**LATVIA**

**Answers to questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur issues to Member States**

**Answer to 1. question**

The Roma people are one of the oldest ethnic minorities in Latvia, and have been an integral part of Latvia’s cultural diversity since the 16th century. The Roma community in Latvia is relatively small. According to data from the population register of the Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs there were 7883 Roma living in Latvia as at 1 January 2015, comprising 0.3% of the total population.

Number of Roma people in Latvia registered

by the Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs



But in the accordance to the Central Statistical Bureau in 2014 there were 5594 Roma people living in Latvia, which is less than 2,600 Roma, registered in the population register (8194 Roma). One of the reasons of this statistical gap could be explained with the intense level of Roma emigration to other Member States as from 2007. Of all the Roma that are registered officially, 94,4% are Latvian citizens, and of these approximately 70% speak Latvian. A large majority of Roma regard the Romani language as their native tongue.

Over the last century Latvia’s Roma have mainly lived a settled way of life and are not characterized by extensive travel and wide-spread migration. Based on the available data the majority of Roma live in the large towns of the Kurzeme and Zemgale regions, such as Jelgava and Ventspils, as well as in Riga. Prior to the active migration of Roma to other Member States, the highest proportion of Roma were found in Talsi, Jūrmala, Tukums, Limbaži and Daugavpils districts.

In Latvia there is no so-called ghettoisation of the Roma community or segregation at the regional or local level; the Roma have formed a territorially heterogeneous group that communicates actively with the local community. Latvia’s Roma is not an ethnically homogenous community. Two different groups of Roma have lived in Latvia since ancient times: the Latvian Roma (*Loftitke Roma*) and the Russian Roma (*Xaladytka Roma*), whose differences manifest themselves territorially, linguistically, culturally and in their traditional way of life.

 Geographical distribution of Roma population in Latvia (2012)



*Source: The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs*

**Answer to 2. question**

The Ministry of Culture as responsible governmental institution for the coordination of the implementation, development and evaluation of *the set of national Roma integration policy measures,* on a regular basis (annually) compiles available data and prepares an informative report on Latvian Roma inclusion policy measures, which is published on the website of the Ministry of Culture[[1]](#footnote-1) and presented at the National Council supervising the implementation of Roma integration policy measures. The information includes in the report is provided by co-responsible governmental institutions and agencies, local governmental institutions and NGOs.

According to Census data 2011, the Roma education level has slightly increase compared with data of previous Census, but it is still unacceptable and need to be improved:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of education** | **2000** | **2011** |
| Tertiary education | 0.4 % | 0.8%  |
| Specialized secondary | 1.2 % |  3.5%  |
| General secondary | 6.7 % |  10.3%  |
| Elementary school (including primary school) (1–9) | 42.1% | 36.5%  |
| Lower than Elementary school (including cases when level of education is not specified) | 50.4%  | 45.3 %  |
| Illiterate persons | 3.5%  |
| All Romani people aged 15 and above: | 5 985 | 4 901 |

 *Source:* [*Central Statistical Bureau*](http://www.csb.gov.lv/en)*, 2012*

According to the statistics data provided by the Ministry of Education and Science 1032 Roma children attended general education institutions during 2013/2014 school year.

Dynamics of Roma school children in general education schools



*Source: The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia*

To monitor the progress the Ministry of Education and Science uses annual statistical reports and data from local municipality Education Boards. The Ministry of Education has requested local and regional municipalities to gather information on the number of Roma pupils in schools by their levels of educational achievement, as well as to identify in which subjects the Roma children have a low assessment, as well as the actions of the school plans to undertake to encourage the quality education of Roma children.

At the last years the number of Roma students attended secondary schools has grown – up. According to statistic data in 2008 only 3 Roma children was educated in general secondary school, but in 2012 there are 20% Roma children after elementary school which continue their education process.

During 2013/14 school year:

- 77 Roma children were trained within compulsory program for teaching children from 5 years age for the acquisition primary education,

- 176 Roma studied a vocational educational program (tourism, crafts, etc.),

- 250 Roma pupils attended the classes not corresponding to their age,

- 37 Roma pupils attended secondary schools (10-12 classes),

- 26,0% of all Roma children of educational age learned within special educational programme for children with special needs/ correction classes,

- 26,8% of the total number of Roma pupils were provided with additional training activities, and

- 15,9% of Roma children did not obtain required primary education.

As regards to the Roma staff involved in educational institutions, 4 teachers’ assistants with Roma background worked in primary schools and **pre-schools**, 5 Roma mediators work in municipalities as well as in established Roma support centers (in Jelgava, Daugavpils, Valdemarpils, Valmiera).

The results of the survey “Roma Rights to Education: Implementing Situation in Latvia” conducted by the NGO “Center for Education Initiatives” in 2011 indicated the opinion of Roma parents about the importance of providing the education to their children - 80% of ethnic Roma believe the Roma should have at least 9 years of mandatory schooling. **The evaluation of the project clearly showed that teachers’ assistants of Roma background foster the educational achievements of Roma children and help to change the attitude of Roma parents about the necessity to include their children into educational processes at schools. The number of Roma children attending inclusive classes of pre-school and secondary school educational institutions has increased.**

The statistical information provided by the State Employment Agency shows that many unemployed Roma are participated in several training activities funded by European Social Fund to support integration of unemployed and job-seekers into the labour market in a period of 2011 – 2014:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of training activity** | **Number of Roma participated in training** |
|  **2011** |  **2012** | **2013**  | **2014 (first 9 months)** |
| **Training** |
| Non-formal training (including in official language) | 125 (0,5% from all participants) | 77 (0,8% from all participants) | 95 (0,4% from all participants) | 43 (0,3% from all participants) |
| Vocational training, requalification, qualification improvement[[2]](#footnote-2) | 19 | 20 | 17 | 7 |
| Training at employer's[[3]](#footnote-3) | 2 (0,2% from all participants) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Measures to increase competitiveness[[4]](#footnote-4) | 604 (1,2% from all participants)  | 309 (0,6% from all participants) | 229 (0,5% from all participants) | 211 (0,5% from all participants) |
| **Employment measures** |
| Workplaces with stipend emergency public works programme (until 2011) | 495 (1,0 % from all participants) | - | - |  |
| Public works programme / Paid temporary public works (started in 2012)[[5]](#footnote-5) | - | 345 (1,1% from all participants) | 401 (1,2% from all participants)  | 256 (1,3% from all participants) |
| Subsidised employment measures for the most vulnerable groups of unemployed[[6]](#footnote-6) | 1 (0,1% from all participants) | 1 (0,1% from all participants) | 3 (0,2% from all participants) | 5 (0,4% from all participants) |
| Supporting voluntary work of young people[[7]](#footnote-7) | 2 (0,2% from all participants) | 2 (0,3% from all participants) | 2 (0,1% from all participants) | 0 |
| Workplace for a young unemployed (started in 2011)[[8]](#footnote-8) | 2 (0,5% from all participants) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Complex inclusion measures** |
| Complex inclusion measures[[9]](#footnote-9) - training in groups | 14 | 25 (0,8% from all participants) | 15 (0,5% from all participants) | 14 (0,6% from all participants) |
| Complex inclusion measures - consultations | 25 | 76 (0,9% from all participants) | 43 (0,6% from all participants) | 125 (1,1% from all participants) |
| Total number of Roma participants in different trainings and supporting measures (one person could participate in different training programmes) | **1289** | **855** | **805** | **661** |

*Source: The State Employment Agency, 2015*

Number of registered unemployed Roma and their characteristics (12/31/2014)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sort by specific characteristics | Total | % of the total number of registered unemployed Roma  |
| By duration of being unemployed | Less that 12 month | 318 | 50,6 |
| 1-3 years | 145 | 23,0 |
| More than 3 years | 166 | 26,4 |
| By level of education | Elementary school and lower education  | 591 | 89,2 |
| General secondary and specialized secondary education | 50 | 7,9 |
| Tertiary education | 0 | 0 |
| Not specified | 18 | 2,9 |
| By age | 15-24 | 69 | 11,0 |
| 25-39 | 200 | 31,8 |
| 40-54 | 255 | 40,5 |
| 55 and older | 105 | 16,7 |
| Total | 629 | 100 |

*Source: The State Employment Agency, 2015*

 Surveys show that Latvian residents (28%) are most critical of the Roma’s opportunities to obtain job in Latvia. The reasons for this situation are:

 1) the Roma’s low level of education;

 2) lack of work experience and skills;

3) negative stereotypes and prejudices in the society towards the Roma community, which may become the base for discrimination of the Roma in the labour market.

 Statistical data on health care and public health indicators is collected in Latvia. Specific statistical data about public health and health care indicators related to ethnicity is not collated separately.

According to the data from the *Eurobarometer* surveys on discrimination in the EU in 2012 64 % of Latvian citizens consider that Roma are group of people at risk of discrimination, 54 % of Latvian citizens consider that society could benefit from better integration of the Roma. Although, the majority of Latvian residents (48%) would accept if

their children have Roma schoolmates, around 26% recognized that such practice would be unacceptable. But *Eurobarometer* surveys on discrimination in the EU in 2009 shows that 27% of the population of Latvia stated that they have Roma friends or acquaintances.

Additional information regarding to monitoring and data collection see also the replay on 7.question.

**Answer to 3. question**

Given the specific national situation and conditions, such as the small Roma population, Latvia has developed *a set of national Roma integration policy measures* (hereinafter “Policy measures”) in 2011. These Policy measures have been included in the development planning document *National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines 2012 – 2018* (hereinafter “Guidelines”).

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia is National Roma Contact point at the EU and CoE level, and a responsible governmental institution for the coordination of the implementation, development and evaluation of the Policy measures. Taking in account that at the national level Roma integration is horizontal policy, other sectoral ministries like the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economic and the [Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development](http://www.varam.gov.lv/eng/informacija_presei/preses_relizes/?doc=15363) are co-responsible for Roma integration in the frame of their competences.

The implementation of the Guidelines and especially the Roma measures is due to take place in cooperation with state bodies, local authorities and NGOs, including Roma NGOs.

Main focus of the Policy measures is on implementing specific measures towards Roma in main social economic areas such education, employment, housing and healthcare, especially on fostering the level of education of Roma, especially children, and promoting social inclusion.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia strives to ensure and foster an effective cooperation with the Roma community (Roma NGO), co-responsible governmental institutions and local authorities to improve situation of Roma in Latvia.

In August 2012 the Council supervising the implementation of Roma integration policy measures (thereafter – The Roma Council) has been established by the Ministry of Culture. The Roma Council include representatives from state bodies (the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Economic, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development), the Office of Ombudsman, educational establishments, NGOs that work in the area of protecting the interests of the Roma, Roma NGOs and the Roma community, as well as experts in Roma integration issues. The main aim of the Roma Council is to assess and foster the policy for Roma integration, as well as to promote civil participation of the Roma community and to strengthen cooperation between the Roma community and national authorities, in accordance with the Guidelines. The main tasks of the Roma Council are ensuring an effective implementation and evaluation of results of the policy for Roma integration and particular the Policy measures; providing recommendation to the authorities to improve the implementation of the policy for Roma integration especially in field of education, employment, health care and housing; fostering the cooperation between Roma community, authorities, stakeholders, social partners, NGO and experts; evaluating the possibility of effective use of EU structural funds to implementation of the Policy measures.

The Ministry of Culture actively uses the Roma Council as a platform to analyze and discuss the results of the Roma integration policy implementation, to present and share initiatives and challenges to development of Roma integration, as well as to plan future policy measures. The recommendations and proposals of the participants of the meeting of the Roma Council for improving Roma integration are regularly assessed and taken into account in order to develop and provide effective implementation of the Policy measures. For instance, in 2014 the Action plan of the Policy measures for next period was discussed and elaborated within the cooperation with the Roma Council. In April 2014 the Roma Council’s members were asked to submit written proposals and suggestions for the new Action Plan of the Guidelines initiated by the Ministry of Culture. The Action Plan of the Guidelines for the next period (2014-2016), including the Policy measures, is adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on February 2015.

Since 2012 the Ministry of Culture regularly has provided financial support from the state budget directly to Roma non-governmental civil society organizations (NGO) in order to promote their initiatives, foster their involvement into the implementation of policy measures and ensure cooperation with local authorities their taking in account the needs of Latvian Roma population. The support which provided directly to the Roma civil society organizations activities according to their needs is one of the main approaches of the engagement Roma into the implementation of Roma integration policy.

Roma NGO’s projects, which were funded from state budget (2013-2015)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | **Project** | **Period of the project** | **Allocated funds (EUR) and funding source**  |
| Roma NGO “Nēvo Drom D” | The Challenges for the Social and Economic integration of Roma in Daugavpils district. | 01/01/ -30/09/2013 | 1 424,5Call for project proposal „Support for fostering the participation of Roma community” by Ministry of Culture.  |
| The Roma Cultural Centre | The five practical seminars for Romu representatives in 5 Latvian (Daugavpils, Madona, Jelgava, Valmiera and Riga) cities are aimed at fostering the participation of Roma community, ensuring the cooperation between Roma and public administration (local governments and other stakeholders). | 01/01/ -30/09/2013 | 3 561,25Call for project proposal „Support for fostering the participation of Roma community” by Ministry of Culture. |
| Roma NGO “Nēvo Drom D” | The project „Golden hands” was aimed at increasing the competitiveness of Roma at labor market and the promotion of intercultural dialogue in Daugavpils. In the framework of the project there were sewing courses for young Roma and educational seminars with the experts of the State Employment Agency organized.  | 01/01. -30/07/2014 | 1 423Call for project proposal „Support for fostering the participation of Roma community” by Ministry of Culture. |
| The Roma Cultural Centre | Project „Informative support for Roma” was organised in cooperation with the Ombudsman Office and the Welfare Department of Riga City Council in order to consult Roma people on different social and legal issues and to improve the informative level and knowledge on human rights protection (totally 70 consultation were provided to the Roma).  | 01/01/ -30/07/2014 | 1 423Call for project proposal „Support for fostering the participation of Roma community” by Ministry of Culture. |
| Roma NGO “Alternativas” | The project „United in diversity – intercultural dialogue: culture and social issues” was organised in cooperation with the Culture, Sports and Youth Initiative Centre of Kandava City in order to foster civic participation of the Roma youth and parents in Sabile and Kandava. In the framework of the project educational and informative activities were provided, the informative material on Roma culture, history and traditions was developed, as well as youth sports day and discussion forum on social integration issues were organized.  | 01/01/ -30/07/2014 | 1 423Call for project proposal „Support for fostering the participation of Roma community” by Ministry of Culture.  |
| AssociationofNational Cultural Societies of Jelgava in cooperation with Roma NGO “Romanu čačipen” | In order to improve the level of education of Roma pupils and support Roma parents’ motivation and efforts, the extra-curricular activities program was implemented in the framework of the project “Education – Opportunity for Roma”. This initiative which aimed at the supporting Roma children in the education process came from Roma teacher assistant who work in the primary school at the local level. There were 21 Roma pupils and their parents involved in this project.  | 01/01/ -30/07/2014 | 1 381Call for project proposal „Support for fostering the participation of Roma community” by Ministry of Culture.  |
| The Roma Cultural Centre | The project “The Window to the Roma Culture” is aimed at the improving of the functionality and informative content of the Roma Web site [www.romucentrs.lv](http://www.romucentrs.lv), where the information about Roma culture heritage, history and memory, social issues, Anti-Gypsyism and other topics will be available. | 2015 | 2500Public administration task “Fostering Latvian Roma integration and promoting their civil participation” by Ministry of Culture. |
| Roma NGO “Nēvo Drom D” | The project “Improving the social situation of Daugavpils Roma community and their integration into active labor market” is aimed at the providing activities to promote Roma employment, educational and informative measures on fostering economic initiatives and discussions on issues related to education and employment opportunities and other social matters, as well as organising cultural events. | 2015 | 2500Public administration task “Fostering Latvian Roma integration and promoting their civil participation” by Ministry of Culture. |

NGO’ projects aimed at the Roma integration, which were funded in the framework of EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 and EU Programme “**Youth in Action” (2012-2015)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | **Project** | **Main activities** | **Period of the project** | **Allocated funds (EUR) and funding source** |
| The Roma Cultural Centre | Learn more aboutLatvian Roma - braking stereotypes and open for joint dialogue[[10]](#footnote-10) | 1) Measures are focused on human rights and intercultural dialogue threads. Target group: young people. 2) Measures are aimed at the awareness raising of Latvian population on issues related to the Roma Holocaust Tragedy of World War II.  | 01/08/2013 – 31/12/2015 | 47 168,20EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014; **Grants programme “NGO fund”.** |
|  Roma NGO “Nēvo Drom D” | „Step by step” the program of the competitiveness for Roma children and Roma young people[[11]](#footnote-11) | The implementation of formal and non-formal education activities for Roma children and young people. | 01/08/2013- 31/07/2014 | 16 814,29EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014; **Grants programme “NGO fund”.**  |
| Centre for Education Initiatives in cooperation with Roma NGO “Alternativas” | Integration incubator to support Roma children and youth[[12]](#footnote-12) | There are many activities implemented in the framework of the project: 1) trainings for specialists on diversity management and non-discrimination in education;2) training and support for Roma mediators (5 mediators are trained and involved in the activities);3) establishing resource centres for Roma children (5 resource centres are established and working);4) implementation of inter-cultural events; 5) working out and publication of informative materials;6) providing consultations for specialists. | 01/10/2013 – 31/01/2016 | 107 698EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014; **Grants programme “NGO fund”.** |
| Organization “Me Roma” | I – Latvian roma[[13]](#footnote-13) | There are many activities implemented in the framework of the project: Roma and Latvian culture and history events (concerts, fests); Latvian and roma language and cross-cultural trainings and workshops. | 01/10/2013 – 30/09/2014  | 19 174,09EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014; **Grants programme “NGO fund”.** |
| Organization “Me Roma” | Youth Summer School “Let's loud and ding all around” | The implemented activities were aimed at promoting the importance of volunteering among Roma young people using music and the raise awareness of population on Roma culture and traditions. There are many activities, which were held in the framework of the project, for example, music, language and intercultural workshops for young Roma, rehearsal and musical performance sessions. | 01/03/ -31/08/2012 | 5 025,64EU Programme “**Youth in Action”** for young people aged 13-30. |

Assessment:

The Ministry of Culture will provide the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia with information on implementing the Guidelines on two occasions during the operating period of the document: the interim assessment in 2015 and the final impact assessment in 2019, as well as with three information reports in 2014, 2016 and 2019 on implementing the action plan of the Guidelines.

The Ministry of Culture on a regular basis (annually) compiles available data including outcomes of projects implemented by Roma and non-Roma NGOs, and prepares an informative report on Latvian Roma inclusion policy measures, which is published on the website of the Ministry of Culture, as well as discussed and presented at the Roma Council meeting. The are also regular field visits of the National Roma Contact point at the regional and local level to evaluate and advise a work of Roma NGOs, and their cooperation with local authorities.

Additional information regarding to monitoring and data collection see also the replay on 7.question.

**Answer to 4.question**

There are no specific measures targeted on combating discrimination faced by Roma women, but the Ministry of Culture and the Society Integration foundation regularly have initiated several activities to raise public awareness of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race and ethnic origin (including Roma), as well as activities to raise awareness of Roma and supporting their integration, especially in the field of education.[[14]](#footnote-14)

In addition in November 2014 the Ministry of Culture set an agreement with NGO Latvian Centre for Human rights (official representative of the “DOSTA!” campaign in Latvia) in order to organise the event “Latvian Roma – between past and future” aimed at the elimination of negative stereotypes about Roma, popularisation of Roma culture in the society, as well as the promotion a dialogue between the Roma community and other ethnic groups in Latvia. The event is going to be organised in April 2015 in Riga.

Roma women are taken active participation in the Council as Roma NGO leaders, and they are involved in the mediation work at the regional and local level.

The Roma representative Ms Roksana Rudeviča has been working in the Ombudsman’s office since 2011, providing legal consultation to representatives of the Roma community on issues related human rights, social protection and prohibition of discrimination. She also taken active participation during the Fourth International ConferenceofRoma Women organized by the Council of Europe and the Finnish Government in Helsinki, Finland, on 16-17 September 2013.

**Answer to 5.question**

On 17.02.2009. The Riga Regional Court sentenced four skinheads for incitement to racial hatred to five years of suspended imprisonment and three years of probation period. The convicted persons also will have to pay compensation to two Roma girls in amount of EUR 17,000 and EUR 11,382. All four skinheads were charged with incitement to hatred after attacking two young Roma girls in October 2007.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Measures, which have been taken to assist, protect and compensate victims:

Number of complaints submitted from Roma to Ombudsman (Equality body)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Number of complaints |
| 2008  | 3  |
| 2009  | 0  |
| 2010  | 0  |
| 2011  | 5  |
| 2012 | 7  |

 *Source: The Ombudsman’s office, 2013.*

In 2011 the Roma origin specialist of judicial issues has started to work in the Ombudsman’s office, providing legal consultation to representatives of the Roma community on issues related human rights, social protection and prohibition of discrimination. The Cooperation memorandum on the elimination of discrimination of the Roma is signed between the Ombudsman and the International Roma Union’s commissioner in 2011 aimed at improving the cooperation to promote Roma rights and social inclusion, and at the same time to preserve Roma tradition and culture.

In order to identify how Roma community is represented in press media, the monitoring was conducted by the Ombudsman’s office in 2011. Main findings of the monitoring are: a lack of information about Roma, its life, tradition and problems; the information about Roma is published mainly in the context of criminal and cultural news; hate speech and prejudices toward Roma are expressed by readers in their comments. The Security police are informed about seven cases of hate speech against Roma in Internet comments.

The educational training „Different Client in Diverse Latvia” aimed at training of healthcare workers, policemen and trade union representatives about intercultural communication, anti-discrimination and diversity management issues, was organised by NGO „Latvian Centre for Human Rights” in 2010 -2011 in the framework of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals, administrated in Latvia by the Ministry of Culture.

There are also individual legal consultations which regularly provided by NGO „Latvian Centre for Human Rights” to Roma representatives who experienced discrimination or intolerance because they are Roma.

**Answer to 6.question**

Education is one of priority area of the Roma integration policy at the national level, including the support for the Roma NGOs and other non-governmental organizations to promote educational activities, providing material support to Roma students for learning aids acquisition, motivational activities for Roma youth, who want to continue their education. This policy is focused on providing early**-**education, primary and secondary education to Roma and to motivate Roma parents to send their children in the school and to follow their achievement in the process of education.

During the period 2011 – 2014 there are many activities implemented which provide the important achievement in Roma education field within the frame of the Roma integration policy at the national level. The most significant achievement is the developing the practice of involving teacher assistants with Roma background into the mainstream education system as well as other activities to improve education level of Roma such as trainings and involvement of 5 Roma mediators at the local level in five municipalities, and establishing four Roma Recourses centers.

For examples, in the frame of Latvian - Swiss cooperation programme project “**School and Community for inclusion of Roma children**” many activities were organised in period 2011-2012 aimed at improving Roma situation in education field, including foster the cooperation between school staff and Roma parents:

(i) The Support centres for parents are established in schools (Vlademārpils, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Jēkabpils and Valmiera), to improve involvement of Roma parents into their children’s education process. As well as 3 auditoriums were established for inclusive classes.

(ii) 120-150 pre-school and school teachers of structures of municipalities are trained for work with Roma children and families. Teachers and educational specialists are also received advisory support to promote provision of inclusive education for Roma children.[[16]](#footnote-16) Pedagogues specialized in work with Roma children are trained to work in multiethnic groups (inc. to foster collaboration with Roma teacher’s assistants).

(iii) The exibition „School un Society to inclusion of Roma children” was organised aiming at fostering the inclusion of Roma children and their family into society and developingintercultural dialogue between Roma community and rest population. During the exhibition six discussions on Roma culture and history in Latvia were organised in several municipalities.

(iv) Based on practice and recommendations of specialists from municipalities, schools and NVO, which they had been obtained during the project, the guidance for action was worked out.

Moreover, in 2011./2012.year seven Roma representatives were employed as teacher assistants in the regional schools and pre-schools, as well as through financing support by „Soros Fund - Latvia” and several local governments. Total there were 109 Roma children included in schools in 2011/2012 school year.

There are many projects, which implemented in order to improve the level of Roma education and involvement Roma pupils into education process (2009-2016)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project**  | **Organization** | **Allocated funds (EUR), and source** | **Period of the project** | **Results** |
| Roma assistant teachers for education institutions | The Centre for Education Initiatives | 23 023State budget within the framework of state program “Roma in Latvia” 2007/2009 | 2009 | (i) 7 Roma assistant teachers are trained for work in education institutions; (ii) individual consultations and mediation;(iii) an assessment of the training results. |
| Roma assistant teachers in education institutions  | The Centre for Education Initiatives | 11 227State budget | 2010 | 6 Roma assistant teachers are involved in education institutions. |
| The educational and informative guide “Laču Dives, draugi!” | The Centre for Education Initiatives | 3 775State budget | 2012  | There is the educational and informative guide “Laču Dives, draugi!” - “How to Integrate Roma pupils” elaborated and published in Internet in order to promote teacher’s intercultural competences. |
| To become friends working together (Roma is only one of the target groups of the project) | Traditional Culture Society „Mantojums”” in cooperation with Elementary school of Ladezers City, Ventspils Evening School | 10 531,5State Programme of Latvian NGO fund for cohesion of society „Programme of Extracurricular activities”. | 17/08/ - 20/11/2012 | In the framework of the project there were several non-formal education intercultural activities organized such as workshops in schools and theatrical performances.There were many Roma pupils who took active participation and involving in these activities.  |
| “**School and Community for inclusion of Roma children**”  | The Centre for Education Initiatives | 112 178 Latvian - Swiss cooperation programme | 01/01/2011-30/06/2012  | See results above. |
| Integration incubator to support Roma children and youth | The Centre for Education Initiatives in cooperation with Roma NGO “Alternativas” | 107 698The **Grants programme “NGO fund” of** EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 | 01/10/2013 – 31/01/2016 | There are many activities implemented in the framework of the project: (i) trainings for specialists on diversity management and non-discrimination in education;(ii) training and support for Roma mediators (5 mediators are trained and involved in the activities);(iii) establishing resource centres for Roma children (5 resource centres are established and working);(iv) implementation of inter-cultural events; (v) working out and publication of informative materials;(vi) providing consultations for specialists. |
| “Different people. Various experiences. One Latvia” | The Society Integration foundationwith the Ministry of Culture, the Centre for Education Initiatives and other organisations | 304 117(for all activities, including Roma measures)EU Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS 2007 – 2013 | 01/08/2013-30/07/2014 | (i) sharing of Latvia’s good practice on Roma integration in the field of education on the international level (in Sweden and Slovakia); (ii) organising round table discussions at the regional level in order to strengthen Roma integration in field of education (5 discussions were held); (iii) organising an informative campaign on equality issues for general public, including special events to promote Roma culture in the society, the commemoration event in memory of the Roma victims of the Holocaust during World War II and publication of informative material about the situation of Roma in Latvia.There is a list of recommendations on the improvement of Roma education level elaborated by experts based on the outcomes of round table discussions and regional field visits. |
|  “Education – Opportunity for Roma”.  | AssociationofNational Cultural Societies of Jelgava in cooperation with Roma NGO “Romanu čačipen” | 1 381State budget | 2014 | In order to improve the level of education of Roma pupils and support Roma parents’ motivation and efforts, the extra-curricular activities program was implemented in the framework of the project “Education – Opportunity for Roma”. This initiative for supporting Roma children in the education process came from Roma teacher assistant who work in the Primary School at local level. There were 21 Roma pupils and their parents involved in this project.  |

The Ministry of Culture considers that the project “Integration incubator to support Roma children and youth” should be also particularly mentioned as best practise on Roma integration in education area at the national level. The main activities of this projects are:

1) trainings for Roma mediators and supporting their work in schools and educational centres; 2) establishing Resource centres for Roma children; 3) organisation of intercultural events; 4) providing informative materials; 5) training for the pedagogical staff on diversity management and non-discrimination in education.[[17]](#footnote-17)

There are four Resource centres, which have established for Roma children and young people in October 2014, where Roma children can get support and improve their communication and civic skills. For example, there are intercultural dialogue events and creative workshops organised in these centres in order to improve cultural competences, cooperation and communicative skills of Roma and non-Roma young people. The representatives of local governments and NGOs, Roma parents and pedagogical staff have the opportunity to receive consultations form experts in these centres. The main actors of the Resource centres are Roma mediators which promote the bridge and link between Roma community and local government institutions (especially educational institutions). At the moment there are 5 Roma mediators, who work in these centres.

In the framework of the project there was the event “Holiday Academy” which took place in Jelgava and Daugavpils on June 2014, where during 3 days Roma children and their peers from different ethnic groups acquired the knowledge and skills to improve mutual cooperation and active participation in a democratic civil society.

Several informative and practical materials are elaborated, published and distributed in the framework of the project,[[18]](#footnote-18) including the toolkit on Roma issues and the guidelines on basic principles of Roma integration policy for local governmental (municipal) specialists, as well as the practical toolkit for Roma mediators.

**Answer to 7.question**

In framework of the project “Different people. Various experiences. One Latvia II” which will be implemented by the Society Integration foundation in the cooperation with the Ministry of Culture in 2015 (financial support provided within the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS 2007 – 2013) the quantitative survey “The situation of Roma in Latvia: their access to education, employment, healthcare and housing” is going to be conducted aimed at the monitoring the situation of Roma in Latvia in the key areas, identifying best practises and providing better elaboration and implementation of Roma inclusion policy in Latvia. In order to clarify and understand current problems, needs and efforts of Roma communities at the local and regional level the quantitative approach will be use focused on gathering primary data directly from the target group. Based on this qualitative study results the consultation process will be organised with experts and Roma representatives to discuss which activities should be implemented in the framework of the national policy for Roma integration to improve current situation of Roma in key areas such education, employment, healthcare and housing. The results of surveys will be available in the end of 2015.

In addition during the period from November 2014 until March 2015 there is a scientific monitoring, which will be elaborated by the Baltic Institute of Social Science in order to analyze the situation and evaluate the implementation of the Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy taking in account indicators are set in the guidelines (the contract has been signed in 2014). Considering that the set of national Roma integration policy measures is a part of this general policy document, the Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy (2012 – 2018), there are many outcome indicators which related to Roma integration, for instance, share of ethnic groups (%) among the long-term unemployed (including Roma); number of the Roma (%) who believe the Roma should have at least 9 years of mandatory schooling; share of the Roma pupils who drop out of mainstream schools because of poor financial circumstances (%); number of people who believe that the Roma have little chance of being employed (%) etc. It is planned that the Baltic Institute of Social Science will also provide the recommendations in order to improve the system and mechanism of monitoring National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy, including Roma integration policy.

There is a lot of effort being made by the Ministry of Education and Science to improve the monitoring mechanism and data collection methods to get real view on situation of education of Roma children. The quality of Roma education is constantly monitored by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with municipalities.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Education and Science collect information regarding to number of Roma pupils involved in mainstream education, especially in secondary schools (10-12 classes), vocational educational program, primary and pre-school education (from 5 years age for the acquisition primary education); number of Roma pupils which attend the classes not corresponding to their age; number of Roma pupils were provided with additional training activities; number of Roma children of educational age which learn within special educational programme for children with special needs/ correction classes.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture on a regular basis (annually) compiles data and prepares an informative report on Latvian Roma inclusion policy measures, which is published on the website of the Ministry of Culture and presented at the Roma Council meeting. The information includes in the report is provided by co-responsible governmental institutions and agencies, local governmental institutions and NGOs.

Additional information regarding to statistical data collection see also the replay on 3.question

**Answer to 8.question**

All key areas of Roma social inclusion such as education, employment, health care and housing are equally important and need to step up additional effort. These areas are deeply interconnected and dependent on each other. Nevertheless the promotion of the level of education and employment of Roma are crucial for effective and positive process of the Roma social inclusion.

Challenges for the next period:

1. Bring efforts to improve coordination between Saeima (the Parliament) and the Roma Council to make implementation of Roma policy measures more effective and facilitate political commitment.
2. To improve effective coordination between co-responsible ministries, local governmental institutions and Roma representatives in order to promote the implementation of initiatives aimed at the social inclusion of Roma and make possible a real access of Roma civil society organisations to the European Structural Funds during the next period within the National Operational Program at the national level.
3. As far as it possible to provide appropriate support for Roma NGO in order to improve cooperation between Roma community and local authorities.

**Answer to 9.question**

As far as it possible an appropriate support is provided to celebrate the International Roma Day on 8th April at the national level.

There are several activities aimed at raising awareness of Roma and supporting their integration, which are implemented in 2013/2014 during the project “Different people. Various experiences. One Latvia.”, including informative public event on 8th April 2014 during the International Roma Day to promote Roma culture in the society and to commemorate the Roma victims of the Holocaust during World War II.[[19]](#footnote-19)

In November 2014 the Ministry of Culture set an agreement with NGO Latvian Centre for Human rights in order to organise the event “Latvian Roma – between past and future” aimed at the elimination of negative stereotypes about Roma, popularisation of Roma culture in the society, as well as the promotion a dialogue between the Roma community and other ethnic groups in Latvia. It is planned that this event will be implemented to launch and popularize the “DOSTA!” campaign in Latvia. One of activities planned in the framework of this event is informative activity focused on different target groups of society (especially young people) aimed at the promotion information about Latvian Roma language and culture heritage as well as at rising knowledge about Roma history and their everyday struggle with negative stereotypes and Anti-Gypsysm. The open discussions and films demonstration about Latvian Roma are planned during this activity. The activity is planning to take place on 8th April 2015 during the International Roma Day in The Museum of Roma Art and History in Riga.

In order to improve an exchange of information regarding the Roma integration and to make working methods of local authorities on Roma inclusion more efficient, the practical and informative guidelines and materials are provided to the experts of municipalities, for instance, an informative materials on Roma culture, specific social circumstances and human rights issues related Roma.

In order to promote teacher’s intercultural competences the guide “To Integrate Roma pupils” was published in 2012 by NGO “the Centre for Education Initiatives” and granted by the Ministry of Culture. Many informative and practical materials are included in the guide, for example, description of Roma culture features and sensitive tradition practice, pedagogical programmes for work with Roma pupils in the inclusive groups. The material has distributed to schools and other educational structures (available in Latvian <http://issuu.com/iic_daiga/docs/celvedis_izgl_iest?e=5624051/2924677>).

**Answer to 10.question**

The Ministry of Culture as a responsible governmental institution for the coordination of the implementation of Roma integration policy at the national level strives to ensure and foster an effective cooperation with the Roma community (Roma NGO), co-responsible governmental institutions and local authorities to improve situation of Roma in Latvia.

The representatives of the Roma community are involved in many governmental consultative bodies. For example, the Council supervising the implementation of Roma integration policy measureshas been established in 2012 by the Ministry of Culture. The Council includes representatives from state bodies (co-responsible ministries, the Office of Ombudsman, local authorities, educational establishments) and five Roma and two non-Roma NGOs that work in the area of protecting the interests of the Roma.

The Roma consultative bodyestablished in 2012 by the Ombudsman aimed at the awareness of situation and needs of Roma community, the evaluation of governmental and non-governmental measures to combat the discrimination against Roma and promote their social inclusion.

Roma representatives are members also of such governmental consultative bodies:

The Minorities Consulting Council of the President of the Republic of Latvia, The Consulting Council in Ethnic Minority Education Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Science, The Consultative Council of National minorities of the Ministry of Culture. As well representatives of Roma community are the members of several committees of municipalities at local level (Jelgava, Valmiera, Daugavpils).

Taking into account the Article 3.2. of the EU Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States (9.12.2013.) and the special Recommendation of the Commission to The Republic of Latvia which is included in the working staff document of the Communication Report on the implementationof the EU FrameworkforNational Roma Integration Strategies (4.04.2014.), *the Network of regional experts on Roma integration issues* (thereafter – the Network) is set in October 2014 by The Ministry of Culture. The main aim of the Network is to foster regular exchange of best practices, experience and sharing information, as well as to develop cooperation between experts of local governments, representatives of Roma communities, the Ministry of Culture and the [Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development](http://www.varam.gov.lv/eng/informacija_presei/preses_relizes/?doc=15363) in order to make the implementation and designing of the Roma integration policy more effective. One of the objectives of the Network is the providing consultations and informative support to the local government in order to use the programs of National and EU structure funds effectively. There are 15 representatives from 14 local government’s institutions who are involved in theNetwork as experts and contact points on Roma integration.

In addition, the National Roma Contact point has regular field visits to certain local governments’ institutions (for example in Jelgava city and Jūrmala city and Daudavpils city municipality) in order to consult and inform their representatives on topical Roma integration issues.

Many Roma representatives are recruited by local governmental institutions. For example, Jūrmala municipality employed three Roma representatives (as a cleaning person, an event organizer and a sports organizer) for at least the period of two years after the finishing of the ESF project. There are also Roma music band established with support of the Day Care centre specialists. Educational institutions of Jelgava municipality also employed three Roma representatives such as mediator, teacher assistant in the primary school and specialists in the pre-school. There are 5 Roma mediators currently works in the Roma Resource centres established in five municipalities in the framework of the project “Integration incubator to support Roma children and youth”. The Roma mediators promote the bridge and link between Roma community and local government institutions (especially educational institutions).

Additional information regarding to monitoring and data collection see also the replay on 3.question.

1. Available only in Latvian <http://www.km.gov.lv/lv/ministrija/romi.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Include different training programmes (continuing vocational training to acquire vocational qualification, advanced vocational training to reach vocational proficiency, non-formal and on-the-job training) organized in co-operation with educational institutions and employers. Funding: ESF (80%) and state budget (20%). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Training of unemployed at the employers’ request in the priority branches - work-based training measures will be expanded in 2013 by launching the ESF-financed activity initiated by the Ministry of Economics and designed in cooperation with the economic partners. Funding: ESF (80%) and state budget (20%). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Measures include different short courses, seminars, lectures and consultations offered to unemployed in areas such as communications skills, networking, negotiation, job-finding and interview skills, motivation etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This programme was launched in 2012 upon the expiry of the measure “Workplaces with stipend emergency public works programme”. The aim of the measure is activation of disadvantaged unemployed by maintaining and developing their work related skills, simultaneously establishing a better linkage of labour market measures with social assistance services in order to avoid shrinkage of the economic potential. Funding: ESF (80%) and state budget (20%). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Subsidised employment for the most vulnerable groups of unemployed, different projects aimed at specific target groups of unemployed – people with special needs, youth, older workers, long-term unemployed, women returning to the labour market after maternity leave etc. The aim of the measure is to facilitate the development of sustainable and long-term working places for unemployed with lower productivity level and preserve their skills and competencies. Funding: ESF (50%) and state budget (50%). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Support for youth volunteer work - the aim is to support activities of young unemployed aged 18-24 years for the public weal, promoting opportunities and developing a volunteer work in Latvia, taking into account youth potential and current situation in the labour market. Funding: state budget (100%). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Workplace for a young unemployed – the aim of the measure is to promote a long-term integration into the labour market of vulnerable groups of young unemployed aged 18-24 years. Funding: ESF (80%) and state budget (20%). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Complex inclusion measures were expanded significantly during the economic downturn in 2010. The decision was taken to transform the measures, by targeting the resources to young unemployed, mostly hit during the crisis. In the whole, complex inclusion measures are aimed at specific target groups - long-term unemployed, unemployed with special needs, unemployed after child-care leave and young unemployed. The measures provide an opportunity for refreshing, acquiring and retaining skills necessary for finding work and include work experience activities for young unemployed. Funding: ESF (80%) and state budget (50%). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Detailed information is available at <http://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8926&Itemid=121&lang=en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Detailed information is available at <http://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8988&Itemid=174&lang=en&skats=1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Detailed information is available at

<http://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9092&Itemid=30&lang=en>;

<http://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project/LV03-0121>. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Detailed information is available at <http://www.erfolg.lv/ya-latvijskij-rom/?lang=en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. In 2013/2014 such activities was implemented by The Society Integration foundation in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Centre for Education Initiatives and other organisations within the framework of the the project “Different people. Various experiences. One Latvia” funded by European Union (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS 2007 – 2013) and Latvian State. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. On 17.10.2007 the media widely reported on an allegedly racially motivated attack by a group of skinheads against two 13 years old Roma girls who were kicked and called ‘blacks’. This was the first publicly reported racially motivated attack against Roma. In May 2008 the Prosecutor of the Riga Regional Court has charged four skinheads with incitement to racial hatred involving violence. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Available at <http://www.iic.lv/en/projects/training_pedagogues.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Detailed information is available in Latvian <http://www.iic.lv/projekti/esosie-projekti/projekts-integracijas-inkubators-romu-bernu-un-jauniesu-atbalstam/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Materials are available only in Latvian <http://www.iic.lv/projekti/esosie-projekti/projekts-integracijas-inkubators-romu-bernu-un-jauniesu-atbalstam/projekta-materiali/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. According to the position and established tradition of Latvian Roma community leaders Roma victims of the World War II genocide are also commemorated on 8th April during the International Romani Day. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)