

***MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND SPORTS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC***

***CONDITIONS FOR THE UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION
OF CHILDREN AND STUDENTS
FROM SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED ENVIRONMENTS
IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC***

Section of Regional Education

***Department of Schools with Instruction in Languages of
National Minorities and Education of Roma Communities***

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1. Introduction

In order to ensure education pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the role of state administration and self-government organs to create conditions for equal opportunities for children regarding access to education and with a special emphasis on those groups which are disadvantaged due to social and cultural specifics in the education system) and the outcomes of the PISA studies (in the SR, the education level is below the OECD average and is strongly affected by the social-economic background) aid to children from a socially disadvantaged environment (hereinafter referred to as an “SDE”) must be ensured directly and ad hominem.

In the SR, the support of access to education is ensured systematically (financially and institutionally: free pre-school education for children from the age of 5; a zero grade at elementary school; specialized classes at elementary school – a compensation and development programme; teacher’s assistants; allowance for pupils from SDE; subsidies for food and school aids; material need benefits for the purposes of ensuring the basic living conditions of a child if he/she complies with compulsory school attendance requirements; support of schools – development projects, ESF; and the design and standardizing of relevant diagnostics tools). These measures are conceptual (Concept of Upbringing and Education of Roma Children and Students including the Development of Secondary and Higher Education approved by Resolution No. 206/2008 of the Slovak Government) and address the causes for the school failure of Roma children from SDE at elementary schools or the failure to achieve school skills.

2. Legislation

No measures in School Act No. 245/2008 Coll. lead to the exclusion of Roma children from the standard school system or their placement in special upbringing and educational facilities and thus to continuing segregation. Students fulfil compulsory school attendance at the elementary school in the school district of their permanent residence unless their legal representatives elect to send their children to a different elementary school. This pertains to all children regardless nationality, gender, race, religious faith, etc.

Every child has the right to

- a) equal access to education;*
- b) free education at elementary and secondary schools;*
- c) free education for five year old children at kindergartens prior to the beginning of compulsory school attendance;*
- d) education in the state language and the mother tongue;*
- e) an individual approach respecting his/her abilities and possibilities, talents and health status;*
- g) have his/her faith, world views, national and ethnic origin respected;*
- h) the provision of counselling and services connected with upbringing and education;*

- i) upbringing and education in a safe and hygienically satisfactory environment;*
- j) the organization of upbringing and education adequate to his/her age, abilities, interests, health status and in compliance with the principles of psycho hygiene; and*
- k) respect and protection against physical, mental and sexual violence.*

A child's legal representative has the right to select a school for his/her child that corresponds to his/her abilities, health status, interests and hobbies, faith, world opinion, nationality and ethnic origin.

Children and pupils with special upbringing and educational needs have the right to upbringing and education with the application of specific methods and forms which correspond to their needs and create the necessary conditions enabling such upbringing and education.

However, children and students are also obliged to participate regularly in upbringing and education and to duly study and it is the obligation of their legal representatives to create conditions for them for the preparation for upbringing and education at school and the fulfilment of school duties, to adhere to the conditions of upbringing and the educational process of the child designated by the school rules and regulations, to care about the social and cultural background of the child and to respect his/her special upbringing and educational needs.

The rights established by the School Act are equally guaranteed for everyone in compliance with the principle of equal treatment in education established by the Antidiscrimination Act.

A) Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (School Act) and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts as amended

*- Article 3, letter d): **principle of the ban on all forms of discrimination and segregation in particular;***

- Article 2, letter p): defines children and students from SDE;

- Article 12: language of upbringing and education;

- Article 28: Paragraph 7 contribution to kindergarten is not paid for children; letter, a) who have one year before starting compulsory school attendance, letter. b) if the legal representative of the child submits documentation to the kindergarten headmaster/headmistress confirming that the child is a recipient of material need benefits and allowances for material need benefits;

- Article 29, Paragraph 4: zero grade of elementary school;

- Article 28, Paragraph 14; Article 30, Paragraph 6; Article 95, Paragraph 9 and Article 99, Paragraph 5: activities of teacher's assistants in kindergarten, elementary and special schools;

- Article 107, Paragraphs 4 to 6): designates to whom the allowance for students from SDE may be provided, defines a student from an SDE for the purposes of the provision of this allowance, authorizes the ministry to determine the amount of allowance for students from SDE and designates the purpose of the provided financial means;

- Article 114: the director of the children's school club may decide on the reduction or relief of the contribution if the legal representatives submit the document confirming that he/she is a beneficiary of material need benefits and allowances for material need benefits;

- Article 116: the promoter of the leisure time centre may decide on the reduction or relief of the contribution if an adult student or the legal representative of a minor so requests in writing and submits a document confirming that he/she is a beneficiary of material need benefits or allowances for material need benefits;
- Article 117: the director or founder of a school dormitory may decide on the reduction or relief of the contribution if the legal representative so requests in writing and submits a document confirming that he/she is a beneficiary of material need benefits or allowances for material need benefits;
- Article 140: the founder or director of a school cafeteria or the headmaster/headmistress of a school or school facility of which the cafeteria is a part, may decide on the reduction or relief of the contribution if the legal representative submits a document confirming that he/she is a beneficiary of material need benefits or allowances for material need benefits pursuant to a special regulation. This does not apply to children and students for which the subsidy is provided pursuant to special regulation (Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on Subsidies within the Competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR).

B) Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on Financing Elementary and Secondary Schools and School Facilities as amended

- in the Ministry chapter, funds may be allocated for the construction, additional construction, modernization and reconstruction of schools in which the education is considered as continuous occupational training; these funds may be allocated by the Ministry to the founder of the school according to the number of students from SDE, the number of students with health disabilities and the urgency of the construction, additional construction, modernization and reconstruction of the school buildings;
- the Ministry may allocate funds for the improvement of the quality of conditions for the upbringing and education of students from SDE within development projects to the founder of a school whose education is considered as continuous occupational training;
- Article 4e: Financing of expenditures for students from SDE

Contributions for the improvement of the quality of conditions for the upbringing and education of students from SDE shall be allocated according to the number of students from SDE and the amount of contribution per student from an SDE.

The amount of the contribution for students from SDE is designated by the Ministry. In 2012, the total contribution per one student from an SDE is 100 €. For 2012, that means the contribution for 65,460 children will amount to 6,546,000 Eur.

The founder of a public elementary school is obliged to use the allocated funds for the purposes according to the special regulation.

The founder of a public elementary school in which more than 100 students from SDE are educated is obliged to use at least 50% of the total contribution for the improvement of the quality of conditions for the upbringing and education of students from SDE for wages and salaries of teacher's assistants for students from SDE, including insurance premiums for compulsory health insurance, social insurance, contributions for old-age pension savings and contributions for complementary pension savings.

C) Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll. of the Slovak Government which establishes the details of the breakdown from the state budget for schools and school facilities as amended

- the salary norm per student of zero grade of elementary school is 200 % of the norm for the students of such elementary school (Article 4, Paragraph 2). The zero grade of elementary school is attended by the students from SDE.

D) Decree No. 649/2008 Coll. of the Ministry of Education of the SR on purpose of the use of the contribution for students from socially disadvantaged environment in the wording of Decree No. 452/2011 Coll.

The contribution for improving the conditions for the upbringing and education of students from SDE may be used to pay for the following costs:

- a) the remuneration of teacher's assistants for students from socially disadvantaged environments;*
- b) equipment in the room designated for the preparation of students from socially disadvantaged environments for instruction through the use of*
 - 1. didactic technology and*
 - 2. teaching aids;*
- c) costs connected with the participation of students in activities pursuant to special regulation;*
- d) costs connected with educating students in specialized classes;*
- e) costs connected with preventing the spread of diseases, such as pediculosis;*
- f) an extra bonus according to special regulation – an extra bonus for teachers for working with disabled students or students from SDE depending on the number of such students in the class; if no teacher's assistant works in that class (Act No. 553/2003 Coll. on the Remuneration of Certain Employees Performing Public Interest Work and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts as amended in wording of Act No. 390/2011 Coll.).*

E) Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff and Specialized Staff and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts

Article 16, Paragraphs 1 and 2: pedagogical assistant (teacher's assistant, assistant of educator);

Article 33, Paragraph 2, letter g): specialist for the upbringing and education of children from SDE.

F) Decree No. 320/2008 Coll. of the Ministry of Education of the SR on Elementary Schools in the wording of Decree No. 224/2011 Coll.

A specialized class may be established at school with the consent of the school founder for students who in terms of upbringing and education need a compensatory programme and for students who were educated at a school with an education programme for students with health disabilities. Such class is established for at least four students but not more than eight students from one grade or several grades. If the number of students drops below four, the class is cancelled. The school headmaster/headmistress places the students in such class based on a proposal from the class teacher, the educational counsellor after studying the opinion of the educational counselling and prevention facility and after obtaining the informed consent of the student's legal representative. The student is only included in specialized class for the necessary period of time.

Students from SDE are also educated in specialized classes if

- a) after completing the zero grade they lack ability to successfully handle the content of instruction of the school's first grade;*
- b) they fail to handle the content of instruction of the school's first grade or if a psychological examination reveal that they lack the ability to successfully handle the content of instruction of the school's first grade; or*

c) they were educated at an elementary school according to a programme for students with health disabilities but no health disability was manifested with them.

3. Pedagogical and Organizational Instructions

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the SR (hereinafter referred to as the MoESRaS SR”) recommends

- a ban on all forms of discrimination and segregation at schools and school facilities;
- the elimination of the problems of students coming from marginalized groups, which complicate the process of their admission to regular schools and school facilities, placement in regular classes and the subsequent upbringing and educational process,
- **the creation of suitable conditions for their education at schools and classes together with the majority population; and**
- the adoption of measures to improve the attendance, behaviour and educational results at schools that educate children and students from SDE and the upbringing and education of such children and students to create proper individual conditions.

4. Development Projects

In 2008, the call was focused on **“E-education for Students from a Socially Disadvantaged Environment 2008.”** 25 projects were approved for implementation at elementary schools in the total sum of 4,938,000 SKK.

The development project entitled **E-education for Students from a Socially Disadvantaged Environment and Students with Health Disabilities 2009** was oriented on instructional innovations through the use of information and communication technologies. 33 projects with an allocated sum of **199,164 €** were approved; this sum was distributed proportionally to the number of projects as follows:

- 21 projects with a focus on students from SDE in the sum of **134,669 €**
- 12 projects with a focus on students with health disabilities in the sum of **64,495 €**.

As of 15 February 2012, the call for the development project entitled **“Promotion for Creating a Positive Social Climate and Motivation in Multicultural Classes of Elementary Schools”** for elementary school founders in the amount of 60,500 EUR is proclaimed at the Ministry website.

Applications for the provision of funds for implementing the development project must be submitted by the school founder through the relevant regional school authority **by 23 March 2012** in an envelope bearing the following words: **“Positive Social Climate”**. The regional school authority must submit the applications to the Ministry of Education, Science, research and Sports of the SR until **23 April 2012**.

The following are the priority fields for support: activities contributing to the elimination of undesirable phenomena such as the spatial, organizational, physical or symbolic exclusion or separation of Roma students because of their ethnic origin (frequently in combination with social disadvantage) from other students.

The support area regarding upbringing and educational reform is creating multicultural classes (particularly in the first grade) with the aim to create a gradually positive social climate at school.

Another field of support involves the improvement in the provision of material and technical equipment of such classes with the aim to enhance the conditions for the upbringing and educational process, the universal development of the personality of students as well as their socialization and integration in society.

Cooperation with non-governmental organizations operating in the field, whose partnership is a necessary condition for joining the call, forms part of the support.

5. Operational Programme Education

The Operational programme Education is the referential document for the programming period of 2007 – 2013 based on which support is provided for the development of human resources through the use of the European Social Fund and national resources. This document is based on the structure of the National Strategic Referential Framework of the Slovak Republic for the Period of 2007 – 2013.

The support of education for people with special educational needs facilitates the social inclusion and sustainable integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market with a special consideration for marginalized Roma communities. Priority Axis 3 is focused on the elementary, secondary and higher education of persons with special educational needs and creates conditions for the further education of specialists who contribute to addressing the social, economic, cultural and educational problems of persons with special educational needs and members of marginalized groups. The role of the measures of this priority axis is to enhance the educational level of persons with special educational needs with a special consideration for marginalized Roma communities.

Measure 3.1 Increasing the Education Level of Members of Marginalized Roma Communities (hereinafter referred to as “MRC”)

The objective of this measure is to increase education level of members of MRC by facilitating their access to formal education and through their further education.

Specific objectives:

- 1. To promote the social inclusion of members of MRC by facilitating their access to formal education and acquiring skills necessary for the labour market; and*
- 2. To further educate members of MRC as well as persons working in the field of their integration in the society.*

Framework activities:

- 3.1.1 Promotion of access of members of MRC to education on all three school levels*
- 3.1.2 Promotion of the individual approach and the development of alternative forms and tools of teaching*
- 3.1.3 Further education of members of MRC*
- 3.1.4 Further education of persons and support of cooperation with institutions working in the area of the integration of members of MRC into society*

*Currently, the projects based on the call (2009) are in the **implementation phase: Programmes and Courses for Students of Elementary Schools coming from MRC** – 49*

projects with contracted non-repayable financial contributions amounting to 8,135,442.58 EUR.

*In the upcoming period the **implementation** of projects based on the call (2011) shall begin: **Support of Reading Literacy of Socially Disadvantaged Students of Elementary Schools who come from MRC** – 25 approved projects, of which 3 are contracted. Total financial allocation: 5 million EUR.*

*The projects based on the ongoing call (2011) also await **direct implementation: Support for Access of Members of MRC to Education including Their Further Education** continuing in the pilot call for the submission of applications for non-repayable financial contributions within the **Local Comprehensive Approach Strategy** proclaimed by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for the Roma Communities – 5 approved projects after the first round of the call, all of which are yet to be contracted.*

On 21 November 2011, The Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the SR for EU Structural Funds updated this ongoing call. The updating of the call was related to proclaiming the second round.

The deadline of the second round of accepting applications for NFC was 20 January 2012; the approval process is currently in progress.

*Implementation of the **national project in progress “Through Educating Pedagogical Staff to the Inclusion of the MRC”** began on 1 October 2011. This project is implemented by the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre. The project shall continue until 30 January 2015.*

Elementary schools may join this project if they comply with the following criteria:

- minimum of 20 % of students from SDE,*
- the school shall create conditions for hiring 2 pedagogical assistants,*
- the school shall implement a pedagogical model of school with an all-day educational system (hereinafter referred to as “AES”).*

The following are the main project activities:

***Education of pedagogical staff and specialists** with the aim of training pedagogical and specialized staff in learning professional competences necessary for the development of specific educational needs of students from MRC.*

***Promotion of all-day educational system at ES** with the aim to create a pedagogical model of school with an all-day educational system as the instrument for the inclusion of students from MRC.*

***Technical support of activities** of the national project, the aim of which is to modernize the teaching process at ES involved in this project through the ICT and thus to support the efficient implementation of a pedagogical model of school with an ADE. The material assistance for each school involved in the project shall be constituted by two interactive system, a package of training material and aids with a value of 1,000 EUR and didactical package according to the school's own selection from the submitted catalogue in the value of 10,000 EUR.*

*The creation and implementation of **12 programmes of continuous education**; the training of **4,200 pedagogical and specialized staff**; creating a minimum of **40 teaching resources** for pedagogical and specialized staff; the creation of **400 jobs** for pedagogical assistants; introduction of the model of AES at ES, which shall enable the effective development of*

students from MRC also off-teaching including leisure time care; **foreign stays for 120 pedagogical staff; creating 1,000 teaching resources for students from MRC are significant benefits.**

To date, 123 schools from the regions of Prešov and Košice and 85 schools from other regions have joined the project. At the same time, the group of experts involved in this project designs the model of AES. In the months of November and December 2011 the main project office ensured publicity and support to the potential interested parties for the position of pedagogical teacher's assistant and created a database of assistants who would be able to become involved in the project at elementary schools.

The national project "Through Educating Pedagogical Staff to the Inclusion of Marginalized Roma Communities" offers new solutions. Its essence is the introduction of a pedagogical model with AES at elementary schools which shall serve as a tool for the inclusion of students from MRC. The entire process will take place in terms of inclusion, i.e., not only Roma children shall be involved in the interest activities within the framework of the AES, but all children who show interest, although the project is built up primarily for children from a socially disadvantaged environment. The project is aimed at changing the current climate at schools which is not favourable for many children and therefore the lack of interest in school among the Roma children is so great.

The national project anticipates the participation of 200 elementary schools throughout Slovakia and should be the preparation for gradual legislative adjustments in our school system. Cultural educational programmes aimed at the creation or improvement of the cooperation between families and schools are also a part of this project.

To build up a system of education that would be inclusive, respect differences and work with disabled or marginalized groups is a long-term process. After completion of the national project, the pedagogical model of school with AES shall be implemented in involved schools and shall be provided as a good practice example of ES with a high concentration of students from MRC. Pedagogical and specialized staff which complete training within the framework of this national project shall be able to further support inclusion of students from MRC. **The basis is that we understood that the priority is not whether children are together at all costs, but whether education should be important for Roma, then desegregation and inclusive classes are one of the important instruments for improvement of education.**

6. State Pedagogical Institute

deals with the issues of educating Roma students from two perspectives:

As a national minority

In this context it implemented (2003 – 2010) the projects regarding the experimental testing of Roma language and literature and Roma history and institutions at elementary and secondary schools. The outputs of these projects in the form of pedagogical documents for teaching these subjects are available at the SPI website in updated form. This experimental testing confirmed that these subjects can be taught at schools. In addition to the significance of the support of the Roma national minority language, the possibility of teaching these subjects is one of the possibilities for ensuring inclusive (intercultural) education at schools.

Thanks to the results of the aforementioned experimental testing, Roma language and literature was included in the list of (optional) leaving examination subjects - 318/2008 Coll. DECREE of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic of 23 July 2008 on the completion of studies at secondary schools. This decree enables secondary school students to take leaving examination from Roma language and literature. The target requirements for knowledge and skills of students taking the leaving examination from Roma language and literature – level B1, B2 are available at the SPI website.

As students from SDE

In this connection, we can present prepared teaching texts in Roma and Slovak language for students of the primary level of education. The aim is to increase the chances for success in educating students and supporting the intercultural competences of Roma students and non-Roma students. In the form of a game we also build mutual understanding and comprehending among students from various cultural environments. These texts will be available for teachers at the SPI website.

A pilot project is currently in the process of preparation; its aim is to prepare the pedagogical staff for work in classes with Roma and non-Roma students at the primary level. Through training of teachers and other pedagogical staff and the preparing of teaching texts, this project will support the process of inclusive and intercultural education of students which will eliminate the segregation and discrimination of students at schools.

7. Methodological and Pedagogical Centre (RW PREŠOV – ROCEPO)

The Roma educational, information, documentation, counselling and consultation centre (ROCEPO) with national competence provides **specialized and methodological assistance** to schools and school facilities in the field of the upbringing and education of Roma children and students from SDE.

Continuous training of pedagogical staff

1. Qualification education for educators and pedagogical assistants at schools and school facilities (extent of EP: 220 hours), number of participants: 480 (14 educational groups)

2. Multicultural education (extent of EP: 42 hours), number of participants: 76, number of graduates: 126

3. Motor development of students in the zero grade (extent of EP: 60 hours), number of participants: 30, number of graduates: 75

4. Regional education in primary education (extent of EP: 60 hours), number of participants: 60

All of the aforementioned educational programmes are aimed at the inclusion of MRC and the mutual coexistence of minority and majority groups in the SR.

Publication Methodology of Designing Teaching Resources is primarily designated for the designers of teaching resources. The book consists of five chapters. Each of them provides methodology and recommendations for designing teaching resources and working

with them. When designing this document, the experts took into consideration the environment in which the pedagogical and specialized staff work and the target group with whom they work. The methodology for designing teaching resources is also a baseline for designers of all programmes of continuous education and shall serve the needs of MPC and its partners from the state administration and self-government which have employees working with MRC.

The survey of the MPC ROCEPO 2009-ES was focused on finding the results of the upbringing and educational process with students from SDE based on statistical data on their school results, attendance, behaviour, completion of compulsory school attendance and further progress in studies at secondary schools. Determining the number of students from SDE in special and specialized classes of elementary school, the number of integrated (included) students at elementary school, the number of students attending children's school clubs and the number of students using school cafeterias and amateur clubs constituted a significant part of this survey. The data collection was also focused on the work of the teacher's assistant in the educational process.

Re-edition of methodological manuals and publications on CD, Help for Teachers of Students from SDE – MPC ROCEPO 2011 – (42 titles).

8. State School Inspection

For a long period of time and annually it fulfils the role with the aim to find out the status and level of care of students from SDE at elementary and secondary schools during comprehensive inspections.

During the comprehensive inspections at elementary schools for students with mental disabilities the personal documentation of students is always checked, the entry of special-pedagogical diagnostics and its outcomes, the correctness of the placement of students in a given type of school. In the event of any doubts regarding the correctness of a placement, it requests re-diagnostics and monitors the procedure up to the possible re-placement of student at a different type of school.

It conducts inspection tasks aimed, besides others, at enrolling students in the first grade of special ES and the placement of children from SDE in special elementary schools.

In upcoming academic years, the SSI also shall continue in the aforementioned inspection activities by extending the monitoring segregation – intensification of the control of segregation procedures at ES.

Based on the requirements of the Ministry, the SSI shall focus on schools where the concentration of children from SDE is higher; it shall intensify the control and assistance to headmasters/headmistresses/schools; in the upbringing and educational process it shall monitor adherence to a non-discriminatory approach to students from SDE and marginalized Roma communities. The SSI should elaborate the internal methodology for detecting the cases which could be assessed as segregation on an ethnic basis. It shall provide regular information to the Section of Regional Education regarding actual cases. Furthermore, the SSI shall intensify the control over the correctness of enrolling the students in special elementary schools and use actively use the possibility of ordering re-diagnostics in the event of the suspicion of an incorrect diagnosis of mental disability.

Evaluation of Violations of the Principle of Equal Treatment in Practice in Slovakia in 2011

The findings of the SSI arise from 829 inspections conducted at kindergartens and elementary and secondary schools in the SR in the academic year 2010/2011 aimed at finding the state and level of pedagogical management, process and conditions of upbringing and education.

The content and tasks of the education of human rights and the related principle of equal treatment were incorporated in school educational programmes and further pedagogical documentation related to the organization and management of schools. In setting up the goals, headmasters/headmistresses respected the individual educational and upbringing requirements of students with health disabilities, students from SDE and gifted students.

Several schools¹ in which a higher number of students from MRC were recorded took into consideration the specifics of their lifestyle in the school educational programme (unfavourable social conditions in families, absence of father's share in upbringing children due to long-term travelling for work, language barrier, bad regime, problematic coexistence with other community, expressions of improper behaviour). Sometimes, depending on the conditions of the school, they were placed in regular classes; they also opened zero grades or special classes with required lessons of occupational education.

A high number of students (1,233) from families in material need and from the Roma community was the specific feature of certain schools particularly in the regions of Košice, Prešov and Banská Bystrica². The legal representatives of these students mostly did not show any interest in cooperating with the school or relevant school facilities for upbringing counselling and prevention in the upbringing and education of their children. Diagnostic examinations of students by the professional staff of the Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention Centres (hereinafter referred to as the "PPCPC") were not conducted, and therefore upbringing and education were not implemented according to the individual educational programmes reflecting their upbringing and educational needs. Particularly in the region of Prešov in monitored school with a prevailing number of students from the Roma community the students were placed in traditional classes; they tried to create an environment in which the students would learn to respect different life customs, cultural traditions, learn tolerance and eliminate prejudices towards different social groups. They recorded an overall drop in the number of students from the majority group of the population, which was related to the fact that the legal representatives enrolled their children in different schools in the vicinity. They had various reasons for such decision, frequently the lack of basic hygiene habits of students from Roma community including the problematic behaviour of these students, irregular school attendance, lack of interest in studying. In 13 schools with higher numbers of students from SDE (over 60 %) mostly only 1 teacher's assistant was helping to the students of the zero and first grades to socialize and adapt in the first months of academic year in the school environment. Later this assistant was helping teachers to work with students with special upbringing and educational needs in higher grades or special classes.

¹ 4 schools in the region of Košice, 4 in the region of Prešov, 9 in region of Banská Bystrica, 1 school in the region of Trnava

² In 1 school in the region of Košice in 21 classes (of which 7 classes were allocated a workplace in the Roma settlement) 429 students were educated and 72 % of them were from the Roma community. PPCPC however did not provide them any care due to the lack of willingness and interest of parents.

Positive Points

- *incorporation of human rights education in school education programmes and further pedagogical documentation related to the organization and management of schools,*
- *focusing of conceptual plans of schools on the humanization of upbringing and education,*
- *accepting regional conditions, demographic situation in the region, traditions and accepting of actual real requirements of pedagogical, parental and students community in setting the upbringing and educational goals,*
- *creating equal conditions for the upbringing and education of all the students,*
- *opening zero grades,*
- *educating students with special upbringing and education needs according to individual upbringing and educational programmes,*
- *involvement of students, including students with health disabilities, in out-of-school amateur activities,*
- *at schools with a higher number of students from SDE, elaboration of development projects aimed at socializing and improving upbringing and educational results in cooperation with the ROCEP.*

Negative Points

- *unimplemented diagnostic examinations of students from SDE by the expert staff of the PPCPC,*
- *overall drop in the number of students from the majority population at schools.*

Evaluation of the level of content, extent, form and efficiency of education provided to Roma students in comparison with the non-Roma population in Slovakia in 2011

School activities in the area of caring for students from **SDE** were monitored at **27 grammar schools** and **23 secondary vocational schools**. **1** student from an SDE who was at the same time registered as a student with sports talents, was recorded at the Private Sports Grammar School in the region of Trenčín. He had an individual upbringing and educational programme elaborated for him. The teaching plan and curriculum were not modified for this student; adjustments in timetable of lessons were ensured. The school created conditions in the form of individual consultations, the special approach of the class teacher, the educational counsellor and other teachers during lessons. In the first private vocational school in the region of Banská Bystrica, **3** students from SDE were educated. Adjustments in the organization of upbringing and education were not necessary because the students had no study problems and their approach to their school obligations was responsible.

At **176** checked **ES**, they recorded **943** (2.59 %) students from SDE from the total number of **36,345** students, of which **584** attended the first level (zero grade including), **and 359 attended** the second level and the school club was attended by **121** students. The most students from SDE were recorded in the region of Banská Bystrica – 21.2 % and the region of Košice 19.2 %; the fewest students came from the region of Trnava 2.4 % and the region of Prešov 9.3 %.

The majority of them did not take pre-school preparation which was negatively reflected on the level of self-service activities as well as hygiene habits. The problems in the

area of language also frequently continue in the territories with mixed nationalities upon entry to the first grade.

The students from SDE were educated in zero grades, regular and special first classes and in a specialized class. The school headmasters/headmistresses for 17.3 % students ensured **individual upbringing and educational conditions**: a modified teaching plan and curricula for individual subjects, releasing students from the study of foreign languages and physical education, including new subjects, developing specific functions, reading and writing as a game, using a specific evaluation of students, organization of upbringing and education, individual work with students, preparation of students for classes within the framework of the school club. In one elementary school they introduced the all-day educational system – during out-of-school time students attended a private elementary art school and a private leisure time centre. For 24.7 % of students within the framework of **adjustments to the organization of upbringing and education**, the schools presented the help of teacher's assistants, remedial classes and sufficient amount of time for individual work of students. The SE³ in the region of Žilina established a specialized class with the consent of the founder. * Students from SDE who after attending the zero grade lacked the ability to successfully handle the content of education of the first grade at ES were placed in this class. In the region of Bratislava two students who were on maternity leave attended school for 2 lessons per week. Teachers in upbringing and education of 34.3 % of students from SDE applied **specific methods and forms of work**; they based their selection on the recommendations of relevant facilities for upbringing counselling and prevention. The following were the most frequently applied methods: the principle of visual demonstration and progressiveness, the individual approach to students, motivation dialogue and talking, assigning differentiated tasks and activities, target-oriented group work in pairs, resolving situation tasks, experience learning, didactical games, heuristic and demonstration methods, prolonged explanation. Teachers at the first level of ES placed the emphasis on the development of communication abilities in the state language, frequently with help of a teacher's assistant who could speak Roma. By fulfilling specific goals, the teachers eliminated further handicaps arising for students from SDE (insufficient hygienic habits, lack of working habits in team and in independent work, low level of concentration and attention, disrespect and even rejection of instruction of pedagogues, cultural and social exclusion). In **assessing the study results** of students, the teachers emphasized their individual abilities, in testing they preferred the forms that were convenient for them, with students with development study disorders they did not give grades for dictation but in words they gave the list of errors. Almost all ES (97.2 %) also used **expert services** in relation to the aforementioned students ensured by an educational counsellor, in certain ES (40.3 %) also in cooperation with school special pedagogues. Almost half of schools used the services of teacher's assistants (46 %) but only a few used the services of the school psychologist (5.1 %).

For 14.2 % of students from SDE at ES **the schools adjusted the environment**. For example, they created classes with a smaller number of students, imitated the family environment in class, equipped the classes with computers with video-projection and presentation surfaces, placed carpets in classes, provided space for relaxation and games during breaks, access to books and toys. In certain ES, a room was established for a special pedagogue for individual work with students. Toiletries, such as paper, soap and paper towels were provided in hygienic rooms.

³ ES, Dončova 4, Ružomberok

Class teachers regularly monitored the school attendance of all students. In order to improve **the attendance** and **behaviour** of students the schools initiated meetings with their legal representatives, Roma assistants accompanied students to and from school; they used motivation; they were praised, or received written warnings, regular reports were sent to the municipal and social authorities, misdemeanour proceedings were held in cooperation with the promoter and with the presence of the guardian from the office of labour, social affairs and family, cycle of lectures and activities with psychologists from the PPCPC were organized for students with problematic behaviour. Irregular attendance and unjustified absences were addressed by consulting the parents. They also cooperated with crisis centres, members of the Police Dept., community workers and local Roma initiatives. Providing free food, a package of school aid and reimbursement for travelling costs were distinctive motivating agents for complying with the school attendance of students at ES.

The students' lack of interest in learning and the subsequent frequent missed lessons and insufficient home preparation related to the non-motivating family environment continuously remain the most frequently presented reason for poor **upbringing and educational results** of students from SDE. In an attempt to eliminate the shortcomings the schools placed students in the school club and adapted written and oral exams according to the possibilities of students; one ES provided all-day educational care and material aids for free. In higher grades truancy was a problem with certain students whose parents were aware of the problem and provided medical excuses. In certain schools in which children from the Roma community are supported by contributions for food, they attend school only for the school lunches; they do not show any interest in learning, they do not bring books or materials to school; they disrespect teachers, disturb lessons, frequently create conflicts with other students and manifest aggressiveness and vulgarism in speaking. There were cases of the destruction of materials from the social aid package and thefts; one school even reported the harassment of teachers by these students. In order to **improve the upbringing and educational results** of students from SDE, teachers participated in various educational events, expert seminars on the upbringing and education of students with SUEN and participated in the project Support of the Integrated Education of Roma.

Students from SDE were mostly involved in **out-of-school activities** and projects, carried out activities in amateur clubs, participated in sporting, musical, literary, fine art and traffic competitions and collected secondary raw materials.

The school headmasters/headmistresses pointed out the fact that in the regions with high unemployment the number of children living in the environment which does not support their socialization and does not provide them sufficient amount of adequate impulses for development of their personality.

Positives Sides

- providing students with the possibility of a longer adaptation process to the school environment,
- improving relations between special pedagogues and students,
- interest of students in activities requiring manual skills,
- involving students in team activities in and outside school,
- ensuring an all-day educational system for students from SDE.

Negative Sides

- lack of interest, weak or no communication from the party of some parents ,
- unsystematic and insufficient home preparation for school,

- *slower progress in upbringing and education (frequent instances of forgetting to bring materials to school; problems in adapting to rules, norms and requirements, language and cultural barriers; lack of work or labour skills; irregular school attendance),*
- *deterioration of average school results and attendance in class.*

9. Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology

Final report from the experimental testing project entitled “Specialized Classes at the First Level of ES”

The project of specialized classes thematically continues from the completed project Phare 2002/000.610.03 “Integration of Roma Children in Standard Elementary Schools”. One of its aims was to test and propose educational, organizational and other conditions for facilitating the transition of Roma children from special elementary schools to elementary schools (transition classes at special ES) and those cases when placement at the SES was not substantiated or when a child’s lack of progress on the social and cultural basis was incorrectly interpreted. As it was proven in practice, such approach helped several children who successfully overcame the differences in the content of studies between regular and special elementary schools in the course of two years. The possibilities of children as well as social, emotional and other variables connected with their families were and still are the pitfalls of such procedure.

The purpose of specialized classes is to ensure that Roma children without pre-school preparation (at kindergarten, etc.) from a marginalized, socially disadvantaged environment with a different cultural and language background who can not definitely be diagnosed as mentally disabled, are educated in elementary schools (instead of the relatively frequently used but inefficient practice involving the delay of compulsory school attendance or placement in special school designated for mentally disabled children). Within the framework of experimental testing, specific materials were designed and tested (teaching plans and curricula); educational methods, teaching materials and sets of teaching aids were designed and other conditions to help students to handle the content of teaching so that they could continue in education according to their individual possibilities and skills were created.

Possibilities and limitations of psychological examinations of Roma children – Methodological material for PPCPC employees

With psychological examinations of Roma children from a socially disadvantaged environment, either in assessing the school competence or diagnostic examinations of cognitive abilities in order to place a child in special schools, the psychologist commonly practice faces issues which can be included in the following groups:

Language and communication barriers

- ☐ *The student’s ability to speak Slovak as a learning and testing language is poor or non-existent*
- ☐ *Their mother tongue – the local Roma dialect does not provide sufficient possibilities to differentiate terms and understand instructions and the principle of testing assignments*

Cognitive and knowledge barriers

- *Their learning (knowledge, information) skills, experience and habits are connected to an upbringing in a different social and cultural environment than the environment of common families from the majority population which is reflected in ordinary tests*
- *Experience indicates certain differences in the commencement of development phases of individual cognitive functions (currently we are testing this information as prequalification and research hypotheses in longitudinal research)*

Socio-cultural barriers

- *The orientation of the Roma community on present and short-term goals contributes to the lack of support for future education*
- *The lack of individualism and the preference to accommodate to the norms of the community at the expense of individual responsibility which can be demonstrated in individual diagnostic examinations and performance*
- *Absence of motivation*

Psychological – diagnostic barriers

- *Absence of culturally relevant tests based on the culturally determined definition of intelligence including memory and other aspects of processing information and using content and procedures, which are relevant to the cultural bases of tested persons and groups (Sternberg, 2001)*
- *Absence or obsolescence of Slovak norms with regularly used diagnostic tools*
- *Absence of qualitative analysis of tested performances, orientation of psychologists to the quantitative evaluation of the child's performance*
- *Improper and handicapping use of tests with respect to the target group (use of verbal variety of intelligence tests or tracing tests only)*
- *Unsuitable timing in testing Roma children before entering school when the aforementioned socio-cultural, language and knowledge barriers are the most profound*

Methodological materials and manuals for pedagogues working with students from SDE shall be designed based on the outcomes and knowledge acquired during research assignments. Further materials regarding the questions of diagnosing special upbringing and educational needs = SDE shall be available to counselling facilities.

10. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR

Within the framework of the social protection system the social protection network (for individuals, family and its members) is ensured through instruments of assistance in material need (Act No.599/2003 Coll. on Assistance in Material Need and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts). The right to such assistance which is necessary for ensuring basic living conditions is anchored in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The aim is to ensure that the assistance in material need is provided in terms of preventative measures and temporary solutions for those whose potential can be mobilized. The mobilizing elements in the system of assistance in material need definitely head towards the promotion of the philosophy of active inclusion. The law regulates the legal relations in assessing the material need of the individual and the provision of benefits in material need and the contribution to the material need benefits, which, together with his/her income, are aimed to ensure basic

living conditions and assist in material need with the contribution of the active participation of individuals and natural persons, which are assessed together with the individual.

A monthly contribution of 17.20 € (518.17 SKK) is provided to ensure a child's basic living conditions and assistance in material need if he/she complies with the compulsory school attendance requirements. It is provided from the beginning of the academic year in the period of school and vacations.

Pursuant to Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on Subsidies within the Purview of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, **a subsidy for the support of training regarding eating habits of children at risk of social exclusion** can be provided to children living in families which receive material need benefits and contributions or whose income is no higher than the living minimum.

The subsidy for the support of training regarding the eating habits of children at risk of social exclusion can be provided for a child that attends kindergarten or elementary school. It is provided every day in which the child attends the upbringing and educational process at kindergarten or elementary school and has meals, lunch or a different meal.

The subsidy may be provided

- for all children attending school and in schools where at least 50 % of the children are from families who receive material need benefits and contributions, or
- individually for a child who attends school and lives in a family that receives material need benefits and contributions or whose average monthly income in the past six consecutive months is no higher than living minimum.

The subsidy for the support of training to comply with the school duties of the child at risk of social exclusion can be provided

- for all the children who attend the preparatory class of kindergarten or school and in such preparatory classes at kindergarten or school where at least 50 % of the children are from families that receive material need benefits and contributions or
- individually for the child attending the preparatory class of kindergarten or school and lives in the family to which the benefit in material need is provided and the contributions to the benefit or the average monthly income of which in past six subsequent months is maximum at the level of living minimum.

The following are the school aids for the purposes of the subsidy for the support of training to comply with the school duties of a child at risk of social exclusion: notebooks, writing instruments, textbooks, necessary individual aids which are directly related to the educational process at school or pre-school upbringing and the preparatory class at kindergarten.

11. Revised National Action Plan of the Decade of Inclusion of the Roma Population for the Period of 2011 – 2015

approved by the Government of the SR on 10 August 2011 through Resolution No. 522/2011

Priority Education

6 basic goals

Objective - measure – actual activities of the MESRaS of the SR - 68 in total

1. Participation of children from SDE/MRC in pre-primary education

Measure No. 1.1. To achieve the highest possible involvement of children aged 4 to 6 from SDE in pre-primary education in kindergartens

- To amend the legal regulations to stimulate the participation of children from SDE in pre-primary education in kindergartens – free pre-primary education of children at kindergarten from the age of 4 with free meals including afternoon snacks
- To ensure the participation of children from SDE in education in kindergartens by joining the motivation measures in the social area (activation work for parents)

Measure No. 1.2. To extend the offer of pre-school education in municipalities with a high concentration of children from SDE

- To establish various forms of upbringing and education of children of pre-school age that stimulate the participation of children from SDE in pre-primary education in kindergartens / half-day upbringing and education, changing of groups in weekly intervals, preparatory classes of kindergarten; daily, for 2 – 3 hours, upbringing and education with the provision of one uncooked meal, with the possibility for legal representatives to participate in upbringing and education; pre-school education several days a week
- To enable founders to acquire means from the EU funds for the construction of new buildings or the reconstruction and extension of capacities of existing buildings of kindergartens in the upcoming programming period of 2014 – 2020
- In the new EU programming period for 2014 – 2020, to open the possibility to draw subsidies from structural funds for the area of pre-primary education
- To extend the spectrum of founders of kindergartens by regional school authorities

Measure No. 1.3. To support kindergartens in introducing programmes oriented on improving cooperation with the parents of Roma children and the involvement of teacher's assistants in kindergartens

- To prepare a proposal of possibilities for financing teacher's assistants in pre-primary education
- To adapt a system of financing of pre-primary education in the formulation of activity No. 1.2.2. in measure 1.2. so that the allocation of finances takes into consideration various forms of upbringing and education of children in the pre-primary education
- To enable the participation of kindergarten teachers in continuous education aimed at designing programmes of cooperation with the parents of Roma children
- To support financially combined programmes of education and social care – cooperation with kindergartens and community centres

2. To improve motivation, school results and attendance of children at elementary education and to increase the number of children continuing in further education after elementary education

Measure No. 2.1. To ensure the greatest possible precision and to implement monitoring mechanisms in the process of expert pedagogical-psychological examination of children of the ages 5 and 6 before their commencement of compulsory school attendance and subsequently after a year of preparation

- To elaborate socially and culturally relevant tests of school competence, to use the mother tongue of the child in testing and if necessary to ensure the presence of a teacher's assistant for students from SDE

- *To monitor the thorough adherence to the procedures of enrolling students in special elementary schools*
- *To ensure so that psychological examinations are conducted with children before their commencement of compulsory school attendance exclusively by PPCPC employees; and that the outcomes of testing serve for orientation except in cases of health disabilities which are documented by a written medical report*
- *To ensure so that the re-examination of students after completing the first year of education at school is conducted by a different person than the person who diagnosed the student before his/her commencement of compulsory school attendance; the monitoring of adhering to this activity shall be a part of the checks conducted by the State School Inspectorate.*

Measure No. 2.2. To ensure the availability of quality and variable educational programmes to cover the individual needs of students with an emphasis on the development of cognitive functions and the acquisition of key competences

- *To support the autonomy and flexibility of schools in designing school educational programmes*
- *To support the equivalent reduction of the maximum number of students in a class in connection with the number of children from SDE*
- *Staffing of experts pursuant to the state educational programme also in educating Roma students: sufficient number of teacher's assistants, logopedists, special school pedagogues, school psychologists, social workers and other staff ensuring the state and school educational programme in compliance with the School Act*
- *To design the educational programmes so that space is created in them for cooperation and coordination with experts from other sectors (health, police, labour office, fire brigade)*
- *In special elementary schools which have the available resources to enable the opening of elementary school classes (as a branch workplace of an elementary school) where the resources are not created for their education at elementary school or these resources can not be created due to objective reasons or to establish elementary schools in municipalities where they are not established and their establishing is necessary*

Measure No. 2.3. Enhancement of the efficiency of the social support of the education system

- *Re-evaluation of the current system in the legislation so that the subsidies cover the widest possible circle of children from SDE and motivate them to improve school attendance and school results at elementary and secondary schools (subsidies for food, school aids, secondary school scholarships, link between the provision of social benefits and proper school attendance of the child, activation contribution for completion of school attendance for unemployed persons aged 16 to 19 in the NAP "Employment")*

Measure No. 2.4. To promote an all-day upbringing and educational system at school at the elementary level

- *To elaborate the methodology of the all-day educational system and to test it in practice*

Measure No. 2.5. To support the system of upbringing and educational activities and social and cultural activities for children from MRC, youth and adults (in cooperation with NGOs, community centres)

- Educational projects promoting the preservation, expression, protection and development of identity and cultural values
- Supporting amateur activities and the use of leisure time
- Support of the upbringing and education of children and youth in the area of human rights, rights of national minorities, the rights of children and other vulnerable groups and gender equality
- Enhancement of information of the general public regarding their rights and obligations
- Preparation of publications, teaching materials and aids
- Promoting inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding among the majority population, national minorities and ethnic groups.
- To introduce compulsory courses, at least 3 hours a week, for recipients of social benefits, where the aforementioned education would be conducted, improving and refreshing courses oriented on reading, writing, calculus with the possibility of supplementing them with computer literacy or according to the interests of participants
- Using graduates of social work in individual activities

Measure No. 2.6. To re-evaluate the method of financing of costs for students from SDE

- To increase the contribution per student from SDE by 100%, to alternatively consider the possibility of a special measure resulting in the further increase of this contribution to the elementary schools indicated in Article 29 of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (School Act) and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts as amended, which place the students from SDE in classes which are not opened for students with the special upbringing and education needs
- To extend the purpose of the use of the contribution for students from SDE
- To enable that contributions from the MoLSAF SR are also provided for students from SDE at 8 year grammar schools at lower secondary education

Measure No. 2.7. To support the enhancement of the quality of upbringing and education

- To re-consider the possibility of introducing the quality indicator in the norm method of financing of schools in which education is considered as the constant preparation for occupation, namely by introducing the quality coefficient or in the form of a contribution – bonus within the norm per student of the school
- To allocate funds to school founders for the quality of their schools; the school shall be able to use the funds for the quality of their schools for the purpose established by the law (for example as an incentive for teachers who work with students who are successful at Olympiads and national or international competitions, and who achieve distinctive improvement in the study results of students from SDE; for the improvement of material and technical equipment of schools in the area in which its students excel at the national and international level, including specialized literature, aids, etc.)
- To increase the number of special school pedagogues, school psychologists and pedagogical assistants at schools and school facilities

Measure No. 2.8. Promotion of the comprehensive integration of gender sensitive and multicultural education at elementary schools

- In the state educational programme to elaborate the profile theme of multicultural education, to structure the content of multicultural education more clearly and in greater detail; do not concentrate the form of multicultural education only on content, but also on social interaction within the framework of the school and among schools; to elaborate the definition of multicultural education more deeply

- *To promote the penetration and cooperation of NGOs that work with the issues of multicultural education, to consider that ethics and civics could be ensured by NGOs in which the employees comply with the conditions for teaching these subjects pursuant to ministerial regulations and that NGOs deal with the theme of citizenship, human rights and multicultural education*
- *To strengthen the intercultural competences of students in the field of Roma history, their culture, literature and social life, as well as gender sensitive education in the content of multicultural education*

3. To improve the results of the teaching process at secondary schools

Measure No. 3.1. To consider the possibility of extending compulsory school attendance up to the age of 18 including professional practice

Measure No. 3.2. To analyze the existence and benefit of existing secondary schools for educating students from SDE

Measure No. 3.3. Support of the comprehensive integration of gender sensitive and multicultural education at secondary schools

4. To improve care for the pedagogical and specialized staff

Measure No. 4.1. To intensify the support of pedagogical staff working with children from SDE and students with health disadvantages, including the students from SDE with behaviour disorders

- *preferential treatment financially in the form of a salary bonus*
- *Psychological support for pedagogues*

Measure No. 4.2. Supporting the education of pedagogical and specialized staff

- *To design a model of professional standards for individual career positions of the pedagogical and specialized staff (heads of pedagogical staff and specialized staff and specialists),*
- *To design a model of professional standards of teacher – specialists for the upbringing and education of students from SDE*
- *To create professional standards for pedagogical assistants at kindergartens, elementary and special elementary schools*
- *To implement accredited programmes of continuous education of pedagogical and specialized staff with an orientation on the specific needs of children and students from SDE and in the area of special pedagogy with an orientation on integrated education*
- *To train pedagogical and specialized staff in the area of human rights, the rights of national minorities, children's rights, rights of other vulnerable groups and gender equality including the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism and other expressions of intolerance. To implement this education as part of accredited educational programmes of continuous education with possibility of gaining credits*
- *To train pedagogical and specialized staff in project thinking and the design of projects, in using the elements of informal education in formal education*
- *To promote the international mobility of pedagogical and specialized staff and students of secondary schools from SDE and thus to motivate them to learn a foreign language*

5. Application of the right to education in the mother tongue and support of the development of identity

Measure No. 5.1. To promote the usage of Roma and during enrolment to find out the interest of Roma parents in teaching Roma at elementary and secondary schools

- To elaborate project of the education of the Roma national minority in their mother tongue with knowledge and experience from experimental testing
- To elaborate Framework Teaching Plans in the state educational programme for schools with instruction in the language of the national minority
- To use Roma as the support language in pre-primary and primary (first level) education
- To ensure the design and publishing of textbooks and pedagogical aids in Roma
- To ensure educational standards for the subject Roma Language and Literature and Roma History and institutions for kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools (teaching plans and curricula) for the subject Roma language and literature and Roma history and institutions
- To support the creation of a collection of publications with the theme Roma history, language and culture in Roma and to promote the publicity of such collection

Measure No. 5.2. To ensure the preparation of teachers of Roma language and literature and to support the education of teachers who teach in Roma

- To promote the continuous education of a pedagogical staff with an orientation on the education of students in Roma
- To promote the education of teachers at the pre-primary and primary levels and future teachers in Roma
- To promote the international mobility of pedagogues and their students from SDE and thus support the identity and communication of students in Roma

Measure No. 5.3. Promotion of the preservation, protection and development of the identity and cultural values; protection of basic rights and freedoms; the social and cultural needs of the Roma national minority; prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism and other expressions of intolerance; inter-ethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding – ensured by the Government Office of the SR

6. To address problematic issues of upbringing and education in special schools and school facilities including school counselling and prevention

Measure No. 6.1. To ensure the highest possible accuracy and consequently use monitoring mechanisms in the testing and placement of children in special education

- After the first year of school attendance and subsequently as necessary, to conduct diagnostic re-examinations of students who are diagnosed minor mental disorders and to enable diagnostic examinations and re-examinations in an environment common for the child – i.e. school, kindergarten, community centre, etc.
- In the event of the suspicion of discrimination in diagnostic examinations of Roma students, to ensure through SSI a monitoring examination whose aim shall be to check the process and results of the original testing; we recommend that the control examination be conducted by a psychologist from an independent counselling facility which is familiar with the issues of the specific conditions in the testing of Roma children
- Methodological and supervisory activities of counselling facilities designated for fulfilment of this task pursuant to Article 130 Paragraph 10 of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (School Act) and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts as amended, to focus on the thorough guidance of a specialized staff of counselling facilities

leading to the elimination of the possibility of discrimination in the examination of children from SDE

- *To ensure the comprehensive assessment of the student's abilities, which shall be the material for the individual educational programme (if necessary, for this student) or his/her enrolment in elementary school (with the consent from parents) not later than the 3rd grade*
- *To re-evaluate the dual system of psychological counselling (PPCPC and CSPC(Centre for Special Pedagogical Counselling))*
- *To enhance the control of the quality of upbringing and education in standard classes, in which the students with SUEN are integrated*

Measure No. 6.2. To direct more specifically the measures of the school policy for the benefit of children from SDE

- *To unambiguously define the method for determining that a student is from an SDE (to define and harmonize with school statistics also for the purposes of financing)*

Measure No. 6.3. To improve information on special education

- *Information campaigns for parents of children from SDE/MRC regarding the impacts of the placement of their child in a special school and possible alternative methods of education, etc.*
- *Information campaigns for workers who monitor diagnostic examinations*
- *To elaborate a precise methodology of informed consent of parents for the placement of children in a special school (information regarding the fact that in the event that parent does not agree with the recommendation to place the child in a special school or special class, he/she does not violate any legal regulation and vice versa, if he/she requires the placement of his/her child in a special school despite the absence of a noticeable mental disability, it can have legal consequences for him/her)*