

Latvia

FRANET National Focal Point

Social Thematic Study

The situation of Roma

2012

Latvian Centre for Human Rights

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Executive summary

Statistical data on the number of Roma in Latvia are approximate and may reflect only the number of Roma who have clearly defined their ethnic origin in documents. Provisional data of the Population Census 2011 shows that there were 6,489 Roma in Latvia, comprising 0.31 % of the total population. Unofficial data in 2003 showed that there were 13-15,000 Roma in Latvia.

Education

Roma have the lowest educational attainment among all ethnic groups in Latvia. The majority have less than primary education (45.28 %), followed by those with primary education (36.48 %), general education (9.3 %), and vocational education (3.51 %). 3.55 % Roma are illiterate while only 41 Roma have university education.

There are no data collected about children or students by ethnicity attending pre-school, vocational or higher educational institutions.

The majority of Roma children attend general education schools (927 or 82% of all Roma children), though a considerable number of Roma children – 189 or 17% study in special educational establishments. According to the Ministry of Education and Science in 2011/2012 there was only one so-called “Roma class” (Grades 1-6) in Latvia’s education system – 72 students were involved in Roma-only ethnic group classes in one evening school.

According to various official and unofficial sources, the majority of Roma children attend school irregularly and discontinue studies without receiving primary education. In accordance with research published in 2011, the key reasons why Roma children discontinue studies are: lack of money (39%), wish to work (34%), creating a family (13%) and parental decision to no longer let children to school (13%). At the same time, the Ministry of Education notes that in recent years 20% of Roma who complete primary education continue their studies in high school.

Latvia has no data on the educational performance of pupils by ethnicity. However, the Ministry of Education and Science compiles information on subjects where Roma pupils have low final marks and the school year has been extended in order to improve their performance. In 2011/2012 additional educational measures were provided to 332 pupils or 26.2% of the total number of Roma children, predominantly in the Latvian language, maths, English, social sciences, and natural sciences.

The State Education Quality Inspectorate (*Valsts izglītības kvalitātes inspekcija [VIKI]*), the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ombudsperson’s Office (*Tiesībsarga birojs [OO]*), and municipalities have not received complaints about the alleged discrimination of Roma children in educational institutions.

Significant efforts have been undertaken by the NGO—Centre for Education Initiatives—to train Roma teacher assistants; however, the lack of state support to sustain their activities has resulted in the majority of assistants leaving Latvia for work abroad. Since 2003, the NGO has implemented nine projects to promote Roma integration into mainstream education, but highlights the lack of political awareness and commitment to address Roma education at state and municipal level.

Although various government policy documents envisage support activities for the raising of Roma educational attainment, funding remains a problem.

Employment

Ethnic Roma in Latvia experience greater difficulties in successfully accessing the labour market and especially in securing official long-term employment relations.

Complaint data about discrimination against Roma on the ground of ethnicity in employment relations is scarce. During 2006-2012 the Ombudsperson received two complaints about possible discrimination on the ground of ethnicity from Roma. At the same time, some representatives of the Roma minority claim that there are numerous instances of ethnic discrimination against Roma in employment, yet people do not file official complaints due to various reasons.

According to the State Employment Agency (SEA), the share of ethnic Roma among the unemployed (0.5-0.7%) is consistently higher than the share of ethnic Roma among the total population (0.4%). 846 ethnic Roma were registered as unemployed on 31 July 2012, and more than a half are women (59.22%). 60.5% of unemployed Roma have their education level lower than primary (both men and women). A significant number of Roma who attended minority schools with Russian as language of instruction (31.7%) do not have the Latvian language proficiency certificate, a legal requirement for full access to the labour market.

According to the SEA and the Ministry of Welfare, in total there were 4,172 ethnic Roma registered in various active employment measures implemented by the Agency during 2008-2011 and the first six months of 2012 (542 Roma participants in 2008, 921 in 2009, 947 in 2010 and 1,275 in 2011, 487 in the first six months of 2012). The majority were enrolled in educational measures aimed at raising their competitiveness in the labour market. Part of the measures included temporary community work, involving 199 ethnic Roma in 2008, 139 in 2009 and 184 during the first six months of 2012.

According to the Central Statistics Bureau (CSB), statistical information about economic activity, pensions, employment and incomes disaggregated by ethnic identity is not normally available in Latvia.

The 2011 Population Census included questions about the person's ethnic self-identity as well as questions about the current economic status and employment. However, as of 15 August 2012 the CSB has not finished counting the results of the census.

There is no statistical or research information available about self-employment among Roma. Thus far, there has been no information on the existence of child labour in Latvia.

Housing and neighbourhood

The only available quantitative data on Roma situation in housing is the data from the 2000 Population Census. The CSB, which is the main state body in charge of collecting, processing and disseminating statistical data, does not have more recent ethnic data on housing because the EU-wide programme Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) does not require the collection of data on ethnic affiliation or racial origin related to housing data. Although questions on housing conditions (type of dwelling, residence status of dwelling, ownership, number of residents, type of building, living space, amenity, time period of building the dwelling) were included in the 2011 Population Census, according to the CSP these data will be available only in 2014.

Municipalities with a significant number of ethnic Roma population do not have data about the situation of Roma in housing, as they do not carry out housing registration along ethnic lines. There are no data on ethnic affiliation of the residents of social houses.

No nation-wide quantitative research has been conducted regarding the housing conditions of Roma since 2003. There are no official, unofficial or research statistical data on the impact of housing conditions on the proximity to services, workplaces, educational and healthcare institutions. The 2009 Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma shows that housing conditions and social problems of Roma families have a negative impact on the accessibility of education, and that unemployment is a major factor worsening housing conditions of the Roma.

There is no official policy of spatial or social segregation of Roma and there are no localities inhabited either exclusively or predominantly by Roma in Latvia. There are no official data on forced evictions of Roma and no qualitative data on problems with adequate protection in cases of eviction.

Several surveys show generally high level of intolerance towards various ethnic and social groups, including Roma. In a survey of 38 cities in Latvia in 2007-2008 more than 50% of respondents would not like to have Roma as neighbours. In another survey at the end of 2011, 38.1% of the respondents indicated they would not like to have Roma as neighbours.

Ombudsperson's Office received only three complaints about discrimination in housing on grounds of Roma ethnicity during 2006-2012. Municipalities with significant Roma populations deny having received complaints from Roma about discrimination or racism in housing.

There is no available information about projects or initiatives co-funded by the EU aimed at the improvement of the situation of Roma in housing.

The *Roma integration policy measures in Latvia 2012 - 2018* by the Ministry of Culture in 2012 envisages gathering information on the number of homeless Roma in the regions in cooperation with local authorities, as well as the inspection of existing homes and, where possible, providing support to ensure sanitary and safety standards; as well as the improvement of the monitoring of the socio-economic conditions of Roma, including a study on Roma's access to housing. No funding has been allocated for this purpose in 2012.

Health

According to the Ministry of Health no information and statistics are available on the health condition of Roma. According to the Disease Prevention and Control Centre no data by ethnicity are collected about child vaccination, infant mortality rates, disability, lifespan, incidence with different diseases and other health related issues.

The only available patient data by ethnicity are on substance abusers. There were 166 newly registered Roma drug or substance abusers (0.6% of the total number of registered users) from 2006 until 2011. According to the report of the fifth wave of Riga Drug User's Cohort Study, 50 Roma representatives have been surveyed since 2006 (15 in 2010), of those 32 men and 18 women, 66% or 33 Roma respondents (drug users) had been in prison.

Although no data on HIV infected persons by ethnicity are compiled in official registers, NGO DIA+LOGS working with HIV/AIDS patients, and HIV prevention drop-in centres register clients by determining their ethnicity, but data are not publicly available. According to the the Latvian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association "*Papardes zieds*" as of 1 January 2011, there were 355 registered Roma HIV infected, and 42 HIV infected persons per 1,000 Roma inhabitants in Latvia. Latvia has no special programmes aimed at the HIV/AIDS reduction measures in the Roma community.

A draft framework document on the financing model of the healthcare system by the Ministry of Health that links access to health services to the payment of income tax, if adopted, may disproportionately impact Roma with regard to access to healthcare. A pilot project on HIV/AIDS and

STD awareness was implemented in the town of Jelgava, where 36 Roma received free of charge HIV/HCV testing.

Poverty/Economic situation

Although Roma are recognised as one of the groups exposed to higher risk of social exclusion and poverty requiring additional support mechanisms, no action plans envisage specific measures aimed at the improvement of the economic situation of Roma.

No ethnic data are collected about the inhabitants at risk of poverty and social exclusion, receivers of social assistance, social benefits and pensions. Municipalities with significant Roma population claim they do not have data by ethnicity about the economic situation and households at risk of poverty. Two municipalities though provided some information on Roma – receivers of social benefits.

Several projects, which aim at Roma social inclusion, are being implemented by municipalities and the NGO Latvian Red Cross. The projects include the improvement of social and functional skills of Roma, successful integration in the labour market, motivation and social rehabilitation programmes, and illiteracy reduction.

Active Citizenship/Rights Awareness

Although Roma is one of the most discriminated against groups, there have been very few official discrimination complaints from Roma to the Ombudsperson's Office (two complaints in 2012, five in 2011, none in 2010, none in 2009, three in 2008, four in 2007 and one in 2006) or to human rights NGOs. In almost all cases reviewed by the Office no fact of discrimination was established. No complaints on Roma discrimination have been received by the Education Quality State Agency, the State Labour Inspectorate and the Health Inspectorate. One of the reasons why Roma do not turn for assistance in cases of discrimination or harassment is lack of information and distrust in law enforcement institutions.

The state programme "Roma in Latvia" 2007-2009 envisaged that a position for a Roma officer was to be established in 2007 in the Ombudsperson's Office; however, the position was established only in May 2011. The consultant's tasks include promoting Roma integration, organising the activities of the Ombudsperson's Office in preventing discrimination, consulting Roma on the receipt of social assistance and suggesting proposals on the improvement of legislation.

13 Roma NGOs are registered in Latvia in 2012; however, many have suspended their activities due to a decrease in state funding for national minority organisations.

Only one Roma has been elected to the Latvian parliament since the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1990. Three Roma candidates ran in 2005 and 2009 local government elections, but none was elected. Several Roma participate in local government commissions on integration, social affairs, administrative or housing commissions.

Attempts by state institutions to develop targeted inclusion measures for Roma had very limited success due to insufficient funding and implementation. 66% of the required funding for "Roma in Latvia" 2007-2009 programme was allocated in 2007, 36% in 2008 and 17% in 2009. The New Guidelines on National Identity, Civic Participation and Society Integration Policy approved by the government in October 2011 envisage the development of a data collection system on the situation of Roma in various socio-economic areas, support programmes for Roma integration, healthcare, employment, access to housing, etc. However, in 2012 only LVL 3,500 (5,000 EUR) have been allocated for this purpose.

In September 2012 the Advisory Council on the Implementation of Roma Integration Policy was established under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture.

From 2007 to 2012, there were 91 projects implemented by ministries, institutions, and NGOs aiming—fully or partially—at Roma integration that received EU and other funding. In an opinion in the second half of 2012 the Ombudsperson concluded that the reduction of Roma exclusion had not been addressed systematically and that the funding had been spent “unpurposefully and ineffectively”.

1 Roma population

According to official statistics there were 8,476 Roma (0.35 % of the total population) in Latvia on 18 April 2012.¹ At the same time provisional data of the Population Census 2011 shows that there were 6,489 Roma in Latvia, comprising 0.31 % of the total population.² Unofficial data provided by Roma NGOs change according to the socio-economic situation. A study published in 2003 shows that there were 13,000 to 15,000 Roma in Latvia. According to Romani leaders, many Roma are afraid of discrimination and therefore often choose to indicate another ethnicity when asked, such as Latvian, Russian or other.³ Therefore, statistical data on Roma are approximate and may reflect only the number of Roma who clearly defined their ethnic origin in documents. Another factor affecting the Roma population count is that, according to the leaders of Latvia's Roma minority, more than 10,000 Roma have emigrated during last 15 years.⁴ However, official statistics show that from 2008 to 2010 only 98 Roma emigrated from Latvia.⁵

Roma is the only ethnic group in Latvia with a positive balance of birth-mortality rates (birth rate exceeds the mortality rate: in the period 2000-2011, natural population growth was 866). However, the birth rate is decreasing among Latvian Roma as well (from 179 in 2000 to 118 in 2010).⁶ The majority of officially registered Roma are Latvian citizens (7,982), 442 Roma are non-citizens, four – stateless persons and 48 are citizens of other countries.⁷ Most Roma in Latvia speak Romany and additionally either Latvian or Russian (or both), but there are cultural differences between the Latvian-speaking Roma (those whose language of communication and sometimes also mother tongue is Latvian) living in Kurzeme (the western part of Latvia) and the Russian-speaking Roma who live in Latgale (region close to the Russian border).⁸

All Latvian Roma are sedentary. Nomadic traditions changed during the First Republic (1918-1940). Later during the Soviet period, general registration of all residents, including persons belonging to the Roma minority, led to their sedentary life style. During the 1970s most Latvian Roma moved into towns and cities of Latvia and now they can be viewed as a mainly urbanized community.⁹ Based on

¹ Population Register of the Office of the Citizenship and Migration (Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvaldes Iedzīvotāju reģistrs), *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr 24/14-25/3358* (19 April 2012)

² Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālās statistikas pārvalde), *Information to the the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (15 August 2012)

³ Latvia, Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (2003), *The Situation of Roma in Latvia*, p. 15-16.

⁴ Vīksne, A. (2009), *Čigāni pamet Latviju*, Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, available in Latvian at <http://nra.lv/articles/print.htm?id=25756/>

⁵ Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālās statistikas pārvalde), *Information to the the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (15 August 2012)

⁶ Latvia, Central Statistical Bureau (*Centrālā statistikas pārvalde*), (2010) *Births, Deaths and Natural Increase by Ethnicity, 2010*.

⁷ Letter of the Population Register of the Office of the Citizenship and Migration to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (Nr 24/14-25/3358, 19 April 2012)

⁸ Apine, I. (2007), Roma in Latvia (*Čigāni (romi) Latvijā*), in: *Minorities in Latvia: History and Present (Mazākumtautība Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne)*, Rīga.

⁹ *Ibid* p.286.

the data that are available, the majority of Roma live in the capital, Riga (1,066)¹⁰ and large towns of Kurzeme and Zemgale regions, such as Ventspils (1,122), Jelgava (1,032) and Talsi (561).¹¹ However due to active migration of Roma to other EU Member States, in a number of cities the Roma proportion decreased significantly. There are no localities or settlements inhabited either exclusively or predominantly by Roma in Latvia. There are a few so-called “Roma houses” – blocks of flats where Roma tend to live in a kind of community. However, these accommodations are rather exceptional and houses and flats occupied by Roma do not form geographically separate communities (localities, settlements) from the rest of the population.¹²

Citizenship and proficiency in the state language (Latvian) have been the two main concerns in the field of minority integration in Latvia since independence. Although Roma represent a well-integrated minority in Latvia according to these two dimensions, it is clear that in socio-economic terms they experience the greatest problems, and negative stereotyping of Roma is widespread in society at large. The most topical problems among Latvia’s Roma are: low educational level and early school drop-out, low competitiveness in the labour market, high level of unemployment, as well as high level of intolerance against Roma, which leads to discrimination against Roma in employment and other areas of life.

¹⁰ Letter of the Population Register of the Office of the Citizenship and Migration to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (Nr 24/14-25/3358, 19 April 2012)

¹¹ Latvia, Office of the Citizenship and Migration Affairs (*Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde*) (2012)

¹² Latvian RAXEN National Focal Point (2009), Thematic Study Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers. Available in English at http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/RAXEN-Roma%20Housing-Latvia_en.pdf

2 Education

Provisional data of the Population Census 2011 shows that only 9.3 % of Roma have secondary education and only 0.84 % or 41 Roma have university education. Among 4,901 Roma over 15, 3.51 % had vocational secondary education or vocational education, 10.34 % had general secondary education, 36.48 % had primary education, and 45.28 % had less than primary education (nine years of school). 174 Roma or 3.55 % of all Roma over 15 are illiterate.¹³ Although compared with the 2000 Population Census the situation has slightly improved, Roma are the only ethnic minority with such low educational attainment levels.

a) Pre-school/ kindergarten

No data by ethnicity on children attending pre-school educational institutions are collected.¹⁴ Although data on Roma children in kindergartens are not collected at national level and municipalities also indicate they do not collect such data, several municipalities provided information on the number of Roma children in kindergartens. In the second largest city in Latvia, Daugavpils, 62 Roma children attend kindergarten, in Ventspils – 15, Kuldīga – 5, Valmiera – 8, Talsi County – 13.¹⁵ At the same time, municipalities note that the kindergarten attendance by Roma children is irregular.

b) Compulsory school attendance

There are no data in Latvia about children not attending school. Only one local government has indicated that around 70 Roma children, aged 6-18, residing in the area, do not attend educational institutions, and that mandatory education of 5-6 year olds remains a concern.¹⁶

However, available information shows that the majority of Roma children attend school irregularly and discontinue studies without receiving primary education. Although official statistics on Roma drop-out are not collected, the information provided by the state authorities to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance shows that 13.7% of Roma do not complete primary education.¹⁷ In 2010/2011, 10.2% Roma pupils, for various reasons (families have emigrated, unfavourable social conditions in the family, etc.), did not complete mandatory primary education.¹⁸

In accordance with the research published in 2011, the key reasons why Roma children discontinue studies are: lack of money (39%), wish to work (34%), creating a family (13%) and parental decision

¹³ Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālās statistikas pārvalde), *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr 0708-10/222* (10 February 2012)

¹⁴ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija), *Information to the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (23 August 2012)

¹⁵ General and Vocational Education Board of Daugavpils City Council (Daugavpils pilsētas padomes Vispārējās un profesionālās izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR No 1-08/637* (16 August 2012), Education Board of Jelgava City Council (Jelgavas pilsētas Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR No 1-11/431*, (22 August 2012), Kuldīga City Council (Kuldīgas pilsētas padome) *Letter to the LCHR No 02-18/1866* (22 August 2012), Education Board of Ventspils City Council (Ventspils pilsētas padomes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter No 1-13.1/819*, (23 August 2012), Education Board of Talsi County Council (Talsu novada Izglītības padome) *Letter to the LCHR* (16 August 2012), Education Board of Valmiera City Council (Valmieras pilsētas padomes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR* (10 August 2012)

¹⁶ Integration Board of Jelgava City Council (Jelgavas pilsētas padomes Integrācijas pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR No 12-13/104* (22 August 2012)

¹⁷ European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2012), *ECRI Report on Latvia* (fourth monitoring cycle), Adopted on 9 December 2011. Available in English: www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/latvia/LVA-CbC-IV-2012-003-ENG.pdf

¹⁸ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (23 August 2012)

to no longer let children to school (13%).¹⁹ Municipalities acknowledge that educational institutions mostly deal with social problems, school inattendance and poor educational performance. Roma children often do not begin school at compulsory schooling age and in many cases their age does not correspond to the age of their classmates. A large number of Roma pupils discontinue studies at different stages and many have no opportunities to restart education. The main reasons for irregular school attendance are: „Early marriages by girls, lack of motivation linked to Roma traditions, older age, frequent change of place of residence and emigration from the country.”²⁰ In order to overcome obstacles that prevent Roma from receiving education, municipality specialists elaborate specific recommendations for each child and a support programme for the family.²¹

c) Educational attainment

Latvia has no official data collection mechanisms that would provide regular and comparable data on the education performance of pupils by ethnicity. However, the Ministry of Education and Science compiles information from Education Boards as to the subjects in which Roma pupils have low final marks and the school year has been extended to improve their performance. In 2011/2012 additional educational measures were provided to 332 pupils or 26.2% of the total number of Roma children, predominantly in the following subjects: Latvian language, maths, English, social sciences, natural sciences.²² Additional educational support aimed at increasing literacy levels is also provided.²³

d) Vocational training/ qualifications

No data by ethnicity are collected about students attending vocational or higher educational institutions.²⁴

e) Different types of schooling (home education, special schools, etc.)

According to the Ministry of Education and Science ((MoES) *Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija*) 1,213 Roma children were enrolled in general educational establishments, of those 1,128 in general educational day school programmes, (0.55% of all high school students), and 85 in evening and correspondence programmes. The majority of Roma children (812) attend schools with Latvian as language of instruction, 312 with Russian as language of instruction²⁵, and 4 with Polish as the main language of instruction.

Although the majority of Roma children attend general education schools (927 or 82% of all Roma children), a considerable number of Roma children – 189 or 17% study in special educational establishments (social educational and correctional programmes in classes in boarding schools, which are not envisaged for Roma children only), while 17 children are enrolled in special classes in general education schools.²⁶

¹⁹ Centre for Education Initiatives (Izglītību iniciatīvu centrs) (2011) *Romu tiesības uz izglītību: īstenošanas situācija Latvijā* (Roma Right to Education: Implementing Situation in Latvia), p.30. Available in Latvian at : www.iic.lv/lv/projekti/rti_petijums_isl.pdf

²⁰ General and Vocational Education Board of Daugavpils City Council (Daugavpils pilsētas padomes Vispārējās un profesionālās izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR No 1-08/637* (16 August 2012). Education Board of Talsi County Council (Talsu novada Izglītības padome) *Letter to the LCHR* (16 August 2012)

²¹ Education Board of Talsi County Council (Talsu novada Izglītības padome) *Letter to the LCHR* (16 August 2012)

²² Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (3 September 2012)

²³ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (23 August 2012)

²⁴ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija), *Information to the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (23 August 2012)

²⁵ Minority schools in Latvia implementē bilingual education programmes, and in senior grades 60% of school subjects are conducted in Latvian and 40% in Russian or other minority language.

²⁶ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (26 March 2012)

According to the MoES in addition to various learning difficulties, the high number of Roma children in boarding schools could be explained by the social support provided in these schools – three meals per day, text books and possibility to reside in the school.²⁷

f) Issues of segregation and integration

Although separate education for Roma has never been officially recognised as part of state education policy, from 2000, when most social and pedagogical correction classes were opened, until 2007 this practice was implemented in almost all towns with a significant share of Roma population.²⁸ In 2011/2012 there were two so-called “Roma classes” (Grades 1-6) in Latvia’s education system – 72 students were enrolled in Roma-only classes in Ventspils evening school (opened in 1987)²⁹ and 30 students were enrolled in Roma ethnic classes in Kuldīga Primary school. In 2011, the Kuldīga District evaluated the relevance of the correctional education programme with the needs of the Roma minority (30 Roma children and youths attended this programme) and a number of drawbacks were identified. In order to achieve the aims of education, the Council decided to establish Roma minority classes (grades 1-6) starting with the 2011/2012 school year and provide an opportunity to study some subjects bilingually.³⁰ After completing the 6th grade Roma children and youths in Ventspils can continue studies in the evening school programme.³¹ In Kuldīga those who finish the 6th grade Roma class can continue their studies in other general education classes or educational establishments.³²

So far no research has been conducted in order to determine whether the “Roma classes” have facilitated the integration of Roma children into the education system and improved their educational achievements. Precise reasons for the closure of “Roma classes” are not known, although according to the Centre for Education Initiatives (CEI (*Izglītības iniciatīvu centrs*)) the rest of Roma classes have been closed allegedly due to shortage of students – most children have emigrated with their parents, as well as the fact that Roma community favours sending children to general education schools.³³

The practice of the remaining special classes for Roma has been criticised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In its fourth report on Latvia, ECRI reiterated its recommendation to close any remaining special classes for Roma and integrate Roma students in mainstream classes, as well as recommended to the authorities to address the high representation of Roma children in special needs schools.³⁴

Twenty two Roma teacher assistants were trained to work at preschool and primary school establishments within the framework of the National Programme “Roma in Latvia” 2007-2009. However, due to the lack of state funding to sustain their activities, only one worked in the 2010/2011 school year as a teacher assistant in a kindergarden in Jelgava (funded by the

²⁷ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (21 March 2012)

²⁸ Latvian Centre for Human Rights (Latvijas Cilvēktiesību centrs) (2008) *Alternative report on the implementation of the Council of the Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Latvia*, p. 38, available in English: <http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/en/publications/alternative-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-co/>

²⁹ Information provided by the Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (31 March 2012)

³⁰ Kuldīga District Council (*Kuldīgas novada pašvaldība*) *Letter to the LCHR No 01-18.1/2079* (19 September 2012).

³¹ Education Board of Ventspils City Council (Ventspils pilsētas domes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR No 1-13.1/819* (23 August 2012).

³² ³² Kuldīga District Council (*Kuldīgas novada pašvaldība*) *Letter to the LCHR No 01-18.1/2079* (19 September 2012).

³³ Center for Education Initiatives (Izglītības iniciatīvu centrs) *Information to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (21 March 2012)

³⁴ European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2012), *ECRI Report on Latvia* (fourth monitoring cycle), Adopted on 9 December 2011. Available in English: www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/latvia/LVA-CbC-IV-2012-003-ENG.pdf

municipality). Most of the 22 trained assistants have left Latvia and now live abroad. Seven Roma teacher assistants began their work in the 2011/2012 school year within the framework of NGOs, the Centre for Education Initiatives' (CEI (*Izglītības iniciatīvu centrs*)) projects. No state funding was envisaged for that purpose.

Research on "*Roma Right to Education: Implementing Situation in Latvia*", conducted by CEI notes a lack of political will and commitment to address Roma education at state and municipal levels. It concludes that the impact of the Roma education policy is not fully assessed due to the lack of statistical data on Roma students' educational process. Interviews with Roma families show that poverty and Roma traditional social order in families are key factors for leaving school early. Stigmatization, symptoms of depression, and adaptation difficulties in school enhance pupils' wish to avoid school. There is a lack of adequate training materials and teachers are not professionally prepared to work with Roma students. These and other barriers leading to many negative consequences in Roma education, such as Roma instruction in separate classes with correctional status, or the artificial creation of conditions for moving Roma children to special classes or schools.³⁵

In 2012 CEI implemented two projects to promote Roma children's inclusion and integration into mainstream education. The "*School and Community for Inclusion of Roma Child*"³⁶ project was aimed at developing an inclusive support system for Roma children, youth and seniors: public debates, adult education seminars, workshops, multicultural class establishment (three classes started functioning in September 2011 and two classes continued their work from previous projects), support from Roma teacher assistants' (work of five Roma assistants will be financed within the project), creation of Roma parents and senior support centres, etc.³⁷ A further education course aimed at strengthening the capacity of professionals working with Roma social exclusion and education issues was elaborated; 196 teachers and local government representatives trained, 3 trainers prepared, 5 Roma teachers assistants trained and integration in school work; 3 multi-cultural classes set up in general educational establishments, 3 Roma parents and senior citizen support centres created, 5 children's books in Latvian-Romani languages published for work in integrated classes, 109 Roma children integrated in five project educational institutions in 2011/2012 within the framework of the project. Recommendations for local governments where Roma families reside were also elaborated.³⁸

The "*Creation of the Support System for Work with Roma Children*"³⁹ project envisaged financing the work of two Roma teacher assistants and developing two in-service training programmes for teachers. It is planned that more than 130 teachers and their assistants will be prepared to work with Roma children and families within the project.⁴⁰ Since 2003 CEI has implemented nine projects to promote Roma integration into mainstream education. The CEI was named by the National Programme "Roma in Latvia 2007-2009" as the responsible organisation for the development of a nationwide inclusive practice for Roma students.

The National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Guidelines (*Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas pamatnostādnes*) approved on 1 October 2011 envisage the

³⁵ Centre for Education Initiatives (CEI) (*Izglītības iniciatīvu centrs*) (2011), *Roma Right to Education: Implementing Situation in Latvia (Romu tiesības uz izglītību: īstenošanas situācija Latvijā)*, available in Latvian (with main conclusions in English): www.iic.lv/lv/projekti/rti_petijums_isl.pdf

³⁶ Implemented within the framework of the Latvian and Switzerland cooperation programme from January 2011 to June 2012, www.iic.lv/en/projects/school_community.html

³⁷ Centre for Education Initiatives (2011), *School and Community for Inclusion of Roma Children*, available in English: www.iic.lv/en/projects/school_community.html

³⁸ Centre for Education Initiatives ((Izglītības Iniciatīvu centrs), (2011), *School and Community for Inclusion of Roma Children: Report and Recommendations (Projekts "Skola un sabiedrība čigānu bērnu iekļaušanai" Atskaite un rekomendācijas)* www.iic.lv/lv/projekti/skola_sabiedriba_rekomendacijas.pdf

³⁹ Supported by the Soros Foundation-Latvia, 1 August, 2011 – 1 August, 2012

⁴⁰ Centre for Education Initiatives (2011), *Creation of the Support System for Work with Roma Children (Atbalsta sistēmas veidošana darbam ar romu bērniem)*, Available in English: www.iic.lv/en/projects/support_system.html

implementation of support activities for raising the Roma educational attainment.⁴¹ The Action Plan for the promotion of society consolidation in the area of education (*Rīcības plāns sabiedrības saliedētības sekmēšanai izglītības nozarē*) elaborated by the Ministry of Education envisages the implementation of good practice – teacher assistants in educational institutions where Roma children study alongside children from other backgrounds.⁴² However, no state funding has been allocated for these activities.

g) Experiences and perceptions of discrimination

Neither the State Education Quality Inspectorate ((VIKI) *Valsts izglītības kvalitātes inspekcija*)⁴³ nor the Ministry of Education and Science⁴⁴, nor Ombudsperson's Office ((OO) *Tiesībsarga birojs*)⁴⁵ nor municipalities⁴⁶ have received complaints about the alleged discrimination of Roma children in educational institutions. There have been no complaints concerning the sending of children to special educational institutions or special classes in general educational institutions.

⁴¹ Ministry of Culture (Kultūras ministrija) (2011), *National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Fundamental Principles 2012-2018* (Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas pamatnostādnes 2012.-2018. gadam). Available in Latvian : www.km.gov.lv/lv/ministrija/integracijas_pamatnostadnes.html

⁴² Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) (2012), *Action Plan for Promoting Society Consolidation in Education 2012-2014* (Rīcības plāns sabiedrības saliedētības sekmēšanai izglītības nozarē 2012.-2014. Gadam). Available in Latvian: <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/aktualitates/jaunumi/8410.html>

⁴³ Education Quality State Agency (Valsts izglītības kvalitātes aģentūra) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* No 4-07/229, (31 August 2012)

⁴⁴ Ministry of Education and Science (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija) *Information to the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (23 August 2012)

⁴⁵ Ombudsperson (Tiesībsargs) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* No 1-5/2162012 (20 August 2012)

⁴⁶ General and Vocational Education Board of Daugavpils City Council (Daugavpils pilsētas domes Vispārējās un profesionālās izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR* No 1-08/637 (16 August 2012), Education Board of Jelgava City Council (Jelgavas pilsētas Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR* No 1-11/431, (22 August 2012), Kuldīga City Council (Kuldīgas pilsētas dome) *Letter to the LCHR* No 02-18/1866 (22 August 2012), Education Board of Ventspils City Council (Ventspils pilsētas domes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter No 1-13.1/819*, (23 August 2012), Education Board of Talsi County Council (Talsu novada Izglītības padome) *Letter to the LCHR* (16 August 2012), Education Board of Valmiera City Council (Valmieras pilsētas domes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR* (10 August 2012), Education Board of Tukums City Council (Tukuma pilsētas domes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the LCHR* No 1-12.3/243 (16 August 2012), Jekabpils City Council (Jekabpils pilsētas dome) *Letter to the LCHR* No 1-4.3/526 (10 August 2012), by the Education Board of Talsi City Council (Talsu pilsētas domes Izglītības pārvalde) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012, Education Board of Valmiera City Council (Valmieras pilsētas Izglītības pārvalde) *Information to the LCHR* (10 August 2012)

3 Employment

Available information suggests that Roma are experiencing greater difficulties in the labour market, and some efforts implemented in Latvia envisage active measures aimed at facilitating their integration in employment.

a) Paid employment

The FRA Roma Pilot survey did not cover Latvia.⁴⁷ Earlier studies indicated that ethnic Roma in Latvia experience greater difficulties in successfully accessing the labour market and especially in securing official long-term employment relations. According to the study “The Situation of Roma in Latvia” conducted in 2003, many Roma lost their income after the break-up of the Soviet Union, when the factories were closed and collective farms liquidated, while unofficial income opportunities also disappeared. Since then, very few Romani persons had official, long term jobs (NGOs assessments range between 1-10% of the working age persons), the main obstacles being the lack of education and professional training, the lack of experience and official work record, as well as stereotypes.⁴⁸

The last Population Census conducted in March 2011 included questions about persons’ ethnic self-identity as well as questions about the current economic activity status and employment and therefore, the Census data should be able to provide a valuable insight into the situation of the Roma minority. However, as of 15 August 2012 the CSB still has not finished counting the results of the Population Census.⁴⁹ According to the CSP these data will be available only in 2014.

b) Self-employment

There is no statistical or research information available on self-employment among Roma.

c) Communal work and other forms of payment schemes

SEA is the main state body entrusted with implementing state policy to decrease unemployment and the number of the unemployed, provide support programme for job-seekers and persons at risk of unemployment. According to the Ministry of Welfare, various active employment measures implemented by the SEA are available to ethnic Roma as well as to persons of any other ethnic background according to the Law on “Support for Unemployed and the Job-Seekers”.⁵⁰ Information about the number of ethnic Roma involved in various active employment measures implemented was made available upon request by the SEA.⁵¹

According to the Ministry of Welfare,⁵² besides various active employment measures implemented by the SEA, four projects co-funded by the European Social Fund are currently being implemented, which envisage activities also aimed at facilitating Roma employment (the sub-activity 1.4.1.2.4. “**Development of social care services in regions as an alternative to social rehabilitation and institutions**” - total budget LVL 378,729.91 (EUR 538,887.18) (See Chapter 5 of the report for details).

⁴⁷ Fundamental Rights Agency (2012), *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States - Survey results at a glance*, 2012, available in English at:

http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf (Accessed 10 September 2012)

⁴⁸ Latvian Centre for Human Rights, *The Situation of Roma in Latvia*, Riga, 2004, available in English at:

<http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/en/publications/the-situation-of-roma-in-latvia>

⁴⁹ Latvia, Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) (*Centrālā statistikas pārvalde*) (2012), e-mail 15 August 2012

⁵⁰ Latvia, Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības Ministrija), *Information Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

⁵¹ Latvia, State Employment Agency (Nodarbinātības Valsts Aģentūra), *Information Letter 5-04/2926* (20 August 2012)

⁵² Latvia, Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības Ministrija), *Information Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

In addition to the general measures implemented by the SEA and available to ethnic Roma, in 2010 the SEA in cooperation with NGO Latvian Red Cross ([LRC] Latvijas Sarkanais Krusts) implemented a project “Education and Job-Seeking Motivation – the Foundation of Successful Competitiveness” aimed specifically at improving the competitive skills of unemployed ethnic Roma.⁵³ Six ethnic Roma participated in the course.

According to the information provided by the SEA and the Ministry of Welfare,⁵⁴ in total there were 4,172 ethnic Roma registered in various active employment measures implemented by the Agency during 2008-2011 and the first six months of 2012. Specifically, 542 ethnic Roma participants were registered in various employment measures in 2008, 921 in 2009, 947 in 2010 and 1,275 in 2011, and 487 during the first six months of 2012.⁵⁵ The biggest part of Roma participants were enrolled in educational measures aimed at raising their competitiveness in the labour market. Part of the measures included temporary community work, involving 199 ethnic Roma in 2008, 139 in 2009 and 184 during the first six months of 2012.

According to the Ministry of Welfare,⁵⁶ LVL 814,441.5 (EUR 115,885.25) were spent during 2009-2011 on various active employment support measures implemented by the SEA and benefiting 3,143 ethnic Roma participants. In particular, LVL 206,854 (EUR 294,328) were spent on support measures for Roma in employment in 2009, LVL 285,025 (EUR 405,524) in 2010 and LVL 322,585 (EUR 459,000) in 2011. The biggest part of the funding was spent on training for work skills acquisition and retention of local government (municipality) employees.

d) Unemployment

The data from the State Employment Agency ((SEA) Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra) under the Ministry of Welfare (MoW) (Labklājības ministrija) includes statistical information about individuals officially registered as unemployed and their declared ethnicity.⁵⁷ These data shows that the share of ethnic Roma among the unemployed (0.5-0.7%) is consistently higher than the share of ethnic Roma among the total population (0.4%).

According to the Ministry of Welfare,⁵⁸ among the 846 ethnic Roma registered with the State Employment Agency as unemployed on 31 July 2012, more than half are women (501, or 59.22%). The largest age group among unemployed Roma is 40-44 years old (122 persons, or 14.4%); both among men and women this age category represents the biggest group. 60.5% of the unemployed Roma have an education level lower than primary (both men and women). The majority of unemployed Roma studied in schools with Latvian as language of instruction (504 persons, or 59.6%), while among those who studied in schools with language of instruction other than Latvian (342 persons, or 40.4%), the majority (268 persons, or 31.7%) do not have the Latvian language proficiency certificate, which is a legal requirement for full access to the labour market. Regarding the length of unemployment, the biggest group is 1-3 years (37.6%).

e) Child labour

Thus far, there has been no information about the existence of the child labour as such in Latvia.

⁵³ Latvia, State Employment Agency (Nodarbinātības Valsts Aģentūra), *Information Letter 5-04/2926* (20 August 2012)

⁵⁴ Latvia, Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības Ministrija), *Information Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

⁵⁵ Latvia, State Employment Agency (Nodarbinātības Valsts Aģentūra), *Information Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr 5-04/2926* (20 August 2012)

⁵⁶ Latvia, Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības Ministrija), *Information Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

⁵⁷ Latvia, State Employment Agency (Nodarbinātības Valsts Aģentūra), *Information Letter 5-04/2926* , 20 August 2012

⁵⁸ Latvia, Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības Ministrija), *Information Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

f) Old age pension

According to the Central Statistics Bureau (CSB (*Centrālā statistikas pārvalde*)), statistical information about economic activity, pensions, employment and incomes disaggregated by ethnic identity is not normally available in Latvia. While the CSB regularly conducts the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) surveys, it does not collect information about ethnicity because EU regulations do not envisage such data.⁵⁹

g) Experiences and perceptions of racial/ ethnic discrimination

Complaint data about discrimination against Roma on the ground of ethnicity is scarce. During 2006-2012 the Ombudsperson's Office received two complaints about possible discrimination on the ground of ethnicity from Roma.⁶⁰ Thus, the complainant in 2006 believed the refusal of a potential employer to hire the complainant was determined by the latter's Roma ethnicity; the Ombudsperson's Office provided a written opinion in the case. A complaint received in 2008 concerned a lay-off case, the complainant alleged possible ethnic discrimination; the Office provided its written opinion in this case as well. At the same time, some representatives of Roma minority claim that there are numerous instances of ethnic discrimination against Roma in employment, yet people do not file official complaints, because "investigation of such cases and litigation takes time, the system consumes time and energy and usually does not bring any results, while people have more urgent needs in life than searching for justice."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Latvia, Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) (*Centrālā statistikas pārvalde*) (2012), Letter Nr.0704_10/854, 25 July 2012

⁶⁰ Latvia, Ombudsperson's Office (Tiesībsarga birojs), *Information Letter No 1-5/2162012*, 20 August 2012

⁶¹ Information provided by Roma Union "Nevo Drom" on 24 August 2012

4 Housing and neighbourhood

All Latvian Roma are sedentary. Nomadic traditions changed during the First Republic (1918-1940). Later during the Soviet period, general registration of all residents, including persons belonging to the Roma minority, led to their sedentary life style. During the 1970s most Latvian Roma moved into towns and cities of Latvia and now they can be viewed as a mainly urbanized community.⁶² Based on the data that is available, the majority of Roma live in the capital, Riga (1,066),⁶³ and the towns of Kurzeme and Zemgale regions, such as Ventspils (1,122), Jelgava (1,032) and Talsi (561).⁶⁴ However due to active migration of Roma to other EU Member States, in a number of cities, Roma proportion decreased significantly.

a) Quality and affordability

According to the Eurostat data,⁶⁵ housing conditions in Latvia were among the worst in EU in 2009: 16.6 % of residents lived in households without an indoor flushing toilet (EU average – 3.5 %), 18.2 % without bath or shower (EU average – 3.1 %), 25.7 % had a leaking roof (EU average – 15.9 %) and 10.9 % (EU average – 7.3 %) considered that a significant problem is the darkness in the dwelling. A significant number of people in Latvia also believed they are living in an area with problems of pollution (30.2 %; EU average – 16.5 %) and crime or vandalism (25.4 %; EU average – 16 %). 19.1 % were living in an area with perceived noise problem (EU average – 22.2 %).

The only available quantitative data on the Roma situation in housing is provided by the 2000 Population Census.⁶⁶ The CSB, which is the main state body in charge of collecting, processing and disseminating statistical data, does not have more recent ethnic data on housing because the EU-wide programme Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) do not require the collection of data on ethnic affiliation or racial origin related to housing data.⁶⁷ According to the CSB it is impossible to collect ethnic data in the framework of the housing stock annual surveys, because the respondents (housing management, apartment owners' collectives and other managers of residential houses) do not register such data. Although the questions on housing conditions (type of dwelling, residence status of dwelling, ownership, number of residents, type of building, living space, amenity, time period of building the dwelling) were included in the 2011 Population Census,⁶⁸ according to the CSP these data will be available only in 2014.⁶⁹

Municipalities with a significant number of ethnic Roma population do not have data about the situation of Roma in housing, because municipalities do not carry out housing registration along ethnic lines.⁷⁰ Municipalities declare that they are “providing assistance in resolving housing issues

⁶² Apine, I. (2007), Čigāni (romi) Latvijā (Roma in Latvia), Mazākumtautības Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne (Minorities in Latvia: History and Present), Riga, p.286.

⁶³ Population Register of the Office of the Citizenship and Migration (Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvaldes Iedzīvotāju reģistrs) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* Nr 24/14-25/3358 (19 April 2012)

⁶⁴ Latvia, Office of the Citizenship and Migration Affairs (Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde) (2012), *Iedzīvotāju skaits pašvaldībās pēc nacionālā sastāva*. Available in Latvian at: www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPN_Pasvaldibas_pec_TTB.pdf

⁶⁵ Anna Rybkowska, Micha Schneider (2009)

⁶⁶ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde) (2002), Results of the 2000 Population and Housing Census in Latvia. Collection of Statistical data, Riga 2002

⁶⁷ Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* Nr 0704-10/854 (13 August 2012)

⁶⁸ Latvia, Cabinet of Ministers, Regulations Regarding the Population Census Programme 2011, available in English: www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=176331&from=off

⁶⁹ Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde) *Information to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (15 August 2012)

⁷⁰ ⁷⁰ Letter of the Valmiera City Council to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (28 August 2012); the Riga City Council (27 August 2012); Kuldīga City Council (Nr. 02-18/1866, 22 August 2012); Daugavpils City

regardless of citizenship or ethnicity, gender and religious affiliation, in compliance with normative acts of the Republic of Latvia and binding decisions of municipality”, therefore, statistics and information about ethnic Roma residents is not collected.⁷¹

No nation-wide quantitative research has been conducted regarding housing conditions of Roma since 2003. The only comprehensive research about Roma in Latvia is “The situation of Roma in Latvia” conducted by the Latvian Centre for Human Rights in 2003. Among other issues, this research addressed the situation of Roma in housing. However, a significant part of data used in this research was also based on the 2000 Population Census results. According to the Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma, many Roma households are overcrowded and a large part of Roma live in run-down apartments without amenities or running water inside; many of these apartments do not have central heating and are heated with wood, while in some instances the nearest water source is 2 kilometres away.⁷²

There is no available information about projects or initiatives co-funded by the EU aimed at improving the situation of Roma in housing. Policy documents developed so far did not envisage special measures for improving the living conditions of Roma as a socially vulnerable group and state institutions or municipalities have not implemented special projects in the housing area.⁷³ In accordance with the opinion of the Ombudsperson on the use of the European Union financial instruments and state budget allocations for Roma integration, there have been no support measures aimed at the improvement of Roma housing from 2007 to 2012.⁷⁴

b) Access to social and private housing

Although many municipalities informed about social houses established in order to assist groups at risk of social exclusion, there is no data about the ethnic affiliation of the residents of these houses. ECRI Third Report on Latvia notes that “Roma suffer from discrimination in employment and other fields such as housing - some Roma are prevented, because of their ethnic origin, from accessing public services such as social housing”.⁷⁵ The Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma states that Latvian Roma have access to social housing; however, according to Roma effective access depends on the attitude of the mayor of the town or on whether Roma are present in the committee which takes these decisions.⁷⁶

The Study emphasizes that the issue of accessing a private house is linked to high level of unemployment and lack of finances to build a private house: Roma face obstacles in receiving bank mortgage loans for purchasing an apartment or building a house, because a significant part of Roma cannot provide financial documents proving that they have permanent income.⁷⁷

Council (Nr. 02.01-08/2211, 21 August 2012); Jekabpils City Council (Nr. 1-1-5/276, 6 August 2012); Tukums City Council (Nr. 1-23/4700/2861, 28 August 2012); Jelgava City Council (Nr. 12-13/104, 22 August 2012); Kandava County Council (Nr. 3-12/1038, 9 August 2012); Ventspils City Council (Nr. 1-51/2850, 13 August 2012); Jūrmala City Council (Nr. 1.1-9/1343, 22 August 2012), Talsi City Council (Nr. 485/12/1-11, 23 August 2012)

⁷¹ Jūrmala City Council (Jūrmalas pilsētas dome) *Letter to the LCHR* Nr. 1.1-9/1343 (22 August 2012), Jekabpils City Council (Jēkabpils pilsētas padome) *Letter to the LCHR* Nr. 1-1-5/276 (6 August 2012); Daugavpils City Council (Daugavpils pilsētas padome) *Letter to the LCHR* Nr. 02.01-08/2211 (21 August 2012)

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 32-33.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Ombudsperson (Tiesībsargs), *Letter of the Ombudsperson on the Spending of EU Financial Instruments and State Budget Allocation* (Tiesībsarga vēstule par Eiropas Savienības finanšu instrumentu un valsts budžeta līdzekļu izlietojumu romu integrācijai) (30 August 2012). Available in Latvian: www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/romi_es_lidzekli_romu_kopienai_vestule_saeimai_mk_.pdf

⁷⁵ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *Third report on Latvia*. Adopted on 29 June 2007, available at http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/XML/ENGLISH/Cycle_03/03_CbC_eng/LVA-CbC-III-2008-2-ENG.pdf

⁷⁶ Latvia RAXEN National Focal Point (2009)

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

c) Location and access to public utilities and infrastructure

There are no official, unofficial or research statistical data on the impact of housing conditions and on the proximity to services, workplaces, educational and healthcare institutions. The Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma shows that housing conditions and social problems of Roma families have a negative impact on the accessibility of education: Roma families have no money to send children to school; in many cases local authorities do not provide lunches for free; in some cases Roma live out of town, far in the country, without public transport and far from the school; very often there is no space to do homework as apartments of Roma are overcrowded. Also, unemployment was mentioned as a major factor in the worsening housing conditions of the Roma population: Roma cannot compete in the labour market, they cannot pay bills and therefore lost their apartments.⁷⁸

d) Security of tenure (including forced evictions and expulsions)

There are no official data on forced evictions of Roma and no qualitative data on problems with adequate protection in cases of eviction. However, the Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma notes that in most cases the main reasons for forced evictions of Roma were low level of education, high unemployment and debts and in most cases no alternative apartments were provided.⁷⁹

e) Residential segregation

There is no official policy of spatial or social segregation of Roma and there are no localities or settlements inhabited either exclusively or predominantly by Roma in Latvia. Still there are examples of so-called “Roma houses” – blocks of flats where Roma tend to live in a kind of community – where the flats are predominantly occupied by Roma people. However, these accommodations are rather exceptional and houses and flats occupied by Roma do not form geographically separate communities (localities, settlements) from the rest of the population.⁸⁰

f) Experiences and perceptions of racial/ ethnic discrimination

A person considering himself/herself a victim of discrimination in housing, can turn to court, submit a complaint to the Ombudsperson’s Office. In case of discriminatory practices of public institutions, including municipalities, a person can turn to the same public institution that has treated the person differently, or a higher institution.

Although the number of complaints regarding housing received by the Office constitutes a significant share of all complaints, there are few complaints on alleged ethnic discrimination in housing. From 2006 to August 2012 the Ombudsperson’s Office received three complaints about discrimination on the ground of Roma ethnicity in housing: one in 2008 (no discrimination was established), one in 2011 (alleged discrimination of a Roma in allocating housing space unsuitable for living; after the person turned to the Ombudsperson’s Office, housing space suitable for living was allocated), and one in 2012 (investigation is pending).⁸¹

Information provided by a number of municipalities with a significant Roma population show that these municipalities so far have not received complaints from ethnic Roma residents about housing rights violations or possible cases of racism or/and discrimination in housing.⁸²

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 32-33.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 35-36

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 32-33.

⁸¹ Ombudsperson (Tiesībsargs) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights No 1-5/2162012* (20 August 2012)

⁸² Letter of the Valmiera City Council (Valmieras pilsētas padome) to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (28 August 2012); the Riga City Council (Rīgas Dome) (27 August 2012); Kuldīga City Council (Kuldīgas pilsētas dome) (Nr. 02-18/1866, 22 August 2012); Daugavpils City Council (Daugavpils pilsētas dome) (Nr. 02.01-08/2211, 21 August 2012); Jekabpils City Council (Jēkabpils pilsētas dome) (Nr. 1-1-5/276, 6 August 2012); Tukums City Council (Nr. 1-23/4700/2861, 28 August 2012); Jelgava City Council (Nr. 12-13/104, 22 August 2012); Kandava County Council (Nr. 3-12/1038, 9 August 2012); Ventspils City Council (Nr. 1-51/2850, 13 August 2012); Jurmala City Council (Nr. 1.1-9/1343, 22 August 2012), Talsi City Council (Nr. 485/12/1-11, 23 August 2012)

The research “Socio-economic development trends in Latvian cities and towns” (conducted in 38 cities and towns, financed by the Ministry for Regional Development and Local Authorities) shows a different, but generally high level of intolerance towards various ethnic and social groups. Answers to the question: “What groups would you not choose as your neighbours?” shows that more than 50 % of the respondents would not like to see Roma as their neighbours (in five cities the negative answer was given by more than 60 % of the respondents).⁸³ According to the public opinion survey “Opinion on hate crimes” conducted in December 2011, 38.1 % of the respondents would not like to see Roma as their neighbours.⁸⁴

The issue of housing was not included in the State Programme “Roma in Latvia” 2007-2009, which was the first state policy paper and action plan aimed explicitly at improving the situation of the Roma.⁸⁵

Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia 2012 - 2018 prepared by the Ministry of Culture in 2012 recognizes two main challenges that have been drawn up for Roma integration in the area of housing: 1) gathering information on the number of homeless Roma in regions in cooperation with local authorities, as well as carrying out inspections of existing homes and, where possible, providing support to ensure sanitary and safety standards; and 2) improvement of monitoring of the socio-economic conditions of Roma, including a study on Roma’s access to housing.⁸⁶

⁸³ Analītisko pētījumu un stratēģiju laboratorija, Socio-economic development trends in Latvian cities and towns, Riga 2007-2008 <http://www.rapl.gov.lv/pub/index.php?id=1529>

⁸⁴ Association of LGBT and their friends „Mozaika” and SKDS (2011).

⁸⁵ Latvia, *Valsts programma “Čigāni (romi) Latvijā” 2007-2009* (State Programme “Roma in Latvia “2007-2009). Available in Latvian:

http://www.humanrights.org.lv/upload_file/valsts%20programmas/06valsts_programma_Cigani_romi_Latvija.pdf

⁸⁶ Ministry of Culture (Kultūras ministrija) (2012), *Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia* Available in English: www.km.gov.lv/lv/doc/nozaru/integracija/Roma_integ_policy_measures_LV_2012-2018.pdf

5 Health

a) Health status/ limitations in daily activities/ disability

According to the Ministry of Health (MoH (*Veselības ministrija*) no information and statistics are available on the health condition of Roma.⁸⁷ According to the Disease Prevention and Control Centre ((DPCC) *Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*) no data by ethnicity are collected on child vaccination, infant mortality rates, disability, lifespan, incidence with different diseases and other health related issues. The only available patient data by ethnicity are about substance abusers. In accordance with the Register on Drug and Substance Users (*Reģistrs par narkoloģiskajiem pacientiem un personām, kuras lieto atkarību izraisošas vielas*) from 2006 to 2011 there were 166 newly registered Roma drug or substance abusers (0.6% of the total number of registered users).

Within the project “**Bordernetwork 2010-2012**” from June to August 2012 a pilot project on “Raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and STDs and Promoting Testing on HIV and HCV in Jelgava Roma community” was implemented. During the project, through the introduction of a system of information and bonuses, 36 Roma representatives received the services of the Centre for Consulting on Abuse ((CCA) *Atkarību konsultāciju centrs*). Of the 36 Roma, 21 were women and 15 men, while 30 persons were adults and 6 minors. During the project the clients could receive free of charge HIV and HCV testing.⁸⁸

b) Unmet needs in the area of health

According to the report of the fifth wave of Riga Drug User’s Cohort Study (RDUCS) the majority of drug users in the study are Russian speaking – either of ethnic Russian origin (67%) or belonging to other nationalities (10%), i.e. Roma, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Poles, etc. – while only about 23 % of Latvians are present in the cohort.⁸⁹ During the research, 50 Roma representatives have been surveyed since 2006 (15 in 2010), of those 32 men and 18 women. The average age of the respondent is 30 (12 drug users are younger than 25, 18 – aged 25-29, 10 – aged 30-34, seven – aged 40. 66% and 33 Roma respondents drug users have been in prison.⁹⁰

Although no data on HIV infected persons by ethnicity are compiled in official registers and data bases,⁹¹ the DIA+LOGS NGO working with HIV/AIDS patients, and HIV prevention drop-in centres register clients by determining their ethnicity.⁹² These data are not publicly available. According to data from the Latvian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association ((LFPSHA) *Latvijas Ģimenes plānošanas un seksuālās veselības asociācija*) “Papardes zieds” as of 1 January 2011, there were 355 registered Roma HIV infected, thus, 42 HIV infected persons per 1,000 Roma inhabitants in Latvia. Although the HIV incidence among Roma is very high, Latvia has no special programmes aimed at HIV/AIDS reduction measures in the Roma community.⁹³

c) Medical insurance coverage

⁸⁷ Ministry of Health (Veselības ministrija) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (6 August 2012)

⁸⁸ Information provided by the Latvia’s Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health “Papardes zieds” by e-mail (27 June 2012)

⁸⁹ Centre for Disease Prevention and Control Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr 02.3-14/819, (26 August 2012)

⁹⁰ Health Economics Centre (Veselības ekonomikas centrs), (2011) *Narkotiku lietošanas tendences un paradumi Latvijā*, (Drug Use Trends and Habits in Latvia), Riga, , p. 5. Available in Latvian: <http://vec.gov.lv/uploads/files/4e0f33326c3b0.pdf>

⁹¹ Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*) Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr 02.3-14/819, (26 August 2012)

⁹² Information provided by the DIA+LOGS (support centre for those affected by HIV/AIDS) and representative of the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control by phone (30 August 2012)

⁹³ Information provided by the Latvia’s Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health “Papardes zieds” by e-mail (27 June 2012)

There are no data in Latvia on the number of persons who are health insurance holders. On 16 August 2012 a draft framework document on the financing model of the healthcare system was announced by the Ministry of Health at the Meeting of State Secretaries (*Valsts sekretāru sanāksme*).⁹⁴ According to the document, access to state funded health services will be linked to the payment of income tax. Persons who do not pay income tax and for whom contribution is not made by the state will be able to benefit from the state funded healthcare system by making monthly minimum mandatory health insurance contribution in the amount of 20 LVL (~ 30 EUR). Irrespective of the payment of income tax, all residents will be entitled to emergency medical care, establishing of specific diagnosis or health condition and treatment. Several population groups will be deemed justified tax non-payers (children under 18, pensioners, one of the parents taking care of a child under 3 years of age, disabled persons with I and II degree disability, unemployed persons, but longer than 1.5 years after being granted the status of the unemployed, prisoners, politically repressed (persons sent to Gulag camps) and several other groups. Given the low employment rate among Roma, the planned changes in the financing of the health care system may adversely impact upon access to health care services by the Roma.

d) Circumstances around giving birth

Roma is the only ethnic group in Latvia with a positive balance of birth rate (birth rate exceeds the mortality rate). In the period 2006-2011, natural population growth was 322. However, the birth rate is decreasing among Latvian Roma as well (from 141 in 2006 to 104 in 2011).⁹⁵ No other information and statistics are available on circumstances around giving birth based on ethnicity.⁹⁶

e) Experiences and perceptions of racial/ ethnic discrimination

There is no information on the evidence of segregation of Roma patients by health care providers. Neither the Health Inspectorate,⁹⁷ nor the Patients' Ombudsperson⁹⁸ has received any complaints on possible discrimination or segregation of Roma in access to and provision of health services. Several NGOs also report of not having received complaints on incidents of discrimination or unequal treatment of Roma in health care.⁹⁹

From 2006 to 31 July 2012 the Ombudsperson's Office received one complaint from a Roma about alleged unjustified apprehension and subjection to medical examination. However, the Office did not establish a violation.¹⁰⁰

According to the opinion of the Ombudsperson about the use of EU financial instruments and state budget allocations for Roma integration, from 2007 to 2012 in Latvia in the realm of health care

⁹⁴ Latvia, Ministry of Health (*Veselības ministrija*), Draft framework document "On the Financing model of the Health Care System" (Konceptijas projekts "Par veselības aprūpes sistēmas finansēšanas modeli"), available in Latvian at www.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40259454

⁹⁵ Latvia, Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde), *Births, Deaths and Natural Increase by Ethnicity, 2010*. Available in English at: <http://data.csb.gov.lv/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=IV0020a&ti=IVG02%2E+BIRTHS%2C+DEATHS+AND+NATURAL+INCREASE+BY+ETHNICITY&path=../DATABASEEN/Iedzsoc/Annual%20statistical%20data/04.%20Population/&lang=1>

⁹⁶ Ministry of Health (Veselības ministrija) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (6 August 2012)

⁹⁷ Letter of the Health Inspectorate to the Latvian centre for Human Rights (No 5.3-1/16331/7780, 31 August 2012)

⁹⁸ Information provided by the Patients Ombudsman Office by e-mail on 3 August 2012

⁹⁹ Information provided by the Roma association 'Nevo Drom' by phone on 13 August 2012, association HIV.LV buy phone on 30 August 2012, association DIA+LOGS by phone on 31 August 2012

¹⁰⁰ Letter of the Ombudsperson's Office to the Latvian centre for Human Rights (No 1-5/2162012, 20 August 2012)

services, there have been no measures to support the improvement of access to health care services for Roma.¹⁰¹

Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia 2012 - 2018 prepared by the Ministry of Culture in 2012 recognizes three main challenges that have been drawn up for Roma integration in the area of healthcare: 1) information on health issues of the Roma population living in anti-sanitary conditions or under the poverty line, observing general hygiene and opportunities for rehabilitation and social care; 2) preparation and training of social workers on specific aspects of Roma culture, and in the area of culturally sensitive services for low-income Roma families; 3) improvement of monitoring the socio-economic conditions of Roma, including a study on Roma's access to housing.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Tiesībsarga vēstule par Eiropas Savienības finanšu instrumentu un valsts budžeta līdzekļu izlietojumu romu integrācijai (30 August 2012). Available in Latvian:

http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/romi_es_lidzekli_romu_kopienai_vestule_saeimai_mk_.pdf

¹⁰² Ministry of Culture (Kultūras ministrija) (2012), *Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia* Available in English: www.km.gov.lv/lv/doc/nozaru/integracija/Roma_integ_policy_measures_LV_2012-2018.pdf

6 Poverty/Economic situation

a) Household at risk-of-poverty

Latvia has adopted a number of action plans aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion of various groups of the society. Although it is recognised that Roma are one of the groups exposed to higher risk of social exclusion and poverty and that additional support mechanisms should target the group, none of the action plans envisage specific measures aimed at improving the economic situation of the Roma. Reports of the Ministry of Welfare about the implementation of social inclusion action plans do not provide information about the implementation of measures aimed at improving the Roma situation specifically.

The only available quantitative data on Roma economic situation are the data of the 2000 Population Census, which show that only 6% of the Roma indicated that their primary source of income is an economic activity.¹⁰³ The questions on economic indicators such as status of economic activity, employment status, profession, etc. were included in the 2011 population census.¹⁰⁴ However, these data will be available only in 2014.¹⁰⁵ According to the CSP, the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) does not allow calculating the at-risk-of-poverty rate and material deprivation based on ethnicity as it does not require the collection of data on ethnic affiliation. Moreover, the size of EU-SILC sample does not permit to receive sufficiently representative information about small populations in order for the data to be generalised.¹⁰⁶

In accordance with the Ministry of Welfare there are no ethnic data collected on the inhabitants at risk of poverty and social exclusion (according to EUROSTAT methodology), receivers of social assistance, state social and social insurance benefits and pensions.¹⁰⁷

Municipalities with a significant ethnic Roma population do not have data on the economic situation and households at risk-of-poverty. Municipalities point out that in analysing the number of households at risk of poverty, the financial situation of inhabitants, assessing the number of receivers of social services as well as analysing other data, municipalities do not require to indicate ethnicity when submitting requests. Social benefits are granted and support is provided in assessing the social and material situation and living conditions of the specific individual or family.¹⁰⁸

b) Income/ expenditure

While most of the municipalities stated that they do not have data about the economic situation of Roma, two municipalities provided some information about those Roma families who asked for social benefits. The municipality of Kandava County (Western Latvia) responded that seven Roma families (20 persons) had registered themselves with low income. The municipality acknowledged that the

¹⁰³ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde) (2002), *Results of the 2000 Population and Housing Census in Latvia*. Collection of Statistical data, Riga.

¹⁰⁴ Cabinet of Ministers, Regulations Regarding the Population Census Programme 2011, available in English: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=176331&from=off>

¹⁰⁵ Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde) *Information provided to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail* (15 August 2012)

¹⁰⁶ Central Statistical Bureau (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde) *Letter of the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr 0704-10/854*, (13 August 2012)

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības ministrija) *Letter of the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

¹⁰⁸ Letter of the Valmiera City Council to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (28 August 2012); the Riga City Council (27 August 2012); Kuldīga City Council (Nr. 02-18/1866, 22 August 2012); Daugavpils City Council (Nr. 02.01-08/2211, 21 August 2012); Jekabpils City Council (Nr. 1-1-5/276, 6 August 2012); Tukums City Council (Nr. 1-23/4700/2861, 28 August 2012); Jelgava City Council (Nr. 12-13/104, 22 August 2012); Kandava County Council (Nr. 3-12/1038, 9 August 2012); Ventspils City Council (Nr. 1-51/2850, 13 August 2012); Jurmala City Council (Nr. 1.1-9/1343, 22 August 2012)

families are illiterate and do not send their children to school. The municipality tries to strive that 1) children attend school by providing children with clothes, free meals, and textbooks, and 2) that parents, by receiving benefits, co-operate and also participate in paid community work, thus improving their financial situation.¹⁰⁹

According to the information provided by the Tukums City Council from 1 January to 15 August 2012, of the 1,033 households that were granted social assistance 28 were Roma households. In 13 households the income per person was below 45 LVL (~EUR 64).¹¹⁰

c) Financial situation/ social transfers/ debts/ borrowing

No information on the financial situation, social transfers, debts and borrowing based on ethnicity are available in Latvia.

d) Malnutrition/ hunger

Please refer to 6 b and 6 e.

e) Material deprivation and/or other non-income poverty indicators

According to the Jelgava City Council Society Integration Board (*Jelgavas pilsētas padomes Sabiedrības integrācijas padome*), 35 Roma families with kindergarden- and school-age children are in the attention of municipal social services, as the families are recipients of social assistance (benefits) and services. Although interviews conducted by municipalities on the development of social services indicate the need for activities promoting the employment of Roma children and parents, and Roma themselves have acknowledged that they could do farm work or crafts, the municipalities note that Roma lack social skills and motivation to fulfil their wish to regularly provide for themselves and their family. The main problems faced by Roma, as identified by the municipality are: low educational and social skills level, inadequate parental skills to support children in school and skills development, difficulties to integrate in school and work environment, social exclusion of children and parents, limited employment opportunities, health problems, poverty, etc.¹¹¹

Data of the study “Causes and duration of unemployment and social exclusion” show that the lack of money has a negative impact on practically all areas in the life for Roma families, as the main sources of income are social benefits provided by the state or local municipalities as well as a salary from irregular and unofficial jobs. It restricts the ability of Roma families to purchase clothing and other necessities of life, to use various services that require payment, such as dental services, cultural and recreational activities.¹¹² The study also notes that although the Latvian language proficiency of Roma is rather good, low educational attainment and existing public stereotypes in many instances prevent Roma from getting even unskilled jobs as identification with this ethnic group in many instances becomes a reason for refusal of employment.

From 2006 to 31 July 2012, the Ombudsperson’s Office has received only one complaint about the discrimination of a Roma in access to social services. An explanation on the receipt of services was provided to the complainant.¹¹³ Roma organisations highlight that one of the reasons hampering Roma

¹⁰⁹ Kandava County Council (Kandavas novada dome) Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr. 3-12/1038, (9 August 2012)

¹¹⁰ Tukums City Council (Tukuma pilsētas padome) Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights No 1-23/4700/2861, (28 August 2012)

¹¹¹ Board of the Social Integration of the Jelgava City Council (Jelgavas pilsētas padomes sabiedrības integrācijas padome) Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights Nr. 12-12/104, (22 August 2012)

¹¹² Latvia, Agency of the University of Latvia “Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia”, Society “Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies”, “Institute of Sociological Research”, *Causes and duration of unemployment and social exclusion*, Riga, 2007, pp.309-315. Available in English: www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba_tirgus/darba_tirgus/petijumi/12_pet_en.pdf

¹¹³ Ombudsperson (Tiesībsargs) Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights No 1-5/2162012, (20 August 2012)

possibilities to receive social assistance is their poor awareness of the possibilities to receive such assistance.¹¹⁴

Roma, as a group exposed to the risk of social exclusion, is one of the target groups that can receive support within the framework of several educational, employment and social inclusion activities co-financed by the European Social Fund. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Welfare, Roma is one of the target groups within sub-activity 1.4.1.2.4. **“Development of social care services in regions as an alternative to social rehabilitation and institutions”**. Four projects were approved within the sub-activity with a total budget of LVL 378,729.91 (~ EUR 538,884.11)¹¹⁵ that are currently being implemented to stimulate the social inclusion of Roma, in particular those representatives of the Roma community who have found themselves in a socially disadvantaged situation, poverty and are socially excluded.

Jurmala City Council “Health and Social Care Centre – Sloka” Ltd (*SIA Veselības un sociālās aprūpes centrs - Sloka*), in co-operation with the Latvian Roma National Cultural Society (*Latvijas Romu Nacionālā kultūras biedrība*), implemented a project **“Elaboration and Implementation of Social Rehabilitation Programme in Day Centre for Roma residing in the Jurmala City.”** The project is being implemented from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2013, and LVL 100,000 (~ EUR 142, 287.18) was allocated for this purpose. The project aims at improving the social and functional skills of Roma, the development of competitive ability and successful integration in the labour market. It has been planned that 400 Roma will receive enhanced social rehabilitation services.¹¹⁶ The project also addresses the following Roma problems: substance abuse, absence of life skills, employments skills and psycho-social support, health, daily subsistence problems, and low motivation. By August 2012 334 Roma had received support services provided by the day centre.¹¹⁷

“Corporate Services”Ltd. in co-operation with Ventspils City Council Education Board (*Ventspils pilsētas padomes Izglītības pārvalde*) is implementing a project – **“Alternative Social Rehabilitation and Support Services in Ventspils Evening School for children and youths, including Roma.”** The project is being implemented from 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2012, and the allocated funding is 100,000 LVL (~ EUR 142, 287.18).¹¹⁸ The aim of the project is to develop social rehabilitation services in Ventspils City to improve social and functional skills of children from low income and needy families, including Roma and persons with insufficient, low and inadequate skills and knowledge for the labour market, and increase their employability and integration in society.¹¹⁹ Three programmes have been elaborated during the project – a motivation programme and two social rehabilitation programmes. The project has involved more than 140 children, including 71 Roma in its activities. 25 Roma were involved in a day camp.¹²⁰

Jelgava City Council in co-operation with the municipality agency “Jelgava Social Affairs Board” (*Jelgavas Sociālo lietu pārvalde*) is implementing a project **“Social Rehabilitation Programme for Roma Families with Kindergarten or School Age Childen Residing in the Jelgava City.”** The project plans to elaborate a new social rehabilitation and illiteracy reduction programme – with the possibility for Roma children and families to receive support, social rehabilitation and assistance of specialists in acquisition of social skills and other issues related to employment and quality of life. The project target group is Roma families with kindergarten- and early school-age children – in total

¹¹⁴ Information provided by the Roma association 'Nevo Drom' by phone on 13 August 2012

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības ministrija) *Letter of to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Welfare (Labklājības ministrija), *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights* (16 August 2012)

¹¹⁹ Letter of the Ventspils City Council to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (Nr. 1-51/2850, 13 August 2012)

¹²⁰ Letter of the Education Board of the Ventspils City Council to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (Nr. 1-13.1/819, 23 August 2012)

50 persons. Until 20 April 2012, 13 Roma families residing in Jelgava with children – in total 28 persons were engaged in the project.

The “Latvian Red Cross” (Latvijas Sarkanais krusts) NGO is implementing a project “**Social rehabilitation services delivered by the Latvian Red Cross in the Jurmala Hygiene Centre in Jelgava**” (2 January 2012-31 December 2013). The total allocated funding is 100,000 LVL (~ EUR 142 287.18) ¹²¹ The aim of the project is to provide qualitative social and rehabilitation services to Jurmala City Kauguri and Sloka inhabitants at risk of social exclusion, by establishing a hygiene centre and supplementing it with employment skills acquisition. It is anticipated that as a result of the project, enhanced social rehabilitation services will be received by 400 persons, including 40 Roma with individual social rehabilitation plans. ¹²² Until 31 August, 35 Roma were engaged in the project and had received services provided by the hygiene centre. Moreover, 15 Roma families were receiving support beyond the project, such as assistance with clothers. ¹²³

¹²¹ Letter of the Ministry of Welfare to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (16 August 2012)

¹²² The Latvian Red Cross (Latvijas Sarkanais krusts) (2012), in Latvian at www.redcross.lv/aktualitates_a.php?lang=lv&id=125&k=473&limit=10

¹²³ Information provided by the project coordinator of the Latvian Red Cross by e-mail (31 August 2012)

7 Active citizenship/Rights awareness

a) Awareness of the existence of representative Roma organisations, other civil society organisations, anti-discrimination legislation and equality body

The main responsible state institution for the implementation of the principle of equal treatment and officially designated as a specialised body in accordance with Article 13 of the Race Equality Directive is the Ombudsperson's Office. The Law on the Ombudsperson (entered into force on 1 January 2007) determines that the Ombudsperson's Office takes over the rights and duties of the National Human Rights Office (NHRO), which was established on 18 July 1995. The Ombudsperson's Office is the designated institution for implementing the principle of non-discrimination not only on grounds of race and ethnicity, but for the principle of equal treatment altogether. The Ombudsperson has the right, upon termination of a verification procedure and establishment of a violation, to defend the rights and interests of a private individual in administrative court, if that is necessary in the public interest; as well as upon termination of a verification procedure and establishment of a violation, to apply to a court in such civil cases where the nature of the action is related to a violation of the prohibition of differential treatment.¹²⁴

Complaints on violations in education are reviewed by the State Education Quality Inspectorate, in the area of health – Health Inspectorate (*Veselības inspekcija*), in the area of consumer rights protection - Consumer Rights Protection Centre (*Patērētāju tiesību aizsardzības centrs*), and in employment relations including discrimination – State Labour Inspectorate (*Valsts Darba inspekcija*).

b) Participation in elections and political representation

N.Rudēvičs, the president of the Latvian National Roma Cultural Association is the only Roma who has ever been elected to the Latvian parliament since the restoration of the country's independence in 1990. He was elected in the 7th Saeima elections in 1998 when he ran on the list of the Latvia's Way (*Latvijas ceļš*) political party. Although Roma representatives ran in subsequent parliamentary elections, none got elected in the 8th, 9th or in 10th Saeima.¹²⁵

In the 2005 and 2009 local government elections, there were three Roma candidates in the country. None of the candidates was elected. However, there are Roma people who are involved in the work of local governments. Some Roma participate in city integration commissions as NGO representatives, while other Roma are non-elected members of city councils' social affairs, administrative or housing commissions (the leader of the Roma NGO "Nevo Drome" in Tukums City Council and the leader of the Roma NGO "Romanu Čačipen" in Jelgava City Council). According to some Roma NGO leaders, this participation helps challenge the prejudice against Roma when adopting decisions. Several representatives of Roma organisations are involved in the work of various consultative councils (both at local and national levels).¹²⁶

c) Participation and representation in non-governmental organisations

13 Roma NGOs are registered in Latvia in 2012.¹²⁷ Besides cultural activities, some Roma organisations are also implementing activities aimed at facilitating Roma education, employment and

¹²⁴ Latvia, Ombudsman Law (Tiesībsarga likums, 06.04.2006), Article 13 Section 9&10, available in English at: www.ttc.lv/index.php?skip=210&itid=likumi&id=10&tid=59&l=LV

¹²⁵ Information provided by the researcher on Roma issues Deniss Kretalovs by e-mail on 10 August 2012

¹²⁶ Zankovska-Odina S., Situation of Roma in Latvia, p. 54, Gessis 2009, available in English:

www.gesis.org/fileadmin/upload/dienstleistung/fachinformationen/series_ssee_01/Roma_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe.pdf

¹²⁷ Latvian Roma Union "NēvoDrom" (Latvijas romu apvienība "Nēvo Drom"; Association "Nēvo Drom D" (Biedrība "Nēvo Drom D"); Roma Cultural Association of Jelgava "Romanučačipen" (Jelgavas čigānu kultūras biedrība "Romani čačipen"), Association "Roma Cultural Centre" (Biedrība "Romu kultūras centrs"), Establishment "International Roma Humanitarian Foundation" ("Starptautiskais Romu Humanitārais fonds"); Association "Latvijas Čigānu biedru apvienība un augstākā čigānu padome" (Biedrība "Latvijas Čigānu biedru apvienība un augstākā čigānu padome"); Roma association of Ventspils "Horizonts" (Ventspils romu biedrība

social inclusion. However, many Roma organisations have suspended their activities due to the fact that the state support to national minority organisations has been significantly reduced during recent years, and many Roma NGO leaders and members have left the country.¹²⁸

d) Awareness and use of complaints procedures

Although the state programme “Roma in Latvia” 2007-2009 envisaged that within the framework of the Discrimination Prevention Department of the Ombudsperson’s Office a position of a Roma officer was to be established in 2007, the position of the consultant on Roma issues was only established in May 2011. The consultant’s tasks include promoting Roma integration, organising the activities of the Ombudsperson’s Office in preventing discrimination, consulting Roma on receipt of social assistance and suggesting proposals on the improvement of legislation. There are also plans to improve the accessibility to law enforcement institutions by Roma.¹²⁹

On 30 August 2011, the Ombudsperson and Roma NGOs signed a Cooperation Memorandum on Prevention of Roma Discrimination.¹³⁰ The Memorandum envisages: “The specialists of the Ombudsperson’s Office or researchers invited by the Ombudsperson shall conduct research in areas related to discrimination – education, employment, social care and housing – and provide recommendations to state and local government institutions in eradicating identified problems, and engage Roma representatives in resolving problems.” On their part Roma associations have committed themselves to motivate Roma to actively participate in the Roma integration processes, and facilitate access by Roma children to education and health care.

In order to inform Roma about the Ombudsperson’s Office and its functions, including discrimination and possible solutions to the cases of discrimination, as well as to provide legal consultations, in 2011 the representatives of the Office organised meetings with the Roma community representatives in six cities in Latvia. It was concluded that one of the key problems faced by Roma is the lack of rights awareness and discrimination in the labour market.¹³¹ Information about the work of the Roma consultant was disseminated through social networks. In 2011 the Office prepared informative material for Roma on how to start a business, and from 1 January to 1 August conducted research aimed at evaluating how information about Roma is portrayed in the largest Latvia’s newspapers. The research concluded that racism and prejudice was widespread in commentaries, which included open hostility and calls for physical violence against Roma, but was not perpetrated by mass media. Information about several commentaries was forwarded to the Security Police.¹³²

In September 2012, the Advisory Council on the Implementation of the Roma Integration Policy (*Romu Integrācijas politikas īstenošanas padome*) was established under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture (Kultūras ministrija). The mission of the Council is the evaluation and elaboration of the implementation of the Roma integration policy, promotion of the civic participation of the Roma community and strengthening the co-operation between Roma and state administrative institutions in

“Horizonts”); Association “Initiative” (Biedrība “Iniciatīva”); Association of Roma Cultural Development “ME ROMA” (Čigānu kultūras attīstības biedrība “ME ROMA”); Foundation “Romano Family” (Nodibinājums “Romano family”); Association “Foundation “Roma”” (Biedrība “Fonds “Roma””); Association “ROMANO LAV” (Biedrība “ROMANO LAV”); Association “Romano drom” (Biedrība “Romano drom”). Information provided by the Ministry of Culture on 11 April 2012

¹²⁸ Information obtained from Roma NGOs leaders by phone on 16 April 2012

¹²⁹ Information provided by the consultant on Roma issues of the Ombudsperson’s Office to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights by e-mail on 11 August 2012

¹³⁰ Latvia/ Ombudspersons Office (Tiesībsarga birojs), Tiesībsarga un romu NVO sadarbības memorands.

Available in Latvian:

http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/sadarbibas_memorands_par_romu_diskrimin%C4%81cijas_nov%C4%93r%C5%A1anu_30.08.2011.pdf

¹³¹ Latvijas Republikas Tiesībsarga gada ziņojums 2011, p. 145, available in Latvian:

http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/gada_zi%C5%86ojumi/ties%C4%ABsarga_gada_zi%C5%86ojums_2011.pdf

¹³² Letter of the Ombudsperson’s Office to the Latvian centre for Human Rights (No 1-5/2162012, 20 August 2012)

line with the National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines 2012-2018. Representatives from ministries, local governments, and educational establishments, NGOs working on Roma advocacy issues, Roma NGOs and experts on Roma integration issues are represented in the Council.¹³³ The first meeting of the Council was scheduled for 19 September.

The attempt by state institutions to develop targeted inclusion measures for Roma had very limited success due to insufficient funding and implementation. On 18 October 2006, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the state programme “Roma in Latvia” 2007-2009.¹³⁴ The programme named three main areas for improvement: combating discrimination of Roma in education, combating discrimination and securing equal opportunities for Roma on the labour market, and involvement of Latvian society into anti-discrimination activities and promotion of tolerance towards Roma. Discrimination in housing, health and social care was not included in the programme. The programme was the first state policy document and action plan aimed explicitly at improving the situation of the Roma in Latvia. However, the implementation of the Programme was mainly related to the improvement of Roma education opportunities and to the development of the Roma culture and to the preservation of the community’s ethnic identity. During the whole period of the implementation of the Programme not a single activity in the field of employment envisaged by the Programme activity schedule was actually implemented. Insufficient state funding and lack of cooperation between the responsible state bodies and social partners were the main reasons which hampered the implementation of the Programme activities. According to the State Programme, implementation of its activities required 81,007 LVL in 2007, 137,139 LVL in 2008, and 125,274 LVL in 2009. However, 53,755 LVL (66% of the envisaged amount) were allocated from the state budget in 2007, 49,280 LVL (36%) in 2008, while only 21,172.52 LVL (17%) were allocated in 2009.¹³⁵

After the end of the State Programme, the issue of Roma integration has been included into the Guidelines of National Identity and Society Integration Policy 2012 – 2018, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 11 October 2011.¹³⁶ The government report “Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia”¹³⁷ elaborated by the Ministry of Culture in 2011 describes a series of national Roma integration tasks and measures, which have been included in the policy planning document “National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines 2012-2018”.¹³⁸ The Report describes the current situation of the Roma in Latvia and identifies challenges in the socio-economic integration of the Roma in education, employment, housing and healthcare, as well as general enjoyment of human rights, civic participation and tolerance.

The Report distinguishes two types of measures: the mainstream approach - fostering tolerance in the society, defending the rights and interests of ethnic minorities (also Roma), fostering civic participation etc.), and the targeted approach – policy measures directly aimed at the Roma minority and specific aspects of their situation. The latter can be grouped into six categories: dialogue, data collection, education, social inclusion, labour, housing and culture. Dialogue measures envisage developing a dialogue between the Roma community, social partners and NGOs, the establishment of an advisory board at the national level on implementing the Roma integration policy. Measures under

¹³³ Information provided by the Ministry of Culture on 20 July 2012

¹³⁴ Latvia, *Valsts programma “Čigāni (romi) Latvijā” 2007-2009* (State Programme “Roma in Latvia “2007-2009). Available in Latvian:

[www.humanrights.org.lv/upload_file/valsts%20programmas/06valsts_programma_Cigani_\(romi\)_Latvija.pdf](http://www.humanrights.org.lv/upload_file/valsts%20programmas/06valsts_programma_Cigani_(romi)_Latvija.pdf)

¹³⁵ Zankovska-Odina S., *Situation of Roma in Latvia*, p. 54, Gessis 2009, available in English:

[/www.gesis.org/fileadmin/upload/dienstleistung/fachinformationen/series_ssee_01/Roma_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe.pdf](http://www.gesis.org/fileadmin/upload/dienstleistung/fachinformationen/series_ssee_01/Roma_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe.pdf)

¹³⁶ Latvia, Ministry of Culture (Kultūras ministrija), *Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes (2012-2018)*. Available in Latvian:

www.km.gov.lv/lv/doc/nozaru/integracija/Pamatnostadnes/KMPam_071011_integ.pdf,

¹³⁷ Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_latvia_strategy_en.pdf

¹³⁸ *Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes 2012– 2018.gadam*
<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=3782>

data collection include gathering data on the situation of the Roma in various socio-economic areas (employment, education, healthcare and access to housing). Under education, a training seminar for 15 teaching assistants of Roma background as well as round-table discussions on Roma education (exchange of good practice) are envisaged. Measures to research and improve the professional skills of Roma, facilitate their inclusion in the labour market and to support entrepreneurship are planned. Support measures for groups at risk of social exclusion, including Roma, to ensure access and provision of social services and healthcare services, support measures for Roma families to resolve housing issues, based on findings of the study, grants through project competition for the support of ethnic minorities, including Roma, to preserve and develop their ethnic, local and European identity and culture, support for research on Roma Holocaust, and a conference on the Holocaust of Roma and Jews are all envisaged in the report. The implementation of these measures is foreseen from 2012-2017, but will remain dependant on funding which has been seriously reduced in the last five years.

In response to the information provided by the Roma community representatives that funding envisaged for the purpose of reducing Roma exclusion is not being spent purposefully, in February 2012 the Ombudsperson's Office turned to the Cabinet of Ministers with a request to submit information on the spending of EU financial instruments and state budget allocation for Roma integration.¹³⁹ In accordance with the information provided by the ministries covering the 2007-2012 period, 91 ministry, institution and NGO projects received EU and other funding fully or partially aimed at Roma integration and rights protection. The total allocated funding has been – LVL 1,081,905 (~ EUR 1,539,412), of this LVL 679,231 (~ EUR 966,458) has been spent on minority integration (funding has been envisaged for minorities, which also include the Roma minority). The Office concluded that the reduction of Roma exclusion had not been addressed systematically and that “the link between aims put forward by the EU fundamental guidelines and national policy planning documents and the real needs of the Roma community and finances is missing. The funding that had been allocated for improving the situation of the Roma minority and their integration for the 2007-2012 period has been spent “unpurposefully and ineffectively”.¹⁴⁰ The Ombudsperson recommended to 1) create an effective control mechanism concerning the allocation of funding, 2) appoint a responsible institution that would evaluate and harmonise the compliance of each project with the aims of EU and national policy planning documents, and 3) provide information to the Ombudsperson about the planned projects for purposes of monitoring. The Ombudsperson also recommends engaging Roma in project design and implementation.

e) Experience and perception of racial/ ethnic discrimination

Although Roma is one of the most discriminated against group, there have been very few official discrimination complaints from Roma to the Ombudsperson's Office (two complaints in 2012, five in 2011, none in 2010, none in 2009, three in 2008, four in 2007 and one in 2006)¹⁴¹ or to human rights NGOs. In almost all cases reviewed by the Ombudsperson's Office no fact of discrimination was established. No complaints on Roma discrimination have been received by the Education Quality State Agency,¹⁴² the State Labour Inspectorate¹⁴³ and the Health Inspection.¹⁴⁴ Some of the reasons

¹³⁹ Letter of the Ombudsperson's Office to the Latvian centre for Human Rights (No 1-5/2162012, 20 August 2012)

¹⁴⁰ Tiesībsarga vēstule par Eiropas Savienības finanšu instrumentu un valsts budžeta līdzekļu izlietojumu romu integrācijai (30 August 2012). Available in Latvian: http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/romi_es_lidzekli_romu_kopienai_vestule_saeimai_mk_.pdf

¹⁴¹ Ombudsperson's Office(Tiesībsarga birojs) *Letter to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights No 1-5/2162012*, (20 August 2012)

¹⁴² Letter of the Education Quality State Agency to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (No 4-07/229, 31 August 2012)

¹⁴³ State Labour Inspectorate (Valsts darba inspekcija) *Information to the LCHR by e-mail* (9 August 2012)

¹⁴⁴ Health Inspectorate (Veselības inspekcija), *Letter of the to the Latvian Centre for Human Rights No 5.3-1/16331/7780*, (31 August 2012)

why Roma do not seek assistance in cases of discrimination or harassment is the lack of information and distrust in law enforcement institutions.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Information provided by the Roma association 'Nevo Drom' by phone on 13 August 2012; Ombudsperson (Tiesībsargs) (2011), *Annual Report of the Ombudsperson 211 (Latvijas Republikas Tiesībsarga gada ziņojums 2011)*, p. 117, available in Latvian: www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/gada_zi%C5%86ojumi/ties%C4%ABsarga_gada_zi%C5%86ojums_2011.pdf

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2. Statistical tables

Education

Number of Roma children in general education establishments

Year	Total	% of the total number of students	In day training programs	In evening and distance training programs
2011/2012	1213	0,56%	1128	85
2010/2011	1274	0,56%	1182	92
2009/2010	1285	0,54%	1204	81
2008/2009	1384	0,55%	1328	56
2007/2008	1395	0,53%	1333	62

Source: Ministry of Education and Science

Employment

Number of unemployed Roma by 31 July 2012

Age group	Women	Men	Total	%
15 - 19	16	18	34	4,0%
20 - 24	40	32	72	8,5%
25 - 29	65	39	104	12,3%
30 - 34	64	40	104	12,3%
35 - 39	66	41	107	12,6%
40 - 44	74	48	122	14,4%
45 - 49	65	42	107	12,6%
50 - 54	57	42	99	11,7%
55 - 59	44	33	77	9,1%
60 and more	10	10	20	2,4%
Total	501	345	846	100,0%

Education group	Women	Men	Total	%
Lower than primary education	314	198	512	60,5%
Primary education	131	81	212	25,1%
General secondary education	20	22	42	5,0%
Professional education	12	22	34	4,0%
Higher education	0	0	0	0,0%
Not specified	24	22	46	5,4%
Total	501	345	846	100,0%

State language proficiency group	Women	Men	Total	%
Education acquired in Latvian language	298	206	504	59,6%
Highest level of Latvian language proficiency	3	5	8	0,9%
Medium level of Latvian language proficiency	12	7	19	2,2%

Lowest level of Latvian language proficiency	27	20	47	5,6%
No certification in Latvian language	161	107	268	31,7%
Total	501	345	846	100,0%

Length of unemployment	Women	Men	Total	%
< 6 months	103	99	202	23,9%
6-12 months.	93	74	167	19,7%
1-3 years	200	118	318	37,6%
3 years and more	105	54	159	18,8%
Total	501	345	846	100,0%

Source: Ministry of Welfare

Involvement of unemployed persons in Employment State Agency's measures in 2008-2011 (began attending measures)

	2008			2009				2010				2011			
	Began attending measures in total	Number of involved Roma	% of persons who began attending measures	Began attending measures in total	Number of involved Roma	% of persons who began attending measures	Funding spent for Roma support LVL	Began attending measures in total	Number of involved Roma	% of persons who began attending measures	Funding spent for Roma support LVL	Began attending measures in total	Number of involved Roma	% of persons who began attending measures	Funding spent for Roma support LVL
Training measures															
Training with an employer	78			441				1129				1094	2	0,2%	2408
Informal training (including state language)	6487	7	0,1%	19286	24	0,1%	7824	42658	74	0,2%	22847,8	26256	125	0,5%	43625
Measures on increase of competitiveness	17338	323	1,9%	38720	539	1,4%	5530	59515	432	0,7%	4207,7	52472	604	1,2%	5858,8
Training to persons imposed to risk of unemployment															
Lifelong training measures for employed persons								5155				10923	1	0,0%	212
Employment measures															
Measures for certain group of people	1136	1	0,1%	609	2	0,3%	2270	2132	1	0,0%	661	1175	1	0,1%	775,4
Support for youth volunteering												1255	2	0,2%	108,8
Workplace for young people												381	2	0,5%	676
Allowance for the use of assistant for I group of visually handicapped persons												1417	4	0,3%	2116
Paid temporary employment	9983	199	2,0%	11884	139	1,2%	61716								
Training in maintenance and obtainment of job skills if employer is municipality				19295	203	1,1%	129514	52821	411	0,8%	257286	50628	495	1,0%	266805
Other measures															
Employment measures during summer holidays	11222	12	0,1%												

Source: Ministry of Welfare

Number of unemployed persons by ethnicity

Ethnicity	31 December	
Roma	489	
Total	68944	

Ethnicity	31 December 2007						
	Higher education	Professional education	General secondary education	Primary education	Lower than primary education	Unspecified	Total

Roma	1	13	19	98	217	38	386
Total	6273	19267	14697	9451	1004	1629	52321
Ethnicity	31 December 2008						
	Higher education	Professional education	General secondary education	Primary education	Lower than primary education	Unspecified	Total
Roma	0	18	22	110	260	55	465
Total	9111	29040	21632	1347	1417	1758	76435
Ethnicity	31 December 2009						
	Higher education	Professional education	General secondary education	Primary education	Lower than primary education	Unspecified	Total
Roma	2	27	40	218	500	68	855
Total	25986	65954	49438	31768	3717	2372	179235
Ethnicity	31 December 2010						
	Higher education	Professional education	General secondary education	Primary education	Lower than primary education	Unspecified	Total
Roma	0	30	42	242	566	66	946
Total	19927	58902	45661	32514	4231	1228	162463
Ethnicity	31 December 2011						
	Higher education	Professional education	General secondary education	Primary education	Lower than primary education	Unspecified	Total
Roma	1	32	49	230	537	40	889
Total	16201	47310	36158	26067	3636	924	130296
Ethnicity	31 July 2012						
	Highest education	Professional education	General secondary education	Primary education	Lower than primary education	Unspecified	Total
Roma	0	34	42	212	512	46	846
Total	14644	42007	31309	22629	3315	785	114689

Source: State Employment Agency

Health

IVG02. BIRTHS, DEATHS AND NATURAL INCREASE BY ETHNICITY							
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Roma	Births	141	138	146	140	118	104
	Deaths	78	75	80	84	71	77
	Natural increase	63	63	66	56	47	27
2011:							
Starting from 2011 the number of births includes also children born abroad to mother (permanent resident of the Republic of Latvia) temporary residing country outside the Republic of Latvia. In compliance with the methodology of the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) the mentioned children should be included in the number of children born in the Republic of Latvia. In 2011 the number comprises 239 children.							

Source: Central Statistics Bureau

Newly registered patients by ethnicity among persons suffering from certain diseases, Registry of Narcological Patients and Persons who take Addictive Substances, 2006-2011

Ethnicity		Ethnic Latvians	Ethnic Russians	Roma	others	Unknown	Total
2006	numbers	3773	2608	19	132	84	6616
	%	57,0	39,4	0,3	2,0	1,3	100,0
2007	numbers	3620	2524	49	115	166	6474
	%	55,9	39,0	0,8	1,8	2,6	100,0
2008	numbers	2944	2113	33	204	125	5419
	%	54,3	39,0	0,6	3,8	2,3	100,0
2009	numbers	1695	1081	21	23	99	2919
	%	58,1	37,0	0,7	0,8	3,4	100,0
2010	numbers	1522	872	22	73	722	3211
	%	47,4	27,2	0,7	2,3	22,5	100,0
2011	numbers	1601	831	22	50	935	3439
	%	46,6	24,2	0,6	1,5	27,2	100,0

Source: Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

3. Table of complaints

Number of complaints from Roma received by the Ombudsperson's Office

Year	Number of complaints
2012	2
2011	5
2010	0
2009	0
2007	4
2006	1

Source: Ombudsperson's Office

4. Table of sources (reports and studies on Roma)

	Title, author, source	Romu tiesības uz izglītību: īstenošanas situācija Latvijā <i>(Roma Right to Education: Implementing Situation in Latvia)</i>
	Source and type	Study, non-governmental
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	✓
	<i>Housing</i>	
	<i>Employment</i>	
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	
	Sample	Total number of respondents is 371, including: 183 educational institutions (preschool and school); 2 universities; 31 municipal education boards; 46 Roma adults; 50 Roma children and youth; 59 teachers, educational experts, social pedagogues, psychologists, teachers' assistants
	Location	All regions of Latvia
	Target population	
	Key findings	Study notes lack of political awareness and commitment to address Roma education on state and municipal level. It concludes that the impact of Roma education policy is not fully assessed due to the lack of statistical data on Roma student educational process. Stigmatization, symptoms of depression, and adaptation difficulties in school enhance the pupils' wish to avoid school. There is lack of adequate training materials and teachers are not professionally prepared to work with Roma students. These and other barriers lead to many negative consequences in Roma education, for instance, Roma instruction in separate classes with correctional status, or the artificial creation of conditions for moving Roma children to the special classes or schools.
	Methodology	Quantitative and qualitative research methods - surveys, the analysis of laws and regulations, interviews, focus group interviews, observations of the learning process, and the studies of teachers' and Roma students' portfolio.
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	

	Title, author, source	“Skola un sabiedrība čigānu bērnu iekļaušanai” Atskaite, rekomendācijas <i>(Project “School and society for Roma inclusion” report and recommendations)</i>
	Source and type	Report on project and recommendations, non-governmental
T	<i>Education</i>	✓

	<i>Housing</i>	
	<i>Employment</i>	
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	
	Sample	Total number of persons involved in the project – 628, including: 74 Roma parents and seniors, 318 – teachers, 108 – representatives of municipalities, 3 trainers, 6 teacher assistants Roma, 119 others (representatives of NGOs, universities, journalists, cultural workers, state institutions).
	Location	Jelgava, Jēkabpils, Jūrmala, Talsi and Valmiera
	Target population	Roma parents, children and seniors
	Key findings	-
	Methodology	-
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	-

	Title, author, source	Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma (Riga Stradins University, 2011)
	Source and type	Study of national policies
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	✓
	<i>Housing</i>	✓
	<i>Employment</i>	✓
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	✓
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	
	Sample	-
	Location	All regions of Latvia
	Target population	Roma in general
	Key findings	The study highlights actual situation of Roma in Latvia and the key challenges for the improvement of Roma social inclusion. Education and employment for the Roma in Latvia are the two most serious problems as they give rise to other problems of social and economic character. One of the most serious discrimination risks encountered by the Roma in Latvia is discrimination in the labour market. The most significant failing that prevents assessing the Roma socio-economic situation is lack of statistical and research data by ethnic origin.
	Methodology	Desk research
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	Policy makers

	Title, author, source	Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia Ministry of Culture (2011). Available in English: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_latvia_strategy_en.pdf
	Source and type	Government report
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	✓
	<i>Housing</i>	✓
	<i>Employment</i>	✓
	<i>Health</i>	✓
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	✓
	Sample	-
	Location	-
	Target population	Roma in general
	Key findings	The report indicates main challenges for Roma socio-economic integration based on reports, surveys and meetings organised by the Ministry of Culture, as well as highlights tasks and measures set out in the Guidelines of National Identity and Society Integration 2012-2018.
	Methodology	-
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	Generally

	Title, author, source	Peculiarities of multicultural pedagogic process for inclusion of Roma students in the general education Daiga Zake, (2011). Daugavpils University,
	Source and type	Promotion Paper (PhD)
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	✓
	<i>Housing</i>	
	<i>Employment</i>	
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	
	Sample	365 respondents including: 50 Roma students; 9 pedagogues: principals/directors of education establishments and 13 teachers; 9 assistants of teachers: Roma teacher assistants; 48 parents: parents of Roma children and 226 parents of children from other ethnical groups; experts: university lecturers, researchers (2), education policy-makers researchers (3), principals of general education establishments (3); 2 leaders of Roma communities, researchers
	Location	All regions of Latvia
	Target population	Roma students
	Key findings	Pedagogues have confirmed within the scope of the study that understanding of how to include pupils with different ethnic background, in particular Roma students, in general education

		establishment is still insufficient, and therefore schools should not only provide possibilities for the inclusion of Roma students but also pursue targeted facilitation and support to the development and implementation of inclusive and multicultural models and approaches. Study of literature sources has shown that the literature sources available in Latvian rather reflect the experience of other countries, and there is no scientific research devoted to the education of Roma people in Latvia. Education models aimed at facilitation of inclusion and adoption of Roma students in the general education have to be appropriate and tailored to serve the organization of multicultural and inclusive education.
	Methodology	Theoretical methods– analysis of theoretical literature and other sources. Ethnographic study-using the following methods for obtaining qualitative and quantitative data: questionnaires, unstructured interviews, observation, analysis of the portfolios of Roma students, self-analysis of Roma teacher assistants, analysis of artefacts, compiling and analysis of video and photo material.
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	Ministry of Education, educational establishments, academics, teachers

	Title, author, source	Conditions of Roma and Travellers Latvian RAXEN national Focal Point thematic Study (2009). Available in English: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/RAXEN-Roma%20Housing-Latvia_en.pdf
	Source and type	Latvian RAXEN national Focal Point Thematic Study
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	✓
	<i>Housing</i>	
	<i>Employment</i>	
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	
	Sample	6 interviews: 2 with representatives of state and local authorities; 4 with representative of Roma NGOs
	Location	Riga, Daugavpils, Jekabpils, Tukums, Bene
	Target population	Roma in general
	Key findings	Poor housing conditions of Roma which are mostly affected by the fact that Roma are unemployed: large part of Roma lives in run-down apartments without amenities or running water; many of these apartments do not have central heating and are heated with wood, while in some instances the nearest water source is 2 kilometres away. Although there is no official policy of spatial or social segregation of Roma in Latvia, there are examples of so-called “Roma houses” –

		blocks of flats where Roma tend to live in a kind of community – flats are predominantly occupied by Roma people.
	Methodology	Desk research and field research – interviews
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	-

	Title, author, source	Valsts programmas “Čigāni (romi) Latvijā” 2007.-2009. Gadam ietekme uz Latvijas čigānu (romu) kopienu (<i>Impact of the State programme “Roma in Latvia” 2007-2009 on the Roma Community in Latvia</i>) Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (2008) unpublished
	Source and type	Study (unpublished)
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	✓
	<i>Housing</i>	
	<i>Employment</i>	✓
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	✓
	Sample	22 in-depth interviews with Roma NGO leaders and Roma community representatives
	Location	All regions of Latvia
	Target population	-
	Key findings	According to the Roma NGO leaders and community representatives implementation of the state programme “Roma in Latvia” 2007-2009 was not successful due to the number of reasons, such as lack of information, lack of involvement of Roma community, lack of finances and lack of tangible results.
	Methodology	Quantitative research methods: analyses of statistical data and studies, in-depth interviews
	Representativeness, transferability of findings	Policy makers, state institutions, NGOs

	Title, author, source	Čigānu saskarsme ar policiju (<i>Roma interaction with Police</i>) <i>The Ombudsperson Office, study conducted by Mag.psych.</i> <i>AndrisTertars</i>
	Source and type	Study (unpublished)
Thematic area	<i>Education</i>	
	<i>Housing</i>	
	<i>Employment</i>	
	<i>Health</i>	
	<i>Poverty</i>	
	<i>Migration</i>	
	<i>Active citizenship</i>	✓

Sample	152 respondents including, Russian and Latvian-speaking Roma aged 14-70. 83 men and 69 women
Location	All regions of Latvia
Target population	Men, women, young people, seniors
Key findings	The majority of Roma have negative associations towards police. Roma fear police. The fear is connected with ethnic origin, social and psychological aspects. Roma do not believe in cooperation with police. In order to achieve positive Roma interaction with police it is necessary to ensure equal attitude towards Roma by the police, to inform Roma about their rights un ensure opportunities for Roma to protect their rights.
Methodology	Survey method – direct interviews with respondents
Representativeness, transferability of findings	Police officers

5. Roma networks

Type of Associations, Organisations, NGOs	Name of Organisation	Email/Website	Roma involvement	Main area of expertise
NGO	Latvian Roma Union "NēvoDrom" Rainaiela 17, Talsi, LV-3201	nevodrom@one.lv	NGO used to be one of the largest Roma organisations in Latvia with branches in all regions. Presently low activity due to the decreasing number of Roma in Latvia. Has one branch left in Daugavpils.	Social affairs, Legal assistance Employment Integration Equality
NGO	Association "Nēvo Drom D" Imantas iela 3—5, Daugavpils, LV-5401	Sgb1111@inbox.lv	Helps Roma at local level. Engaging Roma in employment, education. Providing social aid and assistance. Organising cultural events.	Integration Employment
NGO	Roma Cultural Association of Jelgava "Romanučačipen" PulkvežaBrieža 26, Jelgava, LV-3007		NGO provides assistance to Roma residents of the city in social field and education, promoting social inclusion. Activity is low due to lack of funding.	Education Social assistance
NGO	Association "Romu Kultūras Centrs" Pudiķa 6, Rīga, LV-1006	Roxane_latvia@yahoo.com	Roma NGO mostly working in field of culture organising cultural events	Culture Promotion of intercultural dialogue Integration
NGO	Establishment "Starptautiskais Romu Humanitārais fonds" Pudiķaiela 6—3, Rīga, LV-1006	Normunds.rudevics@delfi.lv	Due to lack of funding and support very few activities on local level.	Integration Employment Culture Social assistance
NGO	Association "Latvijas Čigānu biedru apvienība un augstākā čigānupadome" Aleksandra Čaka iela 59-25, Rīga, LV-1011	sandani@inbox.lv	NGO has about 50 active members. Due to the lack of funding is not able to implement projects and initiatives.	Education Employment Social affairs Culture
NGO	Roma association of Ventspils "Horizonts" Pilsielā 13, Ventspils, LV-3601	Inese.ignate@lafiko.lv	Recently established Roma NGO	Education Integration
NGO	Centre for Education Initiatives, Rīgas 216b, Jēkabpils, LV-5202	info@iic.lv , http://www.iic.lv/en/cei.html	CEI has implemented a number of projects for the inclusion of Roma children into the system general education. CEI was responsible for the implementation of activities in education sphere envisaged by the state programme "Roma in Latvia" 2007-2009	Implementation of the projects related to education (including Roma education) and society integration; Seminars, workshops, in-service trainings (including trainings of teacher assistants – Roma) ; Research, teaching methodology books.