

Monitoring Local Implementation of
the Government Strategy for the
Improvement of the Condition
of Roma in Romania
in Cluj County

BACKGROUND

Cluj county is located in Transylvania, in the north-west of Romania. The county population is 703,269,¹ in an area of 6,674 square kilometres. In the 2002 population census 20,052 residents identified themselves as Roma, 2.9 per cent of the county's total population.² This is an increase of approximately 20 per cent since 1992, in a period in which the total number of residents decreased by 36,000. Nevertheless, unofficial estimates claim that there are between 35,000 and 45,000 Roma living in the perimeter of Cluj county.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Cluj County, three years from the adoption of the Strategy, the implementation did not bring about the desired change in the life of the Roma population. However, a County Office for Roma (hereafter, BJR) and Local Joint Working Groups at the county and local level have been established, and local experts on Roma affairs nominated. In spite of these positive aspects, the level of involvement of the Local Joint Working Group is weak and almost no resources are allocated for implementing the Strategy measures.

At the time of writing, Cluj county had not developed a County Strategy for implementing the Strategy, but in February 2004 the Prefecture approved a County Action Plan based on the Strategy, with measures in all ten domains that the national Strategy covers.³

The presence of an active group of Roma non-governmental organisations seems to be insufficient for improving the participation of Roma in public life, and a constant lack of cooperation with the public institutions exists. A relevant example is the project implemented by the County School Inspectorate in several localities and schools with large Roma populations, where there is no partnership with the relevant Roma organisations.⁴

¹ According to the data of 2002 Census, Ethno-demographic structure of population chapter

² According to the data of 2002 Census, Ethno-demographic structure of population chapter

³ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 110 April 2004.

⁴ The county School Inspectorate is implementing a project within the framework of Phare RO-0104.02: "Access to education of disadvantaged groups, with a special focus on Roma" programme. There are no Roma NGOs as formal partners in the project, although they expressed their openness for participation.

The BJR, together with the local experts on Roma affairs, have made some progress in implementing the objectives of the Strategy. However, lack of decision-making authority and lack of funding have been identified as main factors impeding the activities of the BJR in Cluj county. Only low progress in the main areas of the Strategy can be noted, including in health, housing, employments, and social services.

2. LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Administrative bodies

2.1.1 The county office for Roma (BJR)

In accordance with the Strategy,⁵ the County Office for Roma (hereafter, BJR) was established in Cluj County in April 2002. The Prefect of Cluj is the President of the BJR, which is funded through the budget of Cluj Prefecture. The BJR has five members, one of whom is Roma. The BJR members have other daily tasks in addition to their responsibilities as BJR members.

The BJR members include the Councillor for the Prefect on Roma Affairs, (hereafter, Councillor) who was hired by Cluj Prefecture following an open selection process. The Councillor was educated in the social work department of Babeş-Bolyai University and was previously a member of the Romano Suno Association of Roma Students from Cluj Napoca. The Councillor is currently the vice-president of the RSDP in Cluj Napoca. The four non-Roma BJR members have been working with the Directorate for European Integration and External Affairs, Directorate for Governmental Strategies and Relations with Trade Unions, Juridical Department, Public Relations within Cluj County Prefecture for over eight years.

When he first started, the Councillor faced various problems, from organisational to relational ones, including the lack of knowledge on the part of the BJR members of the BJR's role and context within the Strategy. The Councillor has only very limited resources at his disposal and low decision-making authority. All decisions must be approved through the Prefecture's administrative hierarchy, and thus it is impossible to react immediately or effectively in a crisis situation.

⁵ GD 430/2001, Government Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Situation of Roma.

The BJR's activities are carried out according to a schedule proposed for each three months by the Councillor and approved by the Prefect.⁶ The schedule includes office hours for the public and work in the field. The hours with the public, the so-called audiences, are held twice weekly. Monthly site visits to the local mayors' offices in Cluj county have been organised to advise the local experts on Roma issues and improve the relationship between Roma communities and local authorities. The Councillor also visits local public services, NGOs, Roma communities and other institutions in Cluj Napoca in accordance with the measures of the Strategy.

The Councillor's office is furnished with a computer and a printer, access to the telephone and fax machine, and limited Internet access. However, allocation of additional office space within the Prefecture exclusively for the BJR would facilitate its activities. The Councillor is allowed to use the Prefecture's means for transportation, but only with previous approval. In crisis situations, where it is not possible to make arrangements in advance, the Councillor must appeal to Roma NGOs and to the RSDP.

In the implementation of the Strategy at Cluj county level, the main difficulties identified were the low involvement of local authorities from certain mayors' offices in the implementation of the Strategy and the insufficient allocation of funds from the local budget for activities established in the Master Plan of Measures for Applying the Strategy.⁷ In addition, the Councillor does not have decision-making powers, but only the possibility to make proposals to the county mayors' offices and to solicit information.⁸

The Councillor considers the collaboration with the local institutions participating in the working group to be successful. Various projects have been carried out in partnership with the police, the Directorate for Culture and Denominations, and the County School Inspectorate.

The relationship of the BJR with county Roma NGOs has also been productive, and has resulted in joint project applications and a cooperative approach to problem solving. The RSDP is a constructive partner, both at the local and county levels. The representative of the RSDP for Cluj Napoca is member of the working group and participates in joint problem solving for the Roma communities.

⁶ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 13 October 2003.

⁷ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 15 April 2004.

⁸ In accordance with Law no. 215 on Local Public Administration. Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 13 October 2003.

The perceptions of Roma NGOs regarding the activity and results of the Councillor varies. Many groups draw attention to the failures of the Councillor, while acknowledging that the lack of material resources and limited decision-making capacity restrict the possibilities for the Councillor to work effectively.

2.1.2 Local experts on Roma affairs

At the level of Cluj county Mayors' offices, 43 local experts were hired. Of these, 38 were already employed by the Mayors' offices and were assigned new responsibilities, while the remaining two are volunteers. However, only five of these local experts are Roma and of these only one has been hired officially as a local expert for Roma affairs, while the others were performing the same tasks but given different positions or are volunteers.

In most cases, the local experts on Roma affairs who were given the position in addition to their existing work with the Mayor's office. Most are not sufficiently familiar with Roma issues, although many already worked in positions such as social workers which required substantial interaction with the Roma communities. Many of the local experts lack the motivation to work for real change as they consider the extra responsibilities burdensome, and they receive no additional salary to compensate for the additional work.⁹

At the time of reporting, there was no local expert on Roma affairs hired by Cluj Napoca City Hall, as a new position in the administrative staff chart had not been established. The mayor of Cluj Napoca has signed a document committing to modify the staff table in order to hire a local expert.

The work and responsibilities of the local experts varies greatly. Some have a job description,¹⁰ while others only have a job description for their other responsibilities.¹¹ There are a significant number of local experts who are not aware of whether or not

⁹ Interviews with Liliana Ecedi, Local Expert on Roma Affairs, Gilău, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Takacs Tunde, Buza Mayor's Office, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Nagy Ana, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Suatu, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Sebastian Hoda, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Feleac, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Simona Fizeşan, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Floreşti, Cluj, 10 September 2003.

¹⁰ Interview with Simona Fizeşan, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Floreşti, Cluj, 10 September 2003.

¹¹ Interview with Sebastian Hoda, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Feleac, Cluj, 10 September 2003.

they have a job description.¹² Many of those who took on the position of local expert in addition to other responsibilities have stated that they do not have time to focus on resolving on the problems of Roma communities and therefore only interact with Roma in connection with their other work.

In some cases, the local experts state that they have regular meetings, usually once a week, with representatives of the Roma from the respective area, where they discuss the current issues that the local community is facing.¹³ They generally regard their communication with the Councillor for the Prefect on Roma Affairs as good, with weekly consultation by telephone or fax and more often when necessary.

The achievements that the local experts on Roma affairs consider most important include:

- developing a relationship based on trust with the Roma;
- organising of the Roma community at the local level so that there are one or more leaders who can represent the community in relations with local authorities; generally, these are informal leaders, respected by their communities and accepted as such by local authorities;
- persuading Roma groups to work the necessary number of hours in order to receive minimum guaranteed income;
- paving an access road to one of the Roma communities, with the direct participation of the Roma themselves.

The local experts on Roma affairs consider that their activity would be improved if the following was made available:

- office space exclusively for meeting with Roma communities;
- employment of community representatives as local experts on Roma affairs, thus assuring a closer relation with the community, and better understanding of the relevant issues;
- additional employment of personnel or reducing the other responsibilities of local experts as the volume of work with Roma communities is time consuming;

¹² Interviews with Liliana Ecedi, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Gilău, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Takacs Tunde, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Buza, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Nagy Ana, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Suatu, Cluj, 10 September 2003.

¹³ Interview with Szatmari Levente, volunteer Expert on Roma Affairs Unguraş, Cluj, 10 September 2003.

- developing a cooperative atmosphere among Roma, to build awareness that their issues cannot be resolved by the mayor alone, but the involvement of other local structures and their own involvement is essential;
- fostering the participation and election of Roma representatives within the decision-making structures at the local level.

Roma generally approach the local experts on Roma affairs¹⁴ for advice about utilities, including the lack of electricity, water, sewer connections, and gas. There are also problems with the preparation of paperwork for obtaining the minimum guaranteed income, for the registration of houses in the cadastral register, the lack of land for construction, unemployment, and other issues.

2.1.3 Local joint working group

At the Cluj county level, the Local Joint Working Group was formed in 2001, prior to the Ministry of Public Administration's order to do so.¹⁵ The working group was formed by consensus,¹⁶ at the initiative of the Councillor for the Prefect on Roma affairs, who brought together the representatives of local institutions and Roma NGOs in accordance with the Government Strategy. Later, the Working Group became official by an order of the Prefect (no. 518/29.08.2002).

County level Working Group members are both representatives of local institutions and of Roma NGOs. The activity of the Working Group has developed without specific funds from the budget. Its responsibilities are in accordance with those set out in the Strategy¹⁷ and are mainly connected to the evaluation of the most important needs of the Roma community according to the Strategy's Master Plan of Measures.¹⁸

Unfortunately, to date there have been no significant accomplishments of the Working Group, although there has been support from various institutions for the accomplishments of the BJR. Since autumn 2002, the Working Group meetings take

¹⁴ Interviews with Liliana Ecedi, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Gilău, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Sebastian Hoda, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Feleac, Cluj, 10 September 2003; Simona Fizeșan, Local Expert on Roma Affairs Florești, Cluj, 10 September 2003.

¹⁵ With Prefect's order no. 328/18.04.2002.

¹⁶ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 13 October 2003.

¹⁷ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 13 October 2003.

¹⁸ Strategy, Chapter XI, Master Plan of Measures for Applying the Strategy of Improving the Roma Condition.

place once in two months, with a fairly high level of participation, although often the representatives of public institutions lack decision-making capacity, and are merely delegated by the respective institutions. The efficiency of the Working Group could improve with better organisation and direction of its meetings, and with the elaboration of clear plans and schedules for achievement.

The Local Joint Working Group needs funds for the development of activities and for the specific activities institutions should develop according to the Strategy. To date, all its activities were accomplished without funds allocated from the institutional level, but with good collaboration.¹⁹ Improving collaboration with Roma NGOs would also help to increase the working group's efficiency as many NGOs have expertise and experience that should be utilised. The clarification of each partner's responsibilities is essential, and the real partnership between public institutions and civil society must be transformed from an abstract concept into a common reality.

2.1.4 Other administrative measures

At the level of the County Council, a Roma university graduate was hired as Assistant Councillor within the Public Institutions Service of the General Directorate for Public and Judicial Administration.²⁰

In addition, training courses are currently being organised for local experts on Roma affairs and other working group members in writing financing proposals, human rights, and community development. These courses were organised at the initiative of the Councillor for the Prefect on Roma affairs, in collaboration with Ramses Foundation in Dej and the Foundation Resource Center for Roma Communities. Through this project, 30 people have received training to date.

2.2 Housing

In Cluj county, a strategy at the local level is required to ensure that local authorities allocate the necessary financial resources in a timely fashion, assuring the access of underprivileged persons, Roma included, to decent living conditions.

¹⁹ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 13 October 2003.

²⁰ Interview with Lakatos Marius, Assistant Councillor within the Public Institutions Service of the General Directorate for Public and Judicial Administration, Cluj County Council, Cluj-Napoca, 21 November 2003.

In autumn 2003, the Councillor for the Prefect on Roma affairs (hereafter, Councillor) was not aware of any cases of Roma becoming owners of agricultural or housing land. Roma NGOs, the Councillor and the RSDP petitioned Cluj City Hall to improve the situation of the Roma from Byron district, who had no rent contracts for the spaces in which they lived. As a result, all of the 24 families, approximately 170 persons, are now living under legal conditions with rent contracts.

A national programme for the rehabilitation of houses and the environment, including areas populated by Roma, was to be elaborated by January 2003 in accordance with the Master Plan of Measures for Applying the Strategy.²¹ Information was collected by the BJR but there is no sign of such a national programme. In late 2003, the Councillor received and sent to the Ministry of Public Administration and Internal Affairs an up-to-date situation of their housing rehabilitation needs and of the number of houses in the areas populated by Roma; this information was received from the county mayors' offices.

With Governmental funds, the mayoralities of Catina implemented a housing rehabilitation project and the mayoralty of Calatele rehabilitated an access road for the Roma community. The value of the two projects is approximately ROL 3 Billion (approximately €75,000).

Housing projects have been elaborated and forwarded for financing. These projects have as objectives the building of houses for the Roma communities in Pata Rît and Negreni, as well as the rehabilitation of Roma houses from Byron district. The Councillor, together with the assistant Councillor within the County Council, members of Roma NGOs and civil servants elaborated these projects. At the date of an interview, the financing requests had not received an answer.

The transfer of Roma families and other homeless citizens from different areas of the city has led to the creation of two new shantytowns, Pata Rît 2 and Pata Rît 3. There has been no support for the families involved, who have no access to heating or water. The authorities have attempted to hand over responsibility for these families to civil society but this has not resolved the problem, as Roma NGOs lack the necessary financial resources for building houses. As a result of petitions to Cluj Napoca Local Council from the Councillor, the Assistant Councillor, Amare Phrala organisation and the RSDP, ROL 50 million was allocated to the Roma in Pata Rît 2 for heating materials and food and ROL 800 million for electricity during the winter holidays.

²¹ Strategy, Chapter IX, Master Plan of Measures No. 24.

2.3 Social protection

Between October 2002 and September 2003, a project to increase the Roma community's access to local services in Cluj Napoca was carried out in partnership between the city hall and the Roma Students Association Romano Suno, with Phare funding.²² When the project concluded, only half of the budget had been spent, although most of the activities were accomplished. These activities included opening an information and consulting office for Roma in the city hall, and the employment of one Roma staff member, and the creation of a database mapping the needs of the Roma communities. A pamphlet outlining the available services was also printed and distributed and some 850 Roma were informed through the office's awareness campaigns.

There has been no specific project focusing on assisting Roma in acquiring personal and property documents, although local institutions and NGOs have made efforts to address this issue through existing programmes. In 2002, the Association for Roma Women's Emancipation provided information on how to acquire identity documents and to prepare documents to qualify for the minimum guaranteed income; child allowances; the social support canteen; and compensation for caring for people with disabilities. The project was called "Information in Your Community" and it also provided assistance in filling out applications for the relevant institutions. The County Police Inspectorate cooperated in this project by providing a list of people in need of identity documents. The process was interrupted in this phase, however, because the Association did not have enough resources to cover the taxes for issuing the documents.²³

Within a Phare project called "Children First", the Cluj County Directorate for Child Protection, through the Wonder Land Day Centre has supported 50 Roma children and 35 adults from Pata Rît in obtaining identity papers.²⁴ The foundations Wassdas,²⁵ Ecce Homo,²⁶ and Family Help (*Ajutorul Familiei*),²⁷ also supported numerous Roma

²² Phare RO 0004.02.02, Civil Society Development, Fund for Improvement of the Situation of Roma; the project received €67,000 in support from Phare. Interview with Radu Sabău, Inspector within the Control Directorate, Cluj Napoca City Hall, project coordinator for "Increasing Roma Access to Services Offered by Cluj Napoca City Hall", Cluj Napoca, 25 November 2003.

²³ Interview with Ioana Francisca Etves, President of AFER, Cluj Napoca.

²⁴ Interview with Claudiu Caulea, Director of the Wonder Land Day Centre for preschoolers, Cluj Napoca, 10 September 2003.

²⁵ Interview with Geza Otvos, President of Wassdas Foundation, Cluj Napoca, 18 September 2003.

²⁶ Interview with Flavia Irimie, Ecce Homo, social worker, Cluj Napoca, 9 December 2003.

²⁷ Interview with Ioana Szanday, Family Help, social worker, Cluj Napoca, 9 December 2003.

in obtaining identity documents, but this activity was accomplished with their own resources, and not as part of a project with public funding.

2.4 Health care

The identification of solutions for including all Roma in the health insurance system, for registering with the family doctor and for compensatory medicines, is probably the most important issue of the healthcare area of the Strategy. In the second half of 2003, the NGOs working in Roma communities from Cluj were still searching for concrete solutions to this issue. However, as result of the efforts of the County Directorate for Child Protection and Wonder Land Day Centre, 35 Roma children were registered with a family doctor.

Within a programme initiated by the Ministry of Healthcare and Family, the development of a system of health mediators within Roma communities is planned. In Cluj County, although four health mediators were trained, only one was hired within the Public Health Direction, at the Cluj Napoca Children's Hospital.²⁸ Medical personnel consider that the mediator activity is good but not sufficient, due to the fact that there is just one active mediator.²⁹ Two of the other trained mediators are students and may still have opportunities to work with Roma communities.³⁰

In Cluj Napoca, the Association for the Emancipation of Roma Women, in partnership with the Directorate for Public Healthcare and the Cluj branch of SECS, implemented a project called "Roma Women Choose Health" which aimed at improving access to information about family planning for Roma women in Cluj county. SECS trained 23 women from Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca, Răscruci, Bonțida and Gilău as family planning councillors.³¹ The councillors advised young Roma women in Cluj county on available resources at family-planning consulting centres, and assisted in the dissemination of Romani-language flyers containing information on contraception, access to public healthcare services and family planning.

²⁸ A programme for training health mediators carried out by Romani CRISS in partnership with the Ministry of Healthcare and Family.

²⁹ Interview with Filip Tarni, representative of the Directorate for Public Healthcare in the working group, Cluj Napoca, 18 July 2003.

³⁰ Interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 9 December 2003.

³¹ Phare RO 9803.01.011, Partnership Fund for Roma.

Contraceptives were also distributed free-of-charge, together with instructions for usage.³²

In Cluj County, a partnership between Association for Roma Women's Emancipation, the Romanian Cancer Society and the Ion Chiricuta Cancer Institute was established to implement a project aimed at cervical cancer screening for Roma women from the Cluj area. The project trained 11 Roma women as health mediators, and administered Pap tests to 1,500 Roma women from Cluj county. Through these examinations, women diagnosed with various conditions also received assistance in registering with a general practitioner to receive free treatment.

In Cluj county there have been no measures taken to create a system of home medical assistance for the Roma communities. There are no information programmes regarding maternal care that specifically address Roma communities.

The Directorate for Public Healthcare has initiated influenza and hepatitis B vaccination campaigns especially in the Pata Rît community; the Wasdas Foundation has acted as a mediator, helping the medical staff access the community. In December 2003, the Councillor for the Prefect on Roma affairs, together with the Assistant Councillor, initiated a vaccination campaign in the Roma community from Pata Rît; the Directorate for Public Healthcare provided vaccines and medical staff. The space for medical examinations and vaccination was provided by the Family Help foundation, and the assistant councillor for Roma affairs within the County Council, Amare Phrala organisation and the RSDP promoted the campaign in the community.³³

2.5 Economic initiatives

In 2002, the Amare Phrala Organisation developed the project "Qualification Courses" with financing from the Partnership Fund for Roma.³⁴ The beneficiaries of this project were 83 young Roma who benefited from qualification courses in 14 trades, including tailoring, PC operation, waiting tables, bartending, and hairdressing, for six months. The project was successful in part because this was the third such project the NGO has organised and this experience proved very useful. Good collaboration with a local trade school lowered the costs of the course, and an innovative solution to reduce dropouts – a contractual agreement obliging parents to pay if the child leaves – helped to maintain

³² Interview with Claudia Kovacs, Coordinator of the project "Roma Women Choose Health", Cluj Napoca, 7 October 2003.

³³ Phone interview with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 12 December 2003.

³⁴ Project Phare RO 9803.01.011, Partnership Fund for Roma Project.

attendance in the courses. The Amare Phrala Association attempted to collaborate with the County Agency for Professional Training and Occupation of Labour Force during the project, but the Agency had very limited availability and cooperation proved impossible.³⁵

Another local-level initiative in the field of Roma qualification/re-qualification was developed by the Community Development Agency Together with Phare funding. In Cluj Napoca, the Association for Roma Women Emancipation in partnership with the County Agency for Professional Training and Labour Force Occupation implemented the project, to support the integration of Roma on the labour market. Upon completing training qualification courses, 50 Roma obtained diplomas in trades where there is demand on the labour market.³⁶

The first Job Fair for Roma was organised at the county level on 9 May 2003 and was initiated by the Community Development Agency Together and organised by the County Agency for Professional Training and Labour Force Occupation. Seven Roma found work at the job fair.

As a result of the collaboration between the County Agency for Professional Training and Occupation and Cluj prefecture, 250 jobs were allocated for Roma at the level of Turda County Council, on the basis of the Law no. 76/2002 regarding the stimulation of the labour force.

There are no initiatives to train the staff of the County Agency for Professional Training and Occupation with regards to the employment of Roma, the services that the Agency offers are the same for all clients.³⁷ At the level of Cluj county, there are no programmes for supporting young Roma graduates in finding a job.

Implementation of the Strategy's goal to revive traditional handicrafts and trades is contingent upon Roma reaching the level of studies required under the law to practice their trades.³⁸ People who have not attained the necessary qualifications are not eligible for attend courses offered by the County Agency for Professional Training and Labour Force Occupation. NGOs, together with the County Agency, are to gather data on

³⁵ Interview with Doghi Pavel, President of Amare Phrala, Cluj-Napoca, 21 November 2003.

³⁶ Interview with Etves Francisca – AFER, local coordinator for the city of Cluj within the project "Facilitation of Access of Roma to the Labour Market", Cluj Napoca, 20 November 2003.

³⁷ Interview with Don Daniel, Director of CAPTOLF Cluj, member of the local working group, Cluj Napoca, 18 July 2003.

³⁸ Government Strategy, Master Plan of Measures, No. 56.

people in this situation, and on the basis of this survey organise qualification courses in collaboration with County School Inspectorate.³⁹

2.6 Justice and public order

Programmes for legal education and delinquency prevention that are carried out in state institutions or by NGOs do not target Roma communities. The only activities in this respect are sporadic meetings of the County Police Inspectorate with county Roma leaders. Local leaders and NGOs disseminate the information from these meetings in Roma communities. The access to justice of Roma is made more difficult by the lack of information in this field, and by poverty. The BJR has assisted Roma from the Pata Rîta area in acquiring identity documents, in collaboration with the police.

The Resource Center for Roma Communities has made efforts to inform Roma about certain laws as part of the “Defend Your Rights” programme, financed by Phare.⁴⁰ Romani CRISS Bucharest has developed monitoring, prevention and combating of all forms of discrimination against Roma in the county by hiring a local monitor on human rights between November 2001 and March 2003.

The Resource Center for Roma Communities also implemented a counselling project between March and September 2003, with funds from the European Roma Rights Center. The project offered legal counselling to Roma who had been discriminated against; one of the cases handled by the project was brought to the attention of the National Council for Combating Discrimination.⁴¹

Roma NGOs have expressed interest the future recruitment of Roma into the law enforcement services and the police force, and to this end they were requested to recommend eligible Roma for consideration.⁴²

No programmed addressing probation or social rehabilitation programmes in Cluj county have been adjusted for the specific needs of Roma in the criminal justice system, and the Ministry of Justice has not requested any proposals in this respect. There are Roma who receive counselling from the Office for Social Reintegration of the Cluj Court.

³⁹ Interview with Don Daniel, Director of CAPTOLF Cluj, member of the local working group, Cluj Napoca, 18 July 2003.

⁴⁰ Interview with Claudia Macaria, Coordinator of the project “Defend Your Rights”, Cluj Napoca, 10 December 2003.

⁴¹ Interview with Ursu Maria, Coordinator of the project “Monitoring of the Observance of Human Rights”, 10 December 2003.

⁴² Interview with Doghi Pavel, President of Amare Phrala, Cluj Napoca, 21 November 2003.

2.7 Child protection

At present, the County Directorate for Protection of the Children's Rights is not developing any programmes specifically for Roma children, due to the fact that the policy of the institution is not to discriminate on ethnic criteria.

The Directorate for Protection of Children's Rights has set up the Day Centre Wonder Land for pre-schoolers from Someşeni district and Pata Rîţ community. The school year 2001–2002 was the first year of operation and 10 Roma children from Pata Rîţ have finished their first kindergarten year following a curriculum designed to prepare them for primary school. Three of these children were assessed as having special educational needs and placed in special classes, while the others were placed in mainstream schools. However, most children from Pata Rîţ have not been able to register at the school nearest to their homes, so while some attend a technical school in the city centre, the others are attending special classes.⁴³

2.8 Education

According to the data of the County School Inspectorate, in the school year 2001–2002, 4,150 Roma pupils were registered in public schools and Romani language was introduced as an optional component in four schools, at the request of parents.

A collaboration protocol with Babeş-Bolyai University, representatives of Roma NGOs, and the BJR has been signed, as a result of which 28 places for Roma students have been allocated, as compared to the 20 initially proposed.

The County School Inspectorate has received Phare financing for a project entitled "Educational and Specific Integration Support for Roma Communities",⁴⁴ with a total budget of €423,225, €45,347 contributed by the Inspectorate. The goals of the project are to improve inclusion of Roma in the educational system through improving coordination among the relevant institutions and creating a more open and participatory school environment. The project targets eight schools in rural and urban areas, and will include both educational structural rehabilitation activities.

Increased attention will be given to segregation in the school system, such as in School no. 12 in the Someşeni district, which includes a day centre for Roma pupils that follows a special education curriculum. In 2003, first-grade children were not

⁴³ Interview with Claudiu Caulea, coordinator of the Wonder Land Day Centre for pre-schoolers, Cluj Napoca, 18 November 2003.

⁴⁴ Phare RO-0104.02: Access to education of disadvantaged groups, with a special focus on Roma.

integrated into mainstream classes, and indeed, the County School Inspectorate's strategy notes that "segregated schools seem to be institutional formulas within which it is not likely that any change will occur".⁴⁵ There has been little effort to include Roma civil society organisations in the process of school reform, although there are many local NGOs with relevant experience that could be useful partners with the Inspectorate.

The Industrial Chemistry School Group, in partnership with the Free Democratic Union of Roma in Turda developed a project that created a semi-residential setting to encourage Roma to continue their education at the high school and university level.⁴⁶ The project was initially funded through Phare, and continued with the costs of teachers' salaries covered by the County School Inspectorate.

The Association of Roma Gabor Wearing Hats in Romania developed a literacy and kindergarten integration project with Phare financing.⁴⁷ The project objective was combating illiteracy among Roma children and the integration of Roma children in kindergartens. The County School Inspectorate paid the wages of the two kindergarten teachers and searched for a space in which the activities could continue after the end of the project.

2.9 Culture and denominations

The only programme for the promotion of Romani culture and the creation of a positive image of Roma at the Cluj county level is "Amari Emisiunea", a monthly television broadcast of the local studio of the State television. Two Roma students have been working on the programme since December 2001, which was the initiative of the studio. In 2002, the Resource Center for Roma Communities pledged financial support for the programme, covering the wages for the cameraman and director, travelling expenses, and the cost of filming and materials. The broadcast covers ten counties in Transylvania and lasts for 15-20 minutes.⁴⁸

The Ministerial Commission for Roma of the Ministry of Culture and Denominations, in collaboration with the Roma Center for Public Policies Aven Amentza and the Cluj County Directorate for Culture, Denominations and National Patrimony, and with the support of the representatives of the National Council for

⁴⁵ County School Inspectorate, "The Strategy of assuring the access to education of disadvantaged groups, with a special focus on Roma", p. 33.

⁴⁶ Phare RO 0004.02.02, Fund for Improvement of the Situation of Roma.

⁴⁷ Phare RO 0004.02.02, Fund for Improvement of the Situation of Roma.

⁴⁸ Interview with Zita Moldovan, broadcast director, Cluj Napoca, 5 November 2003.

Combating Discrimination, organised a “Caravan for Intercultural Education and Revitalisation of the Roma Culture” in February 2002 and April 2003. At the local level, this event received support from the Romano Suno Roma Students Association. The event focused on identifying solutions for collaboration at the local level between Roma organisations and local bodies of the ministries in Strategy implementation.

2.10 Public participation

There are many active Roma organisations in Cluj county, in comparison to other counties.⁴⁹ These include the Wasdas Foundation for Socio-Educational Support of Roma in Cluj Napoca; the Amare Phrala Association in Cluj Napoca; the Romano Suno Roma Students Association in Cluj Napoca; the Ramses Foundation for Social Development of Roma in Dej; the Association of Roma Gabor Wearing Hats in Cluj Napoca; and The Resource Center for Roma Communities, a member of the Soros Open Network.

At the Cluj county level, there are nine Roma councillors, of whom five were elected from the RSDP and four from the Cluj branch of the Alliance for Roma Unity, the two organisations that are politically active at the Cluj county level.⁵⁰

The RSDP branch from Cluj is not legally registered, which, given the high level of centralised decision making, contributes to a lack of transparency. There have been ongoing conflicts between local RSDP leaders and local representatives of other politically oriented Roma organisations. This impedes the resolution of issues confronting Roma communities and does not contribute to improving their public image.

2.11 Communication and civic participation

Local representatives of Roma NGOs are not aware of the existence of any programmes for combating discrimination in the media or for combating discrimination in the field of employment.⁵¹ Most discrimination cases against Roma were brought to public

⁴⁹ Interview with Florin Moisă, Resource Center for Roma Communities, Cluj Napoca, 15 September 2003.

⁵⁰ Interviews with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Cluj-Napoca, 13 October 2003; Doghi Pavel, President of Amare Phrala, Cluj Napoca, 21 November 2003.

⁵¹ Interviews with Titi Marius, councillor for the prefect on Roma affairs, Etves Francisca – president of AFER, Cluj Napoca, 20 November 2003, Geza Otvos, President of the Wasdas Foundation, Cluj Napoca, 18 September 2003, Doghi Pavel, President of Amare Phrala, Cluj Napoca, 21 November 2003.

attention through the media. Although the representation of Roma in the media is often negative, quite frequently the media also presents more objective reflections on crisis situations in local communities.⁵²

At the initiative of the Wassdas Foundation for Socio-Educational Support of the Roma, Roma NGOs started to have weekly meetings in order to discuss current issues and adopt the best solutions. The Ramses Foundation from Dej is developing a project for the promotion of communication between Roma communities and local public administration.⁵³ Within this project, there are activities for improving communication with public institutions and instruction for local joint working groups from Cluj, Bistrița-Năsăud, Sălaj, Maramureș and Bihor counties.

⁵² Interview with Doghi Pavel, President of Amare Phrala, Cluj Napoca, 21 November 2003.

⁵³ Phare project RO 0004.02.02, Development of Civil Society 2000.