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The Effectiveness of Project Based Inclusion:  
Roma Related National Policies On Employment  
in Hungary, Macedonia And Croatia

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

This study was commissioned by the Roma Decade Secretariat. It was conducted and recognized in partial fulfillment for the “Policy Labs” course within the Department of Public Policy at Central European University. Policy Labs are part of the MA curriculum. They give an opportunity for small teams to work for external clients producing and presenting policy relevant research that will be used for advocacy, assessment and development. Clients are civic organizations, donors, research centers and international organizations. The Policy Lab focusing on this project was mentored by Martin Kahanec, Associate Professor at the Central European University’s Department of Public Policy.

## ABOUT THE PAPER SERIES

Policy Research Reports are occasional studies that provide support or background information for wider research projects. They include reviews of scientific literature, state of the art reports, and country studies. They are works in progress and offer practical combinations of academic and policy writing.

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The views in this report are the authors’ own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Center for Policy Studies, Central European University, the Roma Decade Secretariat or any its entities.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Decade of Roma Inclusion is a political commitment of the European community to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the Roma people. The Decade is an initiative working towards improving the welfare of Roma people, by working together with governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and Romani civil society. The Decade commits accountability on core problems involving poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming. The Decade is focused on improving priority issues, involving education, health, housing, and employment.

The Roma Decade Secretariat is a technical assistance unit for the initiative, supporting the Decade Presidency in organizing meetings and sectorial workshops. The Secretariat coordinates, manages, and compiles information, analysis, and progress to the initiative's stakeholders. The Croatian government will host the Decade Presidency, from July 1, 2012 to June 20, 2013. During this time, the Secretariat will present on its findings on Roma employment at an International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting during this time. The information will be provide valuable insight to the Decade member states, civil society representatives, international organizations, and other partners of the Roma Decade initiative.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The Secretariat is attempting to analyze the effectiveness of national labor market inclusion policies targeting Roma people. In particular, these policies include increasing competitiveness on the labor market for non-trained and able for work Roma as well as provide opportunities for training. Additionally, the Secretariat would like to ascertain how sustainable these policies are in creating secure and permanent employment for the Roma people. To analyze these policy initiatives, the Secretariat will look at three case studies, Hungary, Croatia, and Macedonia, to provide variance in policies, and to provide a functional methodology and framework for future policy monitoring and evaluation. This framework will set the provisions to conduct further research and analysis regarding European integration and different funding schemes for Roma employment policies. The aim of the proposed study is: to provide contextual and analytical narratives for Hungary's, Macedonia's, and Croatia's Roma employment policies; to create monitoring and evaluation indicators to baseline current policy impact for future comparison; and to determine lapses in policy scope.

## CASES

Hungary, Macedonia, and Croatia are all members of the Roma Decade, and have committed to the initiative's strategic plan. Unemployment is a large concern for these three countries. To meet the initiative's goals, the countries have begun implementing policies to increase sustainable, inclusive employment. Each country has adapted independent national policies to combat high unemployment.

### *Hungary*

In estimated 520-650,000 Romani people living in Hungary, approximately 6%-7% of the population. In 2003, surveys show that the Roma population is largely excluded from the labor market, with approximately 38% of men and 20% of women employed, a significant difference from the non-Roma population. This discrepancy is attributed to low levels of education, regional segregation, discrimination, and job instability.

### *Macedonia*

In case of Macedonia, the estimated share of the Roma people in overall population accounts to be 10-12%. According to the Macedonian Employment Agency almost 30% of Roma population is registered as unemployed and 42% of them appear to be women. Like the Hungary, this discrepancy is attributed to low levels of education, regional segregation, discrimination, and job instability in Macedonia too..

### *Croatia*

The Croatian census, conducted in 2001, has the Romani population listed at 0.21%, approximately 9,500 people. However, estimates list the Roma population to be between 2%-2.5% of the total Croatian population, or approximately 30,000 to 40,000 individuals. It is estimated that the Roma face twice as high unemployment rates of approximately 30%, compared to their Croatian counterparts. Further, the Croatian Office for Family, Motherhood, and Youth found only 6% of Roma permanently employed in 2007. Education, discrimination, and lack of job stability are attributed for these figures. A summary of this comparative analysis can be found on Table 1, Case-Study Comparison.

### *Comparative Analysis*

The three-case studies have been chosen to analyze the effects of varied European integration on Romani employment inclusion policies. Hungary represents attained EU membership, Croatia represents accessing membership, and Macedonia represents a candidate country. As a result of this integration, the three countries have access to different financial instruments. Country projects are funded as European Social Funds (ESF) and/or Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). ESF is the European Union's (EU) main financial instrument that promotes economic and social cohesion among its member states; Hungary, as a member state, is entitled to these funds. IPA provides financial assistance for candidate and potential candidate countries to strengthen regional, human resources, and rural development; Croatian and Macedonia qualify for IPA funding.

**Table 1:** Case-Study Comparison

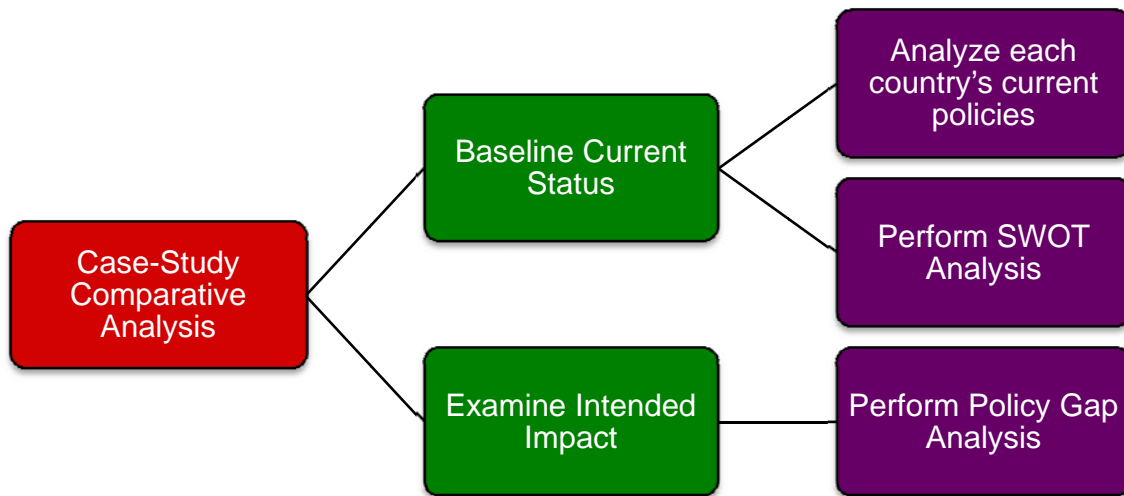
	EU Status	Available Funds	Estimated Roma Population (thousands)	Unemployed Roma (%)	Issues
<b>Hungary</b>	Member State	ESF	520-650	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Job instability</li> </ul>
<b>Croatia</b>	Acceding State	IPA	30-40	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Job instability</li> </ul>
<b>Macedonia</b>	Candidate State	IPA	80-260	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Uncompetitive</li> </ul>

Note: Numbers are estimates, and vary significantly from each country's official census. Croatia was an EU Candidate State from 2003, signing the Treaty of Accession on December 9, 2011.

## METHODOLOGY

In case of data existence the methodology used to carry out this evaluation will be two-pronged: first, we will collect and analyze Roma employment policies by countries. Each policy will be analyzed to characterize its actors, institutions, financing, sustainability, and moral hazards. Based upon these criteria, each policy will be evaluated based upon individual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). This SWOT analysis will provide indication of the three countries' current policies, in relation to their anticipated impact. In juxtaposition to this impact, each countries' employment policies will further undergo a gap analysis, to determine which objectives are being met, and which objectives need further policy intervention. Finally, each country will be provided with recommendations and policy alternatives, regarding the strengthening of current policies or providing for further, missing elements.

The SWOT and gap analysis of the three case-studies will provide an analytical framework of current government programs, evaluate the provisions for success, and provide recommendations to strengthen and create more robust policy scope and impact. The methodology can be found in Graphic 1, below. Further methodological framework and structure can be found in *Appendix A*.



## RESULTS

### *Hungary*

The Hungarian Strategy Action Plan gives a priority role for the expansion of Roma employment. Resources are allocated across the two-year Action Plan. The Strategy gives a priority role for the expansion Roma employment, using three pillars:

- Integration into open and legal labor markets;
- Social economy; and
- Public employment.

Among the three pillars, the first is considered to be the most important, as it urges and provides support to Roma seeking employment at the open labor market. The second pillar, social economy, is defined as a temporary form of employment. The third pillar, public employment, is closely connected to the changes introduced in the public system's social allowances and benefits, in order to "encourage people to engage in work".

While the first pillar is the preferred method to increase Roma employment, the amount and distribution of resources, and the number of people actively engaged in employment programs, suggests that the third pillar, public employment, plays a leading role. Public employment is often considered a temporary employment, and as leverage to be employed in the open labor market. However, neither these intents nor measures can be accurately measured or assessed, leaving these perceptions unfounded.

The Action Plan has implemented a strategy from 2012 onwards that will increase the number of long-term unemployed people through public employment. The Start Public Work Program argues for changing the public work scheme to "encourage people to engage in work," as means to decrease unemployment, by promoting individual job seeking, and maintaining a workforce in the private sphere. In reality, however, there has been little change in private sector employment for the long-term unemployed and the Roma. Consequently, the transformation of the public work scheme pushes wages below the guaranteed minimum, and reduces social allowances, which further penalizes those who are unemployed, and increases poverty.

As a means to create concrete channels that can facilitate and improve finding employment in the open labor market, the Strategy Action Plan has created a number of measures. Such measures could include:

- Mapping and disseminating bottom-up local initiatives;
- Supporting bottom-up local initiatives to launch Roma entrepreneurs, either individually or as a joint venture;
- Providing effective training and mentoring programs;
- Giving priority employment to unemployed Roma;
- Financing micro-loans;
- Developing the Strategy's intervention and preferential programs.

Despite these measure, the Hungarian Action Plan faces many problems. First, the employment concept of the Strategy is built on the assumption that there will be an economic growth in Hungary in the upcoming years. However, in case this expectation fails, the planned actions will hardly meet the targeted results. Further, despite changes in wages, allowances, and benefits, results may be limited due to the firm prejudices against Roma. Despite an effort of planned training programs, permanent project-based employment, and various mentoring services, substantive employment results were not realized. Although the Strategy sets as a task to map and disseminate best practices, no programs with this aim could be found in the Action Plan.

None of the Strategy's measures explicitly details operative programs to improve Roma employability. While the Strategy contains support of micro-credit to be used as a tool for those living in extreme poverty to be self-employed, governmental bodies in charge show a lack of interest, and no sign of cooperation towards the program. These micro-credit pilot programs, which operate in Hungary with EU support, has been criticizes, that it "must process, further improve and extend the experiences of the Way Out Program that targeted Roma communities in Hungary and provided micro-credits." Although the Strategy prefers complex interventions, the listed measures, relying on EU funded tenders, do not contain such operationalized programs.

Given these concerns, and the reliance on EU funds, a number of solutions could resolve these issues. One solution would have contractors of EU-financed investments conduct preferential employment of the highest number of long-term unemployed, especially the Roma. Further, bottom-up, local civil organization initiatives, could support the launching of individual or joint ventures amongst Roma entrepreneurs, to help channel unemployed Roma into the primary labor market. Specific programs should be implemented, following the aforementioned measures, in order to fully maximize EU funds and the Strategy's mission.

### *Macedonia*

According to the National Action Plan of Macedonia for the period of 2009-2011 the programs and policies, with the goal of improving the living conditions of the Roma community in Macedonia, coordinating several ongoing initiatives by international and national subjects were supposed to be implemented. This policy studies consecrates only on the policies, which are supposed to increase Roma people inclusion in employment.

In case of employment issue the following problems are identified in Macedonia:

- 1: high unemployment rate among the Roma community;
- 2: low qualification of the available Roma working force;
- 3: Low standards of employment conditions offered to the members of the Roma community;

The 2002 Macedonian census listed 53,879 Roma living within the country's borders. However, unofficial estimates list the actual number to be between 80,000 to 260,000, or approximately 4%-12% of the population. According to the Macedonian Employment Agency, 17,740 of Roma were registered as unemployed in 2008, of which 42% were women. The high indicator of Roma unemployment relates to various factors, among them the most important ones are a lack of educational opportunities, the presence of labor market discrimination and general job instability. According to the statistics presented by the Macedonian Employment Agency in 2008, 33% of the Roma people out of 17.740 unemployed persons are with incomplete primary education 7% of 17.740 unemployed are with high education or have some qualification 0.1% are with higher education. Thus, low education, lack of competitiveness, and discrimination were blamed for the high unemployment rate, though the Macedonian constitution guarantees the right to a job, free choice of employment, and protection during unemployment.

In order to fight with the problem of unemployment in Macedonia different projects are run, which are financed by the different sources such as: Budget of the Republic of Macedonia, Budgets of LSU, EU Funds, Funds of Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, International funds, foreign donations, Domestic donations.

General objectives of these projects are increasing competitiveness on the labor market for 3,6% non-trained and able for work Roma and increasing employment of Roma of 8% of the total number of able for work Roma until 2011. Specific objectives include open-ended job for 50 Roma persons having terminated higher education in the Public Administration till 2011. Open-ended job for 1500 high school Roma students till 2011 and open-ended job for 450 Roma having terminated primary education till 2011.

Evaluation of the above mentioned plans, the implementation of the policy and studying the current labor market conditions for the Roma people in Macedonia is hardly manageable, due to the lack of the required data for the policy studies and policy analyses.



## *Croatia*

Although Croatia is home to the lowest population of Roma in the three-country comparative study of Hungary, Croatia, and Macedonia, participation of Roma in the labor market is notably low. This is attributed to a number of factors, including a lack of educational opportunities, the presence of labor market discrimination, and general job instability. Despite these realities, Croatia's legal frameworks place high value on the equality of its peoples, as stipulated in its 2002 Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (CLNM), which consists of three main pillars: 1) the right to representation in parliament, 2) the right to proportional representation in local government and executive bodies (in cases in which minorities comprise more than 15% of the population); and 3) the opportunity for minority self-governance. However, these have not yet been realized, and it was only in 2008 that Croatia enacted anti-discrimination laws mostly designed to protect its minorities, such as Roma.

In Croatia, the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Program for Roma has developed five working groups which illustrate the key challenges facing Roma people in Croatia: 1) Documents; 2) Status Issues and Non-Discrimination; 3) Education, Science, and Sport; 4) Social and Health Care and Employment; 5) Physical Planning and Housing, each of which is comprised of relevant ministries and experts. Within the fourth category of "Social and Health Care and Employment," the following issue areas have been prioritized:

- **Preparing Roma for the labor market**
- **Preparing Roma for more active job-seeking behavior**
- **Assisting Roma in accessing the open labor market**

The methods which have been used thus far to measure relative Roma inclusion in the labor market include the following indicators:

- **Age, gender, and ethnicity**
- **Length of unemployment (long-term versus very long-term unemployment)**
- **Number of employed Roma population**
- **Main sources of income in Roma households**

However, current policies continue to leave Roma people in Croatia vulnerable to unemployment and labor market discrimination. Furthermore, the policies continue to leave

Roma women more vulnerable to unemployment than men, with more than half of Roma women unemployed. According to the Croatian Employment Service (CES), unemployment of Roma in Croatia is not evenly distributed, but rather found heavily in certain regions, most notably the northern region of Medimurje County. Of the nine counties (out of Croatia's total of twenty-one) in which Roma are inhabitants, Roma are also having an especially difficult time gaining and maintaining employment in Osijek-Baranja, Primorje-Gorski kotar, Zagreb, and Bjelovar-Bilogora.

Considering this, and in order to improve the process of Roma inclusion in employment in Croatia, several comprehensive changes to existing policies aimed at improving employment are suggested:

1. **Expand** and **deepen** the amount of Roma-specific data in Croatia, a goal which can be achieved in part by pursuing the following policy recommendations:

- In light of the upcoming Census and the importance of basic census data in providing baseline information on employment issues, **include** more Roma representatives in the Census-taking process as well as during the design phase of Census questions, in order to increase direct involvement of the Roma population as well as to create improved transparency of the Census process
- **Access** and **utilize** Roma-specific data from social assistance programs: since Roma are disproportionately higher users of these programs in Croatia, disaggregated data available from these social institutions which allocate this assistance could be very helpful in the monitoring and evaluation of programs aimed at increasing the employment of Roma people
- **Partner** with Roma NGOs to Create a focused pilot survey for the issue areas deemed significant by the Decade for Roma Inclusion and its institutions in order to better **define** benchmarks and create measurable outcomes in order to set more attainable goals
- **Continue** and **expand** the existing employment data collection practices already being carried out by the Croatian Employment Services (CES) in Zagreb and Zagreb county (this institution was already recording important and relevant employment data for self-

declared Roma populations, so a good practice would be to further expand the geographic scope of these collection policies)

- **Introduce** employment (and unemployment) data collection techniques that are ethnicity and nationality-specific

2. Continue to address one of the core root problems behind : **improving the lack of education possibilities** for Roma persons

- **Pursue** goals of reducing drop-out rates of Roma youth

- **Facilitate** the possibility of apprenticeship programs for young Roma in order to combat the low (approximately 10%) numbers of unemployed Roma who have had any type of work experience; this will assist in ending the cycle of unemployment

3. **Re-evaluate** and **update** training programs aimed at improving labor market outcomes of Roma persons in Croatia, since existing programs have not yet made a significant effect on employment outcomes

4. **Increase** the human resources dedicated to Roma employment programs as well as in Croatian governmental institutions which will evaluate their progress

As a currently acceding country, Croatia's decision to pursue anti-discrimination legislation served as an early indication of its desire and efforts to more closely follow European Union standards on social issues, and represented an important pre-accession move. Such legislative actions include the 2003 founding of the National Council for National Minorities, the 2003 adoption of the National Program for Roma, the 2007 Joint Inclusion Memorandum and the 2008 implementation of the Croatian anti-discrimination law. These are important actions that will improve Croatia's ability to assist its Roma population in accessing the labor market but also symbolize Croatia's joining with the European community. Furthermore, there are a number of important policy successes that Croatia has achieved in the field of improving labor market

outcomes for Roma in recent years. The most significant of these is Croatia's excellent fulfillment of the formal criterion for EU membership relating to Roma issues.

However Croatia is now at an important crossroads relating to Roma population in a number of ways, including those issues specifically related to Roma employment. This convergence of issues is the product of a number of converging and disparate factors, including (but not limited to) the negative consequences of its labor market as a whole by the recent economic troubles plaguing Europe; the overall positive trend of the Croatian economy over the past decades; Croatia's adoption of numerous pieces of minority-rights legislation over the past decade; and maybe most importantly, Croatia's status as a country that is now in the process of European Union Accession. The change that will occur upon accession when Croatia begins relying not on IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) funding anymore, but rather on ESF (European Social Funds) money will also prove to be a significant change for Croatia. Since ESF support is designed for EU countries with established and functioning frameworks, Croatia's Roma inclusion policies will need to continue to be rapidly solidified.

A key element of this solidification of Croatia's framework of Roma policy and inclusion of Roma in the labor market will be the improvement of access to data on the Roma situation. As an acceding country in the western Balkans, Croatia could serve as an important example for future candidate countries (Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc), by raising the standards of how much ethnic data is available, as well as becoming part of the greater movement of improving ethnic data and awareness.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

There are a number of limitations that must be taken into consideration when analyzing Roma employment and evaluating the progress made by employment initiatives carried out within the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Firstly, there is a general lack of concrete and accurate data on the number of Roma living in the countries covered by this study, Hungary, Croatia, and Macedonia. Additionally, there is little disaggregated data, which separates the rates of Roma employment from majority employment. For this reason it will be difficult to measure employment trends pre and post- Roma Decade of Inclusion policies. Another challenge concerns the fact that many Roma participate in the informal job market, engage in subsistence labor, or are self-employed. Furthermore, the three countries examined have significantly different Roma populations with regard to the number present and their relative social inclusivity, so the effects of the inclusion initiatives will vary according to the context and the atmosphere in which they were implemented.

Given the recent global financial and credit crisis, many European countries have seen an increase in unemployment rates, and a reduction of funding for human development initiatives. The policy analysis should consider these labor market factors.

## Appendix A: Methodological Framework

Initially, the Roma employment policies for Hungary, Croatia, and Macedonia will be identified. Research will be conducted to determine the policy's overarching impact, intent, and implementation. The analysis will be conducted to investigate and research basic information: who what, why, where, how. Key considerations will be given to gather a breadth of information for each policy, for further critical analysis.

POLICY ANALYSIS	CONSIDERATIONS/QUESTIONNAIRE
<b>WHO</b>	Institutional (Governmental) Actors
	Civil Society Actors
	Non-governmental Actors
	Recipients
	Inter/Intra Governmental Actors
<b>WHAT</b>	Policy terms
	Any exogenous factors?
	Any moral hazards?
<b>WHY</b>	Policy's Intended Affect
	Anticipated impact
<b>WHERE</b>	Country
	Area-specific or country-wide
	Rural/Urban
	Specific Industry/Sector
<b>WHEN</b>	When adopted
	Duration of policy/program
	Anticipated Impact (immediate, short-term, medium-term, long-term)
<b>HOW</b>	Implementation
	Sustainability
	Financing
	Monitoring and evaluating mechanism

Based upon the initial data collection, each policy will be critically analyzed to determine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The SWOT Analysis will be utilized to critically examine, analyze, and evaluate Roma employment policies, by examining whether or not endogenous and exogenous factors are helpful or harmful in achieving policy objectives and impact.

*Appendix A: Methodological Framework*

*Strengths* will be classified as characteristics of the policy that give it an advantage over others. *Weaknesses* are characteristics or limitations that place the policy at a disadvantage relative to others. *Opportunities* are external chances to improve the policy. Finally, *threats* are external elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the policy.

	<b>Helpful</b> <i>to achieving the policy objectives</i>	<b>Harmful</b> <i>to achieving the policy objectives</i>
<b>Internal Origin</b> <i>attributed to the policy making body</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>External Origin</b> <i>attributed to the environment</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>

The SWOT Analysis will help to determine how the policies can be strengthened, improved, and fill any gaps. A gap analysis will be conducted to compare the baseline (the current policies) for potential improvements and greater impact through new policies or strengthening current policies. Four key policy areas will be analyzed and compared for their intended impact: education, empowerment, enlightenment, and employment.

POLICY AREAS	INTENDED IMPACT
<b>Educate</b>	Increasing education opportunities for Roma is essential for increasing the likelihood of meaningful employment
<b>Empower</b>	Increasing the political, social, and economic strength of the Roma to demand better jobs and inclusive policies
<b>Enlighten</b>	Increasing the understanding and support for Roma by non-Roma to alleviate discrimination in the hiring process and workplace
<b>Employ</b>	Increasing employment potential from job providers through government programs, incentives, and subsidies

Finally, once policy gaps have been identified, we will be able to write recommendations for further policies, as well as provide indicators to measure progress for current policies.

Ultimately, however, the Roma Decade, in collaboration with the cooperating governments, will need to conduct a census to underscore current employment numbers, as a baseline to the current Roma employment situation, which can then be utilized for future comparison.