposite side of the coin. Roma are depicted as criminals, lazy, dirty, liars, and uneducated both by the national level survey and in the target groups' samples. The medical doctors, teachers and social workers share two more associations about Roma – they are irresponsible, but they love music (as the only positive stereotype, related to their revelers image). Due to their professional duties, the teachers and social workers point out another stereotype – Roma people have multiple children. The doctors and social workers share the stereotype that Roma are ill-mannered (here recorded: ill-mannered, insolent, rude, arrogant, and boor).

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social workers		National survey	
criminals	40.1%	criminals	46.1%	uneducated	43.3%	larcenous	46,3%
dirty	39.0%	lazy	42.6%	criminals	40.7%	lazy	23,4%
lazy	36.6%	uneducated	32.4%	dirty	37.1%	dirty	15,4%
uneducated	32.1%	dirty	25.8%	lazy	34.5%	liars	11,2%
liars	26.5%	music	25.4%	multiple children	27.3%	gypsies	9,6%
irresponsible	10.8%	liars	21.9%	liars	23.2%	uneducated	8,6%
tricky	9.4%	irresponsible	19.1%	irresponsible	18.0%	poor	7,7%
poor	9.1%	revelers	15.2%	music	16.5%	revelers	6,5%
ill-mannered	8.7%	multiple children	11.3%	ill-mannered	13.4%	insolent	3,7%
music	8.0%	knit together	11.3%	poor	12.9%	tricky	3,0%

2.6. Turks

It was interesting to find out during the survey that the medical doctors, teachers and social workers in the six target regions (some of them with and other without compact Turkish population) have the same three leading stereotypes about the Turk: hardworking, Islam, and knit together. Probably due to their Muslim identification and predominant rural residence, there are some stereotypes about Turks, which are very similar to ones about the Pomaks: good-natured, honest, hospitable, traditional clothing. The teachers and social workers point out the specific Turkish culi-

nary (here recorded: baklava, delight, cafe, kadaif, duner-kebab). During the national representative survey, a stereotypes about the Ottoman rule⁷.

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social workers		National survey	
hardworking	53.7%	hardworking	57.4%	hardworking	45.8%	religion	24,8%
religion	30.7%	religion	39.1%	religion	36.1%	Ottoman rule	15,1%
knit together	18.8%	knit together	21.1%	knit together	17.0%	hardworking	14,4%
honest	10.5%	culinary	15.2%	culinary	12.9%	traders	12,1%
good-natured	9.2%	Ottoman rule	11.7%	cleanliness	11.9%	fanatics	10,1%
responsible	8.7%	traditions	13.3%	well-educated	10.8%	neighbours	9,1%
cleanliness	8.4%	fanatics	10.2%	traditions	9.8%	traditional clothing	8,7%
hospitable	7.3%	family	10.2%	traditional clothing	9.8%	good-natured	5,0%
uneducated	6.6%	hospitable	9.4%	honest	9.3%	enterprising	4,0%
family	5.6%	good-natured	8.2%	hospitable	9.3%	liars	4,0%

3. The stereotypes about Roma people

The extremely negative “Geshtalt” of the Roma people in Bulgaria is the first step of understanding prejudices that led to the significant exclusion of Roma from different social fields, such as education, healthcare, politics, and labour market. However, such a generalized stereotyped image will be not enough and therefore we are going to discuss further down some basic stereotypes about Roma (3.1.), some stereotypes about the institutional inclusion (3.2.), some educational stereotypes (3.3.), and some stereotypes about the Romani women (3.4.).

3.1. Basic stereotypes

The basic stereotypes are discussed as series of similar question statements about Bulgarians, Turks and Roma. The respondents have to agree or disagree with those questions. Due to the focus and requirements of the report, bellow only the outcomes about Roma will be presented in detail by the three target groups and by the six target regions. The outcomes about Bulgarians and Turks will appear on the relevant places but are not going to be subject of a profound analysis.

⁷ Usually described as “the Turkish slavery” or “an yoke”.

Roma enjoy privileges

The affirmative actions and a chance some encouraging policy measures to face understanding of the majority depends on the feeling about who is privileged and who is deprived, because of the public policies. Because of that, the first three statements of this kind were about which community – Bulgarians, Turks or Roma – enjoys privileges in comparison with the other two. The answers of the medical doctors, teachers and social workers indicate low level of cumulative agreement⁸ with such a statement concerning Bulgarians (around 5%) and concerning Turks (around 15%). At the same time, more than the half of the respondents in each of the three target groups agreed with the statement that Roma enjoy privileges in comparison with Bulgarians and Turks (fig. 4). The teachers are the group where slightly under 2/3 of the interviewed persons consider Roma people as privileged. Looking at the regional level, the teachers' opinion seems to be most negative in five out of six target regions, except for Vratza district. However, the Vratza district indicates highest average rate of assessing Roma as privileged people. In fact, only in this district there is no statistically significant difference between the positions of the doctors, teachers and social workers. Opposite to the doctors in Vratza,

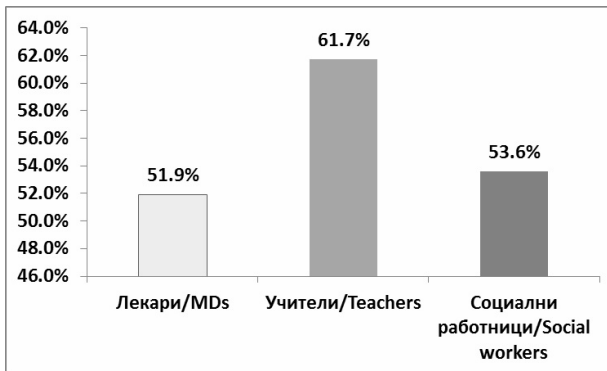


Figure 3. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma enjoy privileges in comparison with Bulgarians and Turks” by target groups*

⁸ Rather agree and absolutely agree answers.

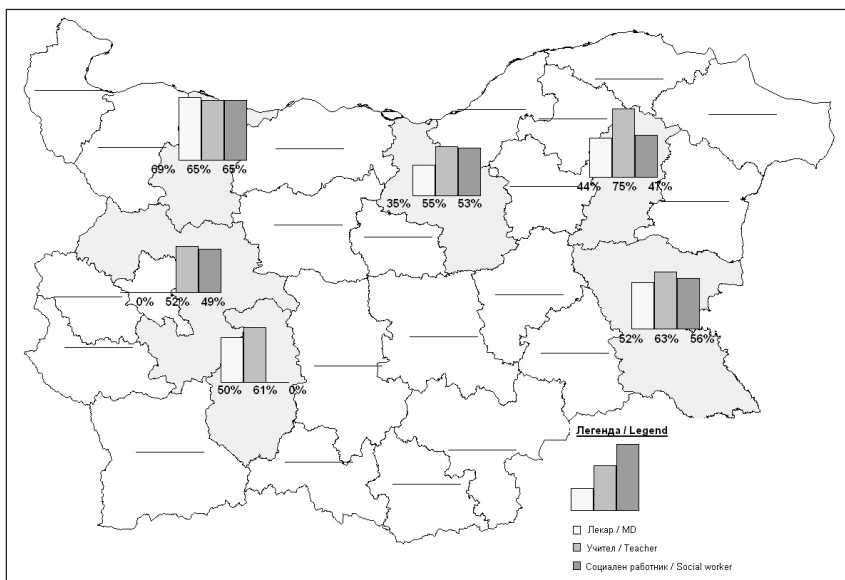


Figure 4. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma enjoy privileges in comparison with Bulgarians and Turks” by regions and target groups*

the medical doctors in Veliko Turnovo district have lowest bent for stigmatizing Roma as privileged group⁹.

Cannot trust or rely on Roma

Almost similar attitudes are observed when it comes to the question about the relying and trust. Cumulative agreement with the statement “You cannot trust or rely on...” gather 10% about Bulgarians and 15% about Turks. The statements “You cannot trust or rely on Roma” faces cumulative agreement of almost 2/3 of respondents in the three target groups (fig. 6). Similarly to the previous question, the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo are the only target group where the agreement has sig-

⁹ From methodologica, point of view, we have to mention that Amalipe CMDT is very active and popular in this region and this could influence the outcomes of the survey, done by this organization.

nificantly lower level. As a matter of fact, in that case we are able to say that the stereotype was not confirmed.

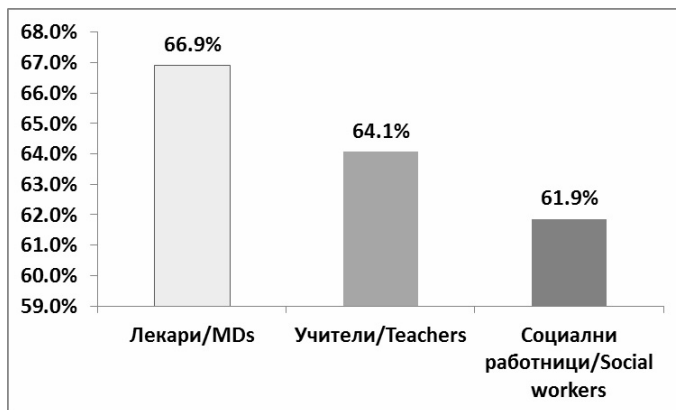


Figure 5. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “You cannot trust or rely on Roma” target groups*

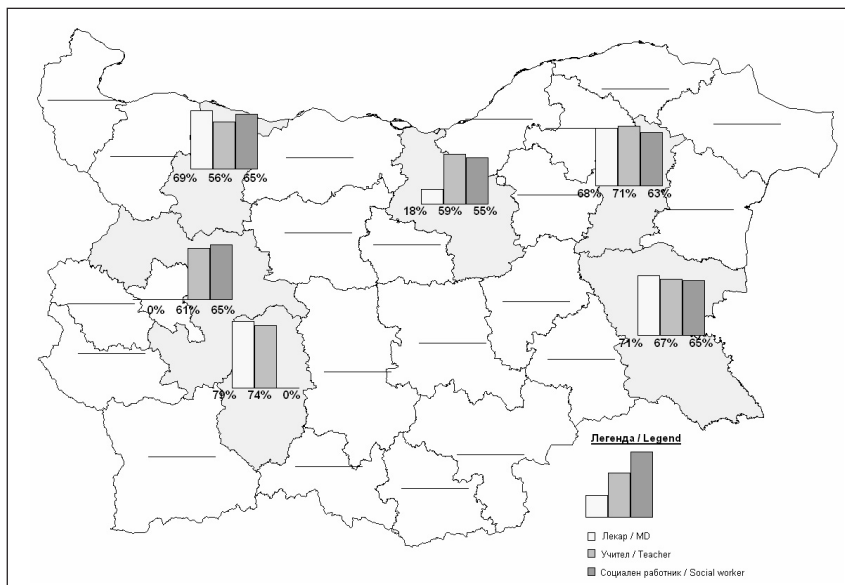


Figure 6. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “You cannot trust or rely on Roma” by regions and target groups*

Typically for the first surveys on the ethnic stereotypes in Bulgaria, there was a question about empowerment of the main ethnic groups, regarded as “places into the governing bodies” of the state. The usual outcome was that Turks occupy too many places¹⁰. Towards Roma did not appear such a stereotype. The current survey indicates slightly change into the attitudes of the public opinion, at least concerning the three target groups from the six regions. About one third of the respondents (32-35%) in each target group agreed with the statement that Bulgarians occupy too many places into the governmental bodies of the state. A bit less of the respondents (around 27-30%) agreed that there are too many Turks into the governmental bodies. Considering Roma those proportions are even lower (fig. 7). Therefore, we are able to say that there is not a stereotype that Roma occupy too many places into the country’s power positions. During the survey, the significantly highest agreement rate was recorded among the doctors in Pazardzhik region, but significantly lowest by the teachers in Pazardzhik and Burgas (fig. 8). It is not tested yet, but there is probably a new stereotype appearing, namely: the places into the

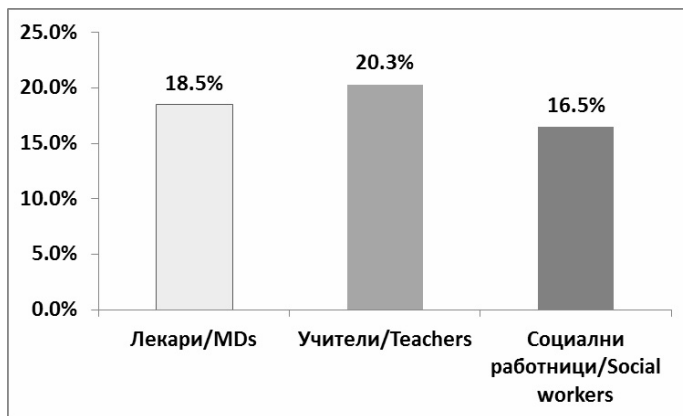


Figure 7. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma occupy too many places into the governmental bodies” by regions and target groups*

¹⁰ It is probably due to the important role of the Movements for Rights and Freedoms (unofficially the Turkish party) into the first democratic parliaments and governments in Bulgaria after 1989.

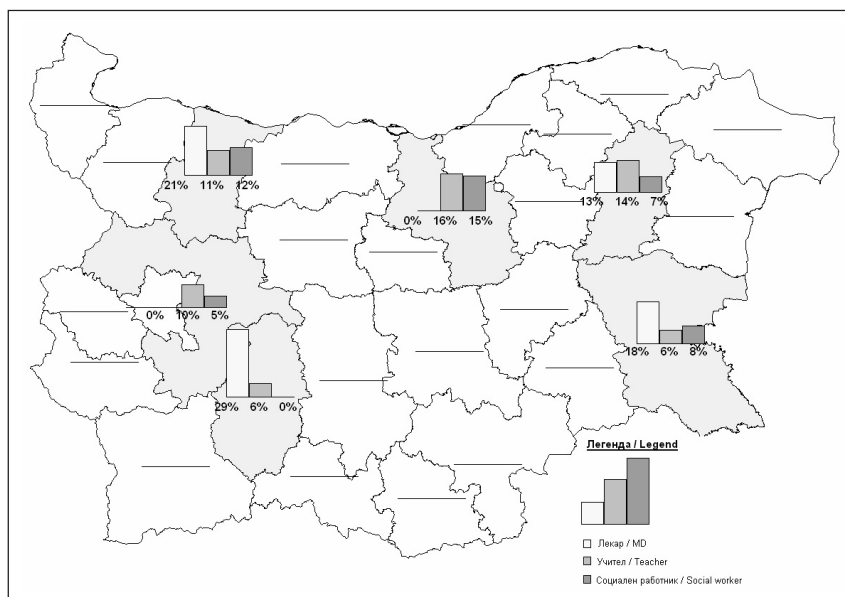


Figure 8. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma occupy too many places into the governmental bodies” by regions and target groups*

governmental bodies are fairly distributed among the ethnic communities in Bulgaria (a stereotype, because the Roma people are underrepresented but Turk are overrepresented in particular regions).

Susceptible to commit a crime

If we go back to the leading stereotyped image of Roma as criminals it is easy to understand the next stereotype: Roma are susceptible to crimes. There is no such a stereotype towards Bulgarians (cumulative agreement 10-12%), nor towards the Turkish minority (cumulative agreement 5-8%). All three target groups are highly disposed to agree that Roma are susceptible to commit a crime, and there is no a statistically significant difference between them. The highest proportion of agreement with this negative stereotype is recorded among the medical doctors in Pazardzhik district and among the social workers in Vratza district. The lowest level is recorded among the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo.

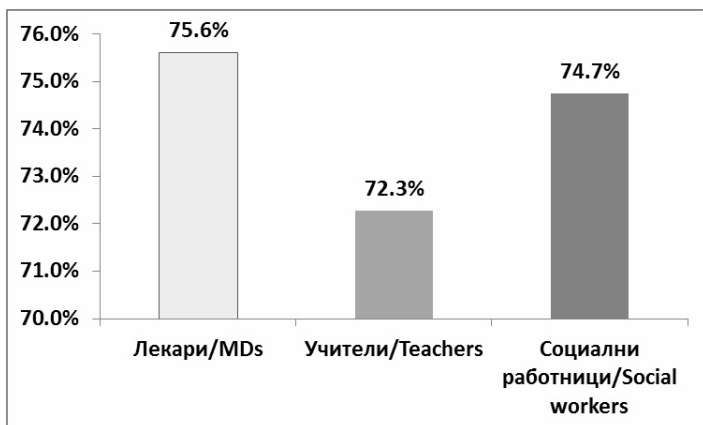


Figure 9. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma are susceptible to commit a crime” by target groups*

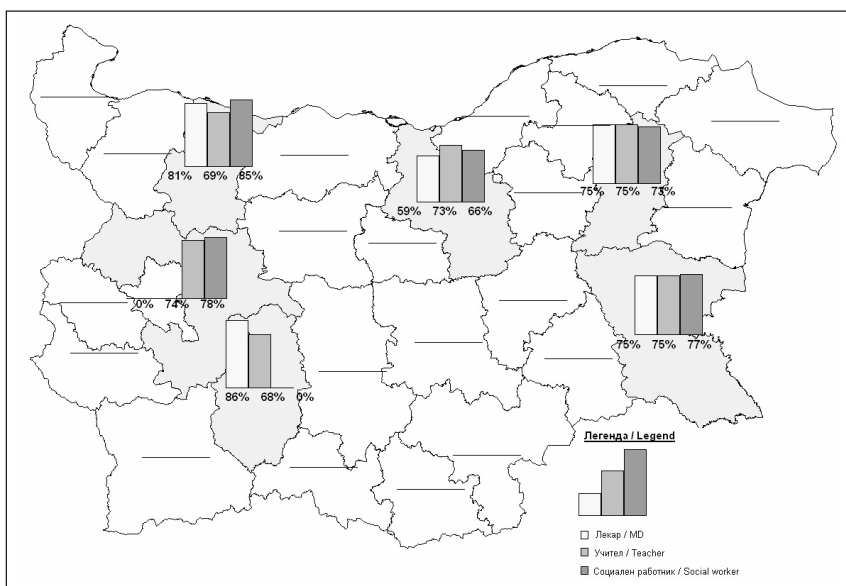


Figure 10. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma are susceptible to commit a crime” by regions and target groups*

Lazy and irresponsible

Another stereotyped image of Roma was also confirmed by such a stereotyped statement: Roma are lazy and irresponsible. There is definitely no such stereotype towards Bulgarians and Truks (for both groups, cumulative proportion of agreement measures about 3 to 5%). At the same time it is sharply outlined by the doctors, teachers and social workers concerning Roma (fig.11). The absolutely highest rate of agreement with the statement is recorded among the medical doctors in Pazardzhik (100%), among the teachers in Pazardzhik (84%) and Shumen (82%), and among the social workers in Shumen (80%)¹¹. Similarly to the previous questions, the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo are the only group with agreement slightly less than 50% (fig.12). However, in our understanding it is yet a high proportion, which confirms the existence of the stereotype.

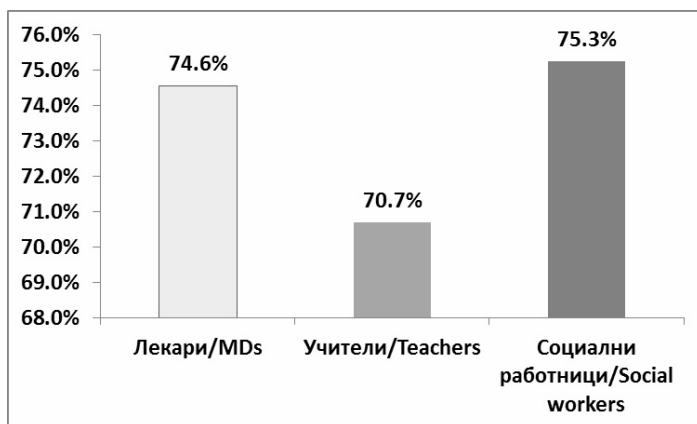


Figure 11. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma are lazy and irresponsible” by regions and target groups*

¹¹ I would like to remind the reader, that social workers in Pazardzhik and doctors in Sofia region decline to participate into the survey.

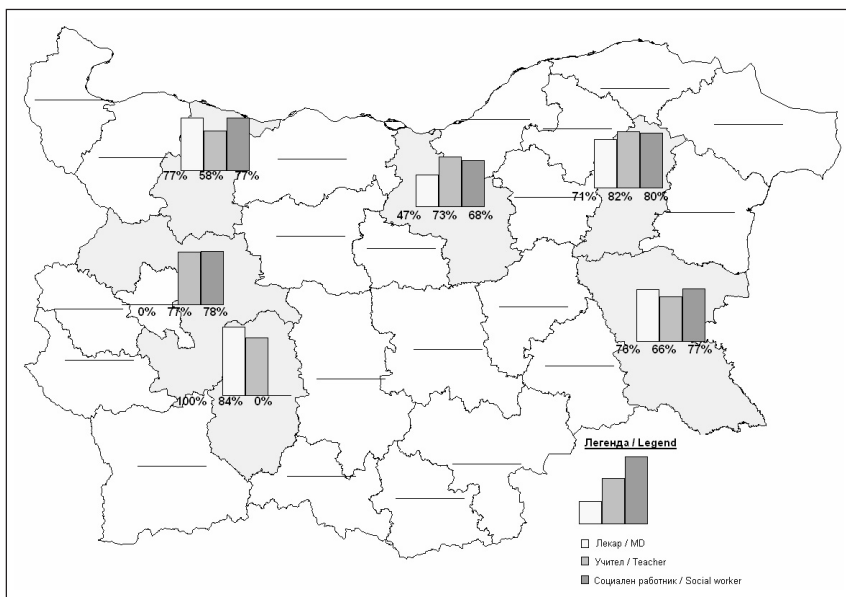


Figure 12. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma are lazy and irresponsible” by regions and target groups*

Roma value low the education

It is also non existing stereotype about Bulgarians and Turks, but it is one of the stereotypes with the highest score of cumulative agreement concerning Roma. The stereotype is most typical about the social workers and less about the medical doctors, but there is not a strong significant difference (fig. 13)¹². Just like before, the doctors in Veliko Tarnovo stay at one side of the coin – denying such statement – while the other regional target groups strongly confirm it. The medical doctors in Pazardzhik, social workers in Vratza, and teachers in Shumen are on the other side of the coin – strongly agreed with the statement. It is important to mention that the stereotype is confirmed also about the social workers in Shumen, but it measures up significantly lower proportion in comparison with the other regional social worker’s samples (fig. 14).

¹² In that case we will need a bigger sample in the future research in order to achieve better estimation of the difference.

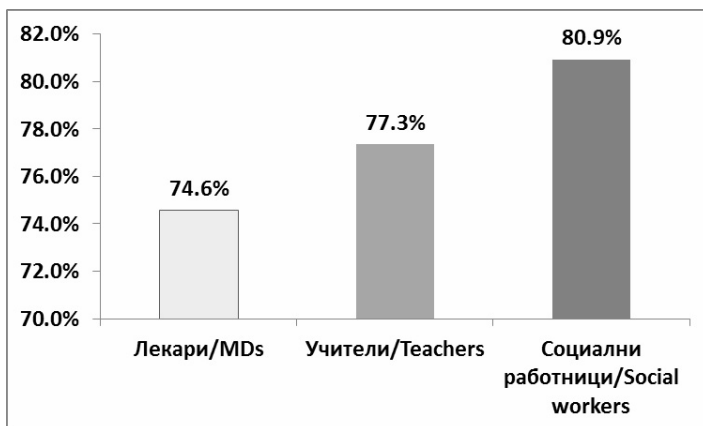


Figure 13. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma value low the education” by target groups*

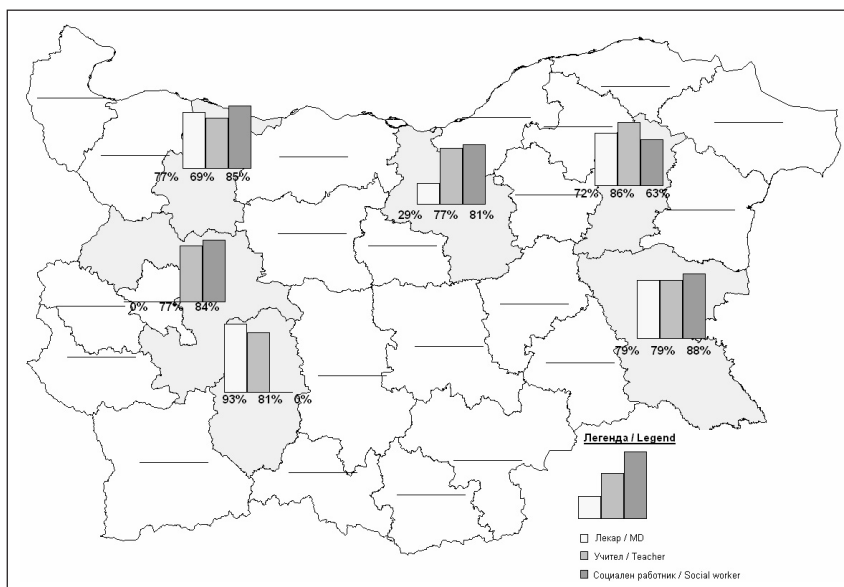


Figure 14. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma value low the education” by regions and target groups*

All Roma are very much alike

There is a greater chance one person to stereotype and stigmatize given group, if he or she believes that members of this group are very much alike. Therefore the statement “There are some exceptions but taken all round, Roma are very much alike” serve to measure the risk of stereotyping Roma. We would like to stress the fact that the existence of ethnicity requires common and shared social and cultural features¹³. Therefore, thinking the members of a given ethnic group as “alike” should not be considered as a surprise. However, the more members of a given group seem “alike” the more risk of stereotyping exists, following the logic of a quasi-syllogism: “A man behaves in a given way → this man is Roma person → Roma people behaves in this way”

This is a statement, which gather quite a high proportion of cumulative agreement also about Bulgarians (around 40%) and about Turks (around 55%). Roma seem “alike” for less than two thirds in each of the three target groups (fig. 15), may be because it is well known in Bulgaria, that there are different Romani groups¹⁴. The medical doctors are a bit

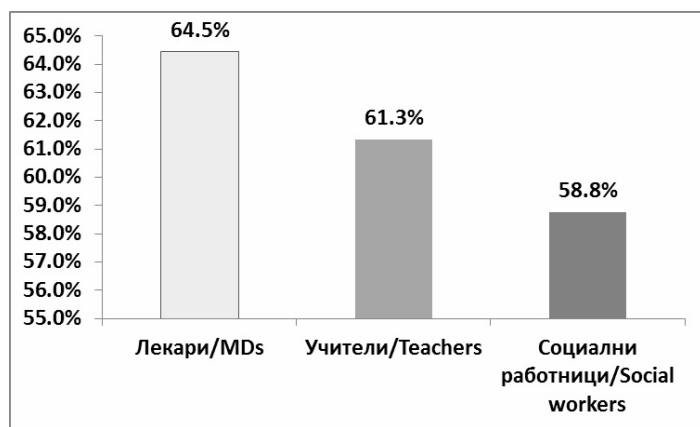


Figure 15. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “There are some exceptions but taken all round Roma are very much alike” by target groups*

¹³ Hutchinson, J. & A. Smith. 1996. Ethnicity (Oxford readers).

¹⁴ For example see: Pamporov, A. (2009) “Roma/Gypsies in Bulgaria”. In: Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. (Eds.) Schleinstein, N., Sucker, D., Wenninger, A., Wilde,

more agree to adopt the statement that Roma are “alike” in comparison with the social workers. From the regional point of view, highest proportion of agreement is registered among the medical doctors in Pazardzhik, which are working with Roma population, living in one of the biggest ghettos in the country.

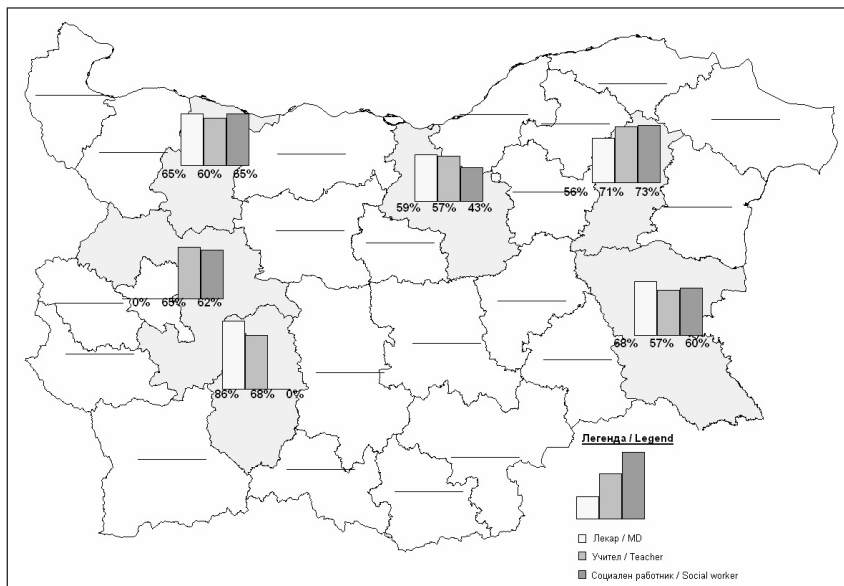


Figure 16. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “There are some exceptions but taken all round Roma are very much alike” by regions and target groups*

Roma must live apart and do not mix with Bulgarians and Turks

The agreement with this statement is not a pure stereotype, but it measures up the segregation attitudes of the respondents. The answers outlined the fact that there is a certain stratum of about 20% among the all target groups, which wants Bulgarians and Turks to live apart. The attitude towards the spatial segregation of Roma is significantly higher among the doctors in comparison with the teachers and social workers

(fig. 17). The highest segregation attitudes are indicated in Shumen region by the doctors and social workers, living there.

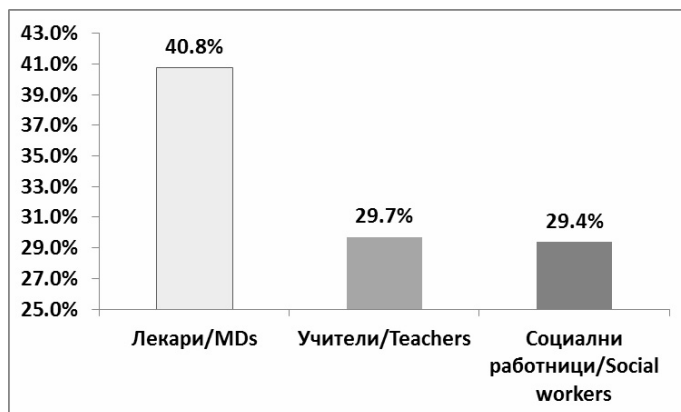


Figure 17. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma must live apart and do not mix with Bulgarians and Turks” by target groups*

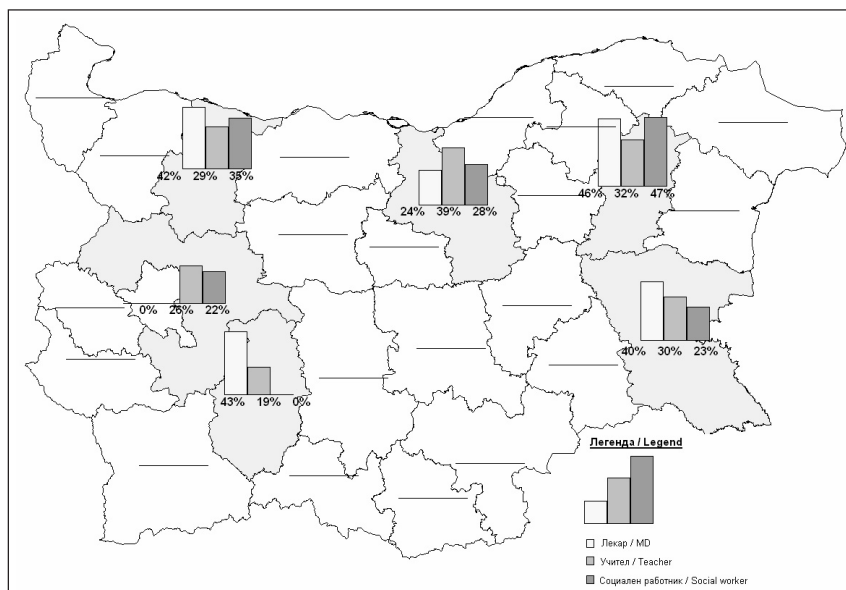


Figure 18. *Proportion of the cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma must live apart and do not mix with Bulgarians and Turks” by regions and target groups*

3.2. Stereotypes about the Institutional integration

The stereotypes about the institutional integration are measured by groups of two opposing statements, and “do not know” option. The aim of such an approach is to check which type of integrative policy would face easier support, if it follows the public opinion. The added value of the method is the chance to know in which direction the policy makers should put an effort in order to better inform the audience and the civil society.

The role of the Roma leaders

There is no a public consensus about the role of the Roma leaders in Bulgaria. Some expert blame them for the non-integration¹⁵, but others state that nothing could happens without the informal authority of a given community. Therefore, the first set of opposing statement into the questionnaire was about the role of the Roma leaders defined as follows:

A) The authoritative persons in a Roma community are semi-criminal and one cannot rely on them.

B) The assistance of the authoritative persons in a Roma community is one of the good way to gain an access to the given communities.

C) Don't know.

The answers show a bit higher level of agreement with statement B – i.e. the three target groups are ready to work in cooperation with the local Roma leaders rather than to label them as criminals and to lose a relevant access (fig. 19). An extremely high level of agreement about the important role of the Roma leaders is shown by the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo (fig. 20).

The role of Evangelic churches

After 1989, there was a boom of Evangelic churches into the Roma neighborhoods (mainly Pentecostal denominations and Adventists of the Seventh day). The preachers and lead singers/musicians became very influential and reputable into the local communities and therefore, may be

¹⁵ See for example Леков, В. 2010. Пет години включване, изключване. Сп. Обектив, БХК.

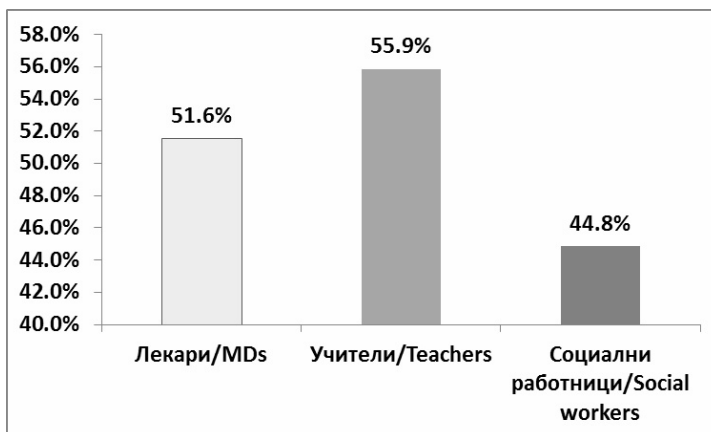


Figure 19. Agreement with the statement “The assistance of the authoritative persons in a Roma community is one of the good way to gain an access to the given communities” by regions and target groups

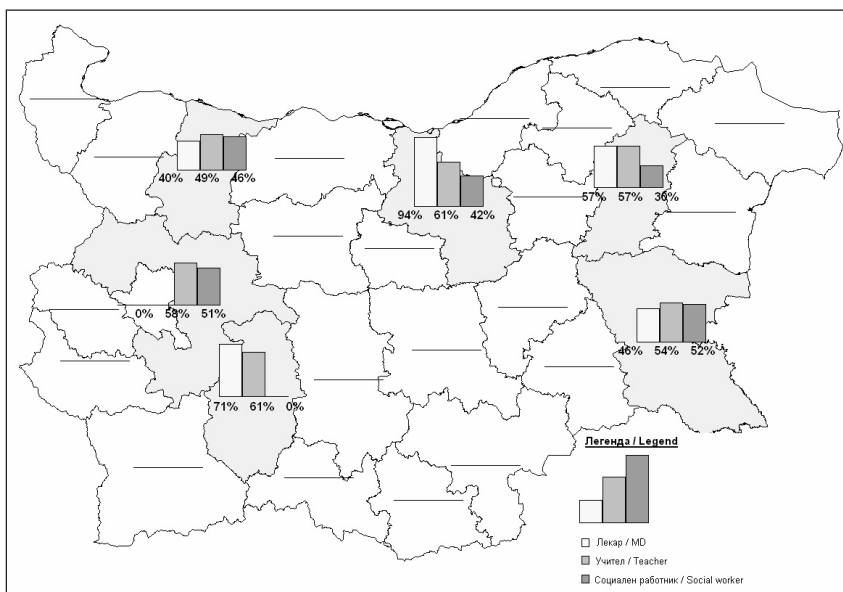


Figure 20. Agreement with the statement “The assistance of the authoritative persons in a Roma community is one of the good way to gain an access to the given communities” by regions and target groups

regarded as part of the Roma leaders¹⁶. The ordinary members of the protestant churches usually get into the Evangelic ethics: stop drinking alcohol, stop smoking, have a tidy appearance, find a regular job. Thus the members of the evangelic communities turn over a new leaf and are outlined against the rest of the Roma population in the segregated neighborhoods. Because of that, the evangelic churches could play a significant role about the Roma integration. At the same time, the activities of the evangelic churches in Bulgaria are known mainly by the Mass evangelizations – where “the blinds begin to see and the crippled begin to walk”. The better social status of its members often is being ascribed to the social support¹⁷, and not to the change of behavior. The set of opposing statements about the role of the Evangelic churches was defined as follows:

A) The Evangelic churches are dangerous phenomena about the Roma integration in the Bulgarian society.

B) The Evangelic churches are one of the ways about the Roma integration in the Bulgarian society

C) Don't know.

About 27,9% of the doctors, 17,2% of the teachers, and 14,9% of the social workers consider the Evangelic churches as a dangerous phenomenon. On the other hand, 16,7% of the doctors, 29,7% of the teachers, and 17,0% of the social workers find out that such institutions are one of the ways for the Roma integration. However, we should lay special emphasis on the fact that the Evangelic churches remain outside of the scope of the target groups and they show rather indifference to the topic (fig. 21). The medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo and the doctors and teachers in Pazardzhik seem to be the most informed (or at least have an opinion), but still about one third among those target groups also answer “don't know” (fig. 22).

The role of Islam schools

Parallel with the boom of the Evangelic denominations, an establishment of dozens of Islam clerical schools in the regions with higher proportion of Muslim population was observed. After September 11th, the

¹⁶ Пампоров, Ал. 2006. Ромското всекидневие в България. София: IMIR.

¹⁷ Contemptuously labelled as “box of humanitarian aids” of “the canned food”.

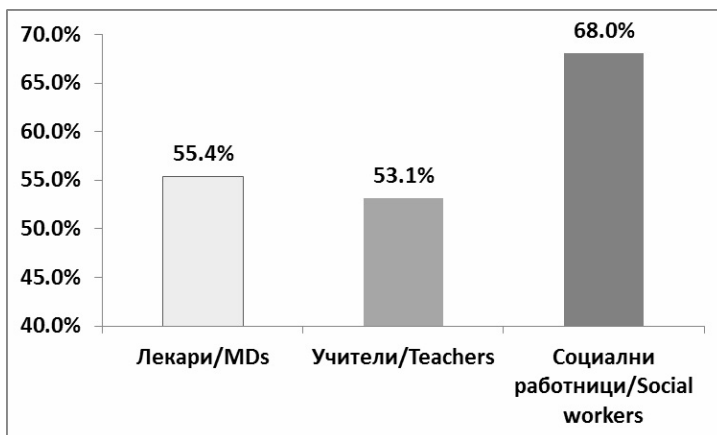


Figure 21. *Proportion of don't know answers, concerning the statements about the role of the Evangelic churches by target groups*

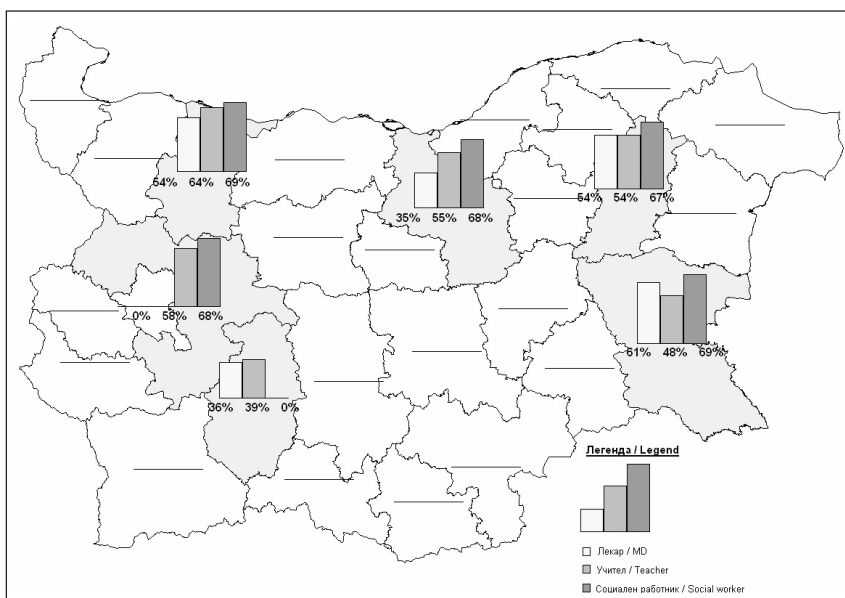


Figure 22. *Proportion of don't know answers, concerning the statements about the role of the Evangelic churches by regions and target groups*

activity of those schools was put under question and nowadays they are reduced in numbers and size, and the state authorities keep them under observation¹⁸. Even though the mass media and the public opinion are very negative about the activity of those schools, the Roma graduates of such schools became “men of erudition”, and they often begin to serve as unofficial imams, mullahs, and healers by Koran, even if there is no mosque or tekke¹⁹ into the settlement. Therefore the graduates of the Islam clerical schools – regardless if they are officially or unofficially in service – became part of the Roma leaders and local opinion makers. The set of opposing statements about the role of the Islam clerical schools was defined as follows:

A) The study of Roma in Islam clerical schools is a dangerous phenomenon about their integration in the Bulgarian society.

B) The study of Roma in Islam clerical schools is one of the ways about the Roma integration in the Bulgarian society.

C) Don't know.

The answers of the medical doctors and teachers show significantly higher level of agreement with statement A. It is in line with the general negative context in the country (described above) and therefore it is not a surprise (fig. 23). From that point of view, at first glance, the social workers seem to be more tolerant. However, the agreement of statement B indicates that there are no differences into the tolerance level towards the Islam clerical schools: 5,6% of the doctors, 4,7% of the teachers, and 5,7% of the social workers. Thus, the social workers show indifference to the Islam clerical schools (DK = 56,2%), similar to their attitude towards the Evangelic churches. It is significantly higher in comparison with the doctors (36,6%) and teachers (37,5%). Moreover, it is not a problem of a given region, biasing the total outcome, but fact the social workers in all target to give significantly higher proportion of DK answers in comparison with the doctors and teachers (fig. 24).

¹⁸ Time to time there are some scandals by secret and illegal local Islam schools run by Saudi teachers.

¹⁹ The tekkes in Bulgaria are sacred places about the Alevi (Shiah) Muslims, build upon a mythical grave of a local Muslim “saint”.

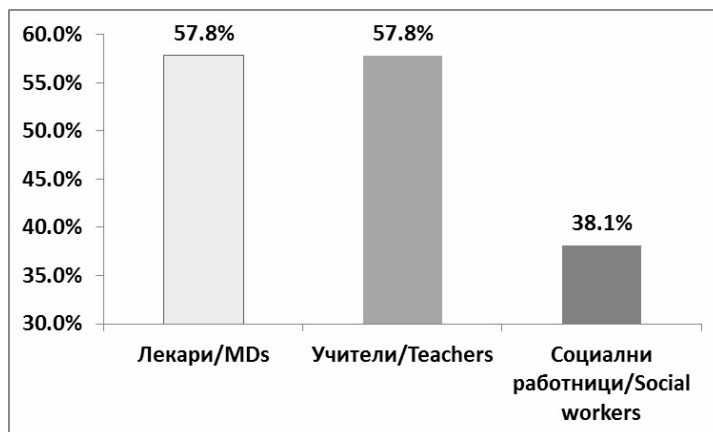


Figure 23. Agreement with the statement “The study of Roma in Islam clerical schools is a dangerous phenomenon about their integration in the Bulgarian society” by target groups

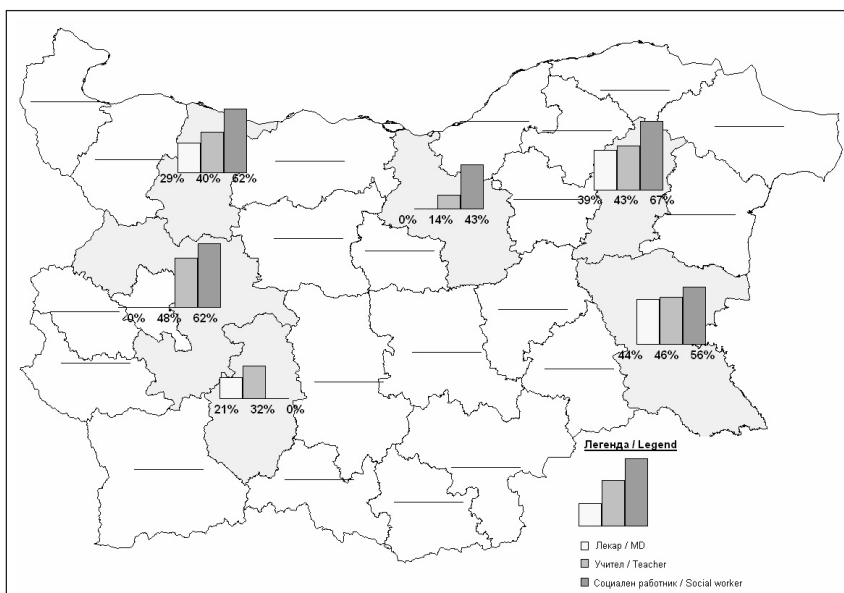


Figure 24. Proportion of don't know answers, concerning the statements about the role of the Islam clerical schools by regions and target groups

The role of educational standards

Among the Roma pupils in Bulgaria is observed an extremely high dropout rate as well as quite a high non enrolment rate. Using as premises the stereotypes that “Roma value low the education”, they are “lazy” and “irresponsible” (discussed above), some experts state that Roma children has “lower intellectual capacity” or, politically correct “lower cultural capital”. Thus, they “benevolent” offer that Ministry of education should set up lower educational standards to the Roma children. Some other experts knew that it is a race debate with a long history and that such a standard will artificially cut the access of Roma to better education and better employment opportunities in the future²⁰. This debate is represented by the following set of statements:

A) There should be lower educational standards about the Roma children, because they are not able to achieve the result of the others

B) There should be the same educational standards about the Roma children, because they have the same accomplishment as the rest of the children

C) Don't know

It is a great disappointment of the survey to find out that significantly higher proportion of the teachers share the stereotype about the need of a lower educational standards in comparison with the two other target groups (fig. 25). In fact it is a kind of a clear defensive strategy – if the Roma children has a lower success rate, it is due to their low abilities, and it's not a fault of the teachers or educational system. At the same time, the lower level of agreement with statement B among the teachers seems to be a regional feature mainly in Shumen and Pazardzhik, partially in Burgas (fig. 26). Therefore by some training in diversity management and ethnic sensitivity their excuse with lower abilities of Roma pupils could be reduced.

The role of natural talents

There is a stereotype that Roma people have a natural talent about music and rhythm. Together with the stereotype about the need of lower

²⁰ About this debate see for example: Кукова, С. 2011. Ромските деца в риск и системата за закрила на детето в България. София: БХК.

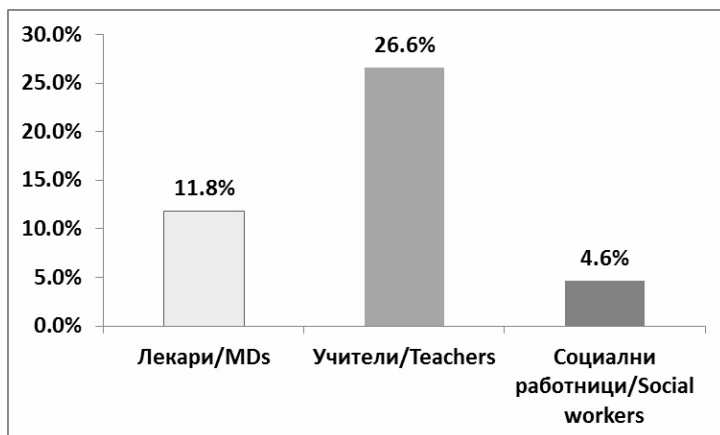


Figure 25. Agreement with the statement “There should be lower educational standards about the Roma children, because they are not able to achieve the result of the others” by target groups

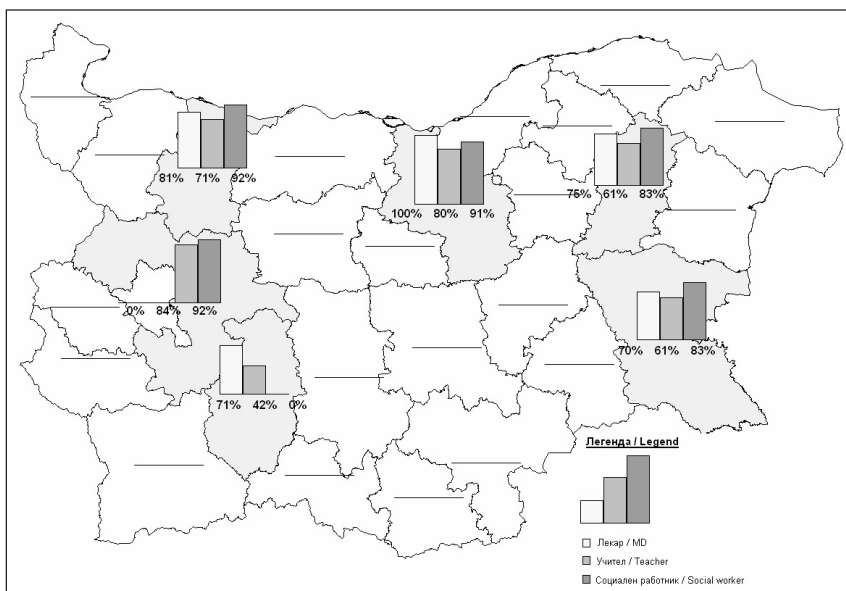


Figure 26. Agreement with the statement “There should be the same educational standards about the Roma children, because they have the same accomplishment as the rest of the children” by regions and target groups

educational standards, it sometimes leads to suggestions about syllabus of such “lightweight” standard. This debate is represented by the following set of statements:

A) Roma children are able most of all to sing and dance well, it is in their blood. Therefore, the key to their integration are music education and labor training

B) Roma children are able to obtain excellence in every subject - math, literature, music, geography, etc. Therefore, the key to their educational integration should also pass through these subjects

C) Don't know.

The question about the role of the natural talent seems to be controversial for the medical doctors and teachers. It is very indicative that 21,3% of the doctors answer “don't know” on this question. At the same time about 31,4% support the statement A. And 47,4% agreed with statement B. Among the teachers (in those case “experts on the field”) only 8,6% do not want to take a position and give a DK answer. However, about 39,1% of the teachers support the stereotype about the adjusted to the “natural talent” syllabus. This stereotype is shared in highest degree by the teachers in Pazardzhik (52%) and Shumen (54%), and in lowest degree by the teachers in Sofia (16%). One fifth of the social workers also support the idea about an intense musical and labour training of Roma. Despite that, yet more than two thirds of the social workers believe that Roma children are able to obtain excellence in every subject. At least but not at last, we would like to stress the fact that the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo – as in the most cases above – are less supportive to the stereotype, and about 88% of them consider Roma as able to obtain excellence in every subject (fig. 27).

The role of mother tongue

Most jokes about “Gypsies” in Bulgaria, in which the Roma protagonist speaks to someone, contain language errors on purpose, imitating Romani speech strain (in order to boost the fun into the story). Although very small stratum of ghettoized Roma population speaks in this way, it keeps alive a stereotype about the insufficient language competence of Roma in the public opinion. Thus, there is another educational stereotype that relates to the abilities of the Roma pupils, i.e. Roma children

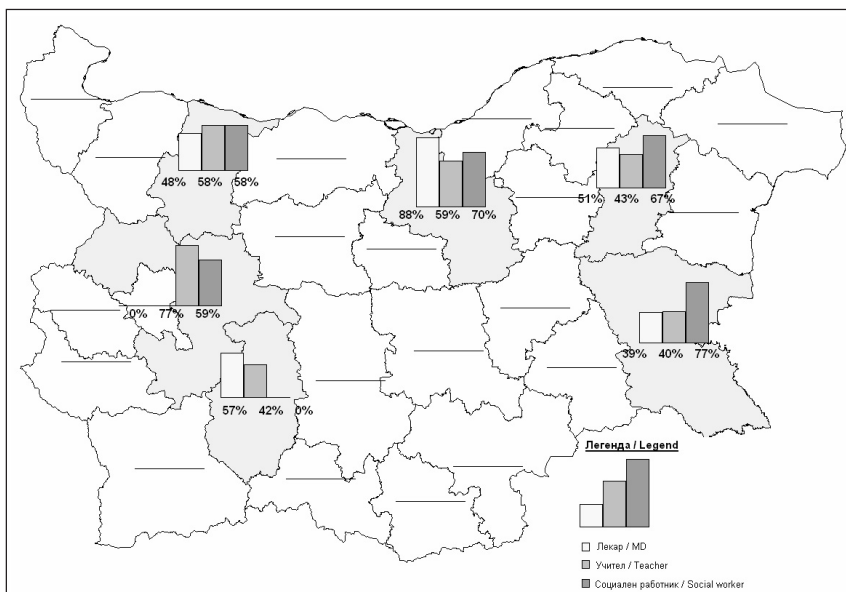


Figure 27. Agreement with the statement "Roma children are able to obtain excellence in every subject" by regions and target groups

fail in educational system do to their different mother tongue. This stereotype and its negation are represented by the following set of statements:

A) Roma children cannot succeed because their mother tongue is not Bulgarian.

B) The good results of Roma children in school are not dependent on their mother tongue, but depend on the ability of teachers to work in ethnically diverse groups.

C) Don't know.

The outcome of this question also indicates higher tendency among the teachers to ascribe the failure of Roma children to their cultural features in comparison with the two other target groups (fig. 28). In fact, in all target regions the agreement of the teachers with the statement that the good results of Roma children depend on teachers' ability teachers to work in ethnically diverse groups is lower in comparison with the agreement level among the doctors and social workers (fig. 29).

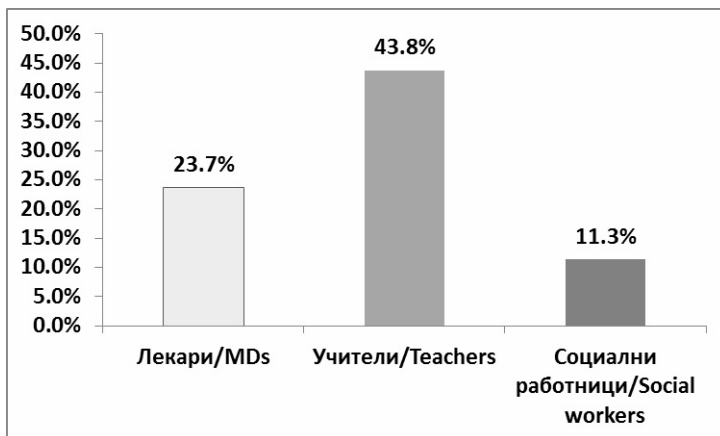


Figure 28. Agreement with the statement “Roma children cannot succeed because their mother tongue is not Bulgarian” by target groups

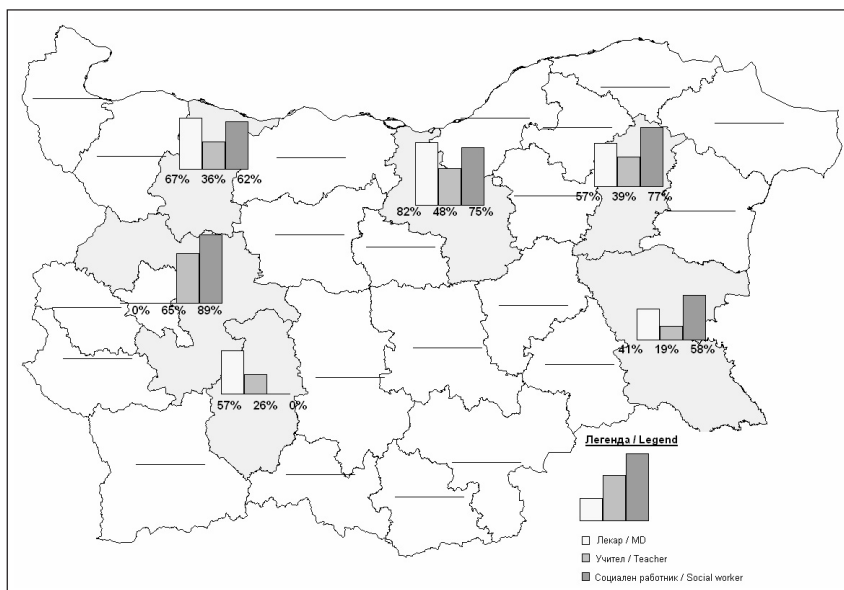


Figure 29. Agreement with the statement “The good results of Roma children in school depend on the ability of teachers to work in ethnically diverse groups” by regions and target groups

The role of knowledge on minority cultures

The next set of statements does not reflect a stereotype but measures up the public attitude about the teachers' need of knowledge on the ethnic minorities in class. Therefore, it is a further step after the previous statement, measuring up the understanding of the need of ethnic sensitivity. The set of statements looks as follows:

A) The teacher must know the culture and customs of minorities who are represented in its class in order to be able to work better with the kids.

B) The teacher do not need to know the culture and customs of minorities, because we live in Bulgaria and the minorities should cover the existing education standards.

C) Don't know.

It is surprising at first glance, but the teachers are the target group, which agree in a higher degree with the need to know the minority culture and customs. In fact, on the previous statements they were rather ready to charge Roma with all gaps in education. From that point of view it is important to stress that there is an obvious methodological problem with measuring stereotypes in this manner. The wording of the previous statement set against the teachers' professional abilities and the Roma cultural features. As a defense mechanism, the teachers were more reluctant to agree that the problem is in their teaching skills. Thus, only 36% of the teachers agreed that the good results of Roma children depend on the ability of teachers to work in ethnically diverse groups but 56% agreed that the teacher must know the culture and customs of minorities who are represented in its class in order to be able to work better with the kids (fig. 30). Therefore, we could expect that the teachers will be open to some diversity management training programmes, as well as to some "history and culture of..." classes but the tutors should be sensitive towards their professional abilities.

The biggest surprise in that respect is the position of the seemingly tolerant social workers. 47% of them agreed that we live in Bulgaria and the minorities should cover the existing education standards against 45% of "pro diversity" supporters. It is important to emphasize that, except for Burgas, the social workers in all regions have the highest score "cons

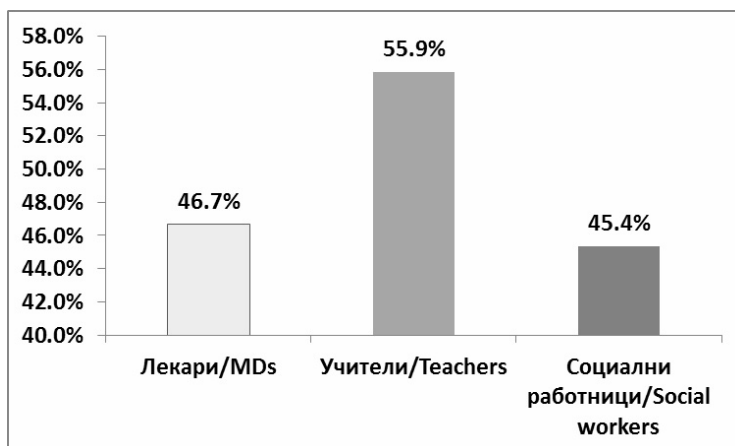


Figure 30. Agreement with the statement “The teacher must know the culture and customs of minorities who are represented in its class in order to be able to work better with the kids” by target groups

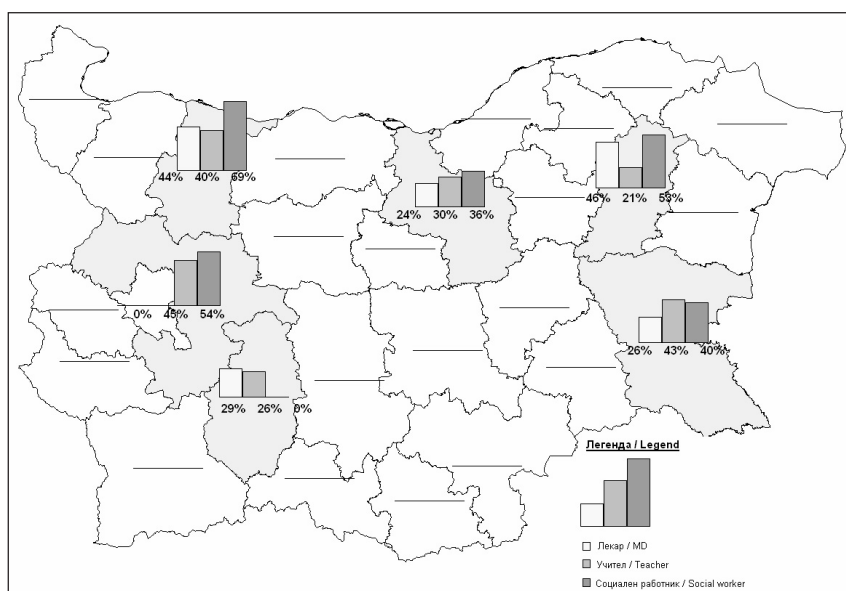


Figure 31. Agreement with the statement “The teacher do not need to know the culture and customs of minorities, because we live in Bulgaria and the minorities should cover the existing education standards” by regions and target groups

diversity”. There are two possible explanations. First of all, looking back at the previous statements, the social workers in higher degree consider Roma people as not different from the rest of the Bulgarian population, and therefore they have to meet the same standards. Secondly, the social workers are may be afraid that if once the need of diversity training is imposed as a duty to the teachers, they could be the next expert to be put to the minority culture training programme. Anyway, the correct interpretation needs a future research and we are not going to speculate on this further.

3.3. Stereotypes about the Education

The stereotypes about the education are measured by five degree scale²¹. Similarly to the general stereotypes discussed earlier in the text, we are going to present the cumulative proportion of agreement with each of the stereotyped statements.

Not a value

Due to the fact, that different wording could bring a different outcome in a value survey, here we have asked a rephrased question about the education as a value. Firstly, we wanted to validate the answers, and secondly – to upgrade a bit the statement with a hypothetic consequence. The previous stereotype statement (“Roma value low the education”) was broadly shared by all three groups²². The answers of the current statement: “The education is not a value for Roma, and because the Roma parents are not interested, cannot motivate their children” keep almost the same proportions of cumulative agreement like the ones from the beginning of the questionnaire (fig. 32). This stereotype is strongest amongst the doctors in Pazardzhik (93%), teachers in Shumen (93%), and social workers in Sofia (92%). The doctors in Veliko Tarnovo (12%) do not agree with this statement (fig. 33).

²¹ Absolutely disagree, rather disagree, nether agree nor disagree, rather agree, and absolutely agree. In order to be able to make a distinction between real “middle” agreement and possible confusion by the question, there is an additional “don’t know” option next to the scale.

²² Social workers 80,9%, teachers 77,3%, and doctors 74,6%.

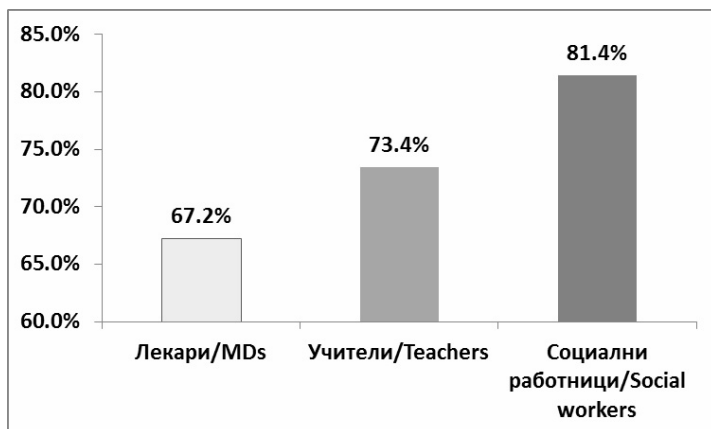


Figure 32. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The education is not a value for Roma, and because the Roma parents are not interested, cannot motivate their children” by target groups

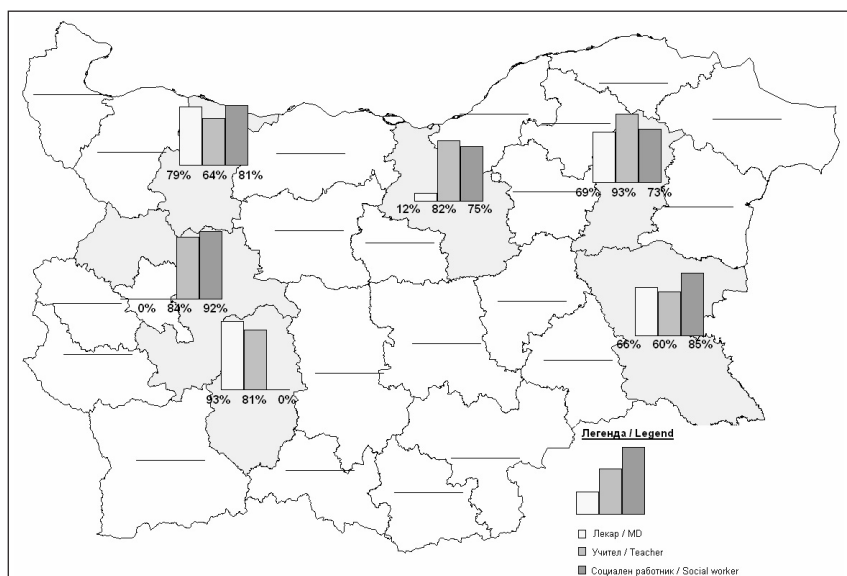


Figure 33. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The education is not a value for Roma, and because the Roma parents are not interested, cannot motivate their children” by region and target groups

Dropouts because of poverty

The representative surveys among the Roma population in Bulgaria show that poverty is broadly used as an excuse for the children dropouts, very often with the phrase: “we do not have money to buy shoes and clothing”²³. Because of that we include the statement: “Roma children drop out of school due to poverty. The parents do not have money for shoes and clothing and stop their children in order not to be ashamed”. Although it is an auto stereotype of some ghettoized Roma communities in Bulgaria, it is not a widespread stereotype among the three target groups (fig. 34). However, the proportion of cumulative agreement of the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo indicates that this particular target groups would accept such an excuse (fig. 35).

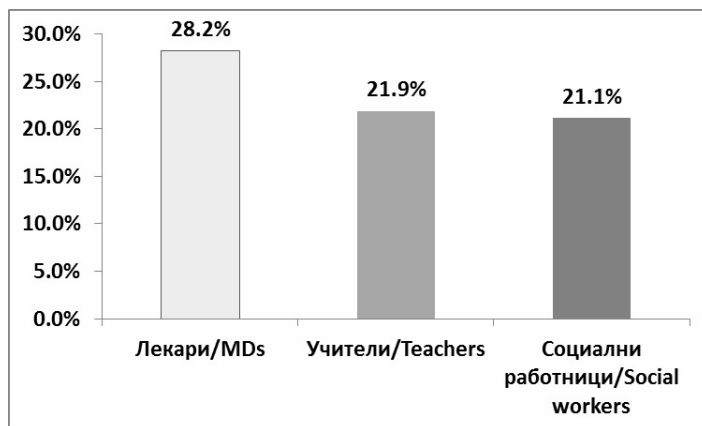


Figure 34. Cumulative agreement with the statement “Roma children drop out of school due to poverty. The parents do not have money for shoes and clothing and stop their children in order not to be ashamed” by target groups

Dropouts because of early marriages

The Roma communities in Bulgaria vastly differ from the rest of the population by its union formation model. Roma people – especially those living in the rural areas or segregated urban ghettos – still keep the tra-

²³ Нончев, А., П. Мондо и др. 2007. Причини за отпадане на децата от училище в България. София: Изток-Запад.

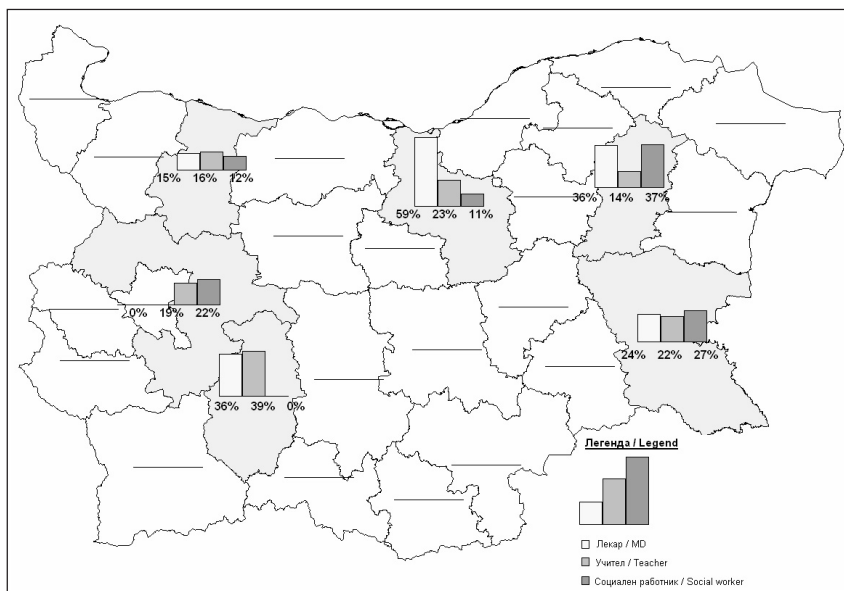


Figure 35. Cumulative agreement with the statement *“Roma children drop out of school due to poverty. The parents do not have money for shoes and clothing and stop their children in order not to be ashamed”* by region and target groups

ditional, pre modern pattern. Because the tradition requires that the bride must be virgin, it leads to a union formation about 10 years earlier in comparison with the other ethnic groups. The mean age of first “marriage” (including the non-marital cohabitations, considered by Roma as traditional marriage) among Roma is about age 18 years and 4 months. Although there are some cases of “traditional marriages” under the age of 14, the mode of beginning of partner cohabitation is 17 (i.e. an year after the compulsory school age)²⁴. The higher proportion of early marriages among Roma – and especially the existence of some cases of extremely early marriages (followed by early childbirths), which are rare but are often exposed by media, lead to the stereotype that Roma dropout of

²⁴ Kolev D., T. Krumova, A. Pamporov and others.2011. Preventing early marriages. Veliko Turnovo: Amalipe. Available at: <http://www.amalipe.com/files/publications/ranni%20brakove%20last.pdf>

school because of those early marriages. This stereotype was represented by the statement: “The early marriages are widespread among Roma and, because no one is able to change the tradition, parents stop their children from school”. This stereotype is shared by the three target groups and there is no statistical difference in the total proportions of cumulative agreement (fig. 36). The stereotype is most widely spread among the teachers in Pazardzhik (81%) and physicians in Vratza (71%). It is weakest among the teachers in Burgas (40%). The given three proportions significantly differ from the average of the answers (fig. 37).

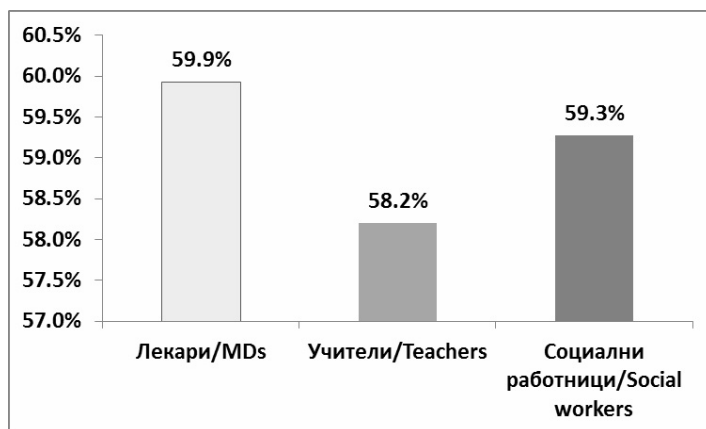


Figure 36. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The early marriages are widespread among Roma and, because no one is able to change the tradition, parents stop their children from school” by region and target groups

Lack of state incentives

The Roma activists and some non-governmental advocacy organizations often consider the state institutions to blame for the dropouts due to insufficient or even lack of incentives. This criticism increased since the beginning of the Decade of Roma inclusion (2005–2015) due to increased expectations about the role of the state. The following statement reflects exactly that position: “The state has not taken sufficient incentives to children to keep them in school”. It is definitely not supported by the three target groups (fig. 38), and there is no even a regional exception (fig. 39). It means that the physicians, teachers and social workers find the state

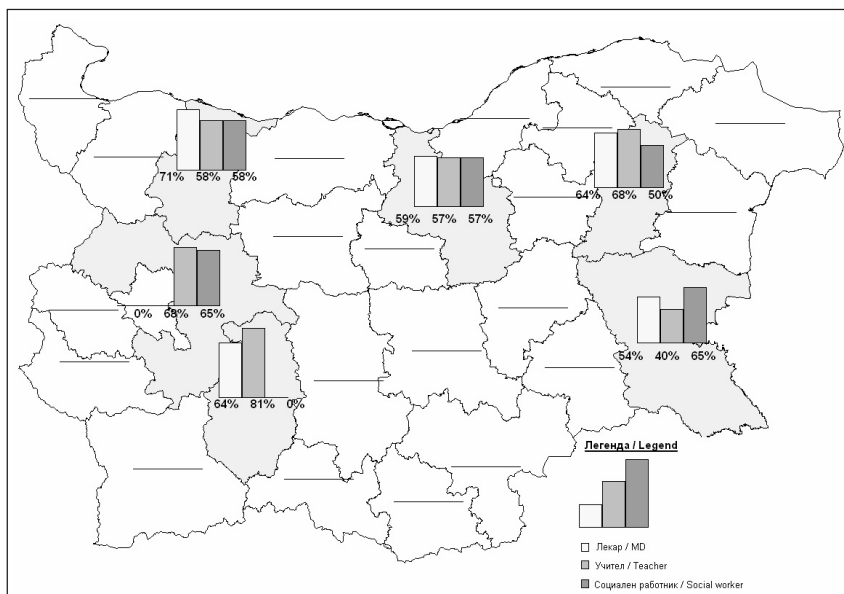


Figure 37. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The early marriages are widespread among Roma and, because no one is able to change the tradition, parents stop their children from school” by region and target groups

incentives to be sufficient and rather tend to blame Roma for educational exclusion.

Lack of state reprisal

Having in mind “the carrot and the stick” principle, some experts argue that it is not a question of insufficient positive measures, because there are a lot of funds allocated about desegregation projects or urging forward the tertiary education of Roma. They insist that the government and local authorities have to demonstrate decisiveness against the school dropouts by measures of repression against the parents, which stop their children from schooling. This position is represented by the statement: “The state has not taken sufficient retaliations for parents to get them to send their children to school”. The three target groups agreed with the view that there is a lack of state reprisal, although there is a statistically significant difference between the proportions of cumulative agreement

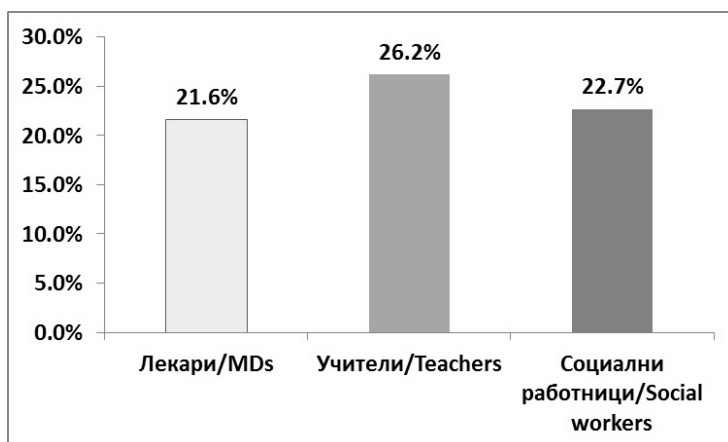


Figure 38. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The state has not taken sufficient incentives to children to keep them in school” by region and target groups

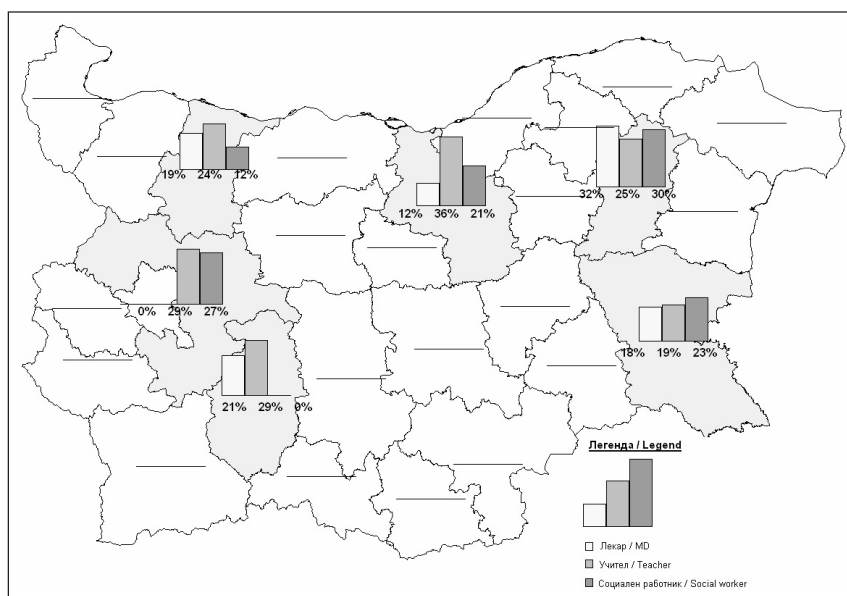


Figure 39. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The state has not taken sufficient incentives to children to keep them in school” by region and target groups

of the teachers and social workers (fig. 40). The medical doctors in Pazardzhik (93%), and teachers in Sofia (81%), Pazardzhik (74%), Shumen (68%) and Veliko Tarnovo (66%) are the main supporters of the measures of repression. The only opposing target groups are the medical doctors in Veliko Tarnovo region (fig. 41).

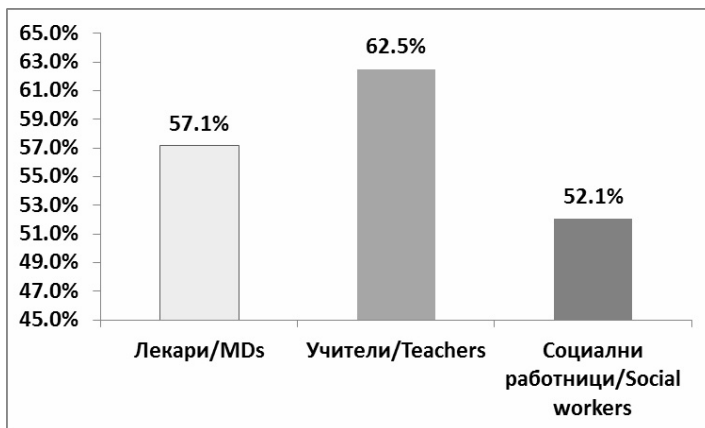


Figure 40. *Cumulative agreement with the statement “The state has not taken sufficient retaliations for parents to get them to send their children to school” by target groups*

NGO have not done their job

Together with the Roma population, and the state and local authorities there is one more important type of stakeholders: the non-government organizations working towards the integration of Roma (including HRO, community organizations, advocacy organizations and public policy organizations). Similarly to the upper cases, there are some experts (especially those working for some right and ultra-right units), which claim that Roma are not guilty, state is not guilty, but the biggest sinner are these NGOs that works about the integration of Roma, because they just absorb the allocated funds without actual and relevant activities²⁵. This

²⁵ Методиева, Ю. 2012. Румян Русинов: Отровените обществени отношения върнаха интеграцията на ромите 10-20 години назад. Сп. Обектив, фев. 2012, БХК.

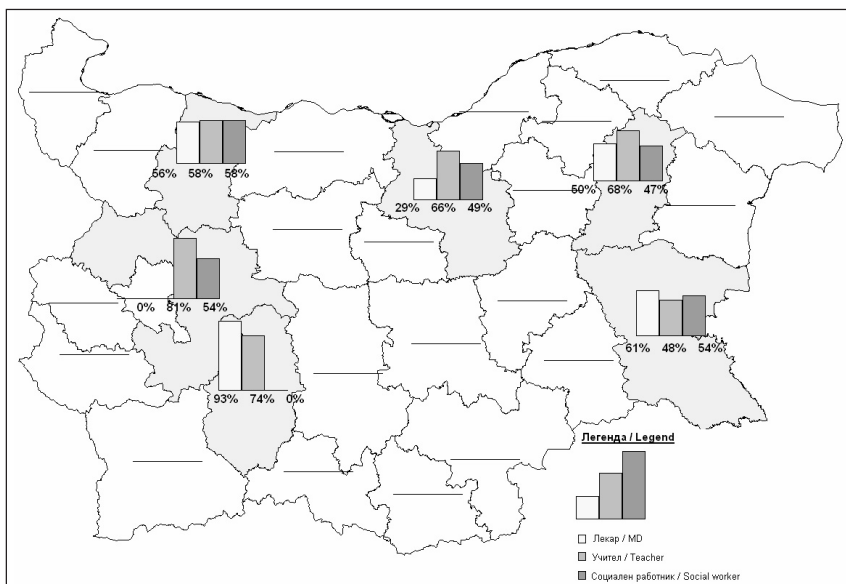


Figure 41. Cumulative agreement with the statement “The state has not taken sufficient retaliations for parents to get them to send their children to school” by region and target groups

specific transfer of the blame was represented in the questionnaire by the statement: “NGOs have not done their job. The school attendance and the good achievements of the children have to be their commitment and concern”.

The physicians and teachers are rather ready to agree with such a statement (fig. 42). Disagreement of the latters is about 19% and about 23% of the MDs – i.e. less than a half of the agreement. The cumulative agreement and cumulative disagreement of the social workers gain equal proportions of 34,5%. The highest tendency of blaming the third sector is recorded among the medical doctors in Pazardzhik and teachers in Shumen. The physicians in Veliko Tarnovo are at the least disposed against the NGOs (fig. 43).

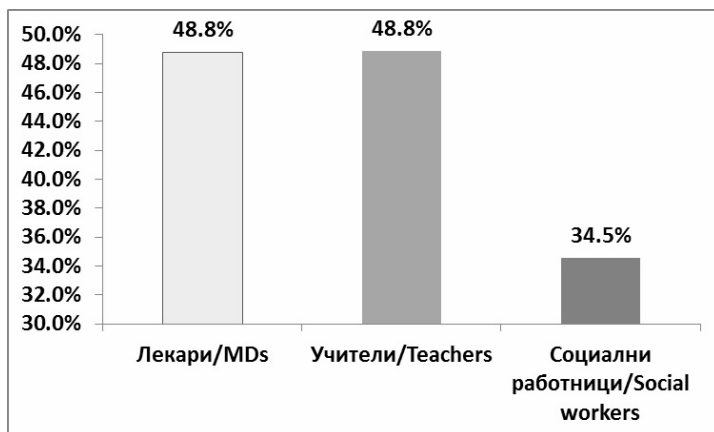


Figure 42. Cumulative agreement with the statement “NGOs have not done their job. The school attendance and the good achievements of the children have to be their commitment and concern” by target groups

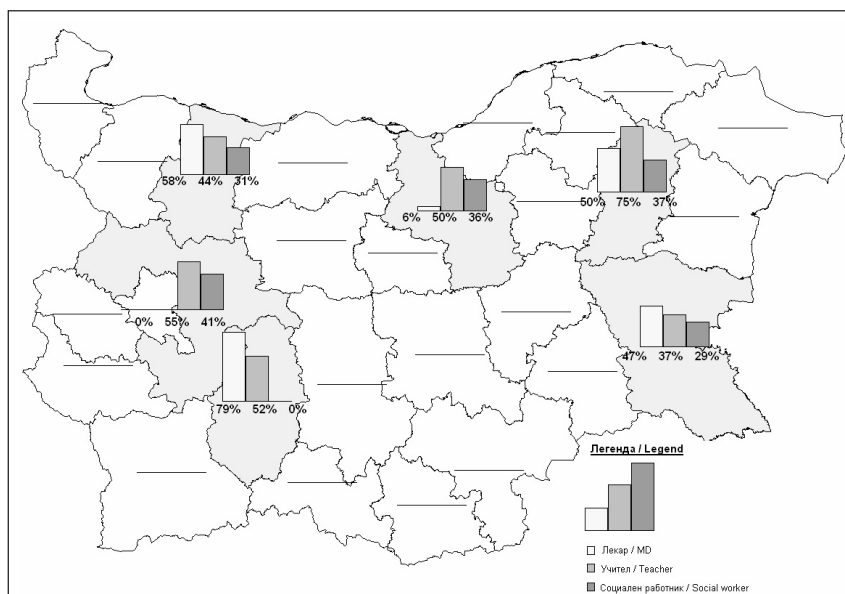


Figure 43. Cumulative agreement with the statement “NGOs have not done their job. The school attendance and the good achievements of the children have to be their commitment and concern” by region and target groups

Not attractive school

In sociology of education filed during the past 20 years it appeared and axiomatic thesis that the textbook content and school curriculum all over the world suppress the minority identities²⁶ and reproduce “old fashioned” stereotypes and prejudices²⁷. Thus, some pro Roma advocacy educational experts assert that Roma drop out of school because the syllabi in social science, arts and humanities do not include information about their own culture. Of course, this is a stereotyped statement as well, because the textbook do not content information about the other minorities as well but there is no such a dropout rate. In fact this is a very actual topic in Bulgaria, as far as there is a currently going scandal about the ethnic stereotypes between the state Antidiscrimination Commission on one hand, and Ministry of Education and the textbook publishers on the other hand. The idea about the non-attractive school is represented by the statement: “School is not attractive enough for Roma children, be-

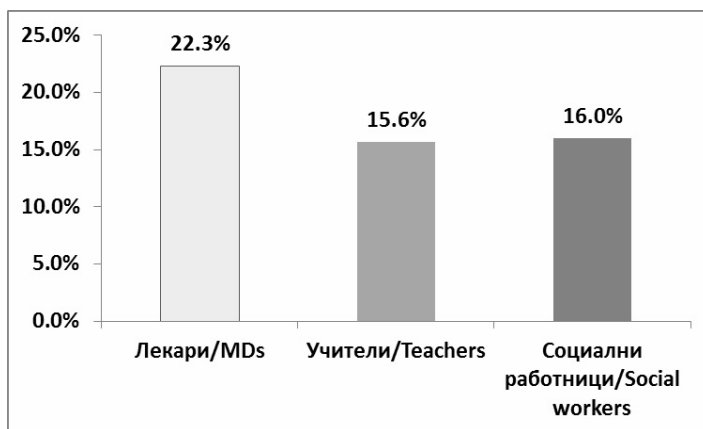


Figure 44. Cumulative agreement with the statement “School is not attractive enough for Roma children, because it does not offer information about their own culture” by *r* target groups

²⁶ Ninnes, Peter. Representations of indigenous knowledge in secondary school science textbooks in Australia and Canada. // International journal of science education, 2000, Vol. 22, No. 6, pp. 603-617.

²⁷ Van Der Linde Ch. Intercultural communication within multicultural schools: Educational Management Insights. //Education, Winter 97, Vol. 118, Issue 2

cause it does not offer information about their own culture”. The outcome shows definitely that this is not the standpoint of this three target groups neither as total (fig. 44), nor at a regional level (fig. 45).

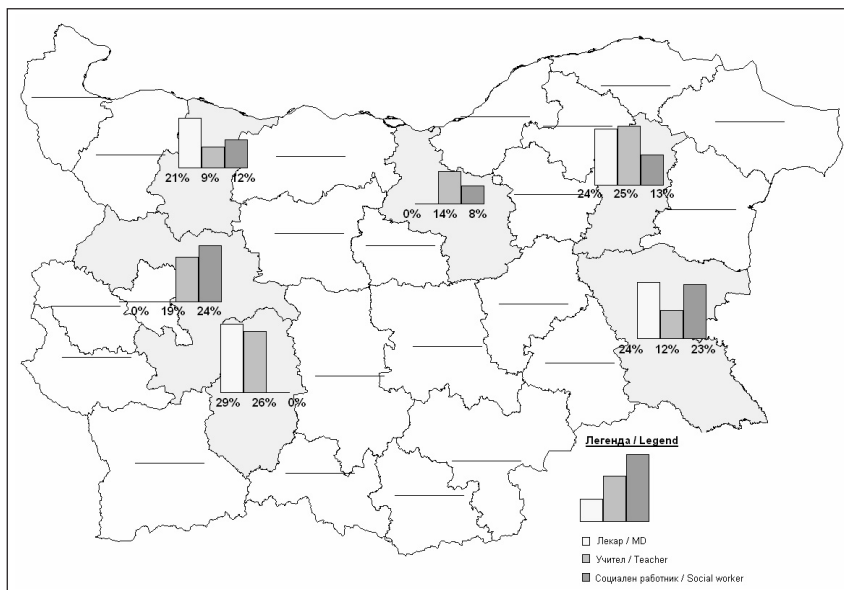


Figure 45. Cumulative agreement with the statement “School is not attractive enough for Roma children, because it does not offer information about their own culture” by region and target groups

3.4. Stereotypes about the Roma women

The Roma women are peculiar case of inner vulnerability within a vulnerable group. The illiteracy rate of Roma women is two times higher in comparison with the Roma men. They are in higher risk of school dropout, higher risk of unemployment and in some subgroups they are totally dependable of the will of their parents and husband (after an arranged marriage). Into the questionnaire of the current survey was included second associative question. Its aim was to check are there different stereotypes about the Roma, if we aim only the women. The outcome show higher degree of shared stereotypes among the three target groups. The higher fertility rate of the Roma women in comparison with the rest

of the population reflects into the leading stereotype “multiple children” (in contrast with the single child pattern among the Bulgarians²⁸). The higher illiteracy rate and the extremely low proportion of Roma women with secondary and tertiary education support the stereotype “uneducated”. The ghettoized life in out of planning zones leads Roma population to extremely bad living conditions and representation about their “dirtiness”. As Roma in general, the Roma women are considered also ill-mannered, lazy, irresponsible, and criminal. In addition, they are considered being aggressive.

Medical doctors		Teachers		Social Workers	
dirty	39.7%	multiple children	45.7%	multiple children	55.7%
uneducated	35.9%	uneducated	39.5%	uneducated	55.7%
criminals	35.2%	ill-mannered	26.2%	dirty	42.8%
ill-mannered	34.1%	dirty	24.2%	ill-mannered	25.3%
multiple children	28.6%	irresponsible	23.0%	criminals	22.2%
irresponsible	23.7%	lazy	20.7%	irresponsible	21.1%
lazy	20.9%	music	20.7%	aggressive	18.0%
liars	20.2%	criminals	19.5%	music	16.5%
aggressive	19.2%	beautiful	16.0%	lazy	16.0%
beautiful	11.1%	aggressive	14.1%	liars	14.9%

Children = benefits

The stereotype about the multiple children of the Roma women often relates to the stereotype that they are giving childbirths on permanent basis in order to receive social benefits for pregnancy and childbirth. Not arguing with the leading stereotype about the many childbirths, the set of statements presented bellow put under question the reasoning of the higher fertility rate:

A) Roma women give birth to many children in order to live on social benefits, which they receive for this children.

²⁸ Пампоров, А. 2006. Ромското всекидневие в България. София: IMIR.

B) When a Roma woman has given birth to three or more children, this is not to be dependent on social benefits, but because of a low contraceptive culture.

C) Don't know.

The answer of this set of statement is very indicative. There is certain stereotype that Roma use to live on social benefits and therefore the child-births are source of an income. The positive finding in these answers is the fact that the social workers – as most informed about the size of those benefits and about the number of the beneficiaries – show a statistically significant much lower level of agreement (fig. 46). From this point of view, it looks as a stereotype that could vanish, if someone just runs a proper info campaign. However, we have to keep in mind the fact that in Vratza are recorded the two highest proportions of agreement with the statement “children equals benefits” including the social workers there (fig. 47). Thus, a clarification is needed. The district of Vratza is one of the poorest in Bulgaria. The region is characterized by high level of unemployment and a lot of household rely on social payments. Due to that, the Roma – taking benefits – are very visible and seem like a privileged group, because of the children²⁹.

Leaving children into orphanages

During the last years of the socialist regime, the state used to encourage the very poor families (especially the Roma ones) to leave their children in homes for children deprived of parental care. It was purely in line with the assimilations attempts. It was quite a popular among the Roma households with many children in to leave some of the kids in a “Mother and a child house³⁰” or in an institution for mentally retarded kids (because there is “bed & breakfast” on the board). We wanted to check is there a stereotype about the reasoning by the following set of statements:

²⁹ The social benefits in Bulgaria often are given based on the household income basis per capita. Therefore more children often means lower income per capita which increases the proportion of Roma households under the poverty line and this naturally leads to higher proportion of Roma among the beneficiaries.

³⁰ As the orphanages was labeled at that time.

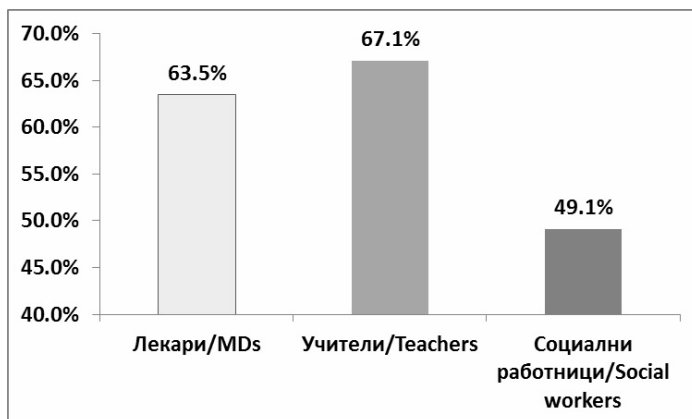


Figure 46. Agreement with the statement “Roma women give birth to many children in order to live on social benefits, which they receive for this children” by target groups

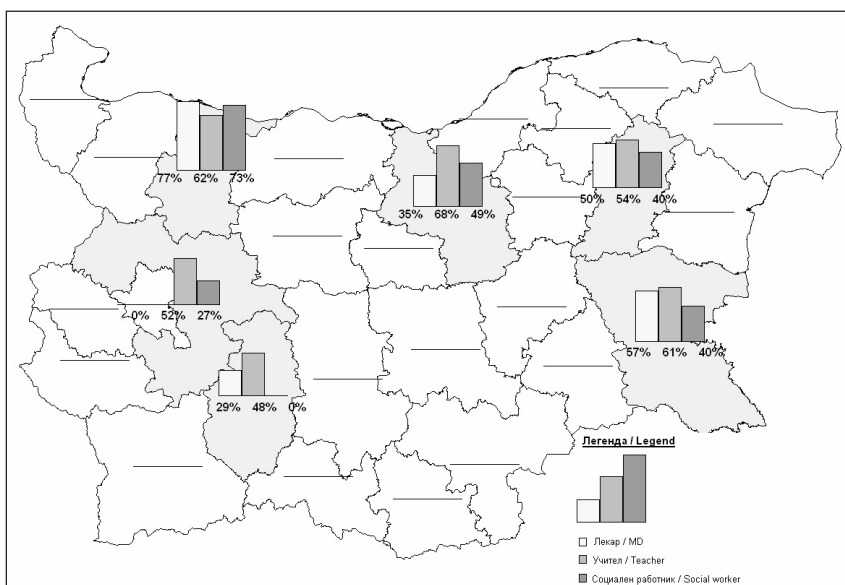


Figure 47. Agreement with the statement “Roma women give birth to many children in order to live on social benefits, which they receive for this children” by region and target groups

A) The Roma women with multiple children quite an often leave their children in homes for children deprived of parental care, because they are too lazy to care for them.

B) Only particular Roma women with multiple children leave some of their children in homes for children deprived of parental, forced by deep poverty.

C) Don't know.

None of the statements was neither accepted nor rejected. It is so to say, that the stereotype is shared in certain quite a low degree. The only clear regional trend is that the teachers and social workers in Sofia do not support the thesis about the laziness of Roma women as stimulus for living their kids in orphanages.

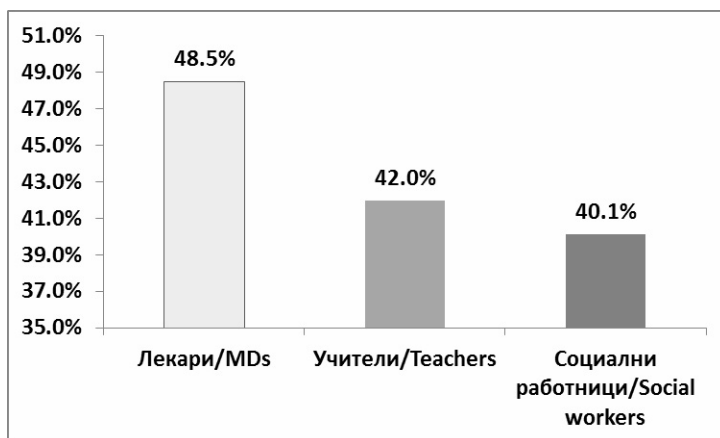


Figure 48. *Agreement with the statement “The Roma women with multiple children quite an often leave their children in homes for children deprived of parental care because they are too lazy to care for them” by region and target groups*

Mass female dropouts

The higher illiteracy rate of the Roma women serve as a ground for the stereotype that around the end of the primary school (8-th grade) they use to leave the school. We decided to check in what degree this stereotype is widespread by the following set of statements:

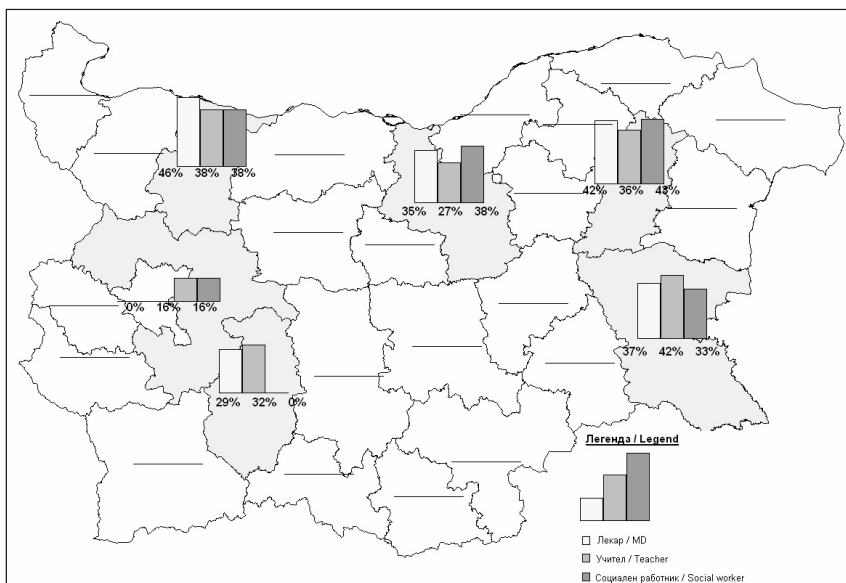


Figure 49. Agreement with the statement “The Roma women with multiple children quite an often leave their children in homes for children deprived of parental care because they are too lazy to care for them” by region and target groups

A) Before or at completion of their primary school, the mass of the Roma girls dropout.

B) Before or at completion of their primary school, just particular Roma girls dropout.

C) Don't know.

The stereotype about the mass dropout of Roma girls was certainly confirmed. At the same time there is a good piece of news, similar to the one about the social benefits. Namely, the target group, which works directly with Roma pupils (i.e. the teachers), indicate statistically significant lower level of agreement with this statement. Therefore, if the audience is informed properly, there is a chance for this stereotype to vanish³¹.

³¹ Similarly to the stereotype about the natural stupidity of the Black American, which disappeared in the late quarter of the 20th century.

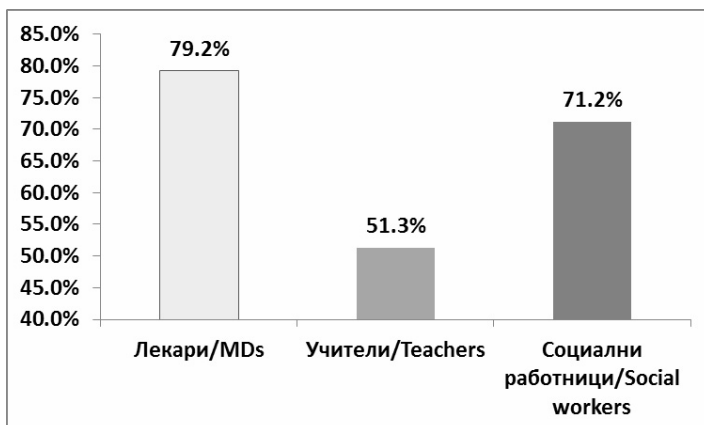


Figure 50. Agreement with the statement “Before or at completion of their primary school, the mass of the Roma girls dropout” by target groups

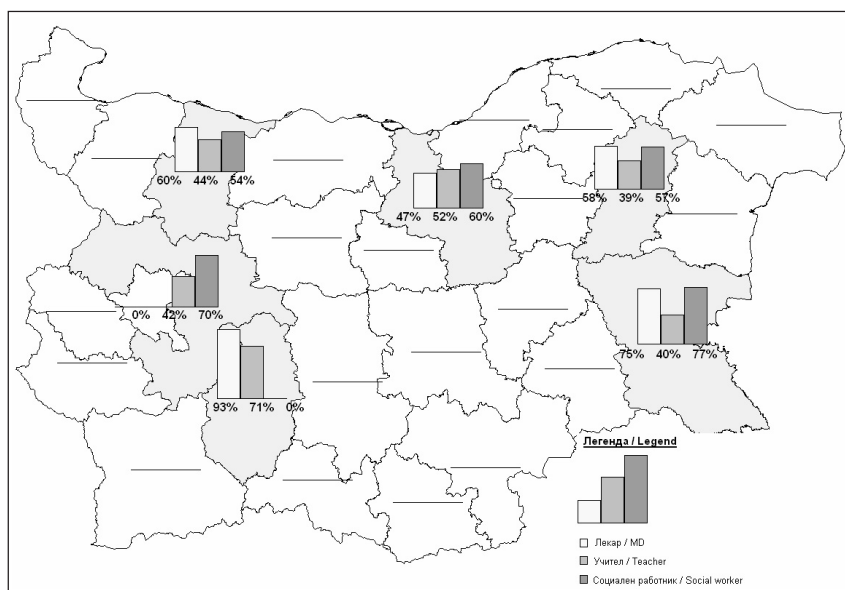


Figure 51. Agreement with the statement “Before or at completion of their primary school, the mass of the Roma girls dropout” by region and target groups

3.5. Stereotypes about the Roma healthcare

Steeled Roma kids

The usual media reportage about Roma in Bulgaria often presents the standpoint of some marginalized inhabitants of some ghetto. As a background of such broadcasting, one could see piles of scraps and rubbish, frame houses made out of cardboard, and nude or half-naked children. This enforces the stereotype that Roma children permanently walk nude and barefooted but still they are healthy. In fact, the official statistics show that Roma population suffers higher morbidity, which reflects in a higher mortality and infant mortality rates. This opposition between the media-built representation and healthcare statistics is introduced in the survey by the following set of statements:

A/ Little Roma kids go naked and barefoot, even in the snow, but this steels them and they are very healthy

B/ Morbidity among Roma is higher than among the rest of the population, due to the inadequate preventive care in early childhood

C/ don't know

The stereotype about the healthy barefoot children is shared by the three target groups in a small degree (fig. 52). Most of the respondents in fact recognize the problem with higher morbidity rates of Roma. In that respect, most informed seem to be the teachers in Pazardzhik and social workers in Vratza (fig. 53).

Inbred illness because of incest

Because of the existing bride price marital pattern in some Roma communities in Bulgaria³², and media coverage of the reach Roma “barons”, there is a stereotype that Roma enter into a very close intimate blood relations in order to keep the patrimony of the reach clans. Moreover, because of the stereotype about the marriage at a very young age, there is a stereotype that the in laws (father or brothers of the groom) are the actual lovers of the just married Romani girls. Unfortunately, this is often used as an explanation of the inbred diseases among Roma popula-

³² Pamporov, A. (2007) Sold like a donkey?: Bride Price among the Bulgarian Roma. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, (N.S.) vol. 13, No. June 2007, pp. 471-476.

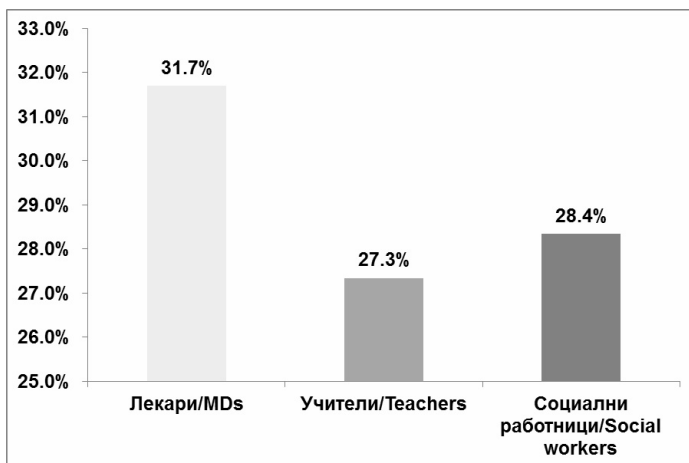


Figure 52. Agreement with the statement “Little Roma kids go naked and barefoot, even in the snow, but this steels them and they are very healthy” by target groups

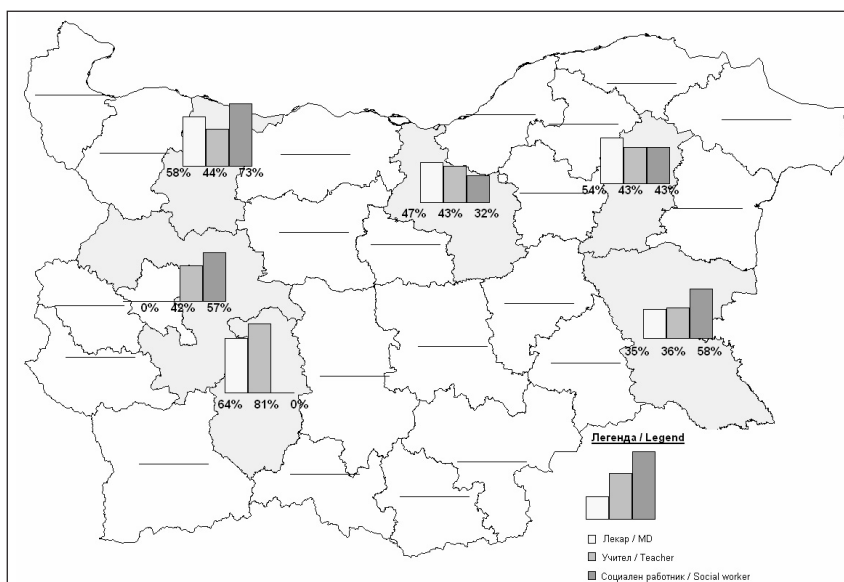


Figure 53. Agreement with the statement “Morbidity among Roma is higher than among the rest of the population, due to the inadequate preventive care in early childhood” by region and target groups

tion (especially those in Northern part of the country). Usually, only some medicine researchers question this stereotype with the problem about the lack of healthcare insurance of Roma and lack of healthcare prevention culture. This problem is included into the following set of statements:

A) Roma suffer from many hereditary diseases, because of marriage and sexual relations between very close relatives.

B) Roma suffer from many hereditary diseases, because not all pregnant women consult a doctor promptly.

C) Don't know.

About one third in all target groups agreed with the stereotype about the diseases as an outcome of incest relations (fig. 54). Having in mind that our respondents are highly educated experts, working on the field, it indicates how strong the stereotype is in general. In fact, only the physicians and teachers in Pazardzhik show a certain degree of understanding about the lack of preventive care (fig. 55). About one quarter of each target groups have chosen to answer “don’t know”. Therefore a well-targeted informational campaign is needed in order to stress the lack of the preventive care as a factor of the inbred diseases.

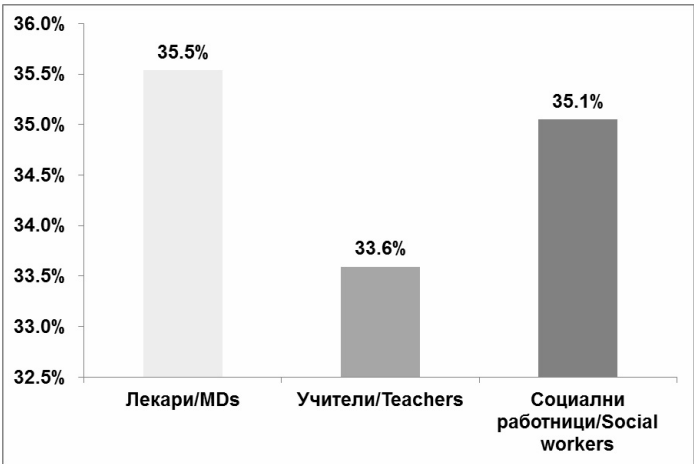


Figure 54. Agreement with the statement “Roma suffer from many hereditary diseases, because of marriage and sexual relations between very close relatives” by region and target groups

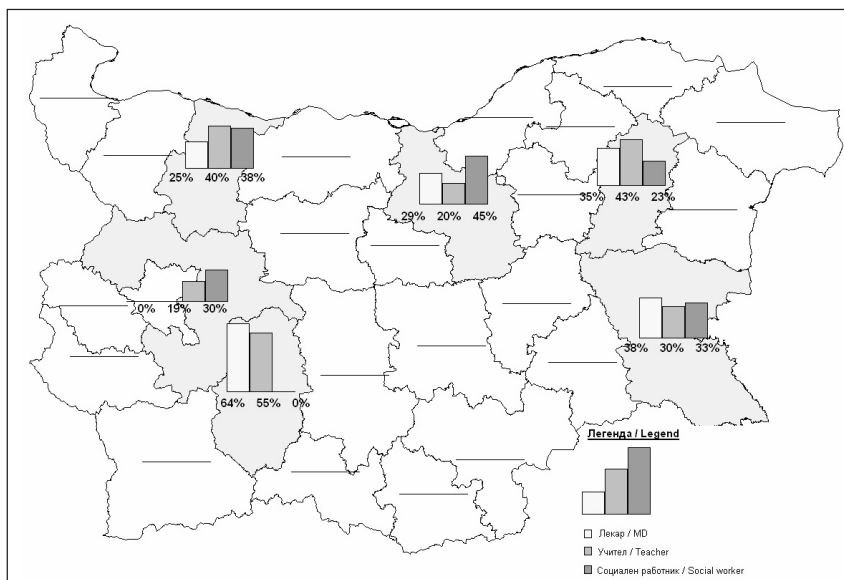


Figure 55. *Agreement with the statement “Roma suffer from many hereditary diseases, because of marriage and sexual relations between very close relatives” by region and target groups*

4. Professional problems when working with Roma

One of the goals of the survey was to explain the negative attitudes towards and stereotypes about Roma by gathering the problems that the three target groups are facing when working with Roma. There was an open-ended question into the survey questionnaire defined as follow: Please, list up to three most serious problems, which you face on when working with Roma. It turned out that the doctors, teachers and social workers very rare list a concrete real problems but rather repeat the stereotypes gathered earlier within the survey. As a top 10 of the problems doctors answer: 52,6% irresponsible, 26,5% uneducated, 16,7% poor hygiene (i.e. dirty), 16% aggressive, 14,6% ill-mannered, 14,3% think that Roma people lie about illness (i.e. liars), etc. For example only 7,7% of the doctors say that Roma have no health insurance, although about one third of the adult Roma are uninsured and this is one of the main prob-

blems of the healthcare system in Bulgaria. Teachers list some real problems in higher degree but still in a very stereotyped manner. Roma are seen as irresponsible parents (51,2%), lazy (28,1%), uneducated (25,4%), ill-mannered (23%), and then comes the problem with irregular students (20,3%), undisciplined student (15,6%) and language barrier (14,1%). Roma are uneducated (77,3%), aggressive (28,9%), irresponsible (24,7%), ill-mannered (21,6%) and lazy (21,6%) for the social workers. Therefore, we are not able to make an adequate interpretation of those problems due to the fact that they look like self-realizing prophecy. The doctors, teachers and social workers expect to face an uneducated, ill-mannered, aggressive, lazy and irresponsible mass of Roma and that is all what they are facing. They do not see problems into the institutional structures or functioning of the healthcare, educational, and social security systems. They do not see the weak points in their own practice (for example the lack of order in front of the doctor's door). From that point of view, there is a need of an intense future work with this target groups and culture sensitive training in order to be able to make a distinction between their own stereotypes and the real problem cases.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

This survey shows up that most of the medical doctors, teachers and social workers in these six regions share the widespread ethnic stereotypes in Bulgaria, including those about Roma people. There is no definitive target group or region, which is more xenophobic in comparison with the others. However, there are several regional target sub-groups that indicate higher levels of negative stereotyping: medical doctors in Pazardzhik, social workers in Vratza, and teachers in Shumen. They tend more often in comparison with the others to blame Roma for their vulnerable situation and are ready to support more repressive measures. On the opposite side of the coin are the medical doctors from Veliko Tarnovo but as it was explained above, there is no guarantee that their positive attitudes are sustainable.

There is no doubt that the stereotypes shared obstruct and significantly deteriorate the work of the three groups with their Roma clients. For example, if a teacher believes that the “natural talent” of Roma kids

is about music, dance and labor, and that syllabus for Roma students should be changed to reflect this “natural talent”, most probably he or she would not invest enough efforts in the other subjects (Literature, History, Maths...), and the students would not achieve good results in these subjects. Or if a social worker perceives Roma as lazy and irresponsible there is little chance for him/her to find which family really needs social assistance. As a result, the work in Roma community of the field workers and the institutions they represent is inefficient and not effective. From the other side, the Roma clients could not obtain quality services and enjoy their rights.

There is also no doubt that the stereotypes shared obstruct the implementation of any Roma integration policy or initiative. The lack of public support is one of the hardest obstacles before the implementation of the Roma integration strategies approved by Bulgarian government since 1999. As part of the intellectuals MDs, teachers and social workers are important opinion-makers; their stereotypes often shape the stereotypes of the broad public. For example, if they perceive Roma as privileged people and affirmative action as privilege most probably the public opinion will share the same stereotypes and will obstruct any initiatives for Roma integration.

The bad news of the survey is that all target groups tend to ascribe all problems to Roma but not to the system or to their own practice. The good news is that if some target group is well informed about a given problem, then this group has lower tendency to stereotype Roma as the one to be blamed. Therefore, several recommendations to be made, coming up from the answers given during the survey.

Key stereotypes and problems to be addressed: Among the tens of stereotypes regarding Roma there are several, that could be defined as “key stereotypes” since they maintain the others and obstruct in highest degree the field work in Roma community, as well as the implementation of Roma integration policy as a whole. Such stereotypes are:

- Among the basic stereotypes: “You cannot trust Roma”, and the four main “features” pointed by the three target groups as main association with Roma, namely “criminals”, “dirty”, “lazy”, “uneducated”. Obvi-

ously, these stereotypes are linked and form strongly negative “Geshtalt” that leads to mistrust. They should be attacked in order to free certain space for all the following activities for Roma integration and efficient work in Roma community.

By the way, it is in fact a small part of the biggest puzzle of mistrust in “the others” in Bulgaria. The European value survey shows that Bulgaria remains one of the countries with lower social capital and higher social mistrust levels. The mistrust in Roma has to be considered in this context;

- Among the stereotypes for the institutional integration: “Roma enjoy privileges” as well as the implicit stereotype, that integration is one-sided process. The first one prevents even the slight Roma integration targeted activities and any affirmative action for overcoming the disadvantaged situation of Roma (and other vulnerable groups). The second principle from the Ten Basic Roma Integration Principles approved by European Council on June 2009 asks for **explicit targeting**. The same does the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (April 5, 2011). The Roma integration policy should be based on the targeted approach (without excluding the mainstreaming one) and such a stereotype should be overcome in order to have real implementation of the Roma integration strategies.

The stereotype, that integration is a process in which Roma should appropriate the mainstream standards and practices but the institutions (and the field workers) would not change any of their practices, is not explicit. Nevertheless, it seems that this stereotype is widely supported by big parts from the three target groups: for example, most of the MDs and social workers deny the necessity of knowing Roma culture and traditions and so on. This stereotype should be also attacked since the integration is two-sided process that requires change also from the majority and from the institutions.

- Among the educational stereotypes: “Education is not a value for Roma”, “Roma children fail because of cultural reasons (early marriages, mother tongue, etc.)”, “The school is attractive enough for Roma kids”, “There is a need for lower educational standards for Roma”. Linked together these stereotypes form a strong perception that the reasons for the

low educational level of Roma are in the Roma community and there is no need for changes in the educational system and the educational practices. Obviously, the existence of these stereotypes among the majority of teachers (and MDs and social workers as well) makes impossible any educational integration efforts.

Overcoming the key stereotypes requires certain comprehensive activities:

Emergent/Short-term activities

- Social workers in all regions need to pass a training course on religious diversity specifics in order to be able to work better with the Evangelic and Muslim communities. This course is also relevant for the MDs and teachers. The upcoming training within “To touch the Untouchable” Project should include a module for the religious leaders in Roma community;

- Teachers in Shumen, Pazardzhik and Burgas need to pass a diversity management course in order to overcome the race stereotype about the lower intellectual abilities of Roma children. The teachers are willing to pass a course on Roma culture and history, and it could be used for this purpose. The upcoming training within “To touch the Untouchable” Project should include a module about the educational level and challenges in Roma community with clear examples and good practices, that demonstrate the normal intellectual abilities of Roma children and their success when they study in good environment;

- The upcoming training within “To touch the Untouchable” Project, as well as the textbooks and other materials for this training need to discuss explicitly the key stereotypes (Roma are lazy, criminals, uneducated, dirty, privileged) and to provide enough information for overcoming these stereotypes. In addition, the curriculum and training materials need to contain knowledge about Roma history and culture (for overcoming the stereotype that “You can not trust Roma”) and about Roma groups (for overcoming the stereotype that all Roma are alike);

- The upcoming training within “To touch the Untouchable” Project should combine information with practical exercises: since the stereotype is not purely rational, its overcoming needs more than knowledge;

- It is better if the upcoming training within “To touch the Untouchable” Project (and similar anti-discrimination training) brings together

MDs, teachers and social workers instead of organizing separate trainings for the three target groups. Since the stereotypes shared are common, there is no reason for separate trainings (one for teachers, another for MDs, the other for social workers). The added value of a joint training would be to help the three target groups establish common vision about the essence of the problems and the necessary solutions;

- It is desirable the upcoming training within “To touch the Untouchable” Project to include also Roma activists who work at grass-root level. They could bring another point of view on all issues discussed that comes from the field and would contribute significantly for overcoming most of the stereotypes. The readiness of the three target groups to work with the Roma leaders is good precondition for their participation in the training.

PART FOUR

COMBATTING THE ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES: ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The research on anti-Roma stereotypes served as a basis for designing and implementing a comprehensive set of activities for forming tolerance, intercultural understanding and overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes. The activities were implemented in 6 districts in Bulgaria, as well as in one county in Romania. They had two main target groups:

- teachers, social workers and healthcare workers, who work on Roma community on daily basis and deliver the basic educational, social and healthcare services, composed the main target group. As the survey showed they share deeply rooted stereotypes that affect their job and the quality of the services they are expected to deliver;
- the broad public was additional target group. It creates the public environment for every Roma integration activity. At present, the hostile public attitudes towards Roma appear as one of the biggest obstacle before the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in all EU member-states.

The institutional framework

The Mobile Joint Task Force was the institutional framework for implementing the main activities for overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes. Six Joint task force groups (JTFG) were formed in the six pilot regions in Bulgaria – Veliko Tarnovo, Vratsa, Burgas, Shumen, Pazardzhik and Sofia, and one in Romania – Neamt county. In order to establish the JTFGs, after a written request from the side of Amalipe, the directors of the three institutions (Regional Directorate for Social Assistance, Regional Health Inspections, and Regional Inspectorate of Education) in the six pilot regions appointed the experts to take part in the JTFG. Some of the

institutions decided to appoint two experts who would work on rotation principle.

The JTFGs had three major tasks:

- to organize trainings for the field workers in the fields of education, healthcare and social inclusion in order to help them overcome prejudices and discrimination;
- to react on cases of discrimination or other problems related with Roma exclusion on the field or in other institutions and apply a multisectoral approach in solving it;
- to plan and carry out public awareness campaigns for overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes: among the field workers and the broad public.

Furthermore, Roma representatives were also included in the JTFGs. These were the Roma community moderators employed by Amalipe in the six Roma Community Development Centers (Byala Slatina Municipality – Vratsa District, Pavlikeni Municipality – Veliko Tarnovo District, Novi Pazar Municipality – Shumen District, Kameno Municipality – Burgas District, Peshtera Municipality – Pazardzhik District and Etropole Municipality – Sofia District). This helped to easier build bridges between officials and the Roma community. Although the initial idea of the project team was to include in the JTFGs also other Roma experts – from NGOs or district administrations – it did not work out.

In this way the Joint Task Forces brought together officials from three different administrations (the regional branches of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour) who have not worked together before and did it very seldom. In addition, they brought Roma experts with them that was also rare practice. In this way the composition of the JTFGs was innovative way to achieve inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation. This appeared as a real challenge and was one of the main reasons for the success of the activities undertaken.

From the survey with JTFG members

Overall 17 experts from the regional branches of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour worked in the JTFGs in Bulgaria.

Table 1: *How long have you been occupying an expert position?*

	number	Share in %
up to 5 years	4	24
up to 10 years	1	6
More than 10 years	12	70
Total	17	100

Table 1 gives clarity on the duration of the expert activities of the JTFGs members included in the questionnaire. 70% or 2/3 of them work as experts for more than 10 years and less than 1/3 of the experts (only 24% – all in the sphere of healthcare) have not yet reached 5-year practice in their positions. On one hand, this supposes a high level of responsibility in the selection of project experts, on the other hand – striving towards high level of professionalism of each one of them. At the same time, this unveils the completely familiar problem of aging of the employees in the sphere of social services and especially in education.

Table 2: *How did you enrol into the project?*

I was enrolled by my employer	13	76%
I myself expressed willingness	0	0%
I was asked by Amalipe Centre	4	24%

As it is seen from table 2, more than 2/3 of the participants in the JTFGs were enrolled in an official way, and the rest were invited for participation by an employee of Amalipe Centre. Nevertheless, all participants in the JTFGs were nominated by the institutions themselves (and those, who were directly contacted by Amalipe, had the preliminary approval of their employers). The reason is that the project activities are mainly directed towards the institutions – the approach “institutions train institutions”, i.e. the change is completely internal process with a little help of Amalipe. The project approach relied on such kind of work, which is in the bases of institutional activity, i.e. without contradicting the mechanisms, used in the institution work, to seek a way that the institutions themselves are provoked to work in such a way, as to be as close as possible to the quick solving of the occurred problems. That is why the participants in the mobile teams in most of the cases were nominated by the

head of the respective institution. This, of course, bears the negatives of whether the most suitable person will be nominated, but at the same time exactly this nomination makes the institution itself more involved, because it acts as a real participant in the project. That is why before forming the mobile teams, representatives of the Amalipe Centre had special meetings with the heads of the respective institutions, so that they can inform them about their project intentions and explain what kind of specialists from their institutions would be necessary for creation of the mobile teams.

To help the JTFGs in implementing their innovative job, the project team organized special training for the JTFG members. In July 2011 the JTFG from Bulgaria passed a six-day training of trainers (TOT), conducted by Amalipe. The representatives of the Romanian partner also participated in the training. During the training the participants discussed in details the seven modules of the trainings they were going to conduct with field workers and got profound knowledge of Roma culture, group division, specifics in the field of healthcare, education, social sphere, early marriages, Roma leadership, etc. A Manual for Trainers and for Trainees was published with details about each part of the training.

The second summer camp took place in May 2012 when the training of the first groups of field workers was finished and the training of the second groups had not begun. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Regional Inspectorates of Education, Regional Health Inspections and Regional Directorates of Social Assistance from the six regions working on the project – Veliko Tarnovo, Pazardzhik, Vratsa, Shumen, Sofia-City and Burgas. The event was organised in connection with the finalisation of the first stage of the activities, consisting of 7 training modules, in which were trained a total of 180 public officials and field workers from the sphere of healthcare, education and social activities. The three-day programme of the training was designed to include an analysis of the completed first stage, exchange of experience between the different teams, planning of the second stage activities, as well as suggestions for enhancing the work and ensuring sustainability.

In addition, the JTFG members received permanent technical and methodological support from the project team for implementing their activities.

From the survey with JTFG members

Table 3: *You have taken part in training, implemented by Amalipe Centre trainers. Do you think that the offered modules correspond to your needs when working with Roma?*

They completely correspond to my needs	14	82%
They partially correspond to my needs	3	18%
They do not correspond to my needs	0	0%

One of the main tasks of the experts of the JTFGs is their participation in training for familiarizing with Roma, creation of awareness towards them and their problems. Table 3 answers the questions, related to the personal perception regarding the efficiency of the carried out training. Amalipe Centre has prepared a handbook with correct scientific and practical knowledge about the Roma with the following sections: Roma and Roma groups; Stereotypes against Roma; Leadership in the community; Roma education; Roma health problems; Roma problems in the social sphere; Early marriages in Romani communities. For 82% of the expert team of the JTFGs the offered training modules completely correspond to their needs. 18% are partially satisfied and no one of the experts has chosen the possible negative answer in the survey research. We suppose that the partially satisfied experts have taken part in other similar trainings and they are familiar to a certain degree with part of the training material offered to them. The high level of satisfaction from the training provides good basis for more successful work both for the realization of the project and in the future work with Roma as a whole.

Table 4: *Do you think that after the carried out training you know Roma people better?*

Yes, completely	6	35%
Yes, partially	11	65%
No, I still have a lot of deficiency	0	0%

The carried out training gave grounds to only 35% of the questioned people (QP), who took part in it, to be absolutely convinced, that they are more familiar with Roma people. Although not directly acknowledging

deficiency of knowledge on this topic, 65% of the QP express partial conviction that they are more familiar with Roma people. The realized deficiency of knowledge about Roma people is a good reason for a more profound inquiry of a larger number of experts from the regional branches of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour in order to meet their needs of development of suitable handbooks or training aids, which will provide enough knowledge, skills and competences for successful work with representatives of different Romani communities in Bulgaria and Romania. At the same time such an inquiry would answer questions, related to adequate training of students in the sphere of education, health and social services with the purpose of better familiarization with Roma and successful work with them.

Anti-stereotypes training

After being trained, the JTFG trainers identified trainees. In every pilot region mixed group of teachers, medical doctors and social workers was formed: 10 representatives from every field who work on daily basis in Roma community. In this way, groups of 30 field workers were identified.

The JTFGs carried out training on 7 modules:

- Modul 1: Roma community – group specifics, customs and traditions
- Modul 2: Stereotypes towards Roma
- Modul 3: Leadership in the Roma community
- Modul 4: Education of the Roma community
- Modul 5: Health status and health problems in Roma community
- Modul 6: Social status and social services
- Modul 7: Early marriages in the Roma community.

The training was done once a month following every module, i.e. it took 7 months. The JTFGs used interactive methods of teaching in order to keep the participants actively involved in the training. Within each group social, health and educational field workers worked together. They had tasks to complete between each module, which they had to do on the basis of the cooperation between the three fields.

Until the end of the project in all six regions the training was conducted two times among two groups of trainees covering all 7 modules of the trainings planned. All participants received their certificates.

From the survey with JTFG members

Table 5: *You carried out training of teachers, MDs and social workers who have daily field work with Roma people. Do you think that it has affected their work in any way?*

Yes, it had positive influence	17	100%
Not in any way	0	0%
No, it had negative influence	0	0%

The result shown in *Table 5* is absolutely eloquent regarding: the positive attitude towards trainings for familiarizing with Roma people; positive self-assessment of one's own efforts in this direction; full satisfaction from the implemented work.

The main conclusion, which comes from the absolutely positive assessment, result of the one's own efforts for qualification of field workers under the project, is that the approach "institutions train institutions", i.e. the change which is absolutely internal process with little external help, has worked successfully. Following the hierarchic subordination, the experts in the Regional Inspectorates of Education, Social Assistance Directorates and Regional Health Inspectorates, engaged under the project, gave serious request for their own readiness to train their colleague teachers and field workers on-site after receiving suitable qualification from them. It would be very good, if the universities, training teachers, doctors and specialists in the sphere of social services, soon come into the position of institutions, providing adequate training for familiarizing and successful work with Roma people who need their services, i.e. provide the necessary external help in this district.

From the feedback questionnaire with trainees

Almost 72% of the teachers, doctors and social workers trained define the training as "extremely useful" for their future work with Roma. Another 26,63% perceive it as "more useful than un-useful". Only 1,37% define the training as "not useful" for their job.

73% state that the training was “very interesting”. Another 27% perceive it as “interesting” and no one – as “boring”.

More than 65% of the trainees declare willingness to be trainer of their colleagues for overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes.

The training brought important outcome, namely the change of attitudes among big part of the trainees. At the end of the training all participants were required to fill the questionnaire used for the survey of anti-Roma stereotypes. 82% of the trainees did it. The results showed change in the attitudes of around 20 % of them that is significant outcome achieved mainly through the anti-stereotypes training. The results are described in details below.

From the survey with JTFG members

Table 6: *Do you find the JTFGs useful in practice and do you think they should be institutionalised?*

	Number	Share
Yes	17	100%
No		
Total	17	100%

Table 10 shows the full agreement that the experts in the JTFGs are useful for the real practice and the desire of the participants for institutionalising of the JTFGs. Institutionalisation of their activity means change in the job description of the authorized for this activity experts in RIE, Social Assistance Directorates and Regional Health Inspectorates and this means more obligations for them for the same salary. Irrespectively of this all participants in the survey research are categorical in their proposal – JTFGs or the so-called „mobile teams“ are useful for the practice and they have to be institutionalised.

Public awareness campaigns

The JTFGs and the Community moderators from the Community Development Centers organized a number of public awareness campaigns. They targeted not only the field workers (teachers, medical doctors and social workers) but also the broad public that defines the entire public environment. The campaigns engaged a big number of participants: trainees in the anti-stereotypes training, a number of institutions Center Amalipe and Sastipen are working with, Roma activists. The campaigns were organized around certain international days:

8 april: the International Roma Day

For the International Roma Day in 2011 Center Amalipe organized events in the whole network of schools we work with, as well as in Veliko Tarnovo – among university students.

The campaign presented information through flyers and pictures for the killed Roma in the concentration camps during the Holocaust. The visitors were able to see posters with pictures that captured the Roma life. The pictures were a product of the children from school “Hristo Smirnen-ski” in the village of Vodolei. The volunteers of the Center Amalipe collected opinions and messages of the citizens concerning the colour of the Roma traditions and customs in Bulgaria.

Parallel with this, in the bookstore “Helikon” Center Amalipe exhibited pictures and essays of Roma students from the whole country. For four hours every visitor had the possibility to enjoy the children art and to reward the best in his or her opinion.

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=786&lang=2>

In 2012 a much larger public awareness campaign was organized. The campaign was held from 4 to 8 April throughout the country, and it joined thousands of students of ninety schools participating in the program “Reducing the dropout of Roma children”, Centers for Community Development in Etropole, Byala Slatina, Pavlikeni, Novi Pazar, Kameno and Peshtera, representatives of the Regional inspectorates of Education, Regional health inspections and Regional Directorates “Social Assistance”. Within the campaign school celebrations, community meetings, essay

contest, sports contests, presenting the film “Mission Amalipe”, and distribution of information materials were organized.

The campaign aimed to familiarize students, parents, representatives of the local Roma community, institutions and the general public with the symbolism of the International Roma Day on April 8th. The campaign also aimed to provide activities for the successful integration of Roma, already implemented in dozens of schools and communities, and the results can be seen and become a model for the whole country.

On 04/04/2012 at the BTA (Bulgarian News Agency) press conference was held under the motto “The sun shines equally on all” on the occasion of International Roma Day on 8 April. Following it, series of events to mark the International Roma Day were held in the week from April 4 to April 8 also in the six Bulgarian municipalities where Center Amalipe has established Community Development Centers. The events were organized in the framework of “The Sun shines equally on all” campaign which was supported by the municipalities of Peshtera, Byala Slatina, Etropole, Novi Pazar, Kameno and Pavlikeni, the Regional Inspectorates of Education, Regional directorates “Social Assistance” and local schools. Within it were held community meetings, sport competitions and distribution of informational materials about the date April 8. All the events were attended by hundreds of children and young people, representatives of municipal administrations, local government institutions and representatives of the local communities.

In the town of Etropole the International Roma Day was celebrated with a number of sporting events. Over 120 students from six schools in the municipality of Etropole competed in various sports activities: chess, dodge ball, football, handball, and table-tennis. During the games volunteers of Community Development Center – Etropole distributed informational materials which examine the nature of the present April 8. The initiatives were honored by Mr. Miroslav Naydenov – Minister of Agriculture and Food, Mrs. Rositsa Hristova – Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Etropole, many parents, citizens and guests of Etropole. Happiest were the children participating in the sports games, because at that day they were reunited with the general sportsmanship and showed that they all are citizens of a country where “the sun shines equally on all” and on an equal footing, everyone has their chance to be the winner.

Moderators of the Community Development Center – Pavlikeni organized jointly with “Philip Totyu” Elementary School, village of Varbovka, making of decorative branches and flowers on a spring theme. In a creative workshop were involved students from grades 5-8 and the made bouquets were given to the guests at the event which aim was to mark the International Roma Day in Pavlikeni. On April 6 in the sport hall of Pavlikeni started the competition in sporting matches and all the three schools of Pavlikeni were involved. The event was launched with a football match between the boys, followed by a volleyball game of the girls from the three schools. Along with sports events children from 5 to 8 grades presented a short cultural program. Volunteers and activists were distributing informational leaflets.

In Byala Slatina the events on the occasion of the International Day of Roma was a joint initiative of the Community Development Center – Byala Slatina, Municipality of Byala Slatina, and the schools on the territory of Byala Slatina. The events took place in two consecutive days. On the first day sports events and information campaign about the meaning of the date were held. In the sport activities were involved students from all the schools. All the participants were enthusiastic and supported by teachers, peers and friends. During the second day of the campaign students from several schools presented a cultural program where the rich life and soul of Roma were shown. Events over those two days were accepted by local authorities and local institutions, representatives of various ethnic groups, residents of the municipality of Byala Slatina.

With many football emotions, chess tournament and tennis was celebrated the International Day of Roma in Novi Pazar. Over 700 people attended various sport tournaments. At the night of April 6 was the culmination of the celebration there: a cultural program including recitation, presentation of the wedding ritual “Kana gedzhesi”, of traditional dances and finally the Roma hymn “Dzhelem, dzhelem”. At the end were presented the winners of the sport competitions and awards were presented by Mrs. Kurteva – Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Novi Pazar and Mr. Nikolov – Chairman of the local Municipal Council.

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1144&lang=1>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1153&lang=1>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1142&lang=1>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1135&lang=1>

Open heart children Roma Festival – 2011–2012

Our practices so far has proved that children are the best agent to change someone's prejudices and stereotypes. Therefore, Center Amalipe has been organizing for eight years already the National Children Roma Festival "Open Heart". In 2011 and 2012 the Festival was organized in a way to address explicitly the anti-Roma stereotypes.

In 2011 the festival gathered more than 800 children from all over the country and hundreds of visitors. In 2012 the number of participating children raise to 1200 from more than 90 schools all over the country. The event was attended by the Minister of EU funds Tomislav Donchev, representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Center for Educational Integration, the Commission Against Discrimination and many other institutions. This was a good opportunity to spread our message-that we all live together and getting to know each other, or to touch the untouchable would make us live better.

Many pictures one can find at our facebook group and more information at:

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=825&lang=1>

<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=825&lang=1>;

<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1213&lang=1>

A visit of student councils to the National Assembly of Bulgaria

On June 16, 2011, Center Amalipe organized a meeting of Presidents of Student Councils from Amalipe network with the Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly, Atanas Atanasov. The meeting was well-deserved reward for students and parents putting a year in effort and enthusiasm to prove that the School Council/Parliament in no way inferior to the National, and it is a linchpin of the model to keep children in school. One of the major goal of the visit is to change the attitudes of the MPs directly concerned with education, especially in regards to the preparation of the new Educational law. The intelligence of the students and the smart questions they asked challenged the stereotypes of the MPs about Roma as illiterate and marginalized. More information can be found at:

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=840&lang=1>

1 October: Roma pride – 2011–2012

On September 23, 2011, in the village of Katunitza, a buss driven by a Roma man Simeon Iosifov killed Angel Petrov, 19 years young person of Bulgarian origin. Since the families of Petrov and Rashkov had long history of conflicts during the previous years and since a few days ago Rashkov's grandson threatened to kill Petrov, the majority of Katunitza people decided that Iosifov is engaged by Rashkov, and the protests started. During the protest, another young person – Pavel Tolev – died because of a heart attack. On September 24, the protests against Rashkov appropriated a clear anti-Roma character, especially when the football fans from Plovdiv joined them. They burnt 3 of Rashkov's houses with slogans for killing all Gypsies and Turks. The police interfered too late, when the houses were already burnt. During the next days, the protests were organized in many Bulgarian cities – Plovdiv, Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo, Burgas, Varna, etc. Although officially they were labeled “On defense of the Katunitza people”, the protests had clear anti-Roma character. Fan clubs, rocker clubs, nationalist political parties and many young students joined the protests organized via Facebook.

Since September 25, anti-Roma protests in certain localities started to use violence against Roma. In Burgas, Varna, and other places, Roma people were beaten and Roma neighborhoods were attacked. Victims of this violence were ordinary Roma who had no links with Rashkov; some of them were students who attended ethnically mixed schools outside Roma ghettos or who worked outside Roma neighborhoods. As a result, many Roma parents forbade their children to go to school and many Roma did not go to work.

Therefore, Center Amalipe, together with other civil society organizations, JTFGs, schools, young Roma people, Roma and Bulgarian students, organized on 1st October a number of events in around fifteen cities and towns in Bulgaria. Our initiative was a response to the replaced message of the crowd shouting words of ethnic hatred, and an attempt to present the latter as the “fair outrage of the masses”. In the context of the events in Katunitza, we have decided that Bulgarian Roma Pride would not be a march but something more... We also attempted to include many Bulgarians in these initiatives in order to show that ethnic tolerance is still

a value in the Bulgarian society and that the sensible people in Bulgaria believe and are proud of the same things, of which Bulgarian Roma are proud of.

All the initiatives started at 11.00 a.m. on October 1st. A civic campaign “I have a dream: to study and live together” was one of the activities. It was organized by Center Amalipe in **Veliko Tarnovo** and **Strazhitsa** (with the support of the two municipalities), by the National Network of Children in **Sofia**, by the primary schools of Tishevitsa and Banitsa and Roma medical students in **Vratsa**, and by Roma Lom Foundation in **Lom**. This action was named “Tolerance fair.” In all the cities, Bulgarian and Roma young people were giving the citizens a carnation (in analogue with the Portuguese carnation revolution), a drawing by a child, and an essay written by a Roma child about the future of Bulgaria. In response, the citizens were asked to write their message for Bulgaria on a white sheet of cloth. Around 1000 carnations were given to the passing by citizens. Most of the people accepted them with a smile and a wish for more and more people to join this campaign. This returned us the hope that the prevailing part of the Bulgarian society does not share and does not support the hatred slogans of the crowd. “In Bulgaria, we all live together and the richness of the culture of every one of us contributes to what Bulgaria is” – wrote one of the people we met. Of course, there were people who had looked at us skeptically at the beginning, but our volunteers, especially the Roma medical students, and sincere words written by the Roma pupils quickly changed the skeptical glances.

In six Roma community centers (**Novi Pazar**, *Shumen district*, **Pestera**, *Pazardzhik district*, **Etropole**, *Sofia district*, **Biala Slatina**, *Vratsa district*, **Kameno**, *Burgas district*, and **Balvan**, *Veliko Turnovo district*), established by the Center Amalipe in six districts of Bulgaria, the day of the Roma pride was celebrated with flowers, children paintings, exhibitions of Roma culture, and presentation of examples of successful Roma.

Many other schools, organizations and citizens joined the initiative promoting tolerance. NGO “Public Education Council in the municipality of Gotse Delchev” participated in Saturday’s initiative making **TRAIN of TOLERANCE**: pupils gathered on “Macedonia” square in **Gotse Delchev** (*Blagoevgrad district*). They took each others hand and crossed the main street. They gave to the people painted smiles pictures with the

logo of the campaign “To live and study together” painted by the children during the previous days. In “Ivan Vazov” School, town of **Varshets (Montana district)** students and teachers decorated the **TREE of TOLERANCE** and put there flowers with their names. The elder students made a **WALL OF TOLERANCE** near the main entrance of the school with messages from each class of the school. By creating the longest painting in **Sliven**, the children joined the national campaign “I Have a Dream: To learn and live together.” More than 300 children were involved into a creative initiative, which took place along the main street of town. Daniela Nencheva, Director of “Dimitar Dobrovich” Art gallery in Sliven, told Darik radio that with this act, the children and citizens of Sliven wanted to support tolerance. By 11.30, the length of the drawing has reached 200 meters.

More pictures can be found in our Facebook group and at:

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=913&lang=2>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=918&lang=2>

National campaign for celebrating Vasilica – the Roma New Year

Schools became major actors in the initiative for national celebrations of St. Vasil, organized by Center ‘Amalipe’. Hundreds of students who attended the ‘Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore’ classes organized by dozens of schools participating in the program “Decreasing the Dropout Rate among Roma Students” visited ministries, the Regional Inspectorate of Education in Sofia, the Regional Health Inspection, the Regional Social Assistance Inspectorate and mayors throughout the country to wish them a Happy New Year and to remind us that educational integration efforts require result-oriented support. Thousands of their peers took part in school celebrations to enjoy the rich Roma culture. All this happened within a day – January 13, 2011 and January 14, 2012.

The campaign reached the high level political figures responsible for the Roma integration process in Bulgaria. The Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues Tzvetan Tzvetanov, the Minister of EU Funds Tomislav Donchev, the Minister of Education Sergei Ignatov, the Minister of Labor Totyo Mladenov, and others accepted Roma students and joined their message for tolerance.

In addition, all six JTFs in Bulgaria organized celebrations in three regional institutions.

All the Community Development Centers also joined their efforts in national celebrations of January 14 – St. Basil – the Roma New Year. Although this holiday is not so popular or even not known in some of the towns where the Community Development Centers operate, the community moderators supported the idea for “Vasilitsa” (St. Basil) to become a day of Roma culture, a symbol of originality and richness of Roma folklore in Bulgaria.

More information about all the celebrations can be found at:

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1032&lang=2>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1040&lang=2>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1034&lang=2>

<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1031&lang=2>

<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1448&lang=1>;

<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1027&lang=1>

Campaign on the day of the European languages on 26 September, Campaign on the Tolerance Day – 16 November and other public awareness campaigns were also organized by the JTFGs.

The change achieved

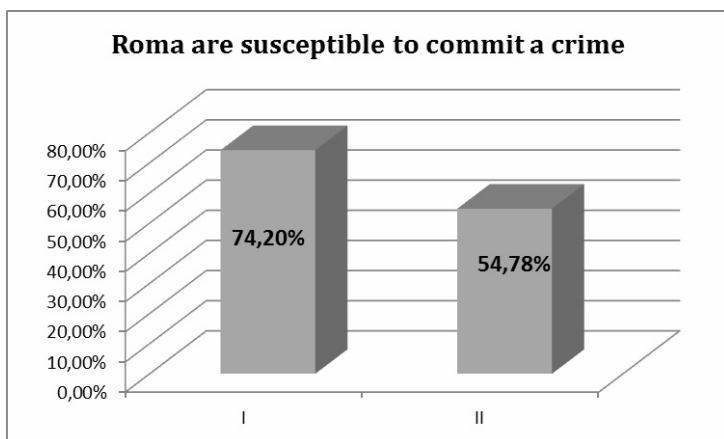
As explained above, at the end of the anti-stereotypes training, all participants (most of them also took part in the public-awareness campaigns) were required to fill the questionnaire used for the survey of anti-Roma stereotypes. Eighty two percent of the trainees did it. Since the project “To touch the Untouchable” aimed to establish and test a model for overcoming anti-Roma stereotypes among teachers, medical doctors and social workers, our intention was to get at least rough orientation in change achieved in these target groups after they were reached by the main project activities.

In principle, change in attitudes and stereotypes is difficult to measure. In addition, although we used the same questionnaire for the survey at the beginning of the project and for the survey after the end of the training, the groups were not the same. Representative sample for all

teachers, medical doctors and social workers in the pilot district composed the group of the first survey; teachers, GP's and social workers who had passed the anti-stereotypes training formed the group of the second survey. In this way, comparison between the results could provide mainly orientation in the change achieved.

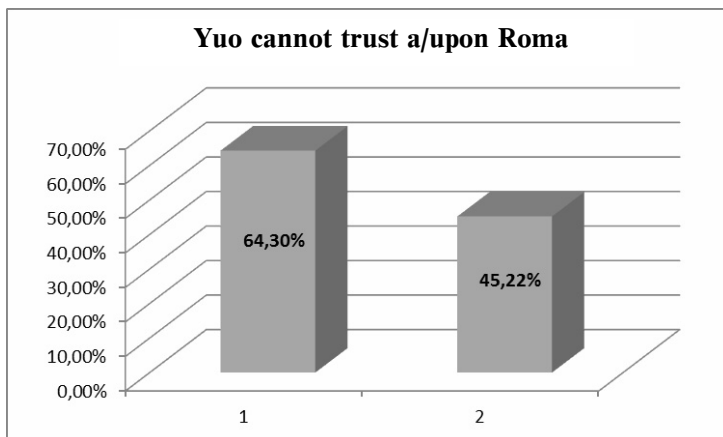
The comparison showed change in the attitudes among around 20% of the field workers who have participated in the main project activities. This is a significant outcome, it indicates that change in the stereotypes among the teachers, doctors and social workers towards Roma is possible and the model tested within the project "To touch the Untouchable" could lead to this change.

Basic stereotypes: The change in the basic stereotypes towards Roma is visible. For example, the share of those who consider Roma as susceptible to commit a crime decreases from 74,2% to 54,78%.

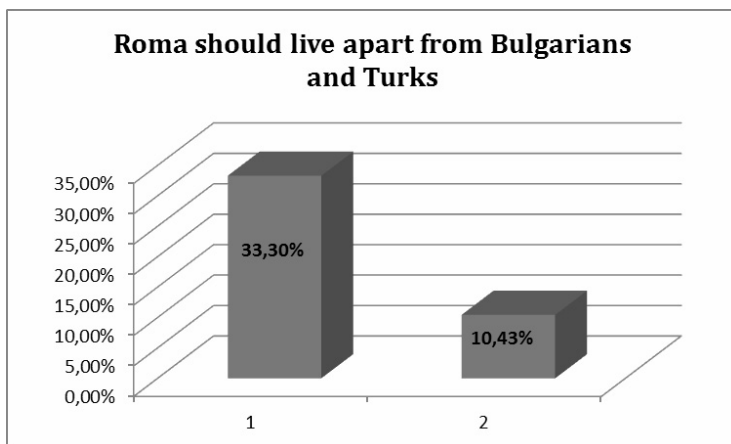


Even bigger is the decrease of those who state that "You cannot trust a Roma": from 64,3% to 45,22%.

In some of other basic stereotypes, the positive change achieved is smaller but still visible. For example, in the basic survey three out of four respondents agreed that Roma are lazy and irresponsible. After the training the number decreased to two out of three respondents. The change in the general perception that "All Roma are very much alike" is minimal: from 61,53% to 57,14%.

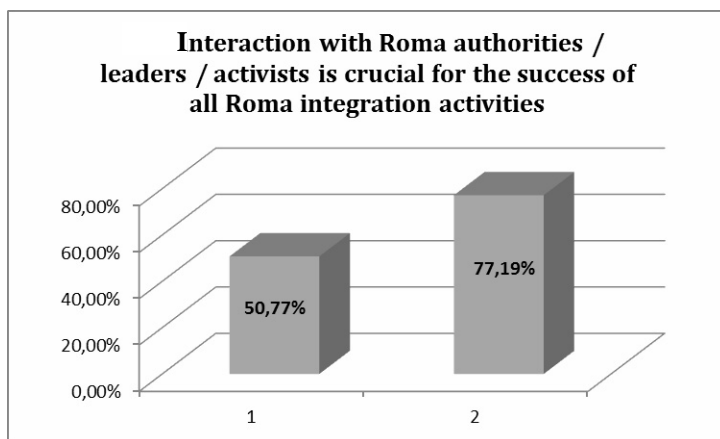


Important and significant change is the decrease in the agreement with the opinion that Roma should live apart from Bulgarians and Turks. From 33,3% cumulative agreement within the first survey, this opinion was shared by 10,43% after the training.



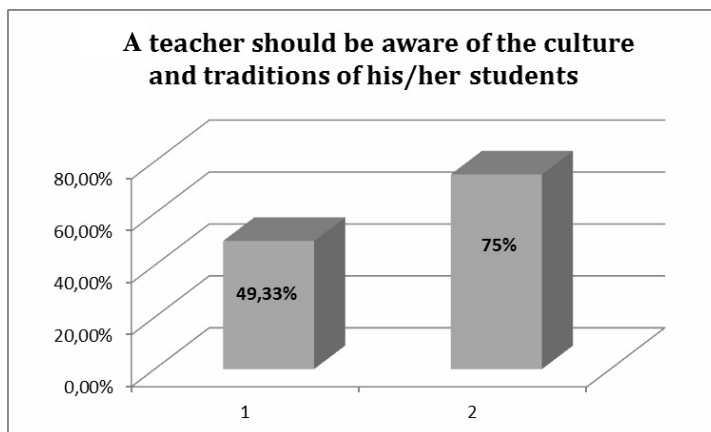
All these results show that the basic stereotypes of the field workers in educational, social and medical care could be influenced positively by a combination of training, coordinated work with Roma activists and public awareness campaigns.

Stereotypes about institutional integration: Important positive development is the growing understanding that interaction with Roma authorities (leaders) and activists is crucial for the success of all Roma integration activities: from 50,77% during the first survey the agreement with this statement raises to 77,19% after the training and public-awareness campaigns.



Understanding that integration is a two-sided process and that the majority (in particular – the field workers) needs to learn more about Roma also rises in similar way. For example, during the first survey less than a half of the respondents agreed that the teachers should now the culture and habits of Roma people in order to work effectively. In the final inquiry this percentage is 75, which is a remarkable improvement. All this indicates that the project model could create favorable awareness about Roma integration.

At the same time no positive change is observed regarding the perception that there is a need for separate (lower) standards since Roma could not achieve the mainstream ones. Even after the training, almost one out of five respondents agreed to have lower educational requirements for the Roma students. Although this perception is not dominant it indicates that a relatively big share of the field workers are ready to “solve” their lack of success in Roma environment with setting double standards.

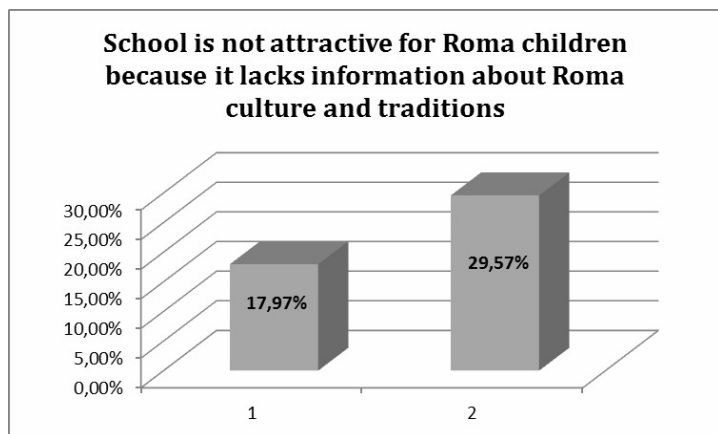
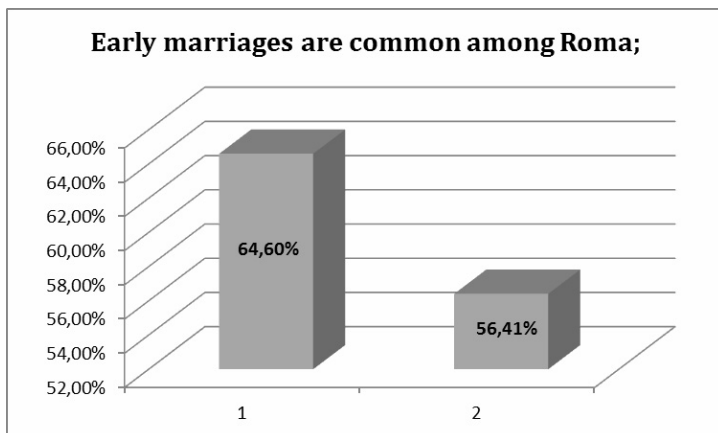


Stereotypes by fields: A less significant change is observed regarding the predominant stereotypes in different fields: education, health care, Romani women. Although there is some improvement, it seems that the model (training, work on individual cases and public awareness campaigns) influences these stereotypes in a smaller degree and needs more investment in this direction.

For example, no change is achieved regarding the perception that “Education is not a value for Roma, and Roma parents could not help their children in school”, as well as on the opinion that “Romani women give birth to many children because of the social benefits”. We have to take into account that these stereotypes are deeply rooted not only among non-Roma but even among Roma population and it is difficult to influence them.

At the same time, the post-training survey marked change in the perception of certain topics that were specially targeted during the training. For example, the number of field workers who state that “Early marriages are common among Roma; they could not be influenced since this is a Roma tradition” decreased from 64,6% to 56,41%.

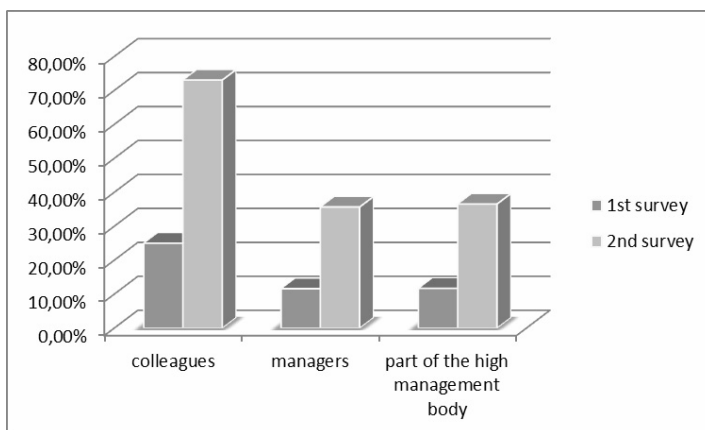
The number of field workers who consider that “School is not attractive for Roma children because it lacks information about Roma culture and traditions” increased from 17,97% to 29,57%. On both topics (early marriages and intercultural education) there were special sessions during the anti-stereotypes training which seems to be a reason for the improvement.



Professional stereotypes: The stereotypes regarding profession and readiness to work together with Roma summarize an advance in all other types of stereotypes. Opening their minds for having colleagues and managers from Roma origin, the field workers (teachers, doctors and social workers) open the door for overcoming all other types of prejudices towards Roma.

An advance in professional stereotypes achieved after the training and public awareness campaigns was remarkable and promising. The strongest indicator for this is the percentage of field workers who are ready to

work “shoulder by shoulder” with a Roma colleague. Only a quarter (25%) of teachers, doctors and social workers agreed with this idea during the initial survey. After the project model was applied this share raised significantly to 73,4%. Similar advance was achieved on the readiness to have Roma as direct managers (from 11,6% to 35,65%) or as part of the management board (from 11,7% to 36,52%).



Do you agree to have Roma as:

Change in behavior: The duration of “To touch the Untouchable” project was two years, which is not enough to measure possible change in the behavior of the field workers. Nevertheless, it could be expected that the change in the stereotypes achieved among teachers, doctors and social workers would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of work in Roma community.

Proxi-indicators for this improvement were searched through interviews with Roma representatives. The community moderators working in 6 Community Development Centers proved that due to the application of the model the field workers improved their work. As a result, better educational, healthcare and social services were delivered in the respective Roma communities.

From the interviews with Roma community moderators

Table 7: *Before launching the project „To touch the untouchable“, did the representatives of the municipal services and of the educational institutions often show discriminatory attitude towards Roma people from your quarter/neighbourhood?*

	Total number	Share
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Except for 1 QP, the local community moderators agreed that before launching the project, the representatives of the municipal services and educational institutions (kindergartens and schools) did show discriminatory attitudes towards Roma people from their quarters. The same image was also described by many other formal and informal Roma representatives, and it is no surprise to any of the well-informed researchers.

Table 8: *Do you know about cases when Roma people from your quarter/ neighbourhood/ settlement have shown discriminatory attitudes towards employees of the municipality/the mayor's office?*

	Total number	Share
Yes	7	70%
No	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Table 8 provides clear information that 30% of the QP have witnessed cases of reversed discriminatory attitudes – when officials were discriminated against in some form by Roma people from the quarter. This phenomenon is also not an exception and it should not be underestimated in practice. The civil servants are also human beings, they also have purely human feelings and emotions, they can also be insulted by acts of discriminatory nature, and they earn their living as hard as the Roma people when they are discriminated against.

Table 9: *Do you think that for the two years during which the project has been running the cases of discriminatory attitude towards Roma people from your quarter /neighbourhood have reduced?*

	Total number	Share
Considerably reduced	5	50%
Insignificantly reduced	4	40%
No change	1	10%
Increased		
Total	10	100%

The question about reducing of the discriminatory cases, as a result from the effect of the project is crucial for the present research. Half of the questioned people (QP) state that such cases have “*considerably reduced*”. Another 40% also agreed that the cases of discrimination have decreased, although “*insignificantly*”. And only one of the questioned moderators gave negative answer, i.e. he/she sees no change. This result is also a good evidence of the sustainability of the project, if its efforts are sustained in one or another form.

Table 10: *Do you personally know Roma people who have made use of the services of the project and have received adequate help on a discriminatory problem in the sphere of education, health and/or social services?*

	Number	Share
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100%

The answers of the question, related to personal knowing of Roma people, who have made use of the services under the project and have received an adequate help in the three spheres of intervention according to their locations, are to a certain extent connected with the personal endeavours of the community moderators. Only two of them, as can be seen in table 10, provided negative answers, the others (80%) stated that they personally know Roma who have benefitted from better services.

The improvement described above provides a real hope that the model applied within the project could contribute to overcoming the key anti-Roma stereotypes among teachers, doctors and social workers. Most probably, this model is applicable for other kinds of field workers too. There is no doubt that much more should be done: for further development of the model (especially towards overcoming the stereotypes per professional fields) and for its application at national and international levels. The following chapter summarizes the main steps, which are necessary for this.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Main conclusions

1. The field workers in education, health care and social assistance in Bulgaria and Romania lack sufficient academic and practical training to encounter ethno-cultural differences and to manage their own discriminatory attitudes. The majority of them share deeply rooted anti-Roma stereotypes that hamper their effective work with Roma.

2. The project “To touch the Untouchable” created and tested an effective model for overcoming anti-Roma stereotypes among teachers, doctors and social workers. Most probably, this model is also applicable for certain other groups of field workers.

The model combines two complementary approaches:

- institutional approach, i.e. the change of anti-Roma stereotypes among the field workers should be achieved primarily through work of the institutions. The approach of the project is based on the type of work, which is in the very basis of the institutional work, i.e. without contradicting the mechanisms the particular institution operates on. In addition, the approach insisted on interaction and joint work of educational, health care and social assistance institutions that proved to be very useful;
- community involvement approach: representatives of the local Roma communities are involved in the activities from their planning through implementation to evaluation.

The model is based on 3 pillars: anti-stereotypes training, work on particular cases, and public awareness campaigns.

3. The Joint Task Force Groups (JTFGs) are very useful in practice and they should be institutionalised.

4. It is important to look for solutions, which could alert about the most pressing problems in the sphere of Roma integration along with looking for opportunities for their prevention. The JTFGs are a significant step in this direction.

5. There is a real need of elaboration of suitable handbooks or study aids, which will provide sufficient knowledge, skills and competences for a successful work with the representatives of the different Roma communities in our country. In this aspect, there is a need of such a research, which would provide answers to the questions, related to the adequate training of students in the sphere of education, health and social services, and which would aim at gaining better knowledge about the Roma people and a more successful work with them.

6. The universities educating teachers, doctors and specialists in the sphere of social services, should take the position of those, offering adequate training for gaining better knowledge and successful work with Roma people.

7. Carrying out of specialized research, which will provide detailed and substantiated analysis of the mean statistical needs in all regions in the country concerning Roma integration, is necessary.

8. All Roma problems must be resolved with the direct participation of Roma people.

A. General recommendations

A.1. In general, there is a need of national informational / public awareness campaign to explain what is the role of the affirmative action / positive discrimination, why it is needed in some cases (concerning for example not only Roma, but immigrant communities as well), and what is its positive impact for all citizens. This is the only way to overcome the stereotypes that Roma are a privileged community, and to contribute for gaining public support for Roma integration activities.

Such a campaign needs to reach a broad public. Teachers, MDs and social workers should be not only clients but also active participants in the campaign. The campaign would gain credibility and legitimacy if it would have representatives from the three groups as ones of its main protagonists.

The institutions responsible for the three groups (teachers, medical doctors and social workers) need to provide:

- the necessary channels for reaching all the field workers (including the professional media and forums);
- proper stimuli for participation in the campaign

4.2. There is a visible need of professional campaigns for changing anti-Roma stereotypes among certain professional groups. As people who work on everyday basis with Roma and who shape the public opinion, teachers, MDs and social workers should be among the main targets of such professional campaigns.

Professionals from the three groups should not only be targets but also active organizers and main participants in the campaigns. Different types of peer-trainings, peer discussions and forums could be included in the campaign's. Common campaign (which reaches teachers, MDs and social workers) is a better option instead of 3 separate campaigns. It is important that Roma activists who work at a grass-root level on the same topics (education, health care, social assistance) take part in the campaigns.

The institutions responsible for the field workers in education, health care and social assistance should organize and steer the campaigns. They also need to provide necessary channels for reaching all the field workers: such as professional media (including special editions), professional forums (including the option to organize special forum on this issue), etc. The responsible institutions should provide the necessary stimuli for the active participants in the campaign. In addition, they should engage independent experts and NGOs with proved expertise in organizing the campaign. Good cooperation among these three institutions is crucial for the campaign's efficiency and effectiveness;

4.3. There is acute need of a national campaign for changing anti-Roma stereotypes: as pointed, Roma are the only ethnic group depicted by solely negative associations. Most of the stereotypes provoke hatred that could explode in ethnic violence and riots. They lead to public mistrust in any Roma integration initiatives, which appears as one of the main obstacles before the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies.

The campaign should reach the broad public. The campaign should include broad set of opinion makers as main protagonists, including teachers, MDs and social workers. It is important that nationally recognized Roma activists take part in the campaign. NGOs with proved expertise

and nationally recognized experts should participate in organizing and steering the campaign;

A.4. There is a need of a new intercultural social education syllabus in the Bulgarian educational system in order to overcome the stereotype that “you cannot trust Roma”. It is necessary to promote intercultural education at all levels of the educational system (from kindergarten to university) and beyond it (including diverse forms of life-long learning);

A.5. There is a need of an anti-discriminatory media monitoring as far as mass media impose the image of the criminal Roma. It is necessary that this monitoring finds its proper institutional holder;

A.7. There is a need of civic education in order to increase an administrative culture not only of Roma but of entire population in Bulgaria. Thus stereotypes about aggression and ill-manners could decrease. It could also affect a stereotype about an uneducated Roma among the social workers, which probably stems from problems with submitting documents and filling up forms.

B. Recommendations for institutional partnership between educational, health and social institutions

To create a sustainable mechanism for overcoming mutual discriminatory attitudes demonstrated both by field workers towards clients of Roma origin and vice versa – by Roma people towards civil servants, it is necessary to create **coordination mechanism**, which requires a serious preparatory work by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health, interested non-governmental organisations, as well as the mandatory participation of the local authority.

B.1. Coordination mechanism: The coordination mechanism is an efficient system for collaboration and coordination of the institutions in charge, competent organisations and other interested parties within horizontal and vertical level aiming at implementation of a lawfully regulated and efficient activity for quick and successful resolution of particular conflicts occurred as a result of existing deeply layered discriminatory attitudes between employees and Roma clients. The coordination mechanism aims at regulating particular rights and obligations of the involved

subjects for uniting resources and efforts in order to provide an efficient system of interaction.

The term “coordination mechanism” can be particularly defined as a system of interaction when dealing with cases of discriminatory activities in the field work of teachers and field workers from the system of social and health services for Roma people.

B.2. Stakeholders involved to implementation of the coordination mechanism

- *Responsible institutions* – bodies of executive power operating on central and local level – managed by their authorities and principles of respecting the interests of the clients of Romani origin, recognition of their rights and the rights of employees, ethics for resolution of each particular case, providing mutual information and assistance, multi-disciplinary approach on national and local level, flexibility in decision-making and setting up long-term goals.

In this (our) particular case, these are the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health including their regional administration bodies.

- *Competent organizations* – temporary, formal structures, established within bodies of executive power – managed by the objectives of their work, specified in the orders for their establishment.

In this case, the structure in question is the Joint Task Force Groups

- *Non-governmental organizations and other structures of the civil society*

- *Representatives of the Roma community*: in case of “To touch the Untouchable” project, these are the community moderators from the Community Development Centers

B.3. Forms for implementation of the coordination mechanism:

- *Reaching an agreement for collaboration and coordination* of the work between Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health for the sake of resolution of particular cases with clearly defined rules for building up an efficient inter-institutional system for prevention of conflicts occurred as a result from the existing mutual discriminatory attitudes. In practice, this stage can be realized through:

- *Adoption of decree of the Council of Ministers*, where the rules for structuring of JTFGs on a district level, the responsibilities of the three ministries working in the same sphere, the rights and obligations of the members of JTFGs, will be clearly defined, or;

- *Signing of a contract for collaboration* between the leaders of the three institutions working in the same sphere – also with clearly defined rules, responsibilities, rights and obligations.

- *Development of mechanisms for prevention and control* upon all sectorial policies, connected with provision of an efficient inter-institutional system for prevention of conflicts in the sphere of education, social services and health, deriving from the existing mutual discriminatory attitudes. In this aspect, it is necessary to emphasize:

- implementation of consistent, real and efficient control upon the entire system of authority institutions (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health, their regional structures, municipalities, mayors and municipal administration, directors of educational, health and social institutions), which will be mainly in the form of prevention;
- improvement of the administrative capacity of the employees working in these bodies concerning the specifics of work with Roma people;
- offering adequate trainings and qualifications for gaining more knowledge about Roma people and the local Roma communities;
- changing primary and subordinate legislation concerning the role of the municipalities in order to develop policies for education, health-care and social services aiming at prevention of conflicts, based on negative discriminatory attitudes.

B.4. Specifics in the JTFGs work

The Joint Task Force Groups should be established at district level and include experts from the regional structures of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health, as well as formal or informal representative/s of the Roma community on a district level. JTFGs should set up a common goal, related to an urgent intervention and prevention of discriminatory cases during field work with Roma people. To achieve this goal, a joint action plan with clearly defined tasks and a three

year implementation deadline must be elaborated. Each of the above-specified participants in the multidisciplinary team shall point out and propose to the rest of the team particular tasks related to the case, which s/he shall implement according to his/her powers, in compliance with a regulatory framework. The specific tasks for implementation must be set up so that any participant will be able to act in accordance with his/her own operating independence. Implementation of particular activities and tasks should be supported by the assistance of other participants, and in the same time this must contribute to the final result. A long-term goal must guarantee prevention of possible future conflicts on a discriminatory basis when working with Roma people.

JTFGs shall report to their direct superiors, and they – to the respective ministries working in the sphere. Annual progress reports must be prepared and uploaded on the web-sites of the three ministries. The triennial work plans and the final triennial reports for the work done shall be accepted at a meeting of the Council of Ministers.

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**BEYOND ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES:
THE WORLD IS NOT JUST WHITE AND BLACK**

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