



TiPSE

The **T**erritorial **D**imension of **P**overty and **S**ocial **E**xclusion in Europe

Applied Research 2013/1/24

Final Report

Annex 4 | Appendix 8

Case Study Report

BANSKÁ BYSTRICA, SLOVAKIA

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February 2014

This report is one of the deliverables of the TIPSE project. This Applied Research Project is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The partnership behind the ESPON Programme consists of the EU Commission and the Member States of the EU27, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Each partner is represented in the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

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ISBN number – 987-2-919777-42-6

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The ESPON TiPSE Project:

The TiPSE project has been commissioned by the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) programme. It is concerned with the issue of poverty, and processes of social exclusion in Europe.

One of the key challenges for the EU, in its pursuit of social, economic and territorial cohesion, is to address regional or local concentrations of poverty and social exclusion. In terms of practical governance, this remains a national responsibility within the context of EU strategic guidance. In practice, regional or local administrations are often in 'the front line'; implementing national policies to ameliorate deprivation and exclusion. At a higher level, the EU defines its role as identifying best practices and promoting mutual learning.

Poverty and social exclusion are essentially relative concepts, arguably only meaningful within a specified geographical context. This underlines the essential roles to be played by observation, measurement, and careful data analysis, as preparations for intervention. The TiPSE project aims to support policy, both by enhancing the evidence base and by identifying existing good practice.

A central objective of the TiPSE project is to establish macro and micro-scale patterns of poverty and social exclusion across the ESPON space. This will be achieved by compiling a regional database, and associated maps, of poverty and social exclusion indicators. Such quantitative analysis of geographical patterns is considered a fundamental part of the evidence base for policy.

In addition, in order to better understand the various social and institutional processes which are the context of these patterns, a set of ten case studies are to be carried out. These will be more qualitative in approach, in order to convey holistic portraits of different kinds of poverty and social exclusion as experienced in a wide variety of European territorial contexts. The principal goal for these investigations will be to bring forward clear illustrations of the social, economic, institutional and spatial processes which lead to poverty and social exclusion in particular geographic contexts.

The selection of case study areas has been carried out with careful regard to the wide variety of geographic, cultural and policy contexts which characterise Europe. The ten case studies are also intended to highlight a range of different 'drivers' of poverty and social exclusion, including labour market conditions, educational disadvantage, ethnicity, poor access to services and urban segregation processes. A second objective of the case studies will be to identify policy approaches which can effectively tackle exclusion, and thus strengthen territorial cohesion.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EE-NMS	–	East European New Member States of the European Union
ESPON CU	–	ESPON Coordination Unit
EU27	–	The 27 member states of the European Union
FRA	–	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
GVA	–	Gross Value Added
NACE Rev. 2	–	European Classification of Economic Activities (2 nd revision)
NUTS	–	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NGO	–	Non Governmental Organisation
OSI	–	Open Society Institute
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Program
WB	–	World Bank

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Executive summary

The present case study provides a broad picture on the state of poverty and social exclusion in the Slovak Republic pointing to some of the causes and consequences that do influence the territorially divergent appearance of these phenomena. Banská Bystrica, one of the southern NUTS3 regions of Central Slovakia represented the spatial focus of the investigation, more closely the district of Rimavská Sobota and two villages subsumed under this LAU1 unit, whilst residential and educational segregation of Romany people represented the thematic focus of the study.

Statistics and survey data suggest a relatively high level of wealth in Slovakia as compared to fellow post-socialist countries, evidenced by the rate of the population that managed to avoid poverty or social exclusion. The rate of neither poor nor excluded members of the population in the Slovak Republic (79.4%) is higher than the EU average (75.9%), well above the EU-12 (69.6%) and almost reaches the two most developed post-socialist countries, Slovenia and the Czech Republic, which have somewhat better rates (80.7% and 84.7% respectively). Compared to 2005, Slovakia got ahead of its main competitors, Estonia and Hungary, two countries that have been hit harder by the 2008-2009 crisis. However, poverty and social exclusion do exist in Slovakia to a significant extent, but with specificities, namely, in a geographically and socially (ethnically) concentrated (multiplied) manner. A solid structural crisis has been prevailing in Slovakia impacting mainly the southern regions from Nitra via Banská Bystrica towards Prešov and Košice: 80% of those who have been job seekers for longer than 3 years were registered in these four NUTS3 regions in 2012. The highest rate of very longterm job seekers was measured in the researched NUTS3 region of Banská Bystrica (31%) whilst this rate was 27% in the regions of Prešov and Košice. This solid structural crisis has been the main cause of spreading poverty and social exclusion hitting Romany people the most.

Data on educational attainment also show some Slovakian specificity. The first issue that needs to be highlighted is the extremely low rate of preschool enrolment of Roma children and non-Roma alike, but especially Roma: only one quarter of Roma children from segregated neighbourhoods were enrolled into preschools in 2011. According to our field research findings, this has to do with several factors, such as fees (though removed recently in the case of children of age five), lacking preschool capacities and finally, the location of the segregated Roma settlements: according to the recent Atlas of Roma, only a quarter of the population of the Roma neighbourhoods live inside the administrative boundaries of villages/towns, the majority live at the edge (44%) or outside municipality boundaries at 0.9 to 7 km distance (32%). If public transportation is available, it is costly, and if it is not available, it is simply impossible for most of the families to carry a child (or more children) to the kindergarten.

According to the survey data, 90% of Roma who live in segregated neighbourhoods suffer from material deprivation, 80% from severe material deprivation and 87% of

them fell under the poverty threshold in 2011. The gap between Roma and non-Roma was significant; the rate of deprived or poor was almost two times higher in the ranks of the Roma, one third of those who lacked access to secure housing and the majority of whom (91%) lived in financial insecurity. Like in Hungary, the majority of Roma would prefer living dispersed among non-Roma (72%), but their wish is refused completely by the latter group.

In the empirical phase of the research thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with village officials, parents, representatives of NGOs engaged in developing projects, preschool leaders, principals of ordinary and special schools in two villages (one Hungarian and one Slovak) and a Roma only school in the district centre of Rimavská Sobota. Principals of secondary schools were interviewed in Rimavská Sobota Tornaľa and Hnúšť'a and representatives of town officials working in the areas of social services and education. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts of Roma issues at national level to unfold policy measures affecting education and social integration.

Severe disadvantages of Roma children were identified in each primary school. Circumstances were obviously the best in the school of Klenovec, as the rate of Roma children was below 50% and most of them had consolidated family background. Pupils living in the segregated Roma settlement of Klenovec were as problematic as their counterparts in the Village of Rimavská Seč and at the ghetto school of the (urban) segregated neighbourhood of Rimavská Sobota. Low motivation of children as a rule, declining performance in upper grades, low number of pupils who continue in secondary education and even fewer who graduate; these are the common traits of accounts. At secondary level, vocational schools perform high dropout rates, especially in case of girls. Contrarily, Roma children in gymnasiums work hard and manage to graduate; however, their number is significantly lower than in vocational schools. Free breakfast is not available among benefits, therefore hungry child and poor clothing is an everyday experience in these schools, especially in lower classes.

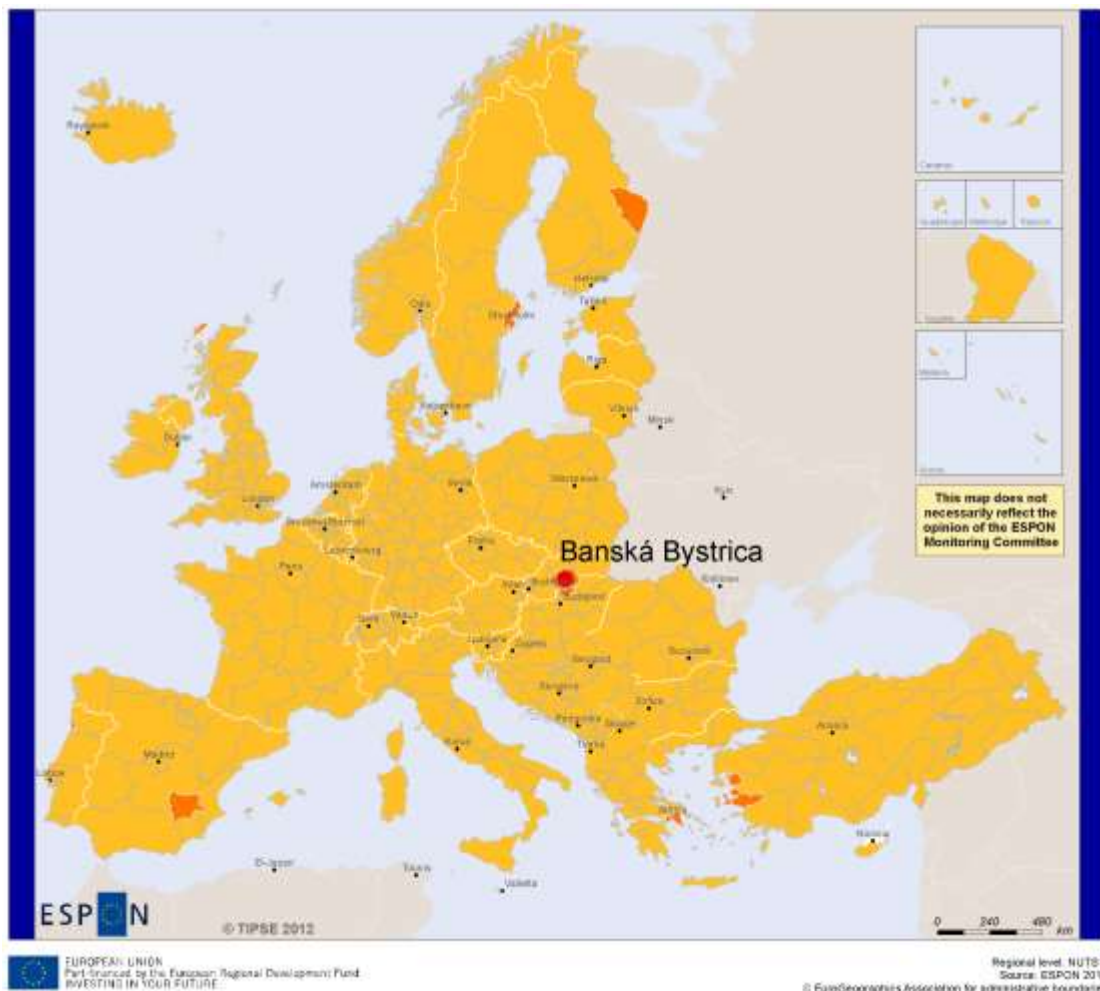
Disadvantages are rarely mitigated by preschool and afternoon school attendance: though they have to pay half price (2 Euros in 2013), the most vulnerable households with seven to eight children cannot afford paying this fee. Usually half of the children cannot pass the readiness test, thus they start their school tenure in grade zero and they continue in special class or special school ending up at best in special secondary schools. Special schools were available in each researched settlement and packed exclusively with Roma students. In ordinary classes, only few children are motivated at home and if they are, not for long enough. Most of them have difficulties with maths as well as with comprehending texts: they progress much slower than their fellow pupils of non-Roma background. Teaching languages is also a mistake in Roma-only schools of Hungarian teaching: these pupils are challenged and overburdened by the seven Hungarian and five Slovakian classes each week (in the 3rd and 4th grades). Therefore, most of them underperform and, from the ghetto school of Rimavská Sobota, only an average of five to six children can continue to an ordinary school once they finish the 4th grade there, while the rest continue to the special school located in the town or special classes in one of the primary schools.

There are important and effective social policy tools against the consequences of poverty (free meals and free equipment for the needy) and segregation like teacher assistants at school and field social workers at segregated neighbourhoods: the latter, field social worker as a thin path between segregated settlements and the outside world is not so common in the region, therefore experiences could be shared among social policy experts and practitioners. An area based so called “Comprehensive Approach” Program aiming communities with significant Roma population was also launched first in 2002, then in 2007, but for a number of reasons it practically failed.

Desegregation policies drafted in the Strategy for Integration of Roma (2012) do address the participation rate of Roma children at preschool and the parallel system of education but nothing yet come to force until 2013. What is more, worrisome new language and new tone appeared in the declaration of the current Plenipotentiary of the Slovakian Government for Roma Communities called Ten Basic Pillars. Although there are overlaps between the two chief documents, the Strategy for Integration of Roma, on the one hand, and the declaration of the Plenipotentiary, on the other hand, the conformity of the latter to EU principles / laws is highly questionable (see Annex 4)

1 The regional context

Banskobystrický kraj (hereinafter Banská Bystrica) is situated in Stredné Slovensko (hereinafter Central Slovakia) next to the Hungarian border of the country. Since the reform of territorial administration in 1996 the NUTS3 unit also forms a government unit named “kraj” (region), which is the highest-level administrative unit in the Slovak Republic. Banská Bystrica and its north neighbour Žilinský kraj (hereinafter Žilina) together constitute Central Slovakia NUTS2 statistical region. As a result of its central position within Slovakia Banská Bystrica has several neighbours. Beside Žilina it is contiguous to Trenčiansky kraj, (hereinafter Trenčín) Nitriansky kraj (hereinafter Nitra), Prešovský kraj (hereinafter Prešov) and Košický kraj (hereinafter Košice). Originally Banská Bystrica was only established in 1923; however, the traditional economic profile and history of the area still have their influence on the present social and economic conditions of the region.



Map 1: Banská Bystrica in the context of the ESPON space

The economic profile of Banská Bystrica has always been determined by primary and extractive industries such as forestry and logging, mining or manufacturing non-metallic mineral products (cement etc.). In the socialist era Slovakia came close to the economic development level of Czech Republic (within the common state, Czechoslovakia) due to the great investments of the socialist industry. However, it could not become the lasting mover of the economy as heavy and modern industry was lacking in strong roots in the area, causing structural disproportions with their negative effects. After the political change of regime and with the socio-economic transition of the early nineties Banská Bystrica – along with several other regions of Slovakia – got into a deep structural crisis. Traditional economic branches in the area like mining and agriculture lost importance while branches of socialist industry collapsed, causing the high rise of unemployment. Banská Bystrica nowadays is still one of the Slovak regions affected by unemployment and the southern part of the region (Rimavská Sobota and its surroundings) is said to be one of the poorest areas of the country.

The position of the region, its geographical characteristics and the potential connections with other areas also influence the socio-economic factors of Banská Bystrica. It can be demonstrated through the presentation of some ESPON CU regional typologies. As being situated in the middle of the continental Europe Banská Bystrica is not covered by the classification of the coastal or the island typology. Similarly to all other regions of Slovakia Banská Bystrica is also contiguous to other countries. The Slovakian-Hungarian border is an internal border of the EU and as other borders, it can be traversed without limitations. At the same time the potential connections between these contiguous parts of Slovakia and Hungary are under-utilized, with the exceptions of the vicinity of the largest urban centres. The “border-effect” yet seems to generate here more disadvantages than advantages. However, in addition to border-effect, two other characteristics of the region might generate relative detriments: on the one hand, Banská Bystrica is situated quite far from the biggest economic centres of the country (Bratislava in the west, Košice and Prešov in the east), while tensions stemming from the high rate of inhabitants belonging to the Hungarian or Roma minority, on the other. The latter, as well as that of the closeness of the border could be exploited for mutual benefits of both sides, that happens time-to-time in a number of fields, but large infrastructural investments, particularly in relation to development of road and rail networks as well as industrial regeneration are yet to be brought about.

Table 1: Different ESPON CU typologies of Banská Bystrica, 2009

Coastal typology	Area not covered by classification
Island typology	Not an island region
Metropolitan typology	Not a metropolitan region
Border typology	Internal border region
Mountain typology	Predominantly mountainous region, close to a city
Industrial transition typology	Region with industrial branches losing importance
Urban-rural typology	Predominantly rural region, close to a city

Source: ESPON CU

The accessibility of Banská Bystrica, the settlement structure and many factors of economic activity of the region are highly influenced by its geographical characteristics. The region is a predominantly mountainous area. There are several mountain ranges in Banská Bystrica such as the Low Tatras in the north, Kremnica Mountains, Vtáčnik and Štiavnica Mountains in the west and the Slovak Ore Mountains which are situated in the central and eastern part of the region. The mountains of Banská Bystrica were once the main sources of European gold and other rare metal ores and later e.g. in the 19th century mining was still a traditional and dominant economic activity in the area, but now the formerly prospering mining towns are in decay.



Map 2: Corine land cover typology of Banská Bystrica, 2006

Beside materials for mining, mountains can provide various natural resources for economic activities, so Banská Bystrica is an ideal land for forestry. The wood coverage in Slovakia is above 40%, and as the central regions of the country are prevalently mountainous, this ratio is even higher in Banská Bystrica. The most elevated mountains in the north are rising to 2000 metres and they are covered with coniferous forests, while the lower mountains in the other parts of the region are mainly covered with mixed and broad-leaved forests. Beside this type of vegetation the more intensive forms of agricultural activity (arable land for stock-raising and plant growing) are only possible on lower reliefs like wider river valleys (Hron, Ipel' or Rimava) and basins (Southern Slovak Basin). These areas are also the locations of bigger settlements with continuous urban fabric.

Banská Bystrica is not a metropolitan region according to ESPON typologies. Its population is above 650 thousand inhabitants which is average among the regions of Slovakia, but the area is a predominantly rural region, though close to a city. The most populated settlement in the area is Banská Bystrica, the seat of the region, which is the 6th biggest town in Slovakia with its population of 80 thousand inhabitants. Other notable towns are Zvolen (43 thousand inhabitants), Lučenec (28 thousand inhabitants), Rimavská Sobota (24 thousand inhabitants) and Brezno (22 thousand inhabitants). With the loosing importance of traditional (logging, mining) and socialist industrial branches these settlements nowadays are mostly administrative and service centres, which – due to their rich cultural heritage (especially Banská Bystrica and Zvolen) – are also frequented targets of tourism. The mountainous character of the region provides good possibilities for mountain tourism too: the most frequented Slovakian ski resorts are also located in Banská Bystrica (or closeby).

One of the unfavourable consequences of mountainous character of Banská Bystrica is the bad accessibility of the region. However the area is situated geographically in the middle part of Slovakia, simultaneously it is a remote region in relation to other parts of the country. The (mountainous) physical relief limits the access of the region; only some river valleys provide enough space for main routes traversing higher mountains which separates Banská Bystrica from the neighbouring regions. That also limits intraregional circulation possibilities as – depending on the characteristics of geographical relief – longitudinal or transversal route connections can be lacking. The main routes in the region cross each other in Zvolen: the one from south to north is an important linkage between South and North Slovakia (and also constitutes the most direct connection between Hungary and Poland); the other from west to east is the part of main transversal route between the western and the eastern parts of the country (and also between the two big cities, Bratislava and Košice). This latter transversal route in Slovakia is otherwise less significant than the other (northern) transversal one, situated between the Low and the High Tatras. The only motorway of the region links Banská Bystrica and Zvolen and it is continued towards the western part of Slovakia, making the linkage between Banská Bystrica and Bratislava, the capital city of the country. The accessibility situation of the region is potentially improvable because there is an airport with international flights in the area, in Sliach (between Banská Bystrica and Zvolen).

The area of Banská Bystrica (9,500 km²) is far the biggest among the Slovak regions, while it is moderately populated due to (among others) the mountainous character of

the NUTS3 unit. Therefore, the population density of the region is the lowest within the country. Despite its unfavourable economic characteristics, the region has not had to face with significant outmigration and population loss in the past decades. Its population is constantly above 650 thousand inhabitants and the major towns hold the number of their inhabitants for years. Only the seat of the region, Banská Bystrica has suffered notable population loss in the past ten years (~5,000 persons); however this phenomenon is related more to suburbanization rather than to outmigration or natural population loss.

Table 2: Demographic and labour market characteristics

	Banská Bystrica (SK032)	Central Slovakia (SK03)	Slovakia	EE-NMS*	EU27
Population (2010)¹, person	653186	1350688	5424925	102.1 M	501.1 M
Population density (2010)², person/km²	69.0	83.0	110.7	96.2	116.6
% aged <15 (2009)¹	14.9	15.7	15.4	14.9	15.6
% aged 65+ (2009)¹	12.7	12.0	12.1	14.7	17.2
Economic Activity Rate (2009)³, %	57.3	57.3	58.9	n/a	57.6
Employment Rate (2009)⁴, %	46.5	48.9	51.8	n/a	50.5
Unemployment rate (2009)⁵, %	18.8	14.6	12.1	n/a	8.9
Long-term Unemployment rate (2009)⁶, %	n/a	8.8	6.5	n/a	3.0

Sources:

1. Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [demo_r_pjanaggr3]
2. Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [demo_r_d3dens]
3. Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [fst_r_lfp3pop]; SO SR, Regional Statistics Database
4. Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [fst_r_lfp3pop, fst_r_lfu3pers]; SO SR, Regional Statistics Database
5. Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [fst_r_lfu3pers]; SO SR, Regional Statistics Database
6. Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [fst_r_lfu2ltu]

* East European New Member States of the European Union (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria)

Moreover, the number of live birth increases again year by year in the region and the actual value of it is close to that of mid-nineties. Despite this tendency the demographic structure of Banská Bystrica is quite unbalanced. The ratio of young age groups (aged <15) is lower than the Slovakian average and it is significantly lower than that of the Žilina. At the same time the ratio of elderly people (aged 65+) in the area is quite high as compared to other Slovakian regions. Consequently, the proportion of the actual and the potential working age groups is relatively low underpinning some unfavourable labour market characteristics in the region.

Beside these demographical characteristics labour market conditions of Banská Bystrica compose another factor of the generally unfavourable social situation in the region. Activity rates of the area can be described as average in rural Slovakia: the higher country average of regional activity rates is pushed by Bratislava and West Slovakia. The labour market disorders, however, can be better illustrated by em-

ployment and unemployment rates of the area. The employment rate is notably lower both in Banská Bystrica and the Central Slovakian NUTS2 unit than in Slovakia itself, not reaching even 50%, and much lower in case of the former one. Unemployment figures show that nowadays Banská Bystrica is among the most badly affected regions in Slovakia where – in contrast with the similarly disadvantaged East Slovakian regions no significant decrease of unemployment rates has been taken place recently. Long-term unemployment rates are quite high in the wider region (Central Slovakia) that also underpins the labour market problems of structural origin in the area.

The economic performance of Banská Bystrica is the lowest (beside that of Prešov) among the NUTS3 units in Slovakia. The total GDP volume of the region does not reach the 10% of Slovakian GDP, while its share of population is above 12%. It also means that the 8500 € per capita GDP of Banská Bystrica reaching only the 75% of the country average is the second lowest followed by Prešov (6,800 € per inhabitant). However, these figures are not so bad in international comparison. It is true that the GDP per inhabitant value of the region in percentage of the EU average is only 36%, but it is higher than the average relative economic performance of the East European new member states of the European Union. Thus the per capita GDP of Banská Bystrica is well ahead of the disadvantaged regions of Bulgaria, Romania, Poland or Hungary.

Table 3: GDP indicators, 2009

	Banská Bystrica (SK032)	Central Slovakia (SK03)	Slovakia	EE-NMS	EU27
Millions of euro	5540	12529	62794	853588	11751419
Euro per inhabitant	8500	9300	11600	8350	23500
Euro per inhabitant in percentage of the EU average	36.0	39.0	49.0	35.5	100

Source: Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [nama_r_e3gdp]

Considering the long-term development of economic performance of the Slovakian (NUTS3) regions, Banská Bystrica is among the stagnating or the lagging ones. The economic development and the catching up (e.g. to the European average GDP per inhabitant value) of Slovakian regions were almost continuous in the past decades, but in this process the growth rate of Banská Bystrica lagged behind several others. Some regions in Slovakia had originally better positions for economic development, like Bratislava with its great economic weight and functional diversity or Trnava which is close both to the capital city of Slovakia and the western borders of the country. However, many others (Nitra, Žilina, Trenčín, Košice) with previously similar starting positions in relative economic performance than Banská Bystrica, have managed to catch up to the ranks of prosperous regions in the last two decades due to (for example) their successful industrial transition.

Table 4: Economic activity by sector (%), 2009

NACE Rev. 2 Category		Banská Bystrica (SK032)	Central Slovakia (SK03)	Slovakia	EE-NMS	EU27
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5.2	3.7	3.4	14.6	3.4
B-E	Industry (excl. construction)	22.6	25.3	24.0	22.7	24.0
C	Manufacturing	20.3	23.1	21.7	19.7	21.7
F	Construction	7.7	9.6	8.5	8.2	8.5
G-I	Wholesale, retail, transport, accomm., food services	27.0	26.9	27.1	22.8	27.1
J	Information and communication	1.8	1.8	2.3	2.0	2.3
K	Financial and insurance	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.9	1.9
L	Real estate	0.7	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0
M-N	Professional, scientific, admin. and support	6.6	6.1	8.6	5.9	8.6
O-Q	Public admin., defence, education, health and social work	24.2	22.1	20.5	17.9	20.5
R-U	Arts, entertainment, recreation	2.7	2.6	2.6	3.1	2.6

Source: Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [nama_r_e3em95r2]

Regarding the sectorial distribution of economic activity industry (manufacturing) (NACE B-E), wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation etc. services (NACE G-I) and public administration, education, health etc. (NACE O-Q) dominate in Banská Bystrica. However, it is almost the same situation in other regions in East Europe. It is more expressive to see the deviance of sectorial employment ratios considering Banská Bystrica, Slovakia and the EU27. The share of agriculture and forestry is yet rather high in the region due to the exploitation of the extended forests in the area, whilst the role of public services (administration, health, education etc.) in employment is much higher than the country or the European Union average. In contrast, the share of industrial sectors as well as that of the creative sectors (information, communication, finance, real estate, and science etc. – NACE J-N) are relatively low in Banská Bystrica, whilst the role of personal services in employment reaches the same level as of Slovakia or the EU27.

Table 5: Gross value added by sector and per head, 2009

		Banská Bystrica (SK032)	Central Slovakia (SK03)	SK	Banská Bystrica (SK032)	Central Slovakia (SK03)	SK
NACE Rev. 2 Category		GVA per head of working age population (thousand €)			Share of GVA by sector (%)		
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	31.7	27.5	25.4	7.6	4.6	3.4
B-E	Industry (excl. construction)	19.7	20.8	26.4	20.7	23.5	24.5
C	Manufacturing	18.8	18.9	21.3	17.7	19.5	17.8
F	Construction	26.7	30.2	30.1	9.5	12.9	9.9
G-I	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation, food services	17.6	17.6	21.1	22.0	21.1	22.0
J	Information and communication	61.1	59.5	53.5	5.1	4.8	4.8
K	Financial and insurance	50.4	57.6	53.3	3.3	3.3	3.8
L	Real estate	182.6	213.4	175.7	6.2	5.8	6.6
M-N	Professional, scientific, admin. and support	24.3	25.4	23.0	7.5	7.0	7.6
O-Q	Public admin., defence, education, health and social work	13.9	14.4	17.9	15.6	14.2	14.2
R-U	Arts, entertainment, recreation	20.0	24.6	31.0	2.5	2.9	3.2
	Total - All NACE activities	21.6	22.4	25.9	100	100	100

Source: Eurostat Database, Regional Statistics (Reg) Table [nama_r_e3vab95r2]

The figures of economic activity by sectors confirm the assertion about the economic structural problems of Banská Bystrica. The weight of those sectors which have the highest share in employment is also the biggest in the gross value added of economic production but unfortunately these are also the least productive sectors. GVA per head of working age population is quite low in the sectors of public and personal services in the region and it is even lower regarding industry – in comparison with the national average. The productivity of the agricultural activity (mainly forestry) and creative sectors is at average in country comparison or higher, these industries contribute much more to the economic production of the region than their share in sectorial employment ratios.

Table 6: Different poverty measures, 2011

	Banskobystrický kraj (SK032)	Stredné Slovensko (SK03)	Slovakia	EU27
At-risk-of-poverty rate, %¹	15.3	13.1	13.0	-
People living in households with very low work intensity, %²	-	7.5	7.6	10.2
Severe material deprivation rate, %²	-	10.7	10.6	8.8
Average disposable equivalised household income, € per month¹	558.4	582.9	581.6	-

Source:

1. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Regional Statistics Database
2. Data from Eurostat Database, Income and Living Conditions (ilc) Table [ilc_lvhl11, ilc_mddd11]

The above mentioned economic profile, demographic and labour force trends all indicate and also explain why Banská Bystrica is lagging behind and usually ranked as the second poorest region of the country. Poverty measurements of course indicate similar territorial imbalances. Measurements, like *people living in households with very low work intensity* or *severe material deprivation rate* only provide information on NUTS2 level of Central Slovakia where the value of these indicators reaches the country average. However, NUTS2 level figures obscure the inner inequalities, namely, the more prosperous Žilina 'compensates' for Banská Bystrica's unfavourable positions. The average disposable income of households is the fourth lowest in Slovakia at Banská Bystrica after Nitriansky, Prešovský and Košices and that of at-risk-of-poverty rate is the second highest (after Prešov) in Slovakia. Notwithstanding that these values are not outstanding in European comparison; the severity of the problem is unquestionable due to the high spatial concentration of the phenomenon. Comparing to other areas of the country the spatial concentration of impoverished municipalities and districts is extremely high in Banská Bystrica, particularly at the southern part of the region bordering Hungary in the town of Rimavská Sobota and its surroundings.

2 Characteristics of social exclusion and poverty: Patterns and processes

2.1 Enriching the general picture on poverty and social exclusion in Slovakia and its regions

2.1.1 At risk of poverty in age groups, households and in the regions

To make further use of Eurostat and Slovak statistics and try to gain a clearer picture of poverty and social exclusion in Slovakia, a European comparison and a comparison to the block of post-socialist countries will be provided first. As it was pointed out above, most indicators of poverty are not outstanding as compared to either group of countries, thanks to Slovakia's relative success in attracting investments during the course of the first decade of the 21st century. This helped the country overcome the economic difficulties of the 1990s having stemmed from the collapse of the socialist industries and also managed to prevent to some extent the full impact of the crisis. The relatively high level of wealth reached by Slovakia as compared to fellow post-socialist countries, evidenced by the rate of the population that managed to avoid poverty or social exclusion, is indicated by the graph below. The graph shows that the rate of neither poor nor excluded members of the population in the Slovak republic (79.4%) is higher than the EU average (75.9%), well above the EU-12 (69.6%) and almost reaches the two most developed post-socialist countries, Slovenia and the Czech Republic, which have somewhat better rates (80.7% and 84.7% respectively). Compared to 2005, Slovakia got ahead of its main competitors, Estonia and Hungary, two countries that have been hit harder by the 2008-2009 crisis.

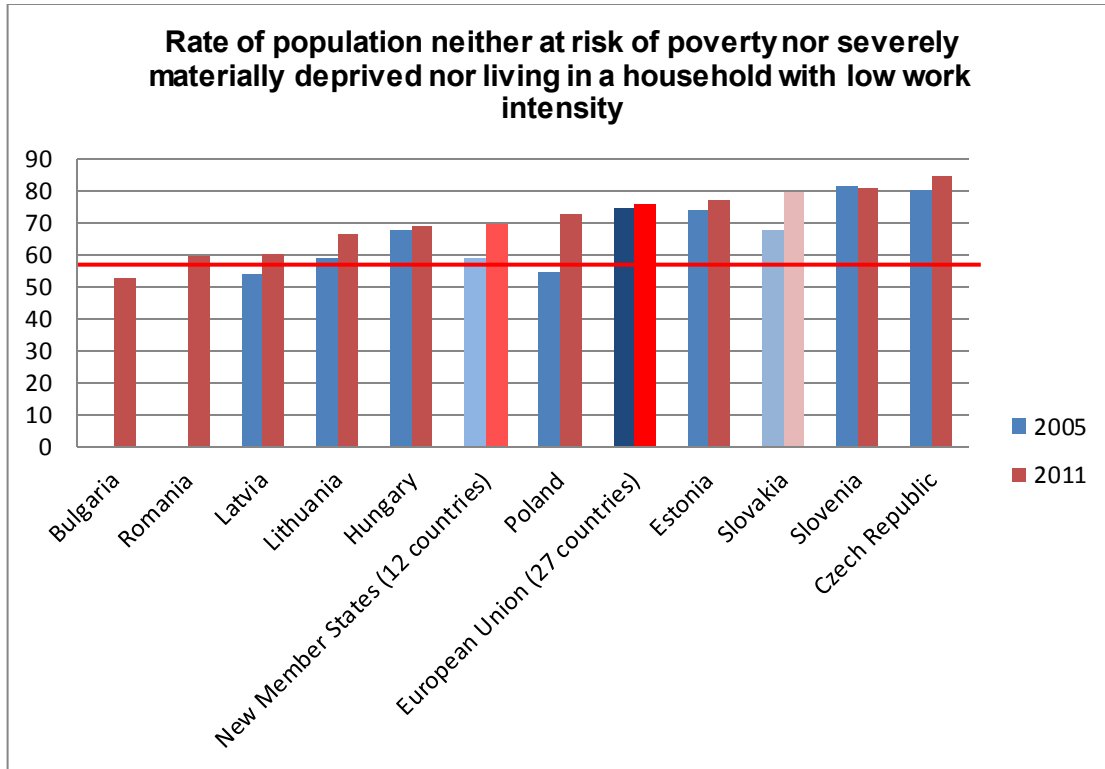


Figure 1: Portion of the population neither at risk of poverty, nor deprived severely, nor living in a household with low work intensity, 2011

Source: Eurostat database, Social participation statistics, Material deprivation and low work intensity statistics, Intersections of Europe 2020 Poverty Target Indicators by income quintile [ilc_pees03]

However, poverty and social exclusion do exist in Slovakia to a significant extent, but with specificities, namely, *in a geographically and socially (ethnically) concentrated (multiplied) manner*. If we reverse our point of investigation and consider the rate of those who were hit by poverty, i.e. severe material deprivation as well as social exclusion, the position of the Slovak Republic is by far the worst compared to Slovenia or the Czech Republic, though still much better than Bulgaria, the poor countries of the Baltic states, Hungary and Croatia.

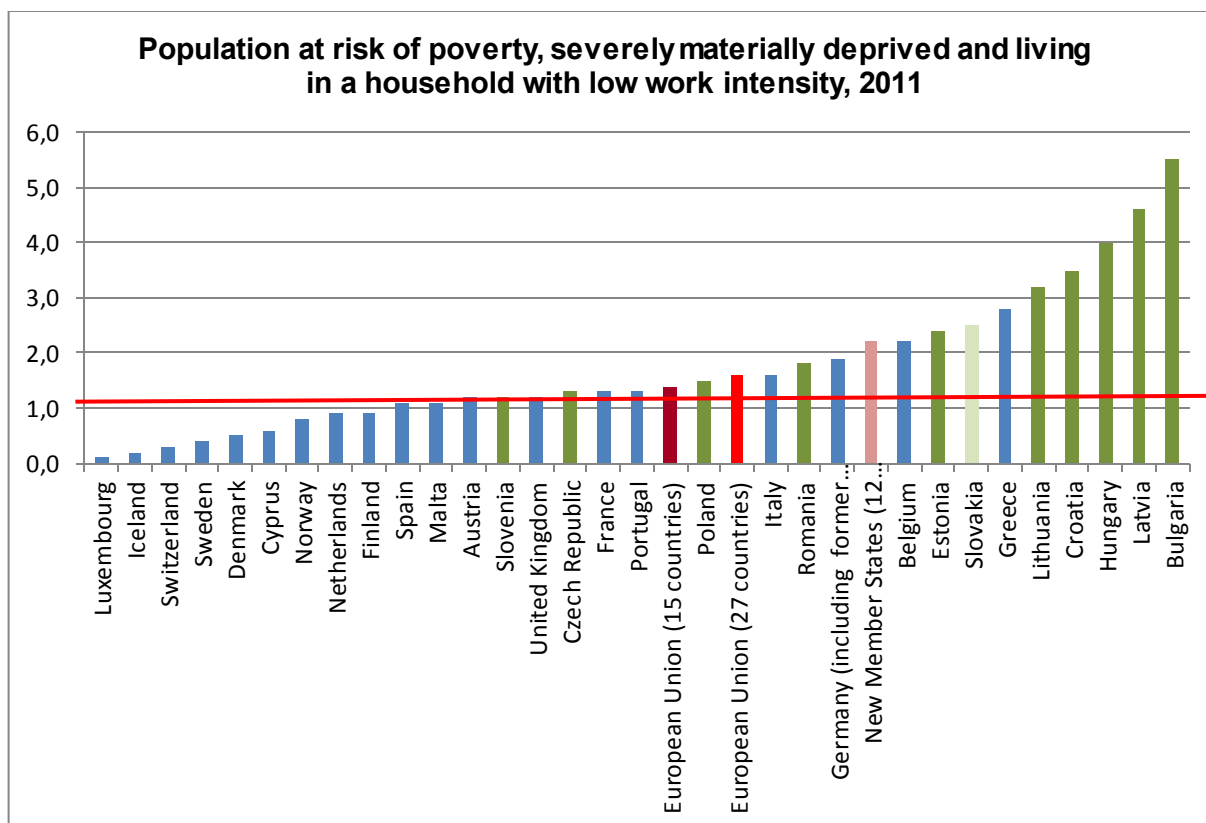


Figure 2: Portion of population at risk of poverty, severely materially deprived and living in a household with low work intensity, 2011

Source: Eurostat database, Social participation statistics, Material deprivation and low work intensity statistics, Intersections of Europe 2020 Poverty Target Indicators by income quintile [ilc_pees03]

The identified components of poverty generating material deprivation and social exclusion that do overlap – in line with EU tendencies – are as follows:

- Unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, resulting in low work intensity rate or no work at all.
- Age structure.
- Household composition: being single, especially with children (lone parents), households with more than 3 children.

The quoted volume relies on the EU SILC survey, which identified the highly significant impact of unemployment on the level of poverty risk: while as little as 6.2% of working people over 18 years of age (excepting students 18 to 24) fell under the 60% of the equalised median income, almost half of the unemployed (44.6%) fell to the group of the relatively poor. (Vlačuha – Kováčová 2013, p. 10)

The role of household structures is also significant. The rate of the risk of poverty after social transfers was almost two times higher in 2012 than the country average (13.2%) in households of single adults less than 65 years of age (24.1%), whilst the rate was more than twice the country average in households of adult single parents and peaked at 35.1% in the case of households with three or more children. (Source: Vlačuha – Kováčová, 2013, p. 9)

The above mentioned figures reflected poverty rates after social transfers. Age, however, illustrates the extremely high equalising effects of social transfers in the case of certain age groups, notably the portion of the population over 65 years of age.

“...at-risk-of-poverty rate before all social transfers in this group of the population ... [was] more than eight times higher than it was in the case of the same age group of the population after taking into account old age and survivor’s benefits in equalised disposable income” (Vlačuha – Kováčová, 2013, p. 22)

The risk of a rise by the poverty rate (cut-off point: 60%) before and after social transfers is illustrated in the table below. Data clearly demonstrate that without the efficient equalising effect of old age and survivors’ benefits, the risk of poverty for the elderly would be 2.2 times higher than that of children. Without social transfers, the average poverty rate would increase to almost three times higher.

Table 7: At-risk-of poverty rate after social transfers by age-groups before and after social transfers 2011 (in %)

At risk of poverty rate	Total			Age group 0-17	Age group 65 years old and over		
	Total	male	female		Total	male	female
At-risk-of poverty rate before all social transfers by selected age groups and by gender (in%)	37.9	35.0	40.5	36.1	83.3	83.0	83.5
At-risk-of poverty rate after social transfers by selected age groups and by gender (in%)	13.2	13.2	13.3	21.9	7.8	5.9	9.0

Source: Compiled from Vlačuha – Kováčová, 2013, p. 21

Last but not least, regional disparities at NUTS3 level are also discussed in the volume. Although low work intensity rate of households is not available on NUTS3 level at EUROSTAT, Slovak statisticians calculated such variables and some others are indicated in the following table:

Table 8: Regional disparities in Slovakia expressed in poverty measurements, 2012

Regions	At-risk-of poverty rate after social transfers (in%)	Low work intensity rate of households (18-59, except students 18-24)	Inequality of income distribution S80/S20 income quintile share ratio by regions	Inequality of income distribution: Gini coefficient by regions
Total (Slovakia)	13.2	7.2	2.7	25.3
Bratislava	6.3	2.6	3.7	25
Trnava	10.6	5.3	3.3	23.4
Trenčín	8.3	5.1	3.2	22.5
Nitra	15.9	10.2	3.9	25.7
Žilina	12.7	4.5	3.6	24.8
Banská Bystrica	15.6	11.1	3.8	25.6
Prešov	19.9	9.0	4.4	26.7
Košice	13.5	8.5	3.5	23.9

Source: Compiled from Vlačuha – Kováčová, 2013

The table indicates that according to the 2012 EU SILC data, Prešov (North-East) was the poorest NUTS3 region in Slovakia, followed by Banská Bystrica (South-Central) and Nitra (South-West) reflecting West-East as well as North-South divisions. It is worth mentioning that the highest inequality was measured in Prešov also, regardless of the measurement (Gini coefficient or income quintile share ratio) which points to the correlation between poverty and inequality. The rate of households characterised by less than 20% work intensity is the highest in the neighbouring southern NUTS3 regions of Banská Bystrica and Nitra. The region of Košice as a whole looks rather consolidated, most probably thanks to its seat, Košice, the second largest city of Slovakia (240688 inhabitants). Košice provides a typical example for a developed and populous urban centre obscuring poor neighbourhoods, either within the city boundaries or in the more distant areas of the region.

2.2 Regional disparities in light of unemployment and ethnicity

This sub chapters below are meant to illustrate that poverty and social exclusion appear in Slovakia *in a geographically and socially (ethnically) concentrated (multiplied) manner*.

2.2.1 Territorial patterns of unemployment

When regional disparities are mentioned in the Slovak context, the scale is rarely considered. In light of data on long-term unemployment published in an annual report of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in 2013, the territorial predisposition of unemployment, both regarding the number of the unemployed and the duration of unemployment, can clearly be verified.

The table below depicts the length of job seeking by NUTS3 regions of Slovakia whilst the graph illustrates the distribution of the very long-term unemployed (being out of employment for more than three years):

Table 9: Average proportion of jobseekers by duration of registration per month in 2012

Length of job seeking (in months)	Bratislava	Trnava	Trenčín	Nitra	Žilina	Banská Bystrica	Prešov	Košice	Slovakia
up to 3 months	29%	25%	24%	21%	23%	15%	16%	16%	19%
4-6	21%	18%	17%	15%	17%	12%	13%	12%	14%
7-9	13%	11%	11%	10%	11%	8%	9%	9%	10%
10-12	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%	7%	8%
13-18	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%
19-24	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
25-30	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%
31-36	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%
37-42	2%	3%	4%	4%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%
43-48	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%	3%
Above 48	2%	5%	6%	10%	8%	22%	18%	19%	14%
Slovakia	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Own calculation from Table 2.14., Report on ... 2013, p. 29

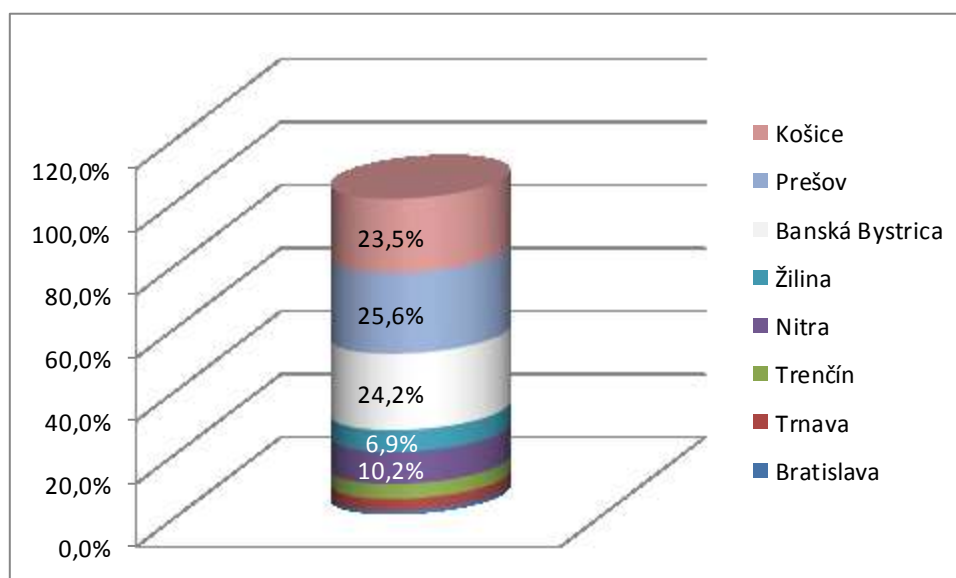


Figure 3: The distribution of long term job seekers (registered for longer than three years) by NUTS3 regions

Source: Own calculation from Table 2.14., Report on ... 2013, p. 29

The data of Table 9 and the illustration suggest that a solid structural crisis has been prevailing in Slovakia, mainly impacting the southern regions from Nitra via Banská Bystrica towards Prešov and Košice. These four NUTS3 regions are responsible for 80% of extremely long unemployment (longer than 3 years). The highest rate of very long-term jobseekers was measured in Banská Bystrica (31%) whilst this rate was 27% in the regions of Prešov and Košice. This solid structural crisis has been the main cause of spreading poverty and social exclusion (see also Map 11).

Regional disparities in Slovakia are rooted in socialist industrialisation policies creating mono-segment industries in certain regions, thus generating a high level of dependency on one or a few industries. This led to social and economic troubles in the 1990s (European Social Watch Report 2010). In the researched district of Rimaská Sobota as well as in the neighbouring districts of Southern Slovakia, agriculture and the food industry dominated local economy; given the favourable environment, the fertile plains and the river valleys, these areas were claimed as the 'breadbasket' of Czechoslovakia, as the slogan went. This vertical integration collapsed in the 1990s, and new investments have not occurred, or at least not enough. Interviewees mentioned one single assembly plant employing a significant number of people (approx. one thousand employees, a South Korean investment in Rimaská Sobota). Lacking highways were also blamed by local people for the scarce interest of foreign direct capital and for the massive lack of jobs – especially jobs for the unskilled. Slovakia is the very country where the unemployment rate among low-qualified persons was the highest among member states in 2012, 45.5%, almost three times higher than the EU-27 average (16.8%). (Report on ... 2013, Table 2 of Appendix to Chapter 5). Moreover, the Roma population is concentrated in these (southern and eastern) regions, which further aggravates problems (see next chapter).

Migration for work would be a logical choice by long-term job seekers; Roma and non-Roma alike do migrate but not yet in large quantities. According to the official figures, 120.7 thousand Slovakian citizens were working abroad in 2012; the 11.2 thousand from Banská Bystrica (9.3% of migrants) is a lower rate than the representation of workers in the region (278.6 thousand annual average, 12.0% of workers in Slovakia). Illegal migration must be much higher; according to a BBC report (aired in December 2013), approximately 200 thousand Roma migrants lived in the UK (BBC 2013), many of them with Slovakian citizenship.¹

2.2.2 Mapping territorial patterns of disadvantages

The north-south divide and territorial disparities are clearly indicated by Map 3 - Map 11. Two series of maps were produced, one at LAU1 (district) level and the other at LAU2 level (restricted to the researched LAU1 unit of Rimavská Sobota). Both series show a considerable north-south divide also emphasised by the local experts: in the southern (and eastern) districts, the unemployment rate is much higher than in the

¹By chance, migrant Roma from Southern Slovakia incurred media attention in Page Hall, Sheffield in November 2013, where an estimated number of 1,500 Roma migrants live. "Three buses run by Interbus make the 30-hour journey overland from Slovakia to Sheffield each week but just two go back in the other direction." <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/s/2013/nov/15/sheffield-page-hall-roma-slovakia-immigration> (retrieved in February 15th 2014)

northern (and western) ones, and the same division seems to prevail within the country, also within the NUTS3 region of Banská Bystrica (see Map 11) and the district of Rimaská Sobota (see Map 6). Map 11 clearly shows that the urban area of Košice, the city itself and its surroundings represent the only exception from the rule: except one of the inner districts of the city (with high rate of Roma), the unemployment rate is as low here as in the western most territories thanks to the equalising effect of Košice, Slovakia's second largest city.

A high rate of unemployment is in an inverse relationship with educational attainment, here indicated (somewhat unusually) with the ratio of secondary school students (Map 5 and Map 10). If the adequacy of these two indicators is to be judged, the rate of secondary school students in the percentage of the population seems to reflect better than other indicators the high rate of people in (deep) poverty (and/or social exclusion). The extremely low rates of secondary school students in the Rimavská Sobota district (1.7% of the population) and in the village of Rimavská Seč (1.4% of the population) show the highly limited access to secondary education of students, especially Roma: principals of secondary schools in Hnúšťa, Tornaľa and Rimavská Sobota equally reported a low enrolment rate and a high dropout rate of Roma students.

There is another indicator, highly relevant in the researched context, namely the self-declared nationality of the population indicated at the levels of LAU1 and LAU2 (Map 3-4 and Map 7-8-9). The overlap between the districts of high unemployment and low enrolment rates with the ones with a high rate of Roma population is clear. On the other hand, an overlap with a high representation of Hungarian minority is less clear (the rate of Hungarians is higher in the more developed Southwest, Midwest (Trnava and Nitra regions). Nevertheless, the high representation of the Hungarian population is unquestionable in the most disadvantaged districts along the border. Since many Roma in the same territory have Hungarian identity: their mother tongue is Hungarian, and so is their self-declared nationality, the real ethnic composition of the area is unclear. In Rimavská Seč, where the rate of Roma population is estimated as high as 70%, only 45 citizens (2% of the population) declared Roma nationality, whilst the rate of citizens declaring a Hungarian nationality was 91%. Obviously, ethnicity in this context cannot be correctly assessed from official census data. The issue is discussed more in detail in the next chapter.

2.2.3 Roma and Hungarian minorities

If you interview middle aged or older members of the Hungarian minority in Rimavská Sobota, you will find a shared conviction that the regional disparities and the backwardness of the border area, inhabited by decreasing, but still significant numbers of the Hungarian minority, are the consequence of purposeful anti-minority (anti-Hungarian) government policies. It seems to be more reasonable, however, that earlier industrialisation policies and the "division of labour" between the industrial and the agricultural regions during the Czechoslovak era noted above, and lacking financial resources to "equalise" the uneven distribution of large infrastructures better explain the widening gap between the developed western and the lagging eastern and south-central territories of the Slovak Republic.

The tensions between the majority Slovak and the minority Hungarian population are regularly sparked in high-level political discourse, shaping the relevant legislation as well (see the Slovak law on revoking citizenship² and that of using minority languages³). Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the impacts of the historically problematic border⁴ between Slovakia and Hungary, and the repeatedly sparking tensions between the two countries and the majority and minority populations within Slovakia, do influence government policies, to some extent at least, and aggravate the negative impacts of the border line towards development prospects (multiplied 'border effect').

The problematic nature of declaring a national identity in Slovakia is clearly demonstrated by the last census: in 2011, 382.5 thousand citizens in Slovakia (7% of the population) and some 160 thousand people in the districts with relevant Hungarian population failed to declare a national identity (Ravasz, 2012, p. 5,7) This is one of the reasons why the precise number and proportion of the Hungarian minority can be yet a matter of debate, despite the obvious and speedy decline in numbers and proportion: just during the course of the decade between 2001 and 2011, the number of citizens declaring Hungarian nationality fell from 520.5 thousand (9.68%) to 458.5 thousand (8.49%).

One also can ask whether those who declared Hungarian nationality are considered Hungarians, or whether some of them would be considered Roma by 'others'. Relying on fieldwork experiences in the Rimaská Sobota district, the most important factors influencing the willingness of Roma to declare a Roma identity could be as follows in 2011:

- Fear of stigmatisation (against);
- Willingness to adapt to the non-Roma majority (against);
- Awareness campaign in the Decade countries that tried to convince Roma to declare Roma nationality (in support);
- Double identity: the first identity is stuck to mother tongue (non-Roma), and since the Slovakian census did not register second identity, the first identity was declared (against);

² In accordance with the currently valid law, Slovak citizenship is revoked on the day when a Slovak citizen obtains foreign citizenship based on an explicit and voluntary display of free will. The loss of Slovak citizenship also implies the loss of civil service employment or similar labour relations which have the precondition of Slovak citizenship (Lajčáková, 2012, p.18)

³ In accordance with the relevant Act, in localities where the rate of national minorities was below 20% in 1991, Slovak is the mandatory language at public places, citizens are fined for using other languages. In villages and towns where the rate of minority population reached the 20% threshold in 1991, the minority population is allowed to use their own languages at public places (the list of eligible municipalities will be revised in 2021 – see Ravasz, 2012, p.17). Though the scope of public places and situations where Slovak should be used was narrowed in 2011 "i.e. leaving out the areas of transport, postal services and telecommunications, fire brigades and certain aspects of keeping school documentation at minority schools [...], the amendment did not abolish the possibility to impose sanctions (i.e. fines) for violating this otherwise meaningless legislation, which apparently contradicts the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" (Lajčáková, 2012, p. 41).

⁴ The border was determined by Article 27 of the Trianon Treaty in 1920. The treaty failed to take the ethnic composition into consideration along the border between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, still clearly perceivable close to its centenary (see Map 7 in the Annex).

- Forms of support with criteria of eligibility based on ethnicity, such as the Hungarian government's minor "grant"⁵ provided to attendees of kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools where the language of teaching is Hungarian (against).

Even this simplified list of (risk) factors shows that (at least in the district of Rimavská Sobota) factors against declaring a Roma identity were probably overwhelming during the 2011 elections, explaining the significant gap between the official census figures based on self-declaration (105.7 thousand citizens) and that of the socio-mapping investigation based on local estimations of key respondents (402.8 thousand citizens thought to be Roma by 'others', that is respondents of the survey).

When trying to provide a picture on the distribution of the Romany population throughout the disadvantaged regions of Slovakia, where 80% are concentrated, we used the estimations of Matlovičová et al. (2012) and the calculations of Ravasz (2013) based on census figures and earlier (other) estimations (of Vano from 2001). Table 13 (Annex) illustrates the result of 'merged' estimations, namely,

- The high numbers of Roma do not always correspond to the depth of poverty within a given territorial unit, because a high concentration of non-Roma population relativizes such figures; the obvious example is Košice and the district of its surroundings, where (altogether) 112,210 Roma live, representing only 15% of the population of the given districts; in such cases, LAU2 level analysis (and even below LAU2 level) can provide a more precise picture;
- In the district of Rimavská Sobota, the 21,4 thousand Roma represent 25% of the population, the highest rate in the country. The proportion of Romany people is high in Banská Bystrica as well, actually, it is the highest amongst the NUTS3 regions (19%), but the distribution of the Roma population within the region is highly uneven (Roma people are concentrated in four southern districts along the border line from among the 13 LAU1 units of the region).

Finally, when considering the proportion of Roma with a Hungarian affiliation, Table 14 provides relevant information. According to Ravasz, who examined the Roma population of these districts with a relevant Hungarian minority, from among the estimated 188.4 thousand Roma of these districts (listed in the Annex Table), 60.4 thousand citizens were assumed to have a Hungarian identity (32%). 41% out of these Roma people with Hungarian national identity live in the Banská Bystrica region, more than half of them in the Rimavská Sobota district (21% of the total).

These figures faithfully reflect the complexity of issues related to ethnicity in general, and in southern districts of Central Slovakia, in particular. We can conclude from the above analysis that in certain contexts, indicators based on official data related to ethnicity cannot be used as proxies indicating poverty and/or social exclusion, despite the overwhelming deprivation among the members of the given ethnic minority. Where reliable estimates are available, they can substitute for census data in certain

⁵ The value of the grant was EUR 70 in 2012 per year/child, distributed by a government agency called Gábor Bethlen Foundation. The criterion for eligibility was enrolment in a minority Hungarian preschool or school, and a bank account opened in one of the Slovakian branches of a Hungarian Bank (OTP).

countries, but the reliability of international comparison – due to the uneven access to such estimates – is highly doubtful.

2.3 The 2011 Roma survey and its results

2.3.1 The situation of Roma in Slovakia in comparison to Eastern European countries

According to the research of the European Union Agency of Fundamental Rights (FRA), the World Bank and the UNDP finished in 2011, there is a dramatically wide gap between the livelihoods of Roma who live in segregated neighbourhoods and the non-Roma households in close proximity to the assessed Roma settlements. To highlight some of the most important indicators:

- The monthly per capita income of Roma living in segregated zones is 26% of the average monthly per capita income in Romania, 36% of that in Hungary, 42% in Bulgaria, 43% in Slovakia and 48% in the Czech Republic.
- Employment rate is extremely low amongst the assessed Roma, particularly among women. The lowest rates were identified in Slovakia, with a 12.3% female and a 19.4% male employment rate, less than half of the average employment rate; the highest rates were found in Bulgaria, where 31% of women and 43.2 % of men found employment.
- Severe material deprivation is also high among Roma in Hungary and Slovakia, 80% of the researched Roma households were seriously deprived (The Situation of Roma, 2012)
- The educational gap is equally dramatic, particularly in Romania, where the rate of Roma household members aged 20 to 24 with completed general or vocational secondary education was as low as 10% against 64% of the same age group in non-Roma neighbourhoods. However, the gap was the widest in the Slovak context, with only 18% secondary education graduates among the Roma against 88% in the non-Roma neighbourhoods. (The Situation of Roma, 2012)

Low educational attainment keeps the Roma away from labour markets and restricts the majority of them to insecure, precarious jobs. Therefore, the generational transmission of poverty keeps on going, resulting in a growing, economically and socially excluded social (ethnic) group.

2.3.2 The situation of Roma as compared with non-Roma: segregated people and outside people

Employment

Before starting the analysis of employment / unemployment figures, the specificities of the survey need to be emphasised once again, namely, that it was accomplished

based on a sample taken in segregated Roma neighbourhoods and in the non-Roma proximity of such purely Roma settlements. Large urban centres were not included in the investigation. Such non-Roma villages and town districts are usually located in disadvantaged regions, districts, therefore the gap between Roma and non-Roma is necessarily narrower than a comparison between Roma of segregated neighbourhoods and the general population. Also, data on the Roma show a darker picture than a survey on the Roma population in general would: in Slovakia, 45% of Roma live dispersed amongst the majority, supposedly in better situation than their fellow citizens of segregated Roma settlements (55% of the Roma population).

Table 10: Figures of (un-)employment and activity

Indicators	Male		Female	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Employment rate (15-64)	20%	46%	9%	30%
Unemployment rate (15-64)	64%	27%	78%	40%
Activity rate (15-64)	57%	64%	40%	49%
No employment experience rate (15-64)	29%	24%	47%	19%
Informal employment incidence (15-64)	23%	5%	18%	5%
Self-employment rate (15-64)	0%	4%	0%	3%

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey 2011

As mentioned above, employment figures of the Roma in Slovakia of segregated settlements are meagre even by Eastern European standards of the same group:

- only 9% of Roma women and 20% of Roma men were employed in 2011,
- consequently, unemployment rates skyrocketed (64% of men, 78% of women were unemployed),
- 29% of Roma men and 47% of Roma women have never had a proper job, and
- self-employment as an alternative to wage labour does not seem to be an option for the Roma.

It is no wonder that in such circumstances informal work experience is higher than the employment rate amongst Roma labour, and two times higher in case of women.

Seeing the figures of female employment, it ought to be emphasised that the role of women in most marginalised Roma households is almost like that of a breadwinner. Their bodies are used (as well as their whole lives) for ensuring security for their families via giving birth to children⁶, thus gaining relatively secure and long-term benefits using various entitlements.⁷ Therefore, these women simply cannot aspire for

⁶ As noted in the field report, according to the children's doctor in Rimavská Seč who has served the community in the same position for the last 40 years, young Roma women start giving birth 5 to 6 years earlier than during the socialist era and they also have more children: 4 to 6 children per family is not exceptional anymore.

⁷ Child and maternity benefits; see Chapter 2.4.2.

proper employment unless they are forced by circumstance (divorce, death, eviction) to do so. Nevertheless, the scale of marginalisation of Roma women in relation to the labour market is astonishing and will surely generate long-lasting consequences.

The graph below is meant to indicate the sources of income of Roma households: the proportion of social assistance and child benefits is almost 59% against 33% rate of dependence on social transfers of the non-Roma households. Earnings from employment bring less than 20% income in an average Roma household.

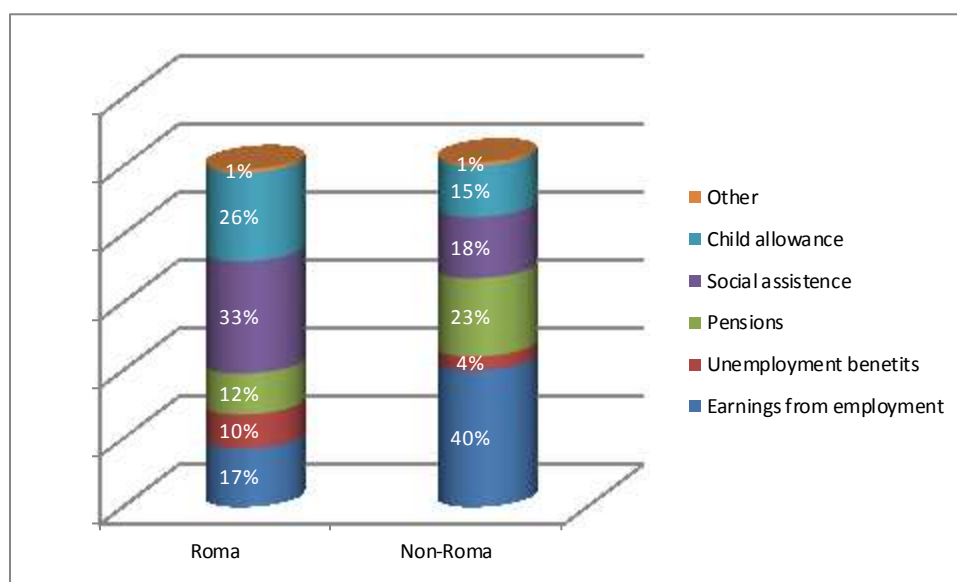


Figure 4: Sources of income in Roma and non-Roma households

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey 2011

It has to be emphasised, though, that employment rates of the non-Roma are also low and clearly reflect the limitations in accessing jobs in disadvantaged regions. Unemployment is high among the non-Roma men (27%) and extremely high among women (40%). One quarter of non-Roma men have never had any work experience, while self-employment is low amongst both women and men. Involvement of non-Roma in informal work is significantly less than that of Roma, but if we consider involvement in formal and informal work together, the gap is much narrower between the two groups: 43% of Roma men worked in 2011 either in the formal or informal job markets against 51% of non-Roma men; rates for women are 27% against 35%, respectively. These data show massive scarcity of jobs setting serious limitations in finding employment for both ethnic groups. Therefore, competition for jobs must be fierce, strengthening anti-minority feelings amongst members of the majority.

Limited access to formal job markets for both ethnic groups in the researched disadvantaged areas is illustrated by the graph below. It indicates the significantly higher employment rates of the general population in the same year of 2011, indirectly reporting disparities between the spaces of decline and that of the (non-existent) average.

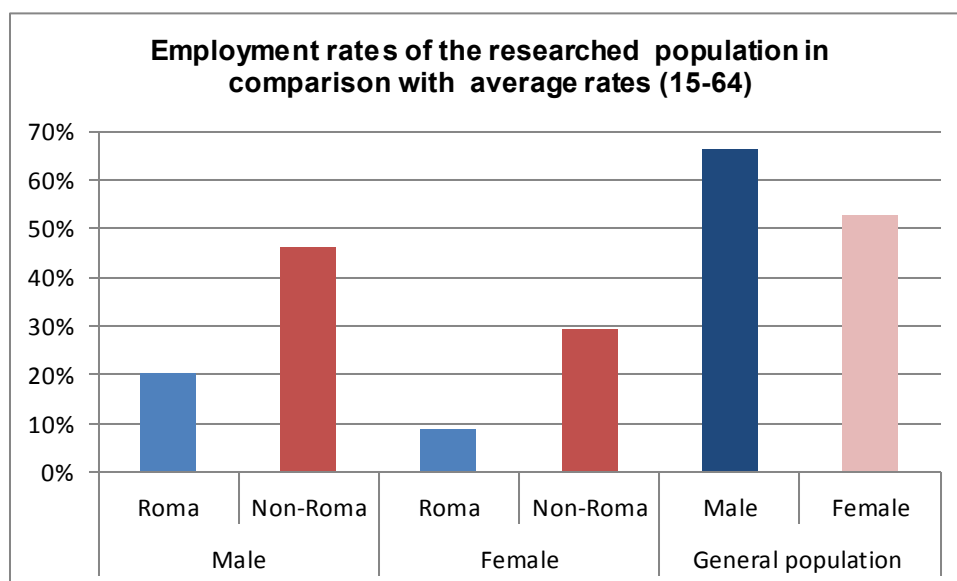


Figure 5: Roma and non Roma employment in segregated neighbourhoods and its proximity

Source 1: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey 2011

Source 2: Employment (main characteristics and rates) - annual averages [lfsi_emp_a]

Education

Data on educational attainment in light of the accessed dataset also show some Slovakian specificity. The first issue that needs to be highlighted is the extremely low rate of preschool enrolment of Roma children and non-Roma alike, but especially Roma: only one quarter of Roma children from segregated neighbourhoods are enrolled into preschools. According to our field research findings, this has to do with several factors, such as fees (though removed recently in the case of children of age five), lacking preschool capacities and finally, the location of the segregated Roma settlements: according to the recent Atlas of Roma, only a quarter of the population of the Roma neighbourhoods live inside the administrative boundaries of villages/towns, the majority live at the edge (44%) or outside municipality boundaries at 0.9 to 7 km distance (32%). If public transportation is available, it is costly, and if it is not available, it is simply impossible for most of the families to carry a child (or children) to the kindergarten.

Table 11: Figures of educational attainment

Indicators	Male		Female	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Compulsory education enrolment rate (7-15)	83%	84%	82%	90%
Upper-secondary education enrolment rate (16-19)	30%	75%	42%	74%
Average years of education (25-64)	9.05	11.96	8.78	11.90
Average years of education (16-24)	9.15	11.24	9.10	11.47
Pre-school enrolment rate (3-6)	26%	59%	25%	53%

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey 2011

The second issue that deserves attention is the gap appearing between the Roma and the non-Roma with regards to the upper secondary enrolment rate of the relevant age group. The gap is wide in case of both genders, but, it is worth mentioning, female enrolment rates are closer to one another. Differences in relation to average years of education are significant, but the gap is decreasing. Another symptom of the social decay across the non-Roma population (in the proximity of Roma neighbourhoods): the average years of education are decreasing in the ranks of the young generation. Therefore, they contribute to closing the gap in a downward move.

Poverty, deprivation and some other indicators of the social distress of Romany people

In this chapter, we are going to point to some further features of the situation of the Roma in the Slovak Republic. Relevant data drawn from the published dataset of the 2011 Roma survey are available in Table 15 - Table 17 in the Annex)

According to the survey data, 90% of Roma who live in segregated neighbourhoods suffer from material deprivation, 80% from severe material deprivation and 87% of them fell under the poverty threshold in 2011. The gap between Roma and non-Roma was significant; the rate of deprived or poor was almost two times higher in the ranks of the Roma, one third of whom lacked access to secure housing and the majority of whom (91%) lived in financial insecurity. Like in Hungary, the majority of Roma would prefer living dispersed among non-Roma (72%), but their wish is refused completely by the latter group (see Table 15 in the Annex).

Poverty, deprivation and anti-Roma sentiments of the majority as well as the frequently experienced discrimination of employers have led one fifth of the Roma to anticipate migration: 22% of the respondents would like to migrate abroad, whilst the rate of migration-intention amongst the non-Roma is only 14%. The UK leads the preference list of targeted countries; Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria are the second/third favourites. The survey revealed rather important differences in relation to the morals of respondents: Roma seems to be looser in terms of keeping moralistic obligations than non-Roma: acceptance of stealing food, for example, is higher amongst Roma (18% against 7% of non-Roma) which is understandable in a community where being hungry is often experienced and 34% of the population is malnourished (see Table 15 - Table 16 in the Annex).

The last point we are going to raise here is the distribution of respondents according to their skills and occupation. The data contained in Annex 7 is gathered for the purpose of showing the following contexts:

- Business owners, white collar workers, foremen or professionals are weakly represented (altogether 8%) among the Roma, both amongst the employed and unemployed.
- The rate of employed Roma skilled workers, though not high (20%), is nevertheless four times higher than their rate amongst the unemployed (5%), indicating that skilled Roma labour is successful in searching and keeping jobs.
- The vast majority of Roma lack vocational or higher education; therefore, most of them are employed as unskilled labour primarily in manufactories and mines, as well as in construction and public utilities-related work.

Such 'division' of positions of the labour market wrongfully, but inevitably, cast most Roma to the lowest ranks of society.

2.4 Residential and educational segregation in Southern Slovakia

2.4.1 Residential segregation: Roma Atlas report

A recent sociomapping survey called Atlas of Roma⁸ covered 1070 municipalities of the total of 2890 municipalities of Slovakia (37.2%). According to the survey results, the estimated number of the Roma population was 402,840 (7.45% of the population). Almost half of the Roma lived dispersed, while others lived in segregated neighbourhoods (804 in numbers). More precisely, during the course of the assessment in 2012-2013,

- the rate of municipalities where Roma lived mixed amongst non-Roma was 45%,
- in 153 municipalities (14%) Roma lived in segregated neighbourhoods only, whilst,
- in 40% of the researched municipalities, dispersed and segregated dwellings were equally revealed.

The distribution of Roma settlements according to their location relative to village/town boundaries is illustrated by the below figure.

⁸ The methodology of sociomapping in Slovakia has been based on surveys covering those municipalities where the headcount of self-declared Roma goes beyond a certain minimum number (it was 30 people during the course of the 2012-2013 survey, but other sets of information were also taken into consideration, like the settlement lists of the Office of Roma Plenipotentiary and the database of the 2004 survey). The first round of mapping was implemented in 2003-2004, the second round, with the participation of 30 researchers, from September 2012 to August 31, 2013. Meanwhile, a so-called qualitative estimation of the number of Roma was completed in 2010 based on telephone interviews. See Matlovičová et al., 2012, Atlas of Roma ... a.n.

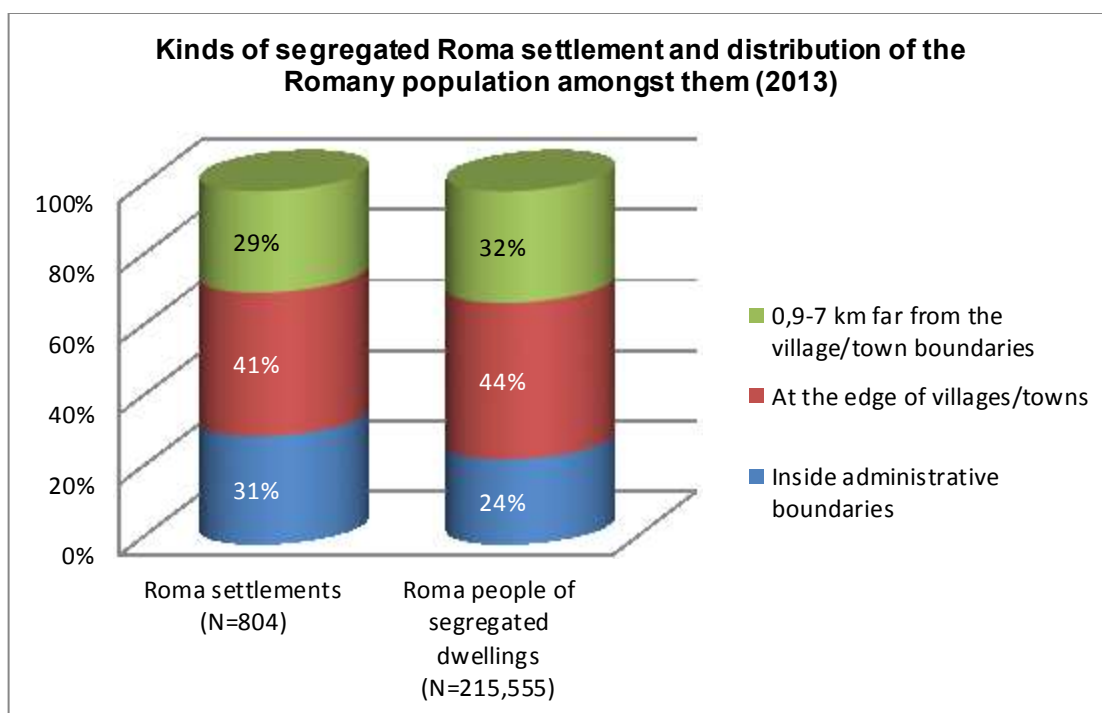


Figure 6: Roma settlements and their inhabitants in 2013

Source: Atlas of Roma a.n.

The 1070 researched municipalities represent 37.2% of the total number of municipalities of Slovakia. Those NUTS3 regions where the representation of villages/towns with Roma inhabitants is close to this rate or higher are indicated in the table below. The table also shows that the majority of municipalities where Roma population live in various proportions are found in three regions, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice (756 municipalities, 71.5% from the 1,070 visited municipalities.)

Table 12: The number and rate of municipalities with Roma inhabitants 2013

NUTS3 regions	Total number of municipalities	Out of which municipalities with Roma inhabitants	
		In numbers	In %
Košice	440	256	58.18
Banská Bystrica	516	266	51.55
Nitra	354	134	37.85
Prešov	665	243	36.54
Trnava	251	76	30.28

Source: Atlas of Roma, a.n.

2.5 Field report: the field sites, the methods and the research tools

As presented in the introductory chapter, Banská Bystrica does not belong to the most disadvantaged self-governed regions of Slovakia. Želinský argued in his 2007 article that neither the scale, nor the deepness of poverty expressed by the poverty gap index suggest a high concentration of poverty in the region. Nevertheless, according to the headcount index 107,460 people lived below poverty line in 2005 in the

NUTS-3 region of Banská Bystrica (Želinský, 2007), and the LAU1 unit of Rimavská Sobota – situated along the Hungarian border in the Southern part of the country – is one of the poorest districts of Slovakia. This phenomenon has probably to do with the high unemployment rate deriving from the collapse of industries at the district centre and of large-scale agriculture in the surroundings in general. The high rate of Roma population being hit the most by the collapse of these industries must also play a role: according to a 2010 survey, the proportion of Roma people was 25% in the Rimavská Sobota district, the highest amongst the districts of Slovakia (see Map 9 and Table 13 in the Annex) The same survey revealed that more than half of the Roma live in Eastern Slovakia (31% in the Košice, 29% in the Prešov NUTS3 region) and Central Slovakia, in the Banská Bystrica region (one fifth of the total of the Roma population) (Matlovičová et al., 2012).

Rimavská Sobota is the district (LAU-1 unit) selected for the empirical investigation, within which two villages (LAU-2 units) have been researched: Rimavská Seč with 1,936 inhabitants and Klenovec with 3,324 inhabitants (2011 census data). 1,763 Hungarian, 92 Slovak and 45 Roma residents were registered (by self-declared ethnic affiliation) during the last census in Rimavská Seč, while from among 3,324 inhabitants, 3,122 respondents declared Slovak and 202 Roma affiliation in Klenovec. However, official figures are misleading: according to village leaders, the rate of the Roma population is as high as 75-80% in the former and roughly 25-30% in the latter locality; which explains their selection as research sites. The issue of majorities and minorities is quite specific in Rimavská Seč: the national majority (Slovak) is represented by only as little as 5% of villagers, ethnic Hungarians make up roughly 20% of the population – still a local minority –, whilst Roma people, whose vast majority has declared Hungarian affiliation in 2011, represent locally a majority. The Roma here belong to the group of Romungro (*magyar cigányok*); they do not speak any dialect of the Romany language and their mother tongue is Hungarian.⁹ Roma of Klenovec speak their own Roma dialect, and Slovakian as a second language. Although we focused on schooling of Roma in rural areas, we interviewed two personalities working for key institutions of the segregated settlement belonging to Rimavská Sobota, 4 km far from the town, nicknamed “Black City”: a field social worker and the principal of the ghetto school.

In the empirical phase of the research thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with village officials, parents, representatives of NGOs engaged in developing projects, preschool leaders, principals of ordinary and special schools, principals of secondary schools of rural towns in Rimavská Sobota district (Rimavská Sobota, Tornaľa and Hnúšťa) and representatives of town officials working in the areas of social services and education. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts of Roma issues at national level to unfold policy measures affecting education and social integration. We did not succeed in obtaining data of schools of Rimavská Seč, because our request was refused, thus our analysis is based mainly on the interviews and observation in the visited schools and segregated Roma dwellings.

⁹ Estimation of local key informants.

2.5.1 A demising village of Rimavská Seč

Two-thirds of the village of Rimavská Seč can be considered an area where the Roma population is concentrated, though the village area is far from being homogeneous. In addition to the “ghetto” (this is how local people actually call the area of social housing, separated at the edge of the village), most of the streets to the left of the Village Hall are inhabited by the Roma. In some of these streets, Roma live scattered among a few non-Roma families, but one particular street is inhabited only by the Roma (locally called ‘Kis Sor’ [*Small Row*]). The Roma in this latter street live in degraded houses built by the once richest peasants of the village in the period between the two world wars. Access to electricity, water and the sewage is provided in this part of the village, but few Roma families use them due to the costs of services. The streets to the right of the Village Hall (the smaller part of the village) are inhabited mainly by non-Roma: mostly by ethnic Hungarians and some assimilated Roma families (scattered in spots amongst Hungarians).

The Roma have traditionally resided in Rimavská Seč at the edge of left part of the village. Later on, during the 1980s, the co-operative placed Roma families to the former peasant houses left empty by their original owners (deceased or migrated). The number and proportion of Roma population started to increase further in early 1990s due to a number of factors such as:

- the decreasing number of children in non-Roma families,
- the exodus of non-Roma families,
- an increasing number of children in Roma families and the waves of poverty migration that reached the village.

Non-Roma families started to move out of the village because of the unfavourable economic situation (the lack of jobs) and the increasing proportion of the Roma from the 1990s. Their houses were bought mostly by the local Roma and sporadically also by immigrant Roma families. Hungarian-speaking newcomer Roma people settled down typically in the left part of the village where the majority of local Roma lived anyway. Meanwhile the reproduction strategies of most Roma families changed and a significant rise of birth-rate has been witnessed recently, that was induced most probably by allowances and the lack of alternatives. According to the local doctor, young female adults started to give birth four-five years earlier than they did during the last years of Socialism: at 15-16 years of age. As a consequence, Roma have been sinking deeper and deeper into poverty, resulting in a multiple deprivation of most households.

Therefore the municipal council applied for a grant from the social housing programme in order to improve the living standards of Roma community.¹⁰ Two rounds

¹⁰ One of the programmes was that of the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development implemented on the basis of a governmental resolution of 2001 concerning the ‘Proposal to Support the Construction of Municipal Rental Flats of a Different Standard Designed to House Persons in Material Distress and the Construction of Technical Infrastructure in Roma Settlements. The minimum sanitary standards of such houses were regulated by the Ministry of Health. The ‘Long-term Concept of Housing

of social housing construction have been completed from central government subsidies since 2001; in return, the government imposed certain conditions on setting rents and the costs of allocation and construction. The local council acquired the right to set up eligibility criteria for potential tenants at the municipal level. Public policy of Slovakia on housing has been criticized, since so-called 'matching grants' depended entirely on incentives to low-cost projects. Moreover, this housing policy focused primarily on building low-quality flats, without any other measures aiming at increasing the living standards of Roma households (International experiences, n.d.; RAXEN Thematic Study, 2009). Nevertheless, with the help of that programme, 30 low-standard flats were built in Rimavská Seč, each equipped with basic facilities – a washbasin, a shower, a flushing toilet, a hot water boiler and heating – also allowing the installation of stoves. The flats are small, the environment is exiguous and dreary (illustrated by Picture A), but this part of the village, despite its local appellation as 'ghetto,' still provides better living standards for Roma inhabitants than the former peasant houses, which are in neglected and ravaged conditions.

Local criticism is not focused on about the living standards provided by social housing, rather on the political goals of the programme. Non-Roma respondents consider social housing as a political tool for mayors to gain votes for the election. This 'public opinion' is prevalent in Rimavská Seč, as demonstrated by the graffiti promoting voting for the present mayor (see Picture B).



Picture A and B: Social housing in Rimavská Seč: the 'ghetto' (March 2013)

for Marginalised Population Groups and the Model of Financing the Concept' were also prepared in co-operation with the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development; the document was approved by the Government in January 2005. The main objective of the concept was to propose principles and support the ways to provide appropriate standards of housing to the populations of socially excluded communities. The Concept also proposed a method based on inter-ministerial co-operation for using EU Structural Funds to co-finance activities related to the development of housing for marginalised population groups in 2007-2013 (Orgovánová, 2006).

2.5.2 The people of Dolinka in Klenovec

Similar village development investments have not taken place in Klenovec, the other village researched, which is 30 kilometre away from Rimavská Seč. According to the last census, its population was 3,324 in 2011, out of which an estimated one third was Roma. Most of the Roma in Klenovec live mixed among the majority Slovak population. According to local officials, most of the Roma households who are willingly integrated are migrants moving in from neighbouring villages. One-third of the Roma families, some 250-300 citizens reside, though, in the segregated neighbourhoods called “Dolinka” (meadow), located at the edge of the village. They live there in wooden shacks among miserable conditions. Altogether 20 houses were built with legal permission (proper planning licence), and about the same number illegally. All the houses are crowded, they all lack public utilities and they hardly defend people against cold weather during wintertime.



Picture C and D: Houses and children of “Dolinka” in Klenovec (April 2013)

Children living in “Dolinka” rarely attend pre-school, and later often miss schooldays, due to a lack of motivation, indirect costs of attendance, proper clothes and shoes, and also to physical distance. People of Klenovec consider “Dolinka” residents as the most problematic group within the village; similarly, local schoolteachers claim that the Roma children from “Dolinka” are their most problematic pupils. “Dolinka” thus clearly represents a classical segregated Roma neighbourhood by its very location, while it also shows how physical separation and the miserable living conditions of such segregated Roma settlements become primarily factors of social exclusion (Mládek and Pukačová, 2010, p. 45-46).

2.5.3 An urban ghetto in Rimavská Sobota

The ‘ghetto’ of Rimavská Sobota is located 5 km from the administrative boundary of the town. Eight blocks of so-called “panel houses” with eight apartments in each were built here during the late 1970s, originally intended to supply the personnel of the hospital with full-comfort apartments. Services such as shops, a kindergarten, a four-grade primary school, as well as a cultural centre were also made available within the small housing estate surrounded by a pine forest. Soon after the blocks and the servicing units were ready, it turned out that neither doctors nor other citizens wanted to move out from the town and live in a nice and new, but segregated and isolated environment, therefore the town leadership decided to place Roma here. Hungarian-

speaking Roma belonging to Vlach and Romungro subgroups were settled in the blocks during the 1980s.

In twenty years, the entire living quarter has deteriorated completely; the cultural house literally disappeared piece by piece, most of the wood was cut. Social homogenisation, families' sinking in deep poverty was speeded up by selective migration: the more entrepreneurial-minded Vlach Roma gradually moved to the town and the Romungro, 90% of whom lost employment during the beginning of transition in early 1990s, stayed.

According to the field social worker whose office is on the spot, Roma live mostly off of social transfers combined with occasional illegal work mostly in Austria and Germany. Circumstances forced people, mainly male people, to earning their living from begging abroad. Prostitution in urban centres of Austria and Germany also occurs sporadically amongst young females.



Picture E: View of the Roma settlement with the town at the back and a public well in the front (November 2013)

Amenities are restricted to electricity and heating facilities (stoves) in apartments, while water is provided by a public well. Thanks to an EU project of mainly ESF funding, adjacent to the office of the social worker (whose salary is also paid by an ESF project) a common bath and a laundry with restricted capacities were opened two years ago: one single bathtub, two shower stalls and two washing machines have been accessible since then for those who participate in welfare work. No healthcare services are available in the settlement; therefore, it often happens that mothers with sick children have to walk to the town to see a doctor because they cannot afford paying for the bus ticket and/or the medicine prescribed for the child.

As far as educational services are concerned, a kindergarten and a four-grade primary school are operating in the settlement with full capacities or beyond: both institutions are overcrowded. Approximately 120 pupils are taught here in five ordinary classes and two afternoon classes. According to the principal, the relationship with Roma parents is fairly good. In addition to eight teachers, the school employs four teacher assistants, one of whom is a Roma himself. The principal, like most of her colleagues, is convinced that Romany children do not fit in the ordinary educational system. At the age of six, most of them are not prepared for school, they fail the entrance test primarily because of their family background (notwithstanding the culturally biased testing methods. The problem of testing is discussed in detail in Spotáková, 2011).

The huge disadvantages of Roma children at school are rarely mitigated by pre-school and afternoon school attendance: though they have to pay half price (2 Euros in 2013), the most vulnerable households with seven to eight children cannot afford paying this fee. Usually half of the children cannot pass the readiness test, thus start their school tenure in grade zero. Only few children are motivated at home and if they are, not for long enough. Most of them have difficulties with maths as well as with comprehending texts: they progress much slower than their fellow pupils with non-Roma background. Teaching languages is also a mistake in Roma-only schools: these pupils are challenged and overburdened by the seven Hungarian and five Slovakian language classes each week (in the 3rd and 4th grade). Therefore, most of them underperform and only an average of five to six children can continue to an ordinary school once they finish the 5th grade here, while the rest continue either in the town's special school or in either of the special classes of the primary schools.



Pictures F – I: The school from outside (bare yard, lattice groundfloor windows) and inside (electronic table, pupils in the afternoon class) (November 2013)

2.4.3. Respondents' views on poverty and social exclusion of Roma and related issues

Among the Roma families who live in segregated dwelling units, extreme poverty and deprivation prevail, especially in 'Dolinka' of Klenovec, where public work is less accessible for the poorest Roma citizens and in the "Black City" of Rimavska Sobota where the availability of public work is relatively limited. In contrast, extended public work schemes have been operational in Rimavská Seč for the past few years, in order to increase the amount of social benefits to over 480 people.¹¹ Since the number of public (welfare) workers is very high, but the budget of the village is scant, 'real work' is limited, public workers are restricted to cleaning the village (scavenging and gathering waste). Therefore neither village officials, nor public workers take their duties seriously. This form of social allowance was criticized by non-Roma respondents as only another way for mayors to win votes, not an effective measure to combat poverty or to help unemployed people back to work. Our respondents were saying that the former public work scheme, operational between 2000 and 2002, was more effective, since it required eight hours of employment and provided minimum wage, furthermore, it also provided additional resources for municipalities to implement a wide range of community work. Having been involved in that scheme, people could have the feeling of performing 'real work' or having a proper job, as their work was useful to the community.

Moreover, the Slovak welfare system was criticized by our non-Roma respondents fundamentally. They argued, it discouraged the least skilled from earning employment because of the small margin between minimum income and the benefits available to households with at least two unemployed.¹² Welfare arrangements and dependency on benefits generated by these arrangements were blamed by critics as one the most important factors keeping the Roma away from the labour market. Moreover, most middle-class interviewees believe that chronic unemployment is not the main factor behind the poverty of Roma population. In addition to welfare dependency, respondents blamed the Roma themselves for their dire and hopeless

¹¹ Activation allowance (*Aktivačný príspevok*) is one of the components of *benefits to people in material need*; currently it amounts to €63.50 for those participating in training programs or performing minor community work for at least ten hours a week) (Your social security, 2012).

¹² In addition to *child benefit* (which is a universal flat-rate allowance, unrelated to family income, currently amounting to €22.54 per child, paid until the completion of compulsory education), and *parental allowance* (a universal, monthly flat-rate benefit, paid regardless of family income up to the child's age of three, currently €194.70), the '*material need*' benefit is the most important source of income for permanently unemployed families. This latter form of assistance is a means-tested benefit for those whose income is lower than the subsistence minimum (*životné minimum*), and who cannot provide income for themselves. The amount of the 'material need benefit' varies according to family composition. It is calculated as the difference between the income of an individual or a household and the theoretical maximum of 'material need benefit.' The latter corresponds to €60.50 for singles; €115.10 for single parents with one to four children; €105.20 for couples without children; €157.60 for couples with one to four children; €168.20 for single parents with five or more children; €212.30 for couples with five or more children. The 'material need benefit' is paid as long as the situation of material need lasts. Other benefits contributing to calculating 'material need benefit' are: a) the benefit for pregnant women from the fourth month of pregnancy; b) the benefit to persons in material need with a child smaller than one year; c) healthcare allowance (*príspevok na zdravotnú starostlivosť*); d) protection allowance; e) housing benefit (*príspevok na bývanie*) for those paying the costs of lodging properly; f) activation allowance (*aktivačný príspevok*) for those following a back-to-work programme (training or performance of minor community work for at least ten hours a week); g) benefit for a child during the period of compulsory education (ages 6–16 years) (*dávka pre dieťa*) (Your social security, 2012, p. 29–35).

situation, arguing that they do not want to change or improve their own situation and living conditions. In the eyes of those who share this kind of judgement, most Roma have accustomed a low-level income and low living standards, and they do not want to adapt and learn the patterns of the way of life of the majority population. Furthermore, Roma are blamed for not being able to divide up their income and make ends meet: they always end up spending social benefits and state support on the first week, frequently on commodities such as alcohol, cigarettes, unhealthy food or candies for children – or what is worse, gambling. Therefore usury is common in the Roma communities. The following summary given by the principal of the special elementary school of Rimavská Seč is almost a general consensus: “*Should they want it, they would manage; they have all the means at their disposal to be able to live a better life.*” Some of our respondents emphasised that having such way of life and following such patterns of behaviour, it is the Roma that exclude themselves from the majority society and not the other way round. We heard only one slightly more sympathetic opinion about the reasons behind Roma’s poverty and its interdependency with exclusion: this interviewee emphasised that such low income coming mostly from social transfers did not help Roma to break out from poverty and social exclusion.

When making negative judgements, non-Roma respondents in Rimavská Seč usually mean those people of the “ghetto” and some other newcomers being noisy, missing taking care of their environment and using dirty words, etc. They also address people committing petty crimes. Repeated offenses against one’s property make the offended ones desperate and – depending to their temperament – angry or even hostile. The immediate damage in one’s property is just one of the consequences of regular petty crimes but not the worst. One of our respondents (in his early fifties) used to pursue gardening, raised pigs and chicken in his backyard, but he stopped home production entirely because of the regular stealing (last year his pine trees were cut). His case is by no means unique. Last but not least, real estate is unsellable if a village or town gets hit by ghettoisation, partly because of the absent safety of property and partly because of the demise of the entire environment. People being stuck in such villages/towns lose a lot which explains their anger and might, unfortunately, back candidates of the far right in the political arena. In Banská Bystrica, in November 2013 Marian Kotleba, leader of a far right ultra-nationalist party, who had formerly declared Roma people “parasites” was elected as a regional governor with 55.5% of votes.¹³

¹³ The news appeared at the BBC website on November 24, 2013 and was retrieved in January 2014.



Picture J: Symptoms of demise: centre of the village, Rimavská Seč (March 2013)

The anger of losers of ghettoisation is understandable but not acceptable, especially if it is generalised. Such negative judgements widen the gap between Roma and the majority society and make even more difficult for Roma to adjust. Open discrimination is also widespread in the region. “When calling up to apply for vacancies, applicants are openly asked about their ethnicity and told that Roma are not accepted. ... [Therefore] Roma subjectively perceived their status as more equal when working abroad. »*Abroad they treat you in a different way*«. This statement was quoted by the authors of a recently published case study based on fieldwork in one of the neighbouring districts to Rimavská Sobota (Messing et al, 2013, p. 108).

As it was discussed in the earlier chapters of this paper, the southern border area of the region of Banská Bystrica is among the poorest areas of Slovakia with extremely high rate of longterm unemployment. Even in the town of Rimavská Sobota, the district centre, “*people could kill for jobs*” as one of our respondents declared; therefore, the competition between skilled and unskilled Roma and non-Roma labour is even fiercer than elsewhere. Whatever is the reason, the shared anti-Roma feelings and conviction of the non-Roma majority strengthen the symbolic exclusion of Roma/poor people and reinforce prejudices and stereotypes. (Džambazovič & Jurásková, 2003a, 2003b; Mládek & Pukačová, 2010) The strongest forms of anti-Roma symbolism are made of concrete: walls and fences erected around Roma settlements. These walls were built by non-Roma resident groups aiming at separating Roma neighbourhoods, even in Košice, the cultural capital of Europe in 2013. This must be interpreted as a

clear signal of the growing tension between ethnic groups and the spreading intolerance within the ranks of the majority society¹⁴ (see Annex 5).

2.5.4 Examples of school segregation

Segregation at elementary schools

Segregation of Roma children within the educational system prevails in Slovakia, albeit in different forms and types. The most unacceptable type is perhaps when Roma children with deprived family backgrounds are placed in special education, keeping them in a parallel but not equivalent educational system that blocks their social integration throughout their entire education: children graduating from such special education schools are not accepted by ordinary vocational schools, they must continue in a special vocational school if they are ambitious enough. Another segregation practice is placing Roma children into segregated classes, floors, buildings, playground, etc. within the standard education system, or seating them separately in the classroom (Lajčáková, 2012, p. 28-29; Hojsík, 2011, 49). Furthermore, as Hojsík pointed out, the segregation of Roma children in school often corresponds to their residential segregation, or it operates as a substitute for absent residential segregation in places where Roma and non-Roma population live mixed. (Hojsík, 2011, p. 49). Both ways of segregation appeared at elementary levels in our field sites.

The proportion of Roma pupils/students at school is considerably higher than within the overall village population: 90% in Rimavská Seč and 50% in Klenovec¹⁵. In the latter village, almost no Roma child from “Dolinka” goes to kindergarten, preschool capacities are practically shared between ethnic Slovak and integrated Roma children, whilst only Roma children are enrolled in the preschool of Rimavská Seč (there are very few ethnic Hungarians in that age-group, and they are all taken away to the preschools of neighbouring villages). The capacity of the kindergarten is limited in Rimavská Seč, with 20%-30% of children entering school without having had preschool socialization.

Free parental choice of school prevails in Slovakia, nevertheless, enrolling children in a school out of the immediate area does not seem to be as common in the researched villages as it is in Hungary, and/or it has started only recently for the better off: some of the very few ethnic Hungarian children go to the closeby towns of Rimavská Sobota or Tornaľa from Rimavská Seč, and to Hnúšťa from Klenovec. They are typically accepted in the lower grades of the eight-grade gymnasiums of the towns (for the poor non-Roma it is not an option: unemployment is high not only amongst Roma but the non-Roma alike in Rimavská Seč; unemployed non-Roma parents simply cannot afford to accompany their children to the district centre this is why they still enrol their children to the local, highly ghettoised school.)

¹⁴ The construction of *anti-Roma* barriers might be qualified as an unlawful discriminatory action as they physically prevent all residents of the Romani communities in question from access to goods, services, education or medical care solely on grounds of their ethnic origin.” (Lajčáková, 2012, p. 24).

¹⁵ Interviews with Slovakian respondents were conducted by Larisa Urbankock in April-May, 2013.

The mainstream way of “mild” segregation of children in both researched schools is that of selecting classes according to the pupils’ abilities. “A” classes are for the best pupils/students, “B” classes are for those performing less brilliantly, etc., and “D” are for the worst ones (The number of children was 275 in the 2013 school year in Klenovec, with only two parallel classes, whilst 493 children were enrolled and four parallel classes were run annually in the school of Rimavská Seč, which absorbed children from neighbouring villages as well.). Both principals argued that “upward” mobility from the worst classes towards the better ones occurs time to time, but they also admitted downward mobility was far more common: a class that starts with 28 pupils can easily end up with half of the children by the 4th grade, due to the high rate of repeaters and children transferred to a poor performers’ parallel class. In other words, there is a wide scale of different techniques for selecting children by performance in the school of Rimavská Seč, where a high turnover of children allows for such techniques.

Children from the poorest Roma families, especially those who have not had the chance to go to kindergarten, arrive at school with tremendous deficits of socialization; some of them have never used a pencil, or seen a flush toilet before entering the school. Since free school meals are restricted to lunches in Slovakia, children of the poorest families frequently go to school hungry. Achieving good results for pupils arriving from extremely poor and low-motivated parental background is obviously much harder than for those with less disadvantageous background, and occurs rarely.

To assist the most disadvantaged children, an afternoon school (extra-curricular study place) was opened by a local civic organization for the upper-grade students in Rimavská Seč in 2010. Example was taken from a Hungarian Roma NGO, finances have been provided so far by the Roma Educational Fund (of Open Society Institute, Budapest).

Segregation on secondary level

The further education of students follows mainstream patterns: middle class children usually go to general grammar school, whilst disadvantaged children from Rimavská Seč go the vocational training or secondary school, most frequently to Rimavská Sobota, the district centre or Tornaľa, a small town 20 km far from the village in the neighbouring district of Revúca, and to Hnúšťa, the closest town from Klenovec. (For the system of secondary education in Slovakia see Annex 6) Very few Roma children turn up in gymnasiums, but if they do, they usually succeed in getting a GED (“maturation”). The dropout rate is usually high in vocational schools, particularly in the case of female students: early pregnancy as the main cause of girls’ leaving school was mentioned by the principals of vocational schools in both Hnúšťa and Rimavská Sobota. Male students usually chose the two-year classes in Hnúšťa just to fulfil the requirement of 10 years of compulsory education up to the age of 16. When such students reach the age of 16 immediately leave the school without any qualification or occupation. They often miss classes during their short secondary education carrier because they already have seasonal, sometimes illegal job. Increasing number of cases appears when students leave school early because their family migrates to abroad for work. According to the experiments of the principal of vocational second-

ary school in Rimavská Sobota, parents sometimes are almost begging for teacher to oblige their child to repeat grade in elementary school because they cannot afford the cost of secondary education.

Schools of special education: a dead-end road

Special education schools are operated in both researched villages for the so-called 'mentally handicapped' children. It is symptomatic that all the pupils enrolled in the special school in Rimavská Seč are Roma, according to our own observation and the informal opinion of the teachers. In Klenovec, 60 of the 62 students are socially disadvantaged, nevertheless, the principal of the school avoided declaring that any would be Roma. Principals of the standard elementary schools and the special schools argued in both villages that such schools providing specific pedagogical methods and reduced curricula are the right institutions for the mentally handicapped children. However, doubts have been voiced and confirmed. According to these voices, in addition to the truly handicapped, Roma children with serious social disadvantages and socialisation deficits have tended to be enrolled in special schools (see for example Lajčaková, 2012, p. 28-29).

Beyond the local special school, special classes with reduced numbers were also operated in lower grades in Rimavská Seč in 2013. Pupils whose achievement at entrance assessment was poor and/or who performed extremely poorly in normal classes were enrolled in "catch-up programmes." Some of those children would continue studies in the special school after first grade, while others remain within a catch-up programme: after their first grade at the standard school, usually 5-6 children are accepted by the special education school each year. The principal of the school of special education is used to identify children to be transferred from the standard school, in close co-operation with his colleagues. His judgment, however, is subject to the approval of the educational counsellor of the district centre, as well as the approval of the child's parents.

The segregation effect of the special school system in Slovakia lies in its 'parallel but not equivalent' character (Lajčaková, 2012). Pupils graduating from special elementary schools are allowed to continue their studies only at special vocational training schools, qualifying them only as so called assistant skilled workers. Thus a certain second-rate parallel educational route is designated for pupils attending special education. Getting back to the standard system is possible only before finishing special elementary school, based on the decision of the educational counsellor of the district centre. But, according to the memories of our respondents, such a case has never happened in the villages concerned. Another more hidden segregation effect of the special education system is the rare appearance of special secondary schools all over the country. If a student completes their studies in time at a special elementary school, without repeating grades, they are still within the age of compulsory education, thus they still have to continue studying, but coming more likely from a Roma and/or poor family, the cost of attendance in a distant school is unaffordable for their family. The principal of Klenovec special elementary school has mentioned that their students apply and are admitted to special secondary schools; however, most of them never turn up in September, or they leave school after only a few months of attendance. The special school students of Rimavská Seč perform better at the sec-

ondary level according to the principal of the school, who said their former students completed special secondary schools.

Principals of the special elementary schools we visited stressed that in many cases parents themselves appeal for placing their children into special education. Our field experiences confirmed that some of our Roma respondents from among the representatives of parents in Rimavská Seč did not mind or they even preferred if their children attended the local special school, because they themselves had studied there or their older children had been also enrolled at the special school. They explained that the level of education provided at special school was adequate, and that some students performed quite well at the special school, which could not have happened at the standard school. Some scholars have argued the low educational attendance and the weak performance of the Roma is also impacted by their negative experiences regarding the value of and the need for education in climbing upwards on the social ladder (Rigová et al., 2003, p. 416). This assumption, linking the symbolic and the psychological exclusion of the Roma people (discrimination) is still prevalent in Slovakia, and it is one of the main factors behind social exclusion. Some of our respondents argued that standard education in Slovakia is inappropriate for Roma children, as it does not match their skills and abilities; they emphasised that the strict, rigid system and the disciplinarian methods of teaching generate impediments before the Roma children's good performance in education.

3 Analysis of underlying processes and trends

3.1 Policy measures

According to the typology of Fenger, Slovakia belongs to the countries of combined post-socialist welfare regimes ('transitional' in the TiPSE welfare regime typology). In relation to the social provisions of the Central and Eastern European countries, Lendvai emphasises the fluidity of welfare regimes, the influence of European Union before and after the accession as well as the impacts of economic and political changes taking place in the countries of the region. According to Lendvai, in sharp contrast to the "complete patchwork" characteristic of the Hungarian and Polish welfare systems with a "large state" and "jobless growth," by 2006, the Baltic States, and later on Slovakia opted for the neoliberal model with "radical economic reforms resulting in minimal states, low welfare spending, low taxes, strongly deregulated labour markets and widespread liberalism... with minimal welfare commitments," whilst the Czech Republic and Slovenia established a kind of "Scandinavian island" in post-communist Europe (Lendvai, 2009:21).¹⁶ The below figure illustrate the relatively low welfare spending of Slovakia thus seems to support Lendvai's concept:

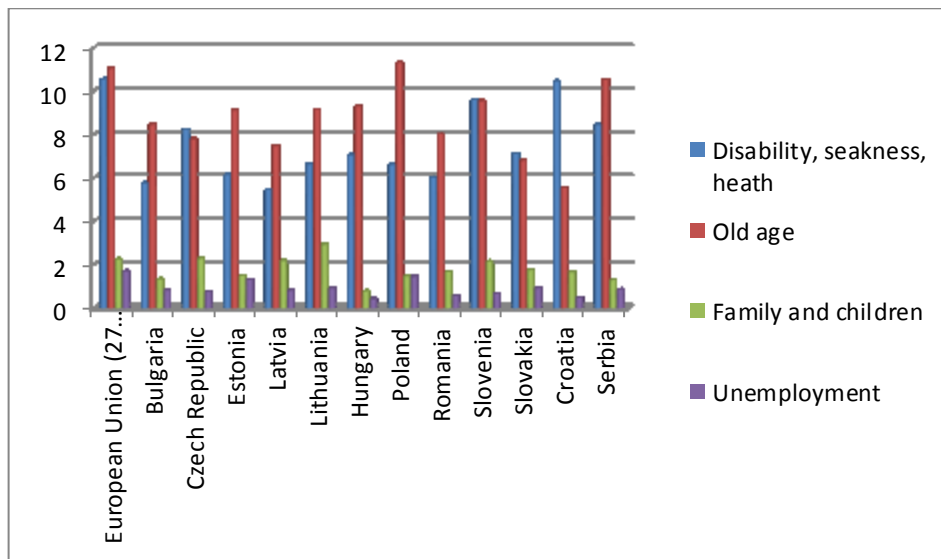


Figure 7: Welfare spending of post socialist countries, 2010

Source: Compiled from Eurostat data Expenditure: main results [spr_exp_sum]

¹⁶ However, the fluidity of the regimes provoked new changes in Eastern Central Europe in 2011-2012, Slovakia made a turn towards the social democratic model since a left-wing government came into power in 2010, whilst the new, right-wing government of Hungary absorbed more neo-liberal principles in its dominantly Bismarckian welfare regime. Paradoxically, in Slovakia a new (authoritarian? anti-Roma? punitive neoliberal?) agenda appeared parallel to the mainstream policies during the second Fico government in 2012-2013.

However, generous universal provisions looked to be more prevalent in Slovakia up until the end of 2013 as compared to Hungary, partly as a legacy of socialist past, partly as a result of the ruling left-wing political agenda.

3.1.1 Social and educational policies

The low turn-up rates of Roma children in pre-schools as well as the dense network of special schools and classes segregating Roma students have been criticized by a number of studies and evaluations.

The continued disproportionate streaming of Roma children in special education and the fact that in many special schools and classes the majority of students are Roma, point to the long way that desegregation policies in the Slovak Republic still have to go. The Strategy for Integration of Roma quotes the study of the Roma Educational Fund prepared in 2009, according to which 60% of all students in special schools and 83% of pupils in special classes of regular elementary schools are Roma from marginalized Roma communities (abbreviated as MRK children) (Strategy for Integration of Roma, 2012 p. 27)

So far, almost nothing has changed – at least in the two researched villages – concerning mainstream educational and welfare policies. Slovakia's Roma Inclusion Strategy addresses these issues with much emphasis. Proposed measures are organised along three axes:

- investments into pre-primary education of MRK children along with supporting early childhood care programs
- development and implementing desegregation standards ... with the exception of Roma national schools and the locations with majority representation of Roma population
- developing specific models of school integration (inclusion) for a whole portfolio of situations and target groups (Strategy for Integration of Roma 2012:27)

The strategy is in line with the so-called “Comprehensive Development Program of Roma Settlements” adopted by the Slovakian government in 2002. The program then was reintroduced to the political discourse by Klara Orgovánová in 2005 since she was the Plenipotentiary of Slovak Government for Roma Communities at that time. The territorially and ethnically targeted program aiming the complex, place based development of Roma communities was part of the Reference Framework for the 2007-2013 programming period with an allocated 200 hundred thousand Euro funding. However, for a number of reasons, the program practically failed: roughly one fifth of the funding was used till the end of 2012 and the rest was absorbed by the budget of technical assistance partly used for financing the community house programs.

Regarding social protection of schoolchildren, the Slovak welfare arrangements address child poverty via family allowances and social benefits available at schools like free meals (lunch only), as well as school accessories twice a year. Socially disadvantaged children are eligible for such benefits; if more than 50% of the students of a school are eligible, the entire school will qualify. Free lunch is available to children at preschool as well, but not available for the lower grades of eight-grade gymnasiums.

3.2 Relevant policies in retrospect¹⁷

3.2.1 The pre-accession period (-2003)

In the nineties, minority right was the ideological framework of coping with the Roma Issue. Partly it was influenced by the claims of the Hungarian minority. During state socialism Roma were not even recognized as ethnic minority. In the next period the Roma question was characterized by economical-social discourse, mostly about the misuse of the welfare system. For the first Džurinda government (1998-2002) it was a very good pretext how to sell the restrictions and the social and economic reform. The official slogan was that 'this is the world of the working people'. This is the normal conservative perception which doesn't care of the context and reasons for the situation. The stress was put on security, control of behaviour, enforcement of responsible behaviour.

However this was a period when meeting the EU requirements was of central importance to Slovakia, so many (temporary) positive measures were taken and strategies produced.

Some of the most important ones:

1991 - *The Principles of the Government's Roma Policy*. This document included some general ideas on how to approach the Roma issue in terms of culture, education, economy, social security, and ethnic matters. However, it failed to specify concrete measures, or to say how the plan would be subsidized. The aim was to acknowledge the Roma as a nation, and thus to ensure their political and legal equality.

1996 - *Proposal of Tasks and Measures for Solving the Problems of Citizens Requiring Special Help*. Besides briefly defining individual problems such as schooling for children, unemployment, housing, upbringing and education, hygiene and health, and negative social behavior, "citizens requiring special help" without regard to their ethnic origin, the tasks suggested that the target group was the Roma.

1997 - *Concept of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma in the Current Socioeconomic Conditions*. The basic principles of the plan were the civic principle (respecting the values and way of life of the target group), the solidarity principle (removing prejudices and eliminating displays of extremism in society), the principle of allowing citizens to participate in solving their own problems, the principle of personal responsibility (the Roma themselves should take personal responsibility for their living conditions), the principle of positive encouragement of marginalized people, the principle of subsidiary.

This seemingly sympathetic construction was immediately scrapped after coming into power of the Džurinda administration in 1999 and was replaced by the *Strategy of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma and the Set of Implementation Measures – 1st Stage*, and later in 2000 *2nd Stage*. This was the first concept that attempted to find a long-term solution to the Roma issue. Action was to be taken in areas where the situation was critical – unemployment, housing, health, the social

¹⁷ This chapter was written by Péter Krasztev, external expert.

network and the school system – as well as in areas requiring improvement, such as human rights, the rights of national minorities, cooperation with NGOs, and regional development. Two years later the cabinet approved a document called *Priorities of the Slovak Government in Relation to Roma Communities in 2002*, based on the foregoing strategy. The document envisaged a complex program to develop Roma settlements, and a program of social fieldworkers.

As it can be seen in this brief summary of concepts, Slovakia's post-1989 governments showed varying levels of interest in solving the Roma issue. Scrapping old plans and adopting new concepts every time the government changed proved ineffective; however, as given the depth of the problems the Roma face, the measures proposed by individual concepts could not be prepared and implemented during a single electoral term.

In 2001 Klára Orgovánová was elected as the new Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Issues. To improve the coordination function of the Government Representative, the cabinet established a Joint Committee for the Affairs of Roma Communities.

3.2.2 Post accession developments

“Until 2003 the government paid social benefits, later there were radical cuts in this respect. The labor offices were able to find jobs only for those who could have found jobs anyway. After 2003 practically all players in Roma inclusion have withdrawn – mostly because nobody believed any more that inclusion is possible. (...) Before the activities of the government were motivated by the ambition of Slovakia to join the EU – some things really worked, some only pretended to function, but many things happened. The Roma issue was among the priorities – as an EU requirement for accession. So in that time it was more a façade than a real humanitarian intention” – claimed by Marek Hojsík speaking about the EU accession as a division line.

Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020 was adopted in 2012 by the Radičová government. For all relevant experts in the field this was and still is the most complex, sensitive and coordinated project ever written for Slovakia. The next government led by PM Fico officially adopted it, promised to continue its implementation, but practically seemed to boycott it. Instead Peter Pollak, the actual Plenipotentiary introduced a new concept, named *10 basic pillars of the new Government Plenipotentiary** which fundamentally contradicts the letter and the spirit of the Strategy of 2012.

The current situation in Slovakia is marked by a sharp debate between the government officials and the representatives of the human rights positions regarding the future activities. Those who support Orgovánová's concept argue that the *10 pillars* is not a policy document, but rather a populist political manifesto which aims at increasing the number of votes, has nothing to do with the Roma problem, but rather mirrors the stereotypes of the majority. In their opinion the mere fact that the Plenipotentiary's Office is subordinated to the Ministry of Interior shows that for the current gov-

* See the full text in the Appendix.

ernment this issue is not a social one, but rather a “securitization of the problem”. Roma here appear as a danger and a threat. According to one of our informants it is not likely that the repressive policies will be implemented, but associating the Roma with criminality in the first sentence of the document is a worrying sign.

However, there are strong arguments in support of the other side too. According to information coming directly from the Plenipotentiary’s Office there is a rational reason behind subordinating this position to the Ministry of Interior. In fact this is the most powerful ministry which in the meantime has the potential to instruct other ministries to follow the Plenipotentiary’s directives. Before all other ministries used this institution “to burry” their Roma related problems into it. The *Ten Pillars* are a result of a compromise, in the focus of which are the two most burning issues of the Slovak Roma community – the problem of lands where the Roma slums are situated, and the problem of schooling. The new law solving those two problems will be proposed in the Parliament personally by the Minister of Interior, the “strong person” of the ruling party SMER. The rest of the ten points is present only to trick the otherwise anti-Roma public opinion, and get the support for the two central issues.

Apart from the outcome of this ongoing debate both sides agree, that the government’s communication about the implementation of the actual Roma policy is disastrous. As Klara Orgovanová remarked in one of her public lectures in September 2013 there is complete chaos in implementation of the Roma strategy, and nobody can see, if such strategy exists at all.

According to the new concept of social benefits everyone will be obliged to work for their social support. This concept is fiercely attacked by human right activists. The other unclear point behind the planned regulation is that the right to decide about social benefits will be delegated to the majors – they are supposed to decide who deserves the support and who not. This provides them not only with economic power, but also with political because in this way they can easily manipulate their political opponents on local level.

3.3 International support for solving the “Roma issue”

Programming and implementation of the Roma-related EU projects in Slovakia was highly centralized with no grant schemes open for project proposal from NGOs, municipalities or other possible beneficiaries. The projects were generated by central government authorities and negotiated with the EC Delegation. A relatively big amount of approximately € 28 million was spent on Roma-related projects mostly in the field of education, housing and social services. Several evaluations have been written about their implementation. Majority of them agree that there were major problems with efficiency of their implementation mostly due to their complicated institutional structure. However, several new agendas have been introduced into Slovak law and systems of national funding like for instance Roma teacher assistants, zero-classes and transitive classes, field social workers in Roma communities, and construction of technical infrastructure and social housing in Roma settlements. As a conclusion the evaluations mostly agree, that neither the infrastructural, nor the inclusion oriented projects achieved their goal because their procurement period was

too short, and the outcomes were not sustainable. The problem here is more general: the interest of donors in seeing quick results usually has a devastating effect, and leads to the opposite result. The short-term nature of the grant cycle is not suited to this goal.

As far as the “Comprehensive Approach” Slovakia’s place based development program targeting Romany communities is concerned, the main obstacles for the success was once again the “overpower” of the local authorities. Moreover, involvement of other Slovak authorities into the implementation (such as the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development and Regional Development Support Agency) was particularly difficult and jeopardized the delivery of the project. After initial agreement, several municipalities changed their mind on participating in the program. In Letanovce, for example, local authorities changed the location for construction of infrastructure and social housing on the outskirts of neighbouring villages, which refused to have Roma from Letanovce in their proximity, and thus the infrastructure and housing is not being used still in 2013. Another example is Svinia where after a local referendum about dismissal of the mayor and election of a new mayor refusing the project, totally cancelled their participation in the project and the allocated funds remained unspent.

3.4 Prospects for the future

The answer to practically all dilemmas related to segregation and social exclusion should be a combined approach. Strategies of social inclusion for the Roma should be put into effect on all levels of society, and include universal, regional, local and individual efforts. The various forms of poverty in Roma settlements require close cooperation and interventions that go beyond the framework of individual ministries. These interventions should be based on a previously decided set of priority issues, as well as a set of legal regulations in which the human rights aspects are in balance with pragmatic/economic ones. Subsidized workplaces could be one of such solutions – this costs a lot, but still less than social paying benefits for nothing. The *Ten Pillars* might be partly useful from pragmatic point of view, but its immanent message, e. g. reinforcing harmful stereotypes of the majority might have a devastating effect from moral and social aspects (see Annex 7).

4 Validity of European-wide data analysis from a local perspective

The results of macro-regional analysis seem valid and explicable 'from below' as well. Slovakia has been mentioned among the countries where the rate of population with low educational attainment (only basic education) is surprisingly high. Our micro-scale researches give an explanation for this phenomenon and vice versa: low educational attainment contributes to the extreme long unemployment in the country where low-skilled labour's access to employment is the lowest in Europe (therefore the unemployment rate of the low-skilled is almost three times higher than the average of EU-27). Furthermore, low enrolment rate and high dropout rate of Roma from secondary education must contribute to the final outcome of high representation of the unskilled since – according to reliable empirical investigations¹⁸ – the estimated proportion of Romany people is 7.5 % of the population which is, at least two times higher among the young people.

As the presented maps indicate, the very low level of economic inactivity rate across Slovakia and especially in the Košice NUTS3 region can be taken by a bit of surprise. Reasons for the latter are clear and comply with explanations given in chapter 2.2., namely, the distorting (neutralising) effect of data of big cities on their surroundings. However, in the Bratislava region low inactivity rate is probably a shared pattern of the LAU1 units of the region, whilst in the Košice region, the city and its close surroundings neutralise the high inactivity rates of the peripheral districts of the entire region. The map below stands for illustrating this assumption:

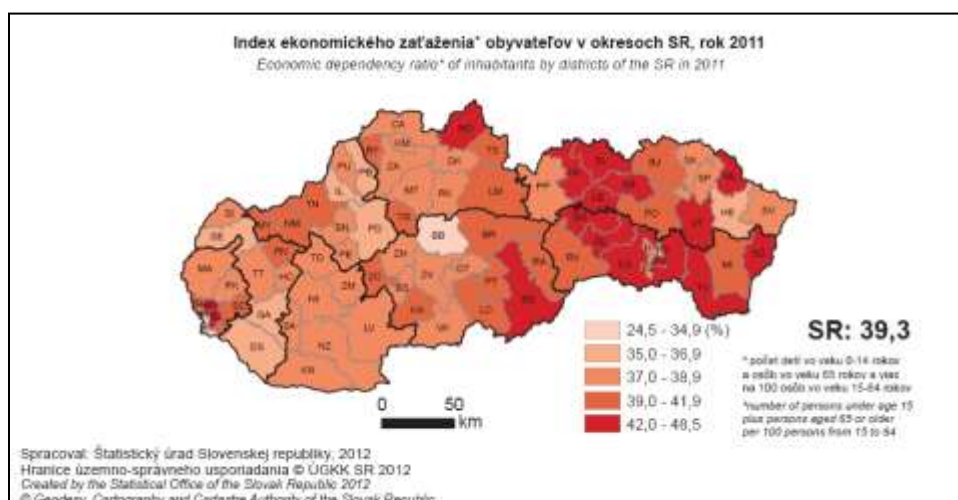


Figure 8: Economic dependency rate of inhabitants by districts

Source: Krasztev, 2013, p. 4

¹⁸ Socio-mapping within the framework of Atlas of Roma 2012-2013.

The high unemployment rate across southern and eastern Slovakia is a clear illustration of the West to East slope prevailing not only in Slovakia but also in Hungary and Poland. This phenomenon has been rooted in historical territorial patterns, industrialisation policies of the socialist era and the collapse of different sectors including a range of industries and agriculture. The massive structural crisis and the desperate need for jobs were highlighted in earlier chapters of this report.

Finally, the map illustrating the ratio of Roma ethnicity by declared ethnicity in the East-Central European macro-region indicate the most affected NUTS3 regions correctly; however, as it was pointed out, the rates of self-declared Roma are much lower than the estimated number of Romany people in the region (see Chapter 2.2.2). Moreover, in special contexts like one of the researched village communities, even less Roma declare Roma nationality for two reasons. On the one hand, they maintain their double (minority) identity (Hungarian and Roma) and on the other hand, Slovakian census in 2011 did not register double identity (as opposed to the Hungarian one). Therefore, official figures in this special context do not reflect a real position of Banská Bystrica region as compared to the neighbouring regions. According to estimations, this is the region where the rate of Romany people in the population is the highest (19%) higher than in Slovakia's poorest and Easternmost region (Prešov 12%) and in the Košice NUTS3 region where an estimated number of more than 120 thousand Roma lived in 2012-2013. However, their proportion is "only" 15%, again due to the "neutralising" effect of "scale" (Košice).

5 Transferability of results

Research material collected in two villages and one rural town reflected similar patterns of Roma marginalisation than in Hungary. The most important causes of marginalisation are more or less the same: low educational attainment, scarce availability of jobs, high dependency rate on social transfers, miserable living conditions especially in segregated dwelling units either urban (like the “black city” of Rimaská Sobota) or rural (like the wooden shacks of Klenovec) and the prevalence of segregated public schools. Nevertheless, there are some differences and some transferable practices.

The repeated assessment of Romany population (Atlas of Roma) is one of the background studies in Slovakia that should be learnt by the other affected new member states of the region because it is able to provide developers, policy makers and also academic audience with a reliable set of estimations at LAU2 level. The last investigation was literally aiming to support strategic planning with necessary information on the spatial distribution of Romany population and the way of their living (segregated or dispersed).

There are important and effective social policy tools against the consequences of poverty (free meals and free equipment for the needy) and against segregation like teacher assistants at school and field social workers at segregated neighbourhoods: the latter one, field social worker as a thin path between segregated settlements and the outside world is not so common in the region; therefore, experiences should be shared among social policy experts and practitioners. However, according to the situation analysis of the Strategy for Integration of Roma, only a minor portion of teacher assistants come from Roma background that needs to be remedied in the future.

Segregating children at school is more common in Slovakia than in Hungary. Institutions like zero grades, special classes and special schools were widespread yet in 2012-2013. Furthermore, enrolment rate of Roma children to preschool was one of the lowest in Europe. It seems that the scope of EU funded projects invested into education was narrower here than in other new member states (sure Start does not exist in the research region of Slovakia, extracurricular study place programs promoting afternoon schooling of Roma children appear sporadically transmitted by Hungarian examples sponsored by the Open Society Institute, Budapest). However, there are excellent analyses and clear policy visions laid down in the Strategy for Integration of Roma of Slovakia that might bring results in the future. For example, the methodology of psychological testing of children will probably be changed in the coming years and the socially deprived low-motivated, low-performing children will not be allowed to put on a parallel educational track starting with zero classes leading to nowhere. Special schools will be maintained for the mentally handicapped children. Desegregation policies in Slovakia make difference between various kinds of segregation, for instance, they do not address ghetto schools of segregated villages with the same policies as the ones with relatively low representation of Roma children.

One of the good examples is that free school meal and free equipment secured for all pupils at school if the rate of socially deprived children goes above 50% of the enrolled children.

Finally, Slovakian planners and policy makers should learn from their own “Comprehensive Approach” Program. The Comprehensive Development Program of Roma Settlements was adopted by the Slovakian government in 2002, then it was reintroduced once again to the political discourse by Klara Orgovánová in 2005 since she was the Plenipotentiary of Slovak Government for Roma Communities at that time. The territorially and ethnically targeted program aiming the complex, place based development of Roma communities was part of the Reference Framework for the 2007-2013 programming period with an allocated 200 hundred thousand Euro funding. However, for a number of reasons, the program practically failed: roughly one fifth of the funding was used till the end of 2012 and the rest was absorbed by the budget of technical assistance partly used for financing the community house programs.

A recent evaluation of the “Comprehensive Approach” (Kostál C., Salner A. et al., 2013) pointed to the following weaknesses of the implementation:

- Uneven quality of local development strategies eligible for funding
- Slow and complicated bureaucratic procedures
- Fragmentation of the administrative system: municipalities were not interested in cooperation; therefore, cross municipality programming was rarely brought about
- Much of the funding supported projects in the developed regions with low representation of Roma, therefore the program did not reach the target group in the desired scale
- The program was ethnically labelled; therefore, middle classes filled with anti-Roma sentiments practically boycotted the implementation in central and local levels alike
- Lack of appropriate technical assistance
- Instable government structures: if a new government come to power, the continuity of policies and their implementation might stop.

According to the evaluators, territorial targeting is missing from the palette of development policies in Slovakia; therefore, the “Comprehensive Approach” should be revitalised and implemented in the coming programming period.

6 Conclusions for policy development and monitoring

Considering vital issues in relation to the inclusion of Romany population in Slovakia, education inevitably comes to the fore. Huge challenges are to be met in this field and the Slovak Government seems to be determined to address the most important ones subsumed here under three headings

a. Giving more chance to Roma children in education

Pro Roma educational policies in Slovakia address two major issues:

- early socialisation of children by increasing the attendance in preschool and
- challenging the parallel education system.

This parallel system, so called special education was originally introduced for mentally handicapped children but studies have proved that healthy Roma children in large numbers have been taught in special classes or schools. The institutional fundamentals of the parallel system has to be challenged by policy measures such as:

- the content and methodology of psychological testing of children's preparedness before entering school,
- criteria concerning the threshold between the mentally handicapped and healthy child
- zero grades for the unprepared,
- special classes and special schools in primary education
- special schools in secondary education.

The most important expected result of the vertically linked policies against special education is to significantly reduce the number of children directed towards a segregated, parallel educational system because this practice leads to a dead-end road without proper education and skills required by the labour market.

Most of the above mentioned policy goals and tools are not complicated from the perspective of monitoring. Pre-school capacities, the number of enrolled, socially disadvantaged children and children from marginalised Roma communities (both groups of pupils are registered and their numbers are available in the statistics of the relevant Ministry and its branches), the number of zero grades, their attendees can easily be assessed. However, the 'soft' aspects of psychological testing and setting thresholds are difficult to accomplish in a 'culturally correct' manner (Testing material is obviously culturally coded. The stock of knowledge of children in deep poverty simply differs from that of middle class children's and has nothing to do with their intelligence and abilities. In the Remavská Seč pre-school, teachers warned that the environment of testing might prevent them from good performances as well.) Introducing new approaches as part of a mandatory professional protocol must also be difficult, and, it is not easy to find the adequate monitoring tools that should go far

beyond the assessment of numbers. The so called participatory evaluation can be advisable within teams of professionals comprising internal and external members.

There are already important and effective tools aiming social protection (free meals and free equipment for the needy), or promoting education of Roma children like teacher assistants at school and field social workers at segregated neighbourhoods that should be further maintained. In order to increase the number of Romany teacher assistants the eligibility criteria of acquiring should / must be eased and measures targeting upward mobility of Roma young adults should be launched (supporting further education of Romany persons with secondary education, promoting Roma NGO's engaged in education, etc.).

b. Extending the scope of policy interventions and addressing complex issues by relevant policy tools such as complex, place based programs

Slovakian policy makers understandably aim to provide social assistance on a normative basis for the ones in need, either schools or municipalities, based on needs assessment. Therefore efforts are concentrated to ordinary public education and universal patterns of availability. However, extending the scope of the tools of educational policies would allow for developing alternative experimental programs, linking subjects and sectors (health care, education, social protection on the one hand, churches, NGO-s, municipal and state agents, minority and majority, etc. on the other hand) and /or introduce such well-known interventions such as Sure Start or extracurricular education programs. Mutual learning is extremely important within and across regions and countries as well. This has been obviously proved by the Rimavská Seč extracurricular study place program imported from Hungary and financed by an international donor agency.

Proper professional and technical supports are key points as well as the issue of potential beneficiaries of policy measures. One of the interviewees in the Labour Office of Rimavská Sobota complained that some of the big centralised projects could not even start and the allocated funding was lost. The reason was simple: a few potential candidates (big players) jeopardised the public procurement process. In order to prevent anything like this from happening again, Roma and pro Roma NGO-s and various scales and types of projects need to be supported.

The area-based comprehensive programme targeting local communities with relevant Roma population needs to be revised and reintroduced in the 2014-2020 programming period. As starting point, statistics based on the Atlas of Roma can be used (when setting up for example eligibility criteria).

As always, the need for simplifying administration and decreasing bureaucracy has to be emphasised; otherwise, ordinary players will not take the burden of dealing with EU projects. Certain projects need to be elaborated and adjusted more to the circumstances. For example: children's books are available for certain ESF funded projects but only in Slovakian language. Therefore, Hungarian speaking Roma children have no chance to make a good use of these books as they can only watch them.

c. Finally, about the unfavourable climate of development

One of the components that contributed to the failure of the “Comprehensive Approach” program mentioned in the previous section was the instable government structures. The point made by evaluators of the concerned program was that projects might be stopped because of the disruptions of the policy process incurred by change in the government. However, there is another threat which has more to do with governance: mismatching policies with contradicting ideological background can run parallel resulting in a kind of policy ‘schizophrenia’. This seems to be the case in relation to the prominent policy documents in Slovakia. The *Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020* was adopted in 2012 by the Radičová administration and the declaration of the Ten Basic Pillars issued by the current Plenipotentiary of the Slovakian Government for Roma Communities were prepared during the Fico government. The approach and norms of the two documents seem to differ fundamentally. The *Strategy for Integration of Roma* is in line with EU inclusion policies and norms, while the conformity of the declaration (Ten Major Pillars) to EU principles / laws is highly questionable (see Annex 4). There are matching points but the tone of the latter document makes it hard even to identify such points: for example, increasing pre-school attendance of Roma children sounds like this: “*Government shall ensure proper education of irresponsible parents’ children before they enter primary schools*”. The face of a punitive state perfectly manifest itself in the last pillar: “*Government shall introduce measures aimed at taking away transgression immunity from socially dependent citizens who are currently able to perpetrate transgressions with impunity*”.

According to some interpretations, the Ten Pillars are a result of a compromise, in the focus of which are the two most burning issues of the Slovak Roma community – the problem of lands where the Roma slums are situated, and the problem of schooling. The rest of the ten points is presented only to trick the otherwise anti-Roma public opinion, and get the support for the two central issues.

Either way, such unsophisticated language and thinking might jeopardise the implementation of any EU conform inclusive policies in Slovakia. One can only hope that the necessary consensus in relation to the main policy concepts, goals and tool will be restored soon.

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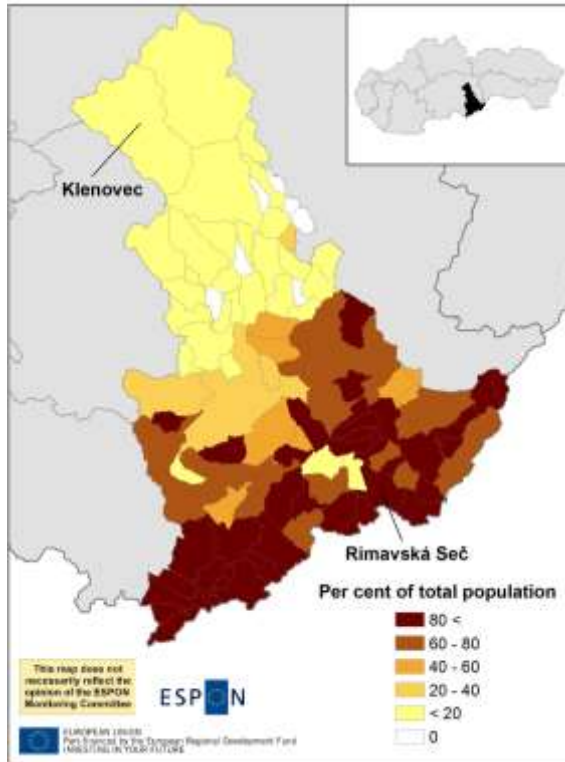
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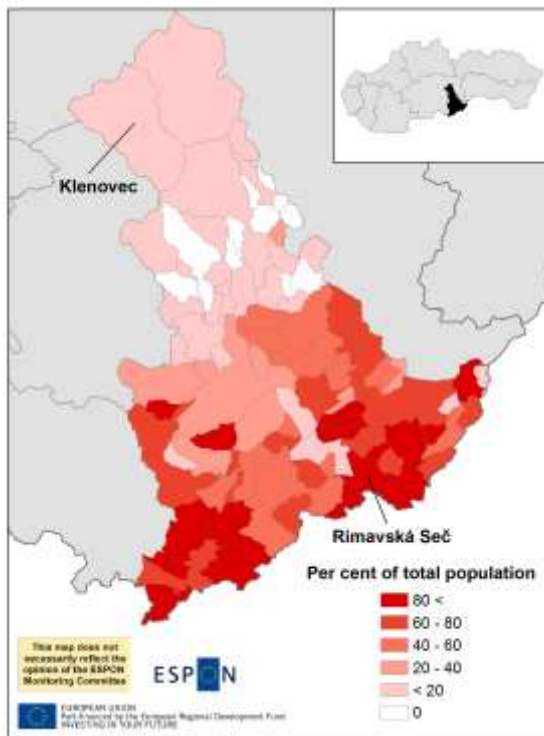
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Annex 1: Additional maps and tables

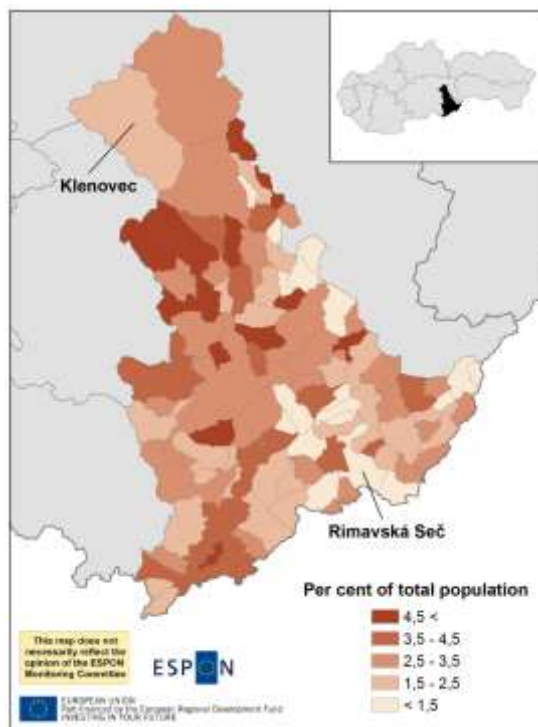


Map 3: Ratio of Hungarians and Roma by self-declared nationality, 2011

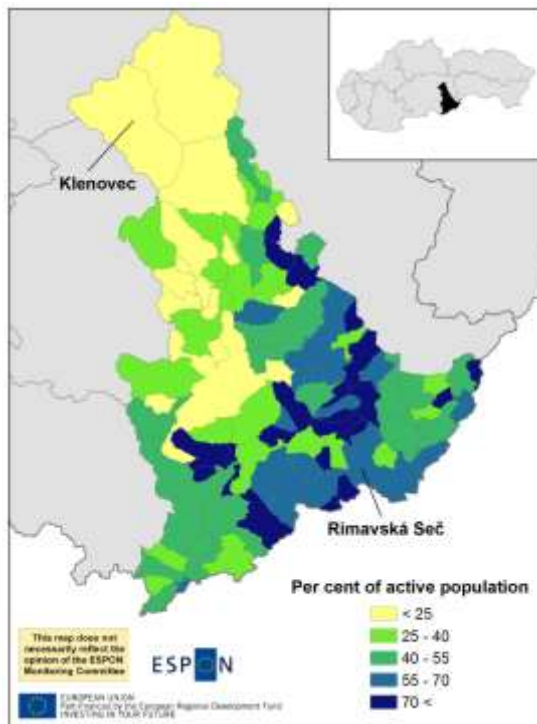
Ratio of Hungarians by Self Declared Nationality, 2011



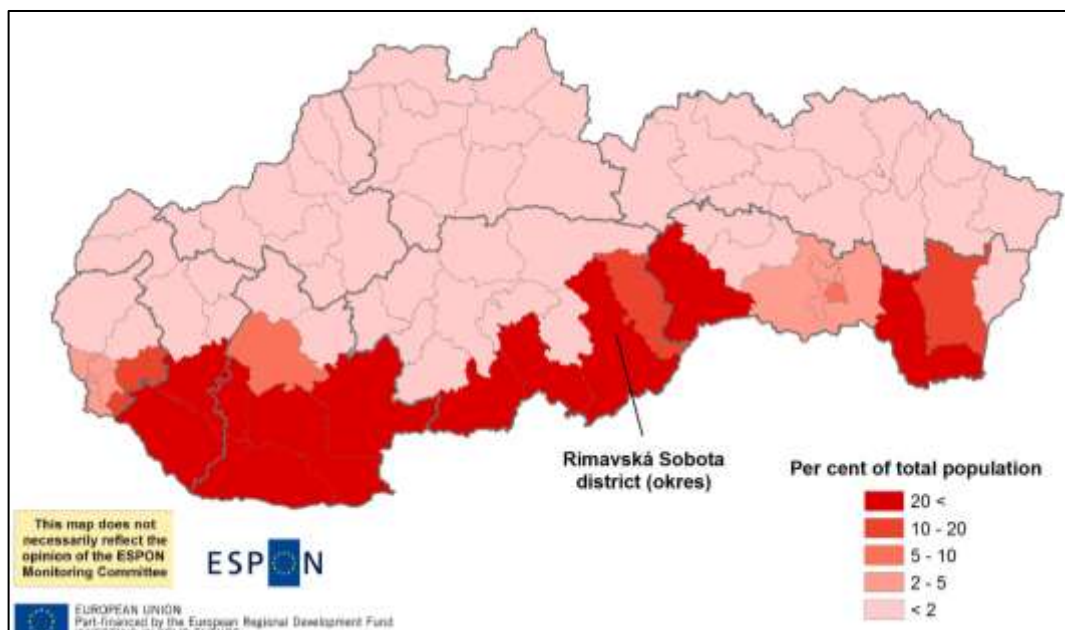
Map 4: Ratio of Hungarians by self-declared nationality, 2011



Map 5: Ratio of secondary school students, 2011

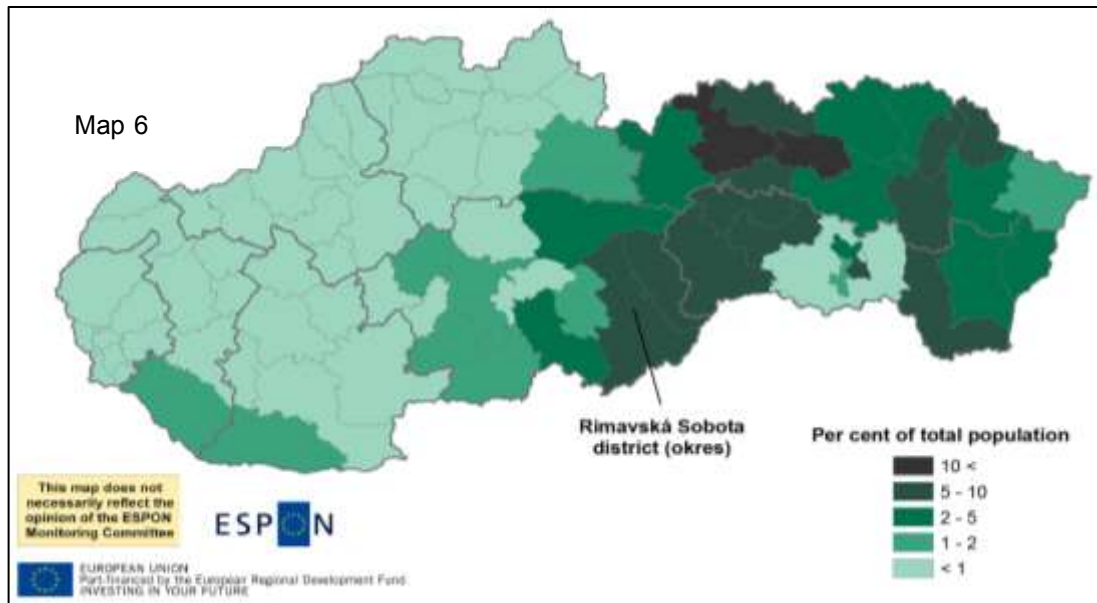


Map 6: Unemployment rate, 2011



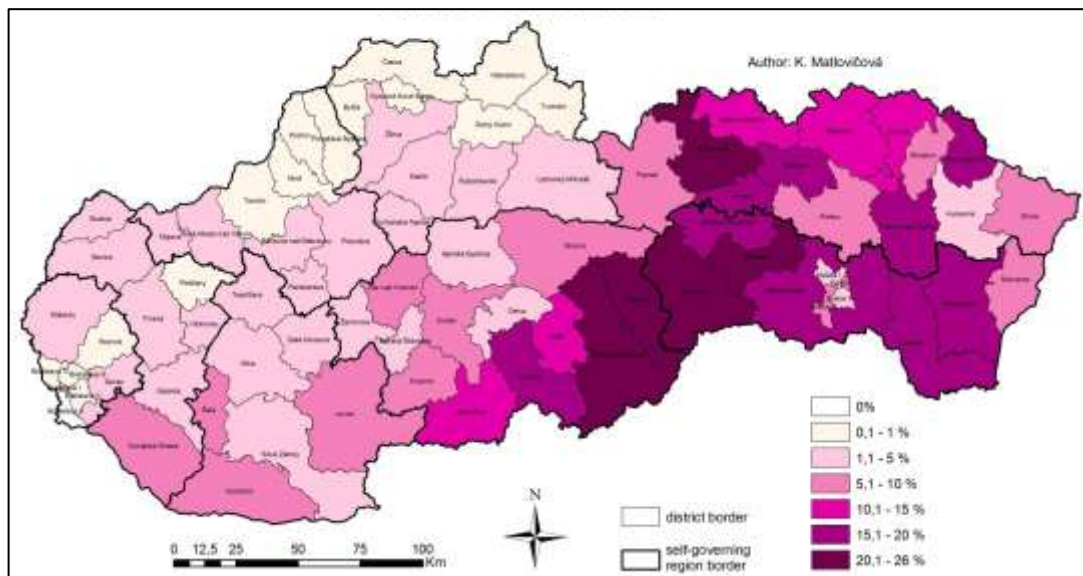
Map 7: Ratio of Hungarians by self-declared nationality, 2011

Source: 2011 Census, NSO of the Slovak Republic



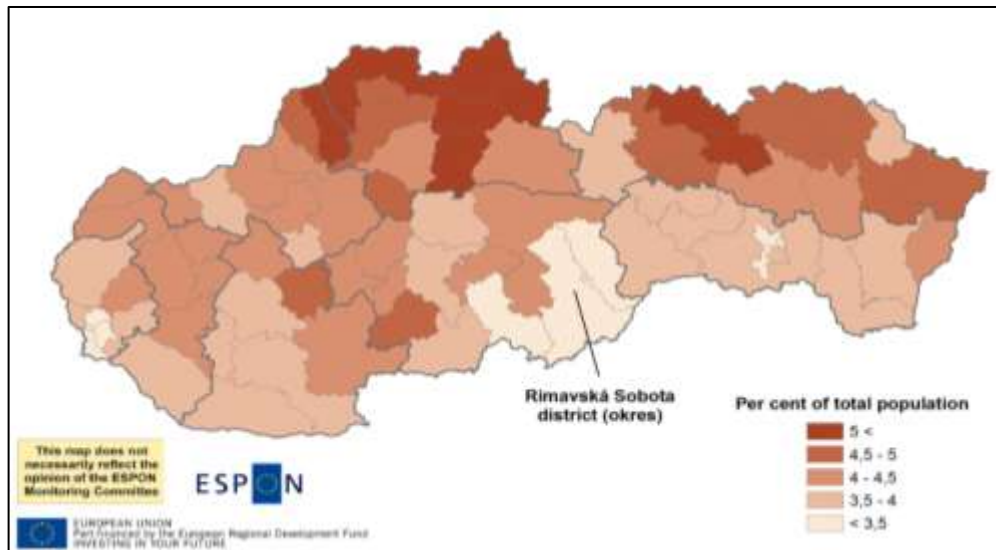
Map 8: Ratio of Romas by self-declared nationality, 2011

Source: 2011 Census, NSO of the Slovak Republic



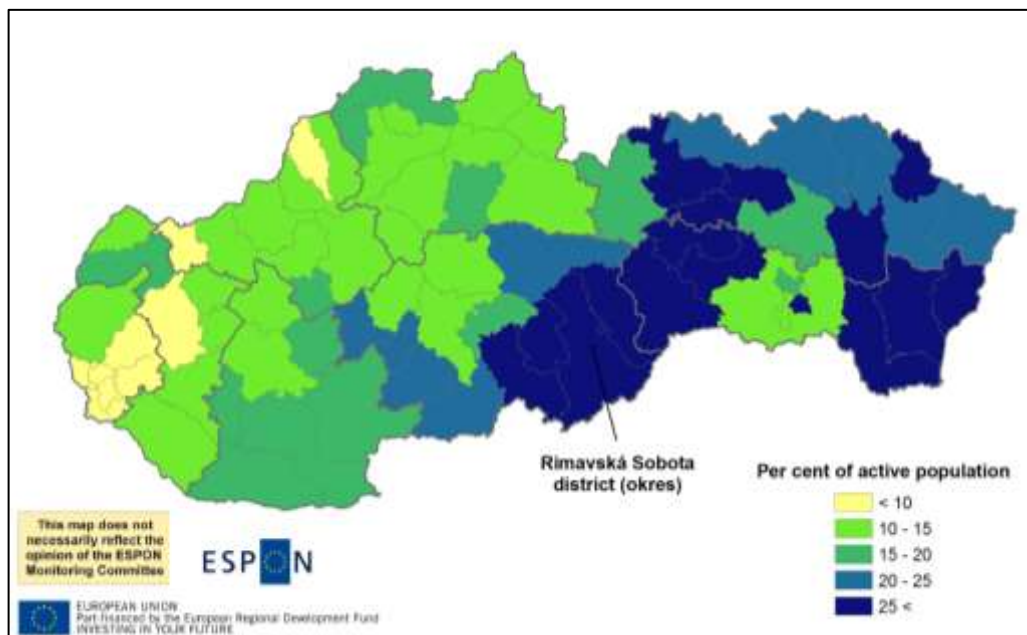
Map 9: Percentage share of the Roma in the districts of Slovakia

Source: Matlovičová et al. 2012 (qualified estimate to end of 2010)



Map 10: Ratio of secondary school students, 2011

Source: 2011 Census, NSO of the Slovak Republic



Map 11: Unemployment rate, 2011

Source: 2011 Census, NSO of the Slovak Republic

Table 13: Estimated rate of Romany population¹⁹

Okres	Kraj	Population 2011 (Census) (headcount)	Roma population, estimated (headcount)	Estimated rate of Romany population (%)	Distribution of Romany population (%)
Lucenec	Banská Bystrica	74861	11469	15%	3%
Revúca	Banská Bystrica	40400	9769	24%	3%
<i>Rimavská Sobota</i>	<i>Banská Bystrica</i>	<i>84889</i>	<i>21431</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>6%</i>
Veľký Krtíš	Banská Bystrica	45562	4197	9%	1%
Banská Bystrica		245712	46866	19%	13%
Bratislava (I-V.)	Bratislava	411228	10028	2%	3%
Kežmarok	Bratislava	70487	17102	24%	5%
Senec	Bratislava	66265	557	1%	0%
Bratislava		547980	27687	5%	8%
Košice I-IV.	Košice	240433	22284	9%	6%
Košice – okolie	Košice	119227	22922	19%	6%
Michalovce	Košice	110842	17756	16%	5%
Rožňava	Košice	63351	12978	20%	4%
Spišská Nová Ves	Košice	97593	19036	20%	5%
Trebišov	Košice	106072	17234	16%	5%
Košice		737518	112210	15%	32%
Komárno	Nitra	103995	6634	6%	2%
Levice	Nitra	115367	8008	7%	2%

¹⁹ by those LAU1 and NUTS3 units where 80% of Romany people concentrated in 2011

Nitra	Nitra	159143	4744	3%	1%
Nové Zámky	Nitra	144417	6675	5%	2%
Šaľa	Nitra	53286	2864	5%	1%
Nitra		576208	28925	5%	8%
Dunajská Streda	Trnava	116492	6719	6%	2%
Galanta	Trnava	93594	4639	5%	1%
Trnava		210086	11358	5%	3%
Prešov	Prešov	169423	16226	10%	5%
Vranov nad Topľou	Prešov	79702	14588	18%	4%
Sabinov	Prešov	57820	10696	18%	3%
Poprad	Prešov	103914	9424	9%	3%
Bardejov	Prešov	77859	9038	12%	3%
Prešov		488718	59972	12%	17%
Total (for the listed territorial units)		2806222	287018	10%	100%

Source: Ravasz, 2012, p. 14 and Matlovičová, 2012, p. 87

Table 14: Estimated rate of Romany population with Hungarian identity

by those LAU1 and NUTS3 units where a significant rate of Hungarian (and Roma) population concentrated in 2011

Okres	Krajs	Roma popula- tion (Census)	Roma population (estimated by Ravasz)	Out of which Roma of Hungarian identity	Theirshare in all Roma	Distribution of Hungarian Roma
		Headcount			%	
Lucenec	Banská Bystrica	2095	11982	7322	61%	12%
Revúca	Banská Bystrica	2538	12677	3727	29%	6%
<i>Rimavská Sobota</i>	<i>Banská Bystrica</i>	<i>5270</i>	<i>18506</i>	<i>12857</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>21%</i>
Veľký Krtíš	Banská Bystrica	469	4197	575	14%	1%
Banská Bystrica		10372	47362	24481	52%	41%
Bratislava (I-V.)	Bratislava	370	10028	872	9%	1%
Senec	Bratislava	60	557	108	19%	0%
Bratislava		430	10585	980	9%	2%
Košice (I-IV.)	Košice	4892	22284	464	2%	1%
Košice – okolie	Košice	7700	19589	2217	11%	4%
Michalovce	Košice	3956	17957	2498	14%	4%
Rožňava	Košice	3487	12962	3939	30%	7%
Trebišov	Košice	6606	17390	5845	34%	10%
Košice		26641	90182	14963	17%	25%
Komárno	Nitra	1250	6634	5629	85%	9%
Levice	Nitra	796	8008	2513	31%	4%

Nitra	Nitra	745	4744	53	1%	0%
Nové Zámky	Nitra	691	6675	2953	44%	5%
Šaľa	Nitra	407	2864	1286	45%	2%
Nitra		3889	28925	12434	43%	21%
Dunajská Streda	Trnava	1853	6719	5312	79%	9%
Galanta	Trnava	534	4639	2262	49%	4%
Trnava		2387	11358	7574	67%	13%
Total of the districts with relevant Hungarian minority		43719	188412	60432	32%	100%

Source: Ravasz, 2012, p. 14

Table 15: Access to various goods and amenities²⁰

ASPECTS	Roma	Non-Roma
Housing		
Rooms per HH member	0.63	1.40
Square meters per household member	13.69	28.01
Share of the population not having access to secure housing	32%	3%
Share of the population not having access to improved water source	38%	17%
Share of the population not having access to improved sanitation	44%	12%
Ownership of Dwelling		
Own household or family	86%	97%
Private ownership (not family)	3%	1%
Municipality	9%	1%
Unknown ownership	1%	1%
Access to various HH amenities**		
1. Radio receiver	33%	60%
2. Colour TV	88%	99%
3. Bicycle or motorbike	41%	83%
4. Car/van for private use	22%	66%
5. Horse	1%	2%
6. Computer	17%	63%
7. Internet connection	12%	55%
8. Mobile phone or landline	65%	93%
9. Washing machine	72%	97%
10. Bed for each HH member including infants	75%	97%
11. 30 and more books	18%	73%
Other indices		
Material deprivation	90%	59%
Severe material deprivation	80%	46%
Relative poverty rate (60% equalized median income)	87%	45%
Ratio of richest 20% v. poorest 20%	5,32	8,86
Financial security	9%	43%
Outstanding payments (share of people)	21%	6%
Home production	17%	40%
Malnutrition	34%	7%
Preference of living in mixed areas	72%	0%
Preferences - source of income (16-64)		
Live on social assistance with problems making both ends meet but with no particular effort	24%	11%
Have higher standards of living but working hard to earn your living	76%	89%
Preferences - source of income (16-24)		
Live on social assistance with problems making both ends meet but with no particular effort	26%	11%
Have higher standards of living but working hard to earn your	74%	89%

²⁰ of Slovakian Roma in segregated neighbourhoods and non-Roma proximity

living		
Informal work (15-64)		
Informal employment incidence	21%	5%

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey 2011

Table 16: Migration intentions, attitudes and awareness of Slovakian Roma of segregated neighbourhoods and their non-Roma proximity

ASPECTS	Roma	Non-Roma
HH migration history	3%	5%
Support from abroad	4%	1%
Migration intention	22%	14%
Migration timing		
In less than 6 months	25%	24%
In 6 to 12 months	15%	15%
In more than a year	48%	54%
I'll never move there	12%	7%
Migration targets		
Top 3 target countries Roma		
1. United Kingdom/England	41%	
2. Czech Republic	17%	
3. Germany	11%	
Top 3 target countries non-Roma		
1. United Kingdom/England		19%
2. Germany		12%
3. Austria		12%
Lifestyles and awareness		
Acceptability of bribing	12%	4%
Acceptability of getting bribes	10%	3%
Acceptability of tax evasion	9%	4%
Acceptability of stealing food	18%	7%
Acceptability of mixed marriages	50%	31%
Acceptability of positive discrimination - language support	91%	84%
Acceptability of positive discrimination – scholarships	92%	89%
Acceptability of positive discrimination - preferential acceptance in school	84%	57%
Acceptability of positive discrimination - support to employers	89%	79%
Acceptability of positive discrimination - public employment	91%	74%
Awareness of NGOs working for Roma	21%	

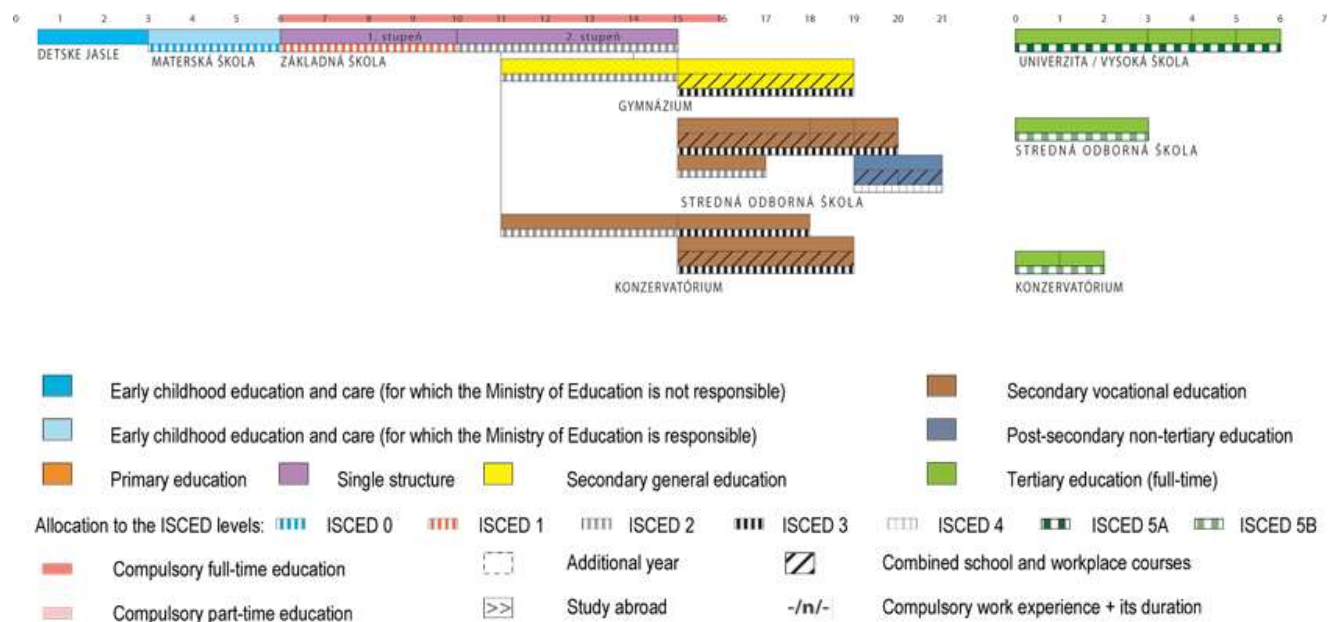
Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey 2011

Table 17: Roma and non-Roma by occupation and industry

Aspects	Employment (15-64)		Unemployment (15-64)	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
By occupation				
Owner of own business	2%	6%	1%	2%
Manager of enterprise, division	0%	3%	0%	2%
Professional	2%	12%	1%	5%
White collar, officer	1%	9%	0%	4%
Office worker	2%	9%	1%	8%
Foreman, technician	1%	3%	0%	0%
Skilled worker	20%	29%	5%	23%
Semi-skilled worker	9%	10%	8%	28%
Unskilled worker	58%	11%	77%	23%
Military	0%	0%	0%	0%
Civil servant (teacher, police, etc.)	3%	4%	0%	2%
Farmer	0%	0%	0%	0%
Landless worker	2%	1%	5%	4%
By industry				
Industry or mining	19%	19%	9%	11%
Construction	25%	15%	39%	15%
Transportation	6%	7%	2%	5%
Trade	5%	13%	10%	28%
Agriculture and forestry	8%	8%	12%	5%
Communication	0%	0%	0%	1%
Leisure services (tourism, restaurants, cafeteria, etc.)	3%	7%	8%	6%
Public utilities	25%	17%	13%	14%
Education and science	2%	5%	1%	5%
Culture and arts	0%	1%	0%	1%
Healthcare	2%	2%	1%	3%
Non-governmental sector	0%	1%	0%	1%
Finances	0%	1%	0%	0%
Police and security sphere	1%	1%	0%	1%
Other commercial services	4%	2%	4%	6%

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey, 2011

Annex 2: The national education system in Slovakia 2012/13



Source: European Commission, Eurydice Network (2013) The Structure of the European Education Systems 2012/2013

Annex 3: List of interviewed experts

	Institution	Role in dealing with poverty and/or social exclusion	Geographical/ political level	Date	Has declared willingness to work with TIPSE?
1.	Local School, Rimavská Seč	Principal, vice Principal leading a segregating school	LAU2	17 March 2013	No
2.	Local preschool, R. Seč	Principal, vice Principal leading a fully segregated preschool	LAU2	17 March 2013	No
3.	Local special school	Two teachers, teaching Roma deprived children	LAU2	17 March 2013	No
4.	Local physician	Providing health services for deprived Roma children	LAU2	18 March 2013	No
5.	Parents of children taught in the primary school of R. Seč	Two Roma and one non-Roma parent, all unemployed	LAU2	18 March 2013	No
6.	Group interview with the leader and a teacher of the afternoon school	Roma teacher and activist, founder of the local afternoon school	LAU2	18 March 2013	No
7.	Former leader of the Parents' Association	Teacher of the local segregating school	LAU2	18 March 2013	No
8.	Principal of the special school of R. Seč	Leader of a fully segregated special school	LAU2	25 March 2013	No
9.	Psychologist of the Pedagogical Service Centre Rimavska Sobota	Service provider to deprived children with learning difficulties	Centre of a catchment area	27 March 2013	No
10.	Teaching assistant in the primary school of R. Seč	The assistant works with Roma children with adaptation difficulties	LAU2	11 April 2013	No
11.	Leader of the mayor's office R. Seč	Leader of a segregating village	LAU2	11 April 2013	No
12.	Elected member of the council of R. Seč.	Leader of a segregating village	LAU2	11 April 2013	No
13.	Vice principal of the Gymnasium of Tornalja	Leader of a selective secondary school	Centre of a catchment area	17 April 2013	No

14.	Leader of a small (4-grade) school in Čakó	Leader of a fully segregated school	LAU2	17 April 2013	No
15.	Leader of a secondary school in Rimavska Sobota	The secondary school accepts many Roma children from the catchment area	Centre of a catchment area	17 April 2013	No
16.	Principal of the primary school in Klenovec	Principal of a moderately segregating school	LAU2	17 April 2013	No
17.	Leader of the social and labour office, Bátka	The office distributes the social benefits to R. Seč eligible inhabitants	Centre of a catchment area	20, April 2013	No
18.	Mayor and vice mayor of Klenovec	Mayor of a village where segregated dwellings of Roma are found	LAU2	24 April 2013	No
19.	Principal of the preschool in Klenovec	Principal, leading a segregating pre-school	LAU2	24 April 2013	No
13.	Principal of the special school in Klenovec	Principal of a fully segregated school	LAU2	25 April 2013	No
20.	Principal of the Gymnasium in Hnúšťa	Leader of a selective secondary school	Center of a catchment area	25 April 2013	No
21.	Principal of Stredná Odborná Skola Hnúšťa	The secondary school accepts many Roma children from the catchment area	Centre of a catchment area	April 2013	No
22.	Roma Institute, Bratislava	Leading Analyst	National	9. September 2013	No
23.	Office of Plenipotentiary on Roma Issues, Bratislava	Advisor	National	8. September 2013	No
24.	M. Simecka Foundation, Bratislava	Director	National	10. September 2013	No
25.	Leader of an NGO in Rimavská Sobota	The NGO deals with social development projects	LAU1	4, September 2013	Yes
26.	Leader of an NGO in Rimavská Sobota	The NGO deals with social development projects	LAU1	4, September 2013	
27.	Leader, official and social worker of Social Affairs Department of Local Council of Rimavská Sobota (3 persons)	The interviewees gave overview of the social situation in Rimavska Sobota District and in the town itself	LAU1-LAU2	4, September 2013	
28.	Leader of a Project Center in the Labour Office in Rimavska Sobota	The interviewee is being in charge of EU supported social projects	LAU1	27, November 2013	No

29.	Leader of Educational Department, social worker and official of Social Affairs Department of Local Council of Rimavska Sobota (3 persons)	The interviewees gave overview of the educational situation in Rimavská Sobota district and in the town itself	LAU1	27, November 2013	No
30.	Principal of the ghetto school of Rimavská Sobota	Principal of a fully segregated school	LAU2	27 November 2013	No

Annex 4: Ten basic pillars of the Government Plenipotentiary

1. The form and amount of welfare assistance provided by government as well as government's approach to citizens shall carefully take into account citizens' approach to their families, society and state.
2. Government shall systematically evaluate the level of risk a family constitutes to sound development of its children and shall adjust the form and degree of its intervention accordingly.
3. Government shall stipulate clear critical criteria of assessing municipalities' riskiness; as soon as these criteria have been fulfilled, government shall directly ensure performance of particular auxiliary professions (e.g. teaching assistants, social field-workers, health care assistants or police specialists) in the municipality.
4. Government cannot rely on irresponsible parents raising responsible children. Government shall ensure proper education of irresponsible parents' children before they enter primary schools.
5. Government's ambition is not to educate children that have completed compulsory school attendance but children that are employable on the labour market.
6. Government shall stipulate the minimum scope of *community* works a socially dependent citizen must perform in order to become eligible to the motivational portion of welfare benefits. Slovakia is not wealthy enough a country to hand out money to people who are fit to work.
7. Government shall adjust the social security system in order to avoid situations when not working is more profitable than going to work.
8. Government shall compensate owners of land on which it allowed emergence of illegal settlements in the past. Subsequently, the land shall be offered for identical prices to its current users whose illegal dwellings shall be removed from the land if they fail to buy the land within the set time limit.
9. Government shall not automatically disburse housing allowance to all real estate owners and tenants but only to people who respect their lawful obligations and refrain from transgressions and criminal offences, regardless of their relation to the property.
10. Government shall introduce measures aimed at taking away transgression immunity from socially dependent citizens who are currently able to perpetrate transgressions with impunity.

Source: Lajčáková and Gallová Kriglerová 2012

Annex 5: Physical barriers as a spreading tool to separate Roma (Walls)



Source: <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/members-of-a-roma-family-walk-along-the-wall-which-news-photo/107069924>

ANDROULLA VASSILIOU
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 13 August 2013

Dear Mr Raši,

I remember with great pleasure my visit to Košice last January. I was impressed with the scope and ambition of a programme that promised to be the largest cultural project in the history of Slovakia. It is therefore with a certain degree of disappointment that I have read recent press reports concerning the erection of walls intended to segregate Roma people in the very city of Košice, a city that bears the title of European Capital of Culture for 2013.

I strongly believe that the construction of physical barriers represents a breach with the values on which our European Union is founded, notably respect for human dignity and human rights, including those of people belonging to minorities. Pursuant to article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and to article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Union has always been strongly committed to fighting all forms of racism and xenophobia. And the European Commission is always ready to take action, within the remit of its competences, to reaffirm the principle of non-discrimination.

An initiative intended to achieve, or merely resulting in, segregation of populations is also at odds with the very *raison d'être* of the title of "European Capital of Culture", which seeks to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and to promote deeper mutual understanding between European citizens.

"Košice, European Capital of Culture 2013" committed to involve minorities in its programming through its strategic line *Open Public Space* and to include specific events concentrating on Roma culture. This was one of the main elements that determined the selection of the city for the 2013 title and one that must be implemented as planned in the bid.

I therefore hereby convey to you my strong concerns and ask you, as a matter of urgency, to inform me about your plans to remedy this unfortunate situation.

Yours sincerely,

Cc.: H.E. Mr Ivan Korčok
Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the EU

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