



Civil society monitoring report
on implementation
of the national Roma integration strategy
in Lithuania

*Assessing the progress
in four key policy areas
of the strategy*

Prepared by:
PI Roma Community Centre
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and Consumers

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHI	Compulsory Health Insurance
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategy
PES	Public Employment Services
RCC	Public Institution Roma Community Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The monitoring report on the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Lithuania reviews the current situation and the implementation of NRIS in Lithuania based on the four areas: housing, education, health and employment. It presents the progress achieved as well as the key challenges which need to be resolved for a more efficient implementation of the strategy.

Employment

Throughout the last years, there has been a number of employment projects and special initiatives, targeting specifically the integration of Roma community into the labour market. Although several projects have started prior to the adoption of the NRIS, they were in line with the Strategy and seemed to have brought a positive change. The currently running project has the largest budget and so far, the most flexible regulation, allowing to adapt it to the needs of the community members. As the population of Roma in Lithuania is not large, it is expected that project-based approach might still be efficient. However, the main obstacles on the way of these initiatives are the formal requirements, which sometimes cannot be easily resolved (such as need for formal secondary or even higher education diploma) and the racist attitudes of the potential employers, who deny job-seekers the positions after learning about their ethnicity.

Housing and essential public services

Housing is one of the key problems in Lithuania and specifically in the largest Roma settlement in Vilnius. Although a set of measures is implemented by both the government through the NRIS and the Vilnius city municipality, the community still faces problems with renting (due to discrimination) and receiving municipal housing (which is very limited) and at the same time faces forced evictions, which are not in line with the international regulations.

Impact of health care policies on Roma

The situation in the field of health care is rather good, compared to the other areas. The general system of health care in Lithuania ensures that all the children, pregnant women and mothers on maternity leave can receive all the needed health care. The indicators for other groups of Roma are lower, as are the indicators for the dental care, but not significantly lower than the ones of the majority of the population. Fewer projects and measures related to the NRIS were carried out in the field of health care compared to the other fields.

Education

Similarly to many EU countries, a set of measures is needed to ensure access of the Roma children to the quality education in Lithuania. While the NRIS in Lithuania includes the needed measures (such as mediators and trainings for school staff), it is suggested to implement them more consistently and thoroughly. Addressing the need for supplementary informal education, day centres, pre-school and after-school activities and the measures taken to ensure this need is fulfilled are also presented and discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The territory of Lithuania is divided into 60 municipalities. The Roma community (2,115 people according to the 2011 census) is territorially spread out and lives in 25 municipalities; although in some municipalities their number is less than 50 persons. From 1989 the number of Roma in the country is gradually decreasing. In 1989 there were 2,719 Roma people in Lithuania, while in 2001 there were as many as 2,571.

According to data of 2011, 81 per cent of the minority lived in urban areas and 19 per cent in rural areas. Most of Roma lived in the municipalities and broader districts of Vilnius (38 per cent of the total Roma population, or 814 persons), Kaunas (23 per cent, or 482 persons), Šiauliai (11 per cent, or 224 persons), Marijampolė (10 per cent, or 214 persons), and Panevėžys (7 per cent, or 145 persons). The large majority (93 per cent) of Roma have Lithuanian citizenship, while 2.3 per cent have citizenship of Russian Federation, and the rest 2.6 per cent have other or no citizenship.

The main problems faced by the community are lack of adequate and accessible housing (especially acute in Vilnius), early school-drop outs and access to quality education for children, low levels of employment and general negative attitude towards Roma by the majority of the population, resulting in variety of problems ranging from bad atmosphere in schools for the children to hate-crimes.

The currently operating Roma organisations include: Public institution Roma Community Centre, Lithuanian Gypsy Community "*Čigonų laužas*", Lithuanian Roma Community, Roma Integration House, Roma Integration Centre, Lithuanian Gypsy Community "*Čigonų laužas*" Šalčininkai Division. Since 2017 a new organisation opened in Kaunas called Roma Intellectuals Organisation.

Lithuania has implemented several national Roma integration strategies (NRIS) since 2000: Roma Integration Programme for 2000-2004; Roma Integration Programme for 2008-2010 and Action plan for Roma integration into Lithuanian society for 2012-2014. With the exception of Vilnius City Municipality, none of the local authorities have participated in the preparation, implementation or monitoring of NRISs.

Municipalities in Lithuania are responsible for the provision of housing, education (pre-school, primary, secondary and adult education), local health centres and hospitals, social welfare of their residents and local cultural centres. Therefore, the municipalities play a significant role in the public sector: it is estimated that they are responsible for 22 per cent of total expenditure, and as a result, the involvement of local authorities and all stakeholders at the local level are crucial in promoting Roma integration.

This monitoring report reviews the current situation and the implementation of NRIS in Lithuania based on the four areas suggested by the EC: housing, education, health and employment. This report is based on an analysis of several information sources. The main one was already existing studies, reports and commentaries, produced over the last years by the civil society (the PI Roma Community Centre as well as other human rights and Roma organisations in Lithuania) as well as the existing legal acts and policies.

However, to provide a more balanced picture of the situation, several interviews were carried out with employees of NGOs as well as with the representatives of the Department of National Minorities.

EMPLOYMENT

Improving access to labour market and effectiveness of employment services

According to the national census of 2007, the unemployment rate among Lithuania's Roma stood at 34 per cent (the national average was 11 per cent). Although the reasons for the higher unemployment rate are various, starting with lower education, lack of Lithuanian language skills and other shortage of professional qualifications, the deep-rooted patterns of racist attitudes by the employers can also be observed.

The results of the public attitude surveys carried out in 2011-2013 show that approximately half of Lithuania's population (42-48 per cent) is not willing to work with Roma at the same workplace.¹

It is also worth distinguishing the situation of Roma women from the rest of the group. According to the survey, the situation of Roma women in terms of employment is worse than that of men. The lower level of activity among women has been determined not only by the entrenched stereotypes regarding their role in public life and in the family but also by the rigid attitude of employers and the lack of public care services.²

During 2004-2015, three projects were implemented in Lithuania. These were the following:

- "Development and testing of the mechanism for the Roma integration into the labour market" (2004-2008),³
- "Turn to the Roma: innovative measures for the Roma inclusion into the labour market (2009-2012)",⁴
- "European Roma culture and business park *Bahtalo Drom* (2012-2015)",⁵
- "Let Us Work Together With the Roma – New Opportunities And Challenges" (ongoing).⁶

The projects were funded by the EU funds and focused on facilitating access to employment and providing leadership, professional orientation, and more specific targeted skills. The projects were and still are in line with the NRIS guidelines and are carried out in close cooperation with the authorities. In total, 351 Roma participated or had accessed these opportunities, out of which 73 were employed, and some continued their education.

The main focus of the current project is to form social and employment skills of the Roma engaged in the project, to motivate, to adequately evaluate personal needs. Therefore, the project participants are provided with social workers' consultations. Social workers

¹ 12 Statistics Lithuania (2013). *Population by nationality, native language and religion*. Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania.

² "Reduction of differences in the situation of women and men in economic decision-making in Lithuania", Financing Agreement No. JUST/2012/PROG/AG/4118/GE implemented under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS (2007-2013). Further information is available at: <http://progress.lygus.lt/romiu-padeties-tyrimas-ir-vertinimas/>

³ "Development of Support Mechanism of Roma Integration into Labour Market" 2005–2008, Contract No. 190- ESF/2004/2.3.0-01-01/02-05, the main project promoter was public institution Roma Community Centre.

⁴ "Turn to the Roma People" 2009-2012, Contract No. VP1-1.3-SADM-02-K-01-045, the main project promoter was United Nations Development Programme in Lithuania.

⁵ European Roma Culture and Business Park *Bahtalo Drom* 2012–2015, Contract No. VP1-1.3-SADM-02-K-03-120, the main project promoter was the Lithuanian Roma Association "Gypsy Fire".

⁶ More information about this project available at: <http://www.romuplatforma.lt/en/roma-in-the-labour-market/>

also provide the Roma with the accompanying and mediation assistance in dealing with authorities. Information about social services and other project activities is provided to the Roma by assistant social workers, they also identify potential project participants, invite to take advantage of the services provided, motivate the Roma to participate in the project activities and employment. In particular, the project offers English and Lithuanian language training, driving classes, computer literacy, traditional (but applicable) crafts, and leadership.

It is estimated that 40 per cent out of approximately 300 participants will be employed. The project is implemented by the public institution Roma Community Centre, project partners – Lithuanian Gypsy Community *Čigonų Laužas* with Šalčininkai Division, Lithuanian Roma Community, Roma Integration House, Roma Integration Centre.

The projects mentioned above incorporate the element of consultations and participation of the Public Employment Service, which in Lithuania used to be Lithuanian Labour Exchange, and as of 1 October 2018 is Occupation Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. This particular cooperation is also valuable in terms of sensitising the PES regarding the rigid set of formal requirements, which sometimes can result in exclusion of certain groups from the labour market.

There is no official data on the involvement of groups facing particular social risk, such as young people, women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities. However, as the Roma grassroots organisations are always involved in the projects, they try to ensure the participation of these groups. Based on the consultations with the NGOs, the Roma women and youth at least are well-represented in the projects.

Fight against discrimination in employment and antigypsyism at workplace

The area of discrimination of Roma in employment remains rather undocumented, therefore the author will provide the findings based on the interviews with the jobseekers themselves and members of NGOs working with the community. The organisations working with the Roma community are however aware of this lack of documentation and any structured studies and are currently preparing an application for funding for conducting a study, a set of recommendation to the Lithuanian NRIS and a public campaign to supplement it.

A mentioned project "Let Us Work Together with The Roma – New Opportunities and Challenges"⁷ includes collecting the case-studies of direct racial discrimination. The purpose of this collection is to have a tangible evidence of racial discrimination in employment to be used for the development of the future projects. The collection is still undergoing, but the data reveals a typical pattern of discrimination in access to employment. Based on the interviews with the Roma NGOs and the jobseekers of Roma origin, Roma face obvious discrimination by the employer.

The typical situation based on the tens of individual cases, witnessed by the organisations is the following: the job seeker applies for a job having sufficient qualification, and this results in two scenarios:

1. the job seeker is invited for a face-to-face interview, after which is informed that the position was occupied;
2. the jobseeker is informed even prior to the interview that either the position is no longer available or explicitly states that Roma people are not to be employed (and/or considered eligible).

⁷ More information about this project available at: <http://www.romuplatforma.lt/en/roma-in-the-labour-market/>

The cases of discrimination of Roma in the workplace are similarly anecdotic and collected only informally by the organisations involved.

HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES

Fight against discrimination, residential segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in housing

Housing conditions and evictions have been one of the key problems the Roma population is facing for many years before and since the independence of Lithuania in 1991.

The Roma households in general have proved to have worse conditions than the ones of the majority of the population. First of all, while 91 per cent of the majority population own their houses, only 31 per cent of Roma had this ownership. The houses had also half the space per inhabitants, compared to the majority average. Over 50 per cent of Roma households do not have inside toilet and/or shower, compared to below 20 per cent for the majority of the population.⁸

The main settlement in Kirtimai, Vilnius is a clear example of a segregated neighbourhood, where little was done by the authorities to desegregate it. The settlement is located in the industrial zone in the southern part of Vilnius, making it time-consuming and relatively expensive for the inhabitants to come to the city, as the public transport is not frequent. Due to the current state of the area – its high pollution, the proximity of factories and the airport - the placement of the settlement can be seen in the context of environmental racism. It is however worth remembering that the settlement of Kirtimai has been located in the area since the 1960s, when the area was rural and underdeveloped, therefore not industrialised at all.

In 2017, based on the unofficial personal calculations of the PI Roma Community Centre 246 people lived in 46 buildings (almost 500 Roma lived there ten years ago). According to the data from the interviews from June 2018, Kirtimai settlement has 41 houses and a population of about 200 inhabitants, so the size of the settlement is decreasing.

Although housing was identified as a key area in the NRIS of Lithuania, the forced evictions, which are not in line with the international regulations continue to happen regularly every few months until now in the settlement of Kirtimai and are planned for the year 2019 in the settlement of Kirtimai. The NRIS does not address the eviction specifically, but rather focuses on the ways to ensure housing to the residents of the settlement. Despite the fact that forced evictions are a clear law case⁹ to be taken to the court and numerous offers by various human rights organisations to assist and represent the community, there have been no Roma from the community who would agree to proceed with such case, either as a group or individually due to the lack of trust and general fear of the authorities.

The inhabitants of Kirtimai are under the jurisdiction of the municipality of Vilnius, while the land that occupies the settlement belongs to state. Vilnius municipality in the past several years have become more responsive to dialogue with the government of Lithuania and the NGOs. Four times a year the Municipality of Vilnius invites representatives of local authorities, ministries, departments and civil society to discuss the results of the 2016-2019 programme of integration of Vilnius (Kirtimai) settlement Roma community into the society, which focuses on facilitating the resettlement of the residents.

⁸ The situation of the individuals of Roma origins in comparison with other citizens of Lithuania. 2015. Diversity Development Group. Available at: <http://www.lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2015/12/romu-tautybes-asmenu-padetis-lyginant-su-kitais-salies-gyventojais.pdf>

⁹ Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights as well as Article 17(1)(2) of the ICCPR and Article 11(1) of the ICESCR, supported by General Comments 4 (right to adequate housing) and 7 (protection against forced evictions) of the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

In order to accelerate the process of evicting the Roma from Kirtimai settlement, a position was allocated in the municipal company *Vilniaus būstas* for one year to assist families living in Kirtimai to rent housing. The clerk has started the work from the end of February 2018. The municipality sees the solution of the problem of housing in Kirtimai settlement in two ways: by providing social housing to the Roma families or by compensating the housing rent. In 2017, seven Roma families received (not segregated) social housing; 14 families benefited from the rent payment. While no official data is available on the impact of the relocation on social integration, the respondents who have been able to secure decent quality housing away from the settlement state that they are happy with this development.

From the other side the State Inspection on Planning the Territories and Constructions under the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Lithuania implements its own plan of demolishing the Kirtimai settlement ignoring either the decisions of Vilnius Municipality or the recommendations of ECRI.¹⁰

The living conditions of the Roma in other municipalities are on average worse than the ones of the majority of the population, but due to the small numbers of the Roma community and the mainstream policy making processes, these are dealt on a case-by-case basis with no Roma-specific element to them.

¹⁰ ECRI Report on Lithuania: Fifth Monitoring Cycle, adopted on 18th of March 2016. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-lithuania/16808b587b>

IMPACT OF HEALTH CARE POLICIES ON ROMA

Ensuring equal access to public health care services

Comparing to the areas of housing, employment and education, the health care is by far the least problematic one. The access to public health care is provided by the compulsory health insurance (CHI). In total in the Roma population only 9 per cent of people did not have CHI, and this percentage is the same for the majority of the population.¹¹ It is worth noting that all the children until 18 in Lithuania, including the Roma children are insured. This is also valid for the women on maternity leave and during the pregnancy.

The survey of 2015¹² revealed that 29 per cent of Roma describes their health as “poor and very poor” (while the average for the majority is 23 per cent), 50 per cent reported that they had a chronic disease or long-term health problems (37 per cent for the majority). The statistics are way better when speaking of children between 0 and 15 years old: only 8 per cent were described by their parents as being in bad health. The situation with the antigypsyism in health care in Lithuania is less problematic. Based on lack of complaints, it seems to be no major specific issues as regards to the access to the health care for the Roma compared to the majority of the population. Although, as noted, the health care system could be improved, it does not seem to promote antigypsyism.

When the needed health care was not received by the Roma, the reasons given are the following: lack of time due to family matters or work or fear of the doctors/hospitals. The reason for not receiving dental treatment in more than 51 per cent of cases was the lack of money, and this percentage, though alarming, might not signify discrimination, but more general problems in dental health care, being similar also for the majority of the population.

Speaking about children aged between 0 and 15, this percent is lower. The medical help was not received in 6 per cent per cent of cases.¹³

2015-2020 Action Plan for Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society pays special attention to health care and provides for increasing the availability of health services in Roma. It emphasises that the Roma are at greater risk of being involved in the category of the uninsured by compulsory health insurance, thereby losing access to all statutory health care services. So far, no monitoring results are available.

The NRIS measures carried out in the field of health care were regular seminars and awareness-raising sessions, focusing on prevention of illnesses, sexual health and childcare. Therefore, the seminars were targeting mostly the Roma women and youth.

¹¹ The situation of the individuals of Roma origins in comparison with other citizens of Lithuania. 2015. Diversity Development Group. Available at: <http://www.lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2015/12/romu-tautybes-asmenu-padetis-lyginant-su-kitais-salies-gyventojais.pdf>

¹² *Idem.*

¹³ *Idem.*

EDUCATION

Education is organized in three main cycles. Preschool until age 6-7, followed by the primary education (four grades, between age 6-11) and then the basic secondary education (six grades, between age 10-17, ends on a "basic education certificate", or an additional upper secondary education (two more grades, between age 16-19).¹⁴ The primary and secondary education is compulsory.

Presently and in the past, there have been several Roma-specific programmes of comparatively large budget in the fields of employment and education. The latest budget of the Roma Integration Strategy allocates 40,000 EUR annually to educational activities, 60,000 EUR annually to the mediation activities. The rest of the information regarding the budget can be accessed via the website of the Department of National Minorities.¹⁵

Improving access to quality preschool education and care

There is a major difference between the preschool care and education between Roma and non-Roma children. According to the survey from 2015, only 25 per cent of Roma children attend preschool institutions, this number for the majority is 75 per cent.¹⁶ The reasons for this, according to the above mentioned survey as well as the social workers and school mediators are both the lack of places available in good quality free of charge kindergartens (especially in Vilnius and other big cities) as well as the tradition to raise children in family circles and rely on the extended family members for help in looking after small children. However, it should be specifically noted that the legislation provides for all the children of at least 5 years old access to and a place in a preschool educational facility.

The lack of attendance of the pre-school care results in school being the first institution, which is a place of discipline and teamwork with other children. As the children need time for adaptation, this can lead to negatively impact their academic performance and teamwork.

It is therefore crucial that the teachers in the schools are aware of the context and make sure that the process of adaptation (and often also language learning, as Lithuanian or Russian are usually not the first languages for the children of Roma origin) is as smooth as possible and that the child does not face hostility.¹⁷

In order to compensate for the disadvantage conditions many Roma children have before starting school, special attention is paid to the extra-curricular activities and non-formal education, such as language classes, homework groups and other activities aimed at encouraging the easier adaptation to the school life. According to data of 2015, 33 per cent of Roma children attend child day care or children's activity centres.¹⁸

¹⁴ *World Data on Education: Lithuania*. UNESCO-IBE. 2011. Available at: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Lithuania.pdf

¹⁵ Currently the budget is available in Lithuanian at: <http://www.romuplatforma.lt/departamento-veikla-romu-integracijos-srityje/>

¹⁶ *The situation of the individuals of Roma origins in comparison with other citizens of Lithuania*. 2015. Diversity Development Group. Available at: <http://www.lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2015/12/romu-tautybes-asmenu-padetis-lyginant-su-kitais-salies-gyventojais.pdf>

¹⁷ Sabaliauskienė R. (2001). *Daugiakultūris ugdymas*. In Toleikis V. (Sud.) *Lietuvos čigonai. Tarp praeities ir dabarties*. Vilnius: Garnelis. P. 49–56. [only available in Lithuanian]

¹⁸ *The situation of the individuals of Roma origins in comparison with other citizens of Lithuania*. 2015. Diversity Development Group. Available at: <http://www.lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2015/12/romu-tautybes-asmenu-padetis-lyginant-su-kitais-salies-gyventojais.pdf>

Improving quality of education until the end of compulsory schooling

Similarly to the issue of housing, the most pressing matter with the education remains in the biggest Roma neighbourhood of Kirtimai in Vilnius. To ensure the children attend school, the social workers (on average two part time workers per classroom, but the number changes) of the Social Security Centre of Vilnius City visit Kirtimai settlement daily to wake and accompany 35 children with special rented transport to the educational institutions.

Vilnius City Municipality allocates targeted funds for the Vilnius Naujininkai School and the Saulėtekis School-Multifunctional Centre (the institutions with the highest numbers of pupils of Roma origin), which organize the transfer of children from Kirtimai settlement to schools.

The above-mentioned schools of Naujininkai and Saulėtekis in Vilnius employ social pedagogues who supervise the Roma children. The pedagogues assist with language problems and communication between the teachers and pupils, follow up on the progress of the student in school, homework and other activities. The pedagogues or school mediators are provided with individual and group counselling. In addition, these schools offer extracurricular activities involving around 80 Roma children.

In accordance with the NRIS, similar measures are taken also in other municipalities to bridge the gap in education between the Roma minority and the majority of the population. Within the Roma Platform initiative,¹⁹ the municipalities employ social mediators, whose responsibility is among other things to assist and mediate in school between the teachers, parents and the children.

While the aim should be to have mainstreamed education policies for the Roma children as for the majority of the population, it is at the moment seen as a necessary step by the local NGOs and social workers to have mediation services within the schools. In order for the mediators to work to their full capacity and to be able to evaluate the results of this intervention, it is recommended to have the position full time and long term. Until 2014 the mediators were working on an ad hoc project basis, but within the above-mentioned Roma Platform initiative, their involvement became more long term and regulated by the government, who is in charge of running the programme in the framework of NRIS.

The situation in education has changed noticeably in 2001-2015. Compared to data of 2001, illiteracy and incomplete primary education (combined for the purposes of the study, although some discrepancy may occur) among the school-age Roma students decreased by 39 per cent (in 2001 – 47 per cent, in 2011 – 11 per cent, in 2015 – 8 per cent), the number of persons with basic education increased from 7 to 27 per cent. In 2011, education of Roma children (10-19 years) in their peer children group in across Lithuania distinctly differed only in secondary education, while illiteracy, primary and basic education indicators differed only by 1-5 per cent (in 2001, the difference reached 11-36 per cent).²⁰

Fight against discrimination, segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in education

Although there are no more cases of segregated classes or other forms of segregation in education found to date, as far as it is known to the authors, there still are some persisting problems of discrimination in education.

¹⁹ For more information on the initiative, please refer to the project website of Lithuanian Roma Platforms – Going Local: <http://www.romuplatforma.lt/en/home/>

²⁰ *The situation of the individuals of Roma origins in comparison with other citizens of Lithuania*. 2015. Diversity Development Group. Available at: <http://www.lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2015/12/romu-tautybes-asmenu-padetis-lyginant-su-kitais-salies-gyventojais.pdf>

As it was noted throughout several studies,²¹ the main need for change and the biggest impact, which can be achieved happens on the teacher-student interaction level. Therefore, the programmes consistently address the issue of awareness raising among the teachers on the matters of Roma history, including the Holocaust, current situation and relevant traditions, and the background of consistent discrimination. This is done mainly through trainings and seminars. The latest large-scale programme, run by the government in the framework of NRIS is called "Lithuanian Roma Platforms – Going Local." The programme has been consistently running awareness raising seminars across the country.²² As the programme is rather recent, there are no studies to date to confirm or deny its efficiency. However, based on evaluation interviews with the school staff the programme seems to receive a positive feedback.

²¹ Sabaliauskienė R. (2001). *Daugiakultūris ugdymas*. In Toleikis V. (Sud.) *Lietuvos čigonai. Tarp praeities ir dabarties*. Vilnius: Garnelis. P. 49–56. [only available in Lithuanian]

²² More information on this programme can be found at: <http://www.romuplatforma.lt/en/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Employment

To prepare a documented study of discrimination by potential employers

Currently the evidence of racial discrimination faced by the potential Roma job seekers is anecdotic and only known to the staff working directly with them in the employment project. It is needed to have a well-documented set of evidence in order to continue working with improving the situation. More information is also needed on the awareness on the possible discriminatory and antigypsyist situations. The study could be prepared by a capable Roma organisation in cooperation with the think-tank.

To have more synergy between education and employment initiatives

More information is also lacking on the results of the initiatives developed to support the transition from education to employment.

Housing

To immediately stop forced eviction, which are against the international human rights norms

Currently the community living in Vilnius settlement is facing orders for forced evictions, often taking place during harsh weather conditions, in winter, with no alternative housing available and with small children involved. The evictions need to be stopped before the housing issue is solved.

Health

To continue with additional classes for youth and women

In line with the NRIS there are some additional education on gender, sexuality and health issues are carried out and/or supported. This initiative is indeed very needed and should be continued.

Education

To employ school mediators on a long term and full-time basis

The role of mediator in school is needed, but in order to be performed successfully, there is a need to have the person in stable position, and not on a project or ad-hoc basis.

To address the gap in preschool education

It is important to increase the number of Roma children who attend preschool facilities. In order to achieve this, a two-way process is needed. The access to the facilities needs to be improved, and the awareness of preschool education benefits should be raised among the parents.

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