

Complete wording of specific objectives 5.1.1, 5.1.3, 6.1.1 and 6.1.2

Complete text of the description of the specific objective 5.1.1:

Specific objective 5.1.1 *Enhancing the educational level of members of marginalized communities, including, without limitation, the Roma, at all levels of education with an emphasis on pre-primary education*

According to the Atlas of Roma Communities (2013), 16.73% of inhabitants have not finished elementary schools; 28.05% have finished elementary schools; 4.98% have finished special schools. 5.74% have finished secondary schools; 2.80% attend secondary schools. Inhabitants that graduated from universities make up 0.18%; universities are attended by 0.36%. According to a research¹, in selected communities with high percentage of the Roma, kindergartens were attended by 28% of children aged 3-6². In order to improve the unfavourable condition resulting in a low educational level of the Roma, especially those of the MRC environment, the SR, in line with the Council Recommendation to the NPR SR 2014, adopted measures necessary to balance structural disadvantages faced by children from SZP, especially from MRC with low chances of leaving bad socioeconomic situation and obtaining education. Measures to include these children are described in the Action Plan of Strategy of the SR for integration of the Roma. Until 2015, the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport of the SR will introduce free pre-primary education for children from SZP from 3 years of age. Measures relate to special education of teachers for MRC, prevention of erroneous classification of children from SZP to special schools, higher number of assistant teachers and the consequent higher subsidy per pupil, spare time care, completion of elementary education for pupils who have not finished the elementary school, and education of the Roma in their mother tongue³.

Many Roma children are lagging behind the majority population in terms of developing their skills. Their lack of stimulation in early childhood is the first step into a vicious cycle of poverty. All subsequent problems in continuing education and also in adulthood are linked and largely arise from this problem. The implementation of early care programs and development activities for children aged 0 to 3 years can eliminate and lessen the negative impact on MRC children living in generational poverty.

Barriers of improvement of education of Roma children (opinions of parents, discrimination of Roma children, lack of trust to pre-school facilities, lack of awareness of the importance of pre-school education, language barrier, lack of financial coverage) multiple the disinterest of parents and cause problems when collecting information.⁴ Investments to pre-primary education are a means forming the basis for further education, a means of prevention of premature termination of school attendance; they increase the equality of results and the level of skills.⁵

The complexity of the problem of education is expanded by the segregation of Roma children in the educational system - a high share of them end in special elementary schools and in special classes in standard elementary schools. The purpose of the activities is to desegregate and to build inclusive

¹ Research by the World Bank, UNDP, and EC 2011

² WB: Heading to Equal Start: Closing the Gap in Education of Roma Children in Early Childhood in Eastern Europe. World Bank 2012

³ NPRSR2014

⁴ Good start: The EU structural funds and education and care in early childhood in MRKREF2012.

⁵ EC 2006: Efficiency and Justice in the European Systems of Education and Vocational Training.

education. Quality education in early childhood removes the differences in results achieved and supports the cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.⁶ Improving the dissemination of information about the benefits of pre-school education, the intensive co-operation of pedagogical staff with the help of Roma teacher assistants with parents and the support of activities aimed at improving the co-operation of parents with educational facilities are effective tools for enhancing of the rate of preparation of Roma children for school and increasing the overall level of education of members of the MRC. It is necessary to provide for regular data collection to measure the progress of implementation of inclusive policies in the area of education and the impact thereof on the inhabitants of the MRC, including the trends of desegregation.

Results

- *Reducing the number of children from MRC in special schools*
- *Higher number of children from MRC attending pre-school facilities*
- *Increased inclusiveness of the education system also through the placement of Roma pupils in different schools*
- *Reducing the early school dropout rate among children and youth from marginalized Roma communities*
- *Increased proportion of Roma students with education at the level of ISCED 3A, ISCED 3B, ISCED 3C, ISCED 4*

Complete text of the description of the specific objective 5.1.3:

Specific objective 5.1.3 ***Promoting access to health care and public health, including preventive care and health education and increased hygiene standards of living***

Several reports on the condition of the Roma population in Slovakia point to the **deterioration of the health of the Roma population** recently (or after 1989). The main determinants are the insufficient level of health and social awareness; low standard of personal and communal hygiene, living, and ecological riskiness of environment.⁷ The unfavourable health condition in the Roma communities is also contributed to by insufficient nutrition and lower real accessibility of health care due to lack of financial sources. There is a need to look for the causes not only in the bad social situation, but in the low level of education and lack of health awareness.⁸

According to demographic indicators it can be concluded that the Roma population has a progressive character in terms of age. Natality studies also refer to higher **perinatal and infant mortality**.⁹

Bad living conditions in segregated Roma settlements and locations with a high settlement of MRC as well as low health awareness and lack of hygiene influence the occurrence of contagious diseases such as hepatitis, bacillus dysentery, respiratory infections and diseases such as porrigo and pediculosis.

Roma communities also lack knowledge about health protection, reproduction health, sexual behaviour, childcare, and personal hygiene. In order to increase the availability of health care, contribute to the

⁶ Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: Providing for Optimum Start for All Our Children in the World of the Future; Official Journal of the EU; (2011/C 175/03)

⁷ M. Popper, P. Szeghy, Š. Šarkozy, Roma Population and Health: Analysis of Situation in Slovakia (PDCS: Bratislava, 2009)

⁸ Ditto

⁹ B. Šprocha, "Mortality and Health Condition of the Roma in Slovakia, part 1", Slovak Statistics and Demography, (2012), Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 86-101, D. Mihailov, Health Situation of Roma Communities: Analysis of UNDP/WB/EC research data (UNDP:Bratislava, 2012) 10

increase of awareness and health information, especially for inhabitants of the MRC, a number of pilot projects were implemented; these serve as the basis for the setting of the Programme of Support of Health of Disadvantaged Communities in Slovakia for years 2007-2015. The lack of success in fulfilment of the objectives of this programme can be attributed to the insufficient number of community health care workers, the absence of standardized activities of these workers and the discontinuation of the programme.

Housing conditions also affect the health of a population. Settled ownership relations are a prequalification for the legitimacy of the technical and hygienic standards of dwellings. Data from the Atlas of Roma Communities (2013) and available surveys confirm that dwellings in Roma communities are frequently built on land by individuals with no legal entitlement to such land and without building permits or their subsequent legalization, which results in the absence of or limited access to basic and technical infrastructure. Quality housing is connected to the possibility of finding a job, living in a quality environment in terms of hygiene and providing adequate space for the personal and educational growth of children and adults. Improvement of housing hygiene can also be ensured through the settlement of land within the settlement in which people live from the MRC live (settlement of land from known / unknown owners for the benefit of the municipality). This will allow other activities such as access to publicly controlled water, provision of a municipal waste management system, road construction, etc. The social and economic disadvantages of the population of MRC, the lack of adequate expert capacities of local governments to address the settlement of ownership rights and the legalization of the land require outside intervention. It is necessary to provide for regular data collection to measure the progress of implementation of inclusive policies in the area of health and housing and the impact thereof on the inhabitants of the MRC.

Results

- *Increased availability of health care services for persons from MRC*
- *Increased level of awareness of the persons from MRC in health care and prevention through awareness programmes, information activities and campaigns*
- *Settlement of land will make it possible to improve the hygiene of living in MRC*

Complete text of the description of the specific objective 6.1.1:

Specific objective 6.1.1 *Growth in the number of the Roma households with access to improved housing conditions*

The area of housing is one of the areas with the largest growth in the gap between Roma and the majority population. Within the majority population there are groups that are disadvantaged and considered to be vulnerable in certain areas, however, only Roma communities in Slovakia create settlements and different types of non-standard dwellings within them that fail to meet technical or hygiene standards.

According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013, in 809 settlements identified in 582 municipalities, there are 21,168 dwellings in the following structure:

- 1,491 residential buildings with 9,943 flats, 4,726 of which are FLS
- 8,501 legal masonry buildings
- 196 legal timber buildings
- 986 masonry buildings under construction
- 3,645 masonry buildings not entered in the land register

- 388 timber buildings not entered in the land register
- 4,070 shack-type dwellings,
- 470 dwellings built from portable buildings
- 59 caravans,
- 60 dwellings in non-residential premises,
- 13 other dwellings

In dwellings located in settlements, 74% of dwellings are able to use public water supply and 57% of dwellings actually use it. Dwellings using their own well made up 23% of the concentrations. In 22% of dwellings other sources were used or there was no access to drinking water. The public sewer system was available to 39% of dwellings in settlements and actually used by 30% of such dwellings. Septic tanks were used in 25% of dwellings.

Because the access to basic technical infrastructure is lacking in some cases also in parts of municipalities with a majority population, it is desirable to prevent further deepening of the exclusion between the majority and the minority in support of these interventions. For this reason, in addition to investments in improving access to basic technical infrastructure for MRC, it is also possible to support investments in this area in parts of the municipalities inhabited by the majority.

The Report on the living conditions of Roma households in Slovakia mapping the situation in 2005 and with data from 2010 found a higher level of diversity in the water sources used by Roma households compared to the general population in the geographical vicinity.

Access to drinking water is one of the factors necessary for full participation in the life of society in terms of generally expected standards for hygiene. In addition to the basic infrastructure, the scope of issues of housing includes also issues regarding the technical condition of houses and blocks of flats in the ownership of municipalities. Municipalities frequently lack funds for their maintenance and repair. This situation is addressed in part by the Housing Development Programme, which partially addresses this situation by providing subsidies for the procurement of rental flats of common and lower standard, technical infrastructure and the removal of systematic defects in blocks of flats.

Despite the unique nature of this programme in Central and Eastern Europe, it remains a limited and not a universal solution to the housing issues of Roma communities.

New forms of housing in the SR have also been tested. They show potential to improve the housing level of population in marginalized Roma communities. One of these forms, which offers optimal conditions for individual integration, is multilevel or transitional housing. It includes a comprehensive system of social services for dependent and vulnerable sections of the population whose backbone is a vertical system of social housing. The system helps and promotes social growth and social inclusion. A direct component of transitional housing is systematic social work – work by field social workers and community workers, who provide advice and assistance aimed at solving the problems of vulnerable sections of the population and operate a range of reintegration programmes. Self-build housing, the basic principle of which is the direct participation of population in marginalized Roma communities, is another form.

Securing objectives in the area of housing can also be achieved in the form of a returnable financial contribution through financial instruments. One of the financial instruments is direct investment aimed at improved living conditions. The aim of housing support through direct investment is to support a business whose activities will lead to the fulfilment of goals in the area of housing.

Results:

- *improved conditions for social integration of people from MRC through a functional housing*

system (e.g. transitional, social, rental),

- *introduction of a financial mechanism supporting self-build housing projects (micro-loans)*
- *improved quality of housing in the MRC environment through:*
 - *infrastructure*
 - *access to drinking water*
 - *construction, reconstruction of access roads communications*
 - *establishment of a municipal waste management system*

Complete text of the description of the specific objective 6.1.2:

Specific objective 6.1.2 *Improving access to quality education, including education and care in early childhood*

At the present time there continue to be sub-optimal conditions for the full participation of children from MRC in the pre-primary as well in the primary level of education. The capacity of the network of kindergartens is limited and educational facilities are undersized. Space capacities do not correspond to the demographic curve, buildings of kindergartens are in poor condition, and the equipment of these educational facilities does not reach the required level. According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013, there are at present 1,456 kindergartens attended by 24,627 children, of whom 9,164 are Roma children, including 6,523 Roma children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the survey, 10,090 Roma children were born just in 2011. The findings of the new Atlas of RC confirm this trend. For the time being, it is certain that the amendment to the Education Act no. 245/2008 from 2019, which made pre-primary education compulsory from the age of 5 with effect from 2021 (the Act no. 209/2019 Coll. with effect from 1 January 2021) will increase the pressure on municipalities to enlarge the capacity of kindergartens. With full use of the ESIF, it is possible to create sufficient capacities for 5 year old children in municipalities with MRC. This does not take into account demographic trends, which have a rising tendency, as well as the intention to introduce pre-primary education compulsory from the age of 4 or 3 years. This will further exert pressure to further increase of capacities in pre-primary education.

In view of this situation it is necessary to expand the capacity of kindergartens in municipalities with the presence of MRC. The construction and refurbishment of pre-school education facilities is essential for the development of sustainable and inclusive education policies and is an integral part of development strategies on the national level.

Primary school capacities are undersized. Spatial possibilities regarding class numbers are limited and do not correspond to demographic trends. Since 2014, demographic trends have been rising throughout the country except of Trenčín Region. Children born in 2018 will leave primary schools in 2032, so the capacities necessary for primary school pupils will gradually rise until at least 2032. Since 2014, the number of primary schools with two-shift running has been rising. In school year 2018/2019 were officially registered in two-shift running 44 such schools, 191 classes and 3342 pupils. Based on a survey conducted in 2019 by the Plenipotentiary Office in cooperation with the MoE on a sample of 125 schools, in 2027 two-shift running will be approximately in 4000 classes with 68,500 Roma pupils, mainly from socially disadvantaged environment. In order to preserve unity in schools, it is necessary to address the current situation with two-shift schools and also in schools where there is a threat of three-shift in the perspective of the next 3 years. There is a must of expansion of primary schools with new classes, specialized classrooms and laboratories, school libraries, canteens, gym and the provision of

related material equipment. Where justified there is also permitted construction of new buildings of primary schools. In combating the ambiguity of education in schools with MRC pupils, the OP will fund integrated pilot projects (where a combination of soft and investment measures will be required) to test new approaches to improving the access of MRC pupils to inclusive primary school education, thus improving their quality of education and at the same time to ensure desegregation of Roma pupils.

Such pilot projects will include investments in expanding the capacity of existing primary schools and their equipment. Under no circumstances can these investments lead to segregation of Roma pupils and should contribute to their desegregation by applying the following principles:

1. Investments in existing schools with more than 30% of MRC pupils are allowed only in primary school (grades 1 to 4). Investments must be accompanied by active desegregation measures to reduce the concentration of Roma pupils in these schools and their more balanced and equitable representation and distribution to other schools, for example. Providing bus services for Roma pupils from the school. At the same time, the investment must be accompanied by stronger soft measures that will lead to better quality of service, both in the school that it handles and receives Roma pupils. The participating municipalities and schools should sign an agreement with neighboring municipalities specifying how to ensure the mobility of pupils, capacities and so on. Schools receiving Roma pupils from neighboring municipalities / localities can invest in services and equipment that will serve all pupils in schools, such as: PC classroom, library, kitchen / dining room, gym, etc. In the case of sites with more than one primary school, the extension of the capacity of the school with a higher degree of segregation is not permitted. The allocation for investment in schools with more than 30% of MRC pupils should not cover more than 30% of the call allocation.
2. Investments in existing schools with less than or equal to 30% of MRC pupils should be accompanied by active desegregation measures in order to reduce the concentration of Roma pupils in these schools and their more balanced and equitable representation and distribution to other schools. Participating municipalities and schools should sign an agreement specifying how to ensure the mobility of pupils, capacities, etc. Schools receiving MRC pupils from neighboring municipalities can invest in services and facilities that serve all school pupils, such as computer room, library, kitchen / dining room, gym and more.

All investments under pilot projects must be accompanied by soft measures (eg through cross-financing in the project provided or through projects under PA 5) in order to improve the quality, access of Roma pupils to education and inclusion in education - eg:

- teacher assistants,
- inclusive teams,
- social educators employed at school,
- Parental involvement activities
- mentoring and coaching vulnerable pupils or other activities aimed at preventing early school leaving and grade retention,
- complementary support for career guidance and transition to high school,
- investment in the training of teachers and other staff in schools to enhance their professional skills and to introduce innovative teaching methods and individualized approaches,
- adapting the school curriculum to increase the inclusiveness of education and the school environment, the fight against racism, prejudice and discrimination between teachers, pupils and parents.

Each supported school adopts a local desegregation plan explaining all desegregation and soft measures that will be communicated with partners and approved by the school's statutory body.

These soft measures must be implemented in the school at least during the sustainability period, i. at least 5 years after the completion of the ERDF investment.

Investments in primary schools must have a demonstrative impact on improving primary education for MRC pupils (ie increasing the share of MRC pupils continuing education after compulsory education, decreasing the share of MRC pupils returning to one of the years, improving school performance) and desegregation (ie the proportion of MRC pupils educated in homogeneous classes with other MRC pupils). An evaluation of the above-mentioned impacts of investment in schools will be carried out.

Children in early childhood from a disadvantaged background have high potential to benefit from the access to high-quality education and care within the ECEC. The studies showed that high-quality education and care for children in early childhood bring many social benefits, including better health, stronger civic and social awareness. At the same time it has positive impact on social skills and personality traits.¹⁰ The aim of the investments and activities for ensuring success and stability is the achievement of an integral component of policies for the development of human capital, infrastructure, and employment relating in particular to children from low income families and from ethnic minorities such as the Roma, where there are limited, centralised, state-financed education programmes.¹¹

Investments leading to segregated primary education infrastructure are unacceptable.

Results:

- *Conditions created for the full participation of children from MRC in pre-primary/primary education through the extension of the kindergartens capacity/primary schools network, by constructing new kindergartens/primary schools, extension/addiction to existing kindergartens/primary schools, reconstruction and modernization of kindergartens/primary schools, reconstruction of existing facilities at kindergartens/primary schools and provision of their equipment in municipalities with the presence of MRC*
- *Increased number of children from MRC attending kindergartens*
- *desegregation, reducing the concentration of Roma pupils in schools*

¹⁰ OECD (2010): Council for Early childhood Development (2010) Investing in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC), OECD publishing

¹¹ Source: A good start: EU Structural Funds and Early Childhood Education and Care for Marginalized Romani Communities, 2014–2020