

Minority Protection in Lithuania

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE INTEGRATION
OF ROMA INTO LITHUANIAN SOCIETY 2000–2004.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004 (hereafter, “Integration Programme,” or “the Programme”)¹ aims to promote Roma integration while protecting and promoting Roma national identity. In its first stage, it focuses mostly on improving the situation of Roma living in the Kirtimai settlement in Vilnius. Additional measures to address the situation of Roma in other cities and regions are to be developed and implemented in a second phase.

The Programme does not reflect a fully comprehensive approach to minority protection; there are few concrete measures either to protect Roma against discrimination or to promote the protection and cultivation of their identity.

Background

The Integration Programme was not preceded by any similar governmental initiative; previously, the Government had undertaken only *ad hoc* efforts to address issues faced by Roma, most often in cooperation with non-governmental organisations.

Administration

Overall responsibility for coordinating Programme implementation is assigned to the Minorities Department. However, the Department does not have the competence to require implementation of Programme tasks from ministries and other State or municipal bodies; as there are no mechanisms for reporting or evaluation, it does not have a detailed overview of project activities or expenditures under the Programme, especially regarding funds allocated by local authorities.²

Responsibility for implementing Programme measures is assigned to a variety of State and local actors, in most cases the Minorities Department, Vilnius Municipality and the Ministry of Education and Science.³ Many of its most important initiatives are

¹ Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004, adopted by Government Resolution No. 759 (1 July 2000), in *Valstybės Žinios* (Government News), No. 54, 5 July 2000; see also <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfmt?C1=w&C2=104285>>, (accessed 26 September 2002). All citations in this report are from an unofficial English translation prepared for the EU Accession Monitoring Program.

² This information was compiled especially for EUMAP, see e.g. Annex A.

³ Also the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour, the Migration Department (Ministry of Interior), Vilnius Municipality, Vilnius County Administration and the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language.

being implemented by a few key NGOs,⁴ yet their formal role in relation to the Programme is unclear, blurring the line between the State and NGO sectors.

Limited funding for implementation was allocated from the 2001 State budget as well as by Vilnius Municipality, Vilnius County, and the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language.⁵ International funding and some funding from the Ministry of Education and Science was also made available for Programme measures through NGOs; some Programme measures are to be fulfilled through existing governmental programmes for the general population.

EU Support

The EU has not directly supported implementation of the Integration Programme, though it has provided financial support for NGO initiatives that are complementary to Programme measures; in some cases, these initiatives have in fact been presented as Programme measures. No information assessing expenditures and achievement of EU-funded projects was available for this report.

The 2001 Regular Report highlighted the need to pay more attention to the issue of housing. It also called for more funding for the Integration Programme and for upgrading the capacity of the Minorities Department.⁶ It did not draw attention to problems of discrimination or the need for more targeted action in the areas of unemployment, healthcare, and access to social services, nor did it reiterate the 2000 Regular Report's call for more consultation with Roma.⁷

Content and Implementation

There has been little research on the situation of Roma communities, and this posed an important obstacle to the Department's efforts to draft a comprehensive programme.

⁴ Notably the Lithuanian Children's Fund (LICF) and the Foundation for Educational Change, both of which have received EU as well as other international funding, *inter alia*.

⁵ In 2001, a total of LTL 730,605 (€207,135) was allocated for implementation of Programme measures by various governmental bodies (80 percent of the amount originally foreseen for 2001 from all sources). The exchange rate is calculated at LTL 3.5272 (Lithuanian Litas) = € 1.

⁶ European Commission, *2001 Regular Report on Lithuania's Progress Towards Accession*, Brussels, 13 November 2001, p. 23, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2001/lt_en.pdf>, (accessed 1 February 2002) (hereafter, "*2001 Regular Report*").

⁷ *2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Lithuania's Progress Towards Accession*, Brussels, 8 November 2000, p. 21, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_11_00/pdf/en/lt_en.pdf>, (accessed 15 April 2002) (hereafter, "*2000 Regular Report*").

However, the experience of Roma leaders was not utilised effectively to make up for this deficiency during the process of Programme preparation.

As a result, the Integration Programme insufficiently reflects the concerns of Roma and covers a limited number of areas only – primarily social issues and problems related to education, healthcare and migration, *inter alia*. The Programme also outlines a number of concrete measures to be implemented, and states the aim of protecting Roma identity. At the same time, however, the “linguistic, cultural and ethnic features” of Roma are identified as an obstacle to integration. Moreover, key issues for Roma leaders, such as unemployment and housing, are barely addressed, and there are no measures to combat discrimination or to promote a more positive image of Roma among the majority population.

Measures in the area of minority rights are largely limited to support for cultural activities; no measures have been proposed to support education in Romanes or teacher-training which would allow such classes to be offered in the future. However, there are plans to publish a textbook for studying Romanes, which would set the stage for further progress in this area.

There are no concrete Programme measures to promote a more active participation of Roma in public life, and Roma find it difficult to access either State or international funding sources. Training for Roma community leaders and activists in public administration as well as project management skills could bring multiple benefits, by facilitating the emergence of a group of Roma who would be capable of leading Programme implementation in the long term.

Implementation has centred on the establishment of a Roma Community Centre in Kirtimai Tabor.⁸ The Centre has offered a range of educational and cultural activities for Roma residents of the Tabor, including pre-school classes to prepare children for primary school. However, future funding for these activities is uncertain, and there have been few attempts to evaluate the initiatives taken to date with a view to extending and improving upon their results.

Mechanisms have been established to enable Roma participation in the management of the Community Centre. However, Roma community leaders still feel that most Programme measures have been decided upon without their input, and that the Programme does little to place them at the forefront of efforts to improve the situation in their communities. They have consistently and unanimously called for more active participation in designing and implementing Programme measures. In response, the

⁸ The Minorities Department emphasises that a number of the measures proposed are also intended for Roma in other parts of Lithuania.

Minorities Department has promised to involve Roma more effectively during the second stage of Programme development.

Few measures have been implemented in other areas. Though a vocational training programme for Vilnius Roma was prepared in 2001, there are no plans for implementing it. Some steps have been taken to improve conditions in Kirtimai Tabor, but there has been no progress in addressing the urgent issue of illegal construction and lack of ownership of land in the Tabor.

An initiative to provide health education for Roma is perceived as demeaning and unnecessary by Tabor residents, who point out that poor sanitary conditions are not due to lack of awareness but to lack of basic services and poor living conditions. Measures to facilitate equal access to social protection have been insufficient; many Roma lack personal documents which are necessary for the receipt of various social benefits.

Racially motivated violence is not identified as a problem in the Integration Programme and no official complaints of racially motivated violence have been registered. Police raids continue to be carried out in Kirtimai Tabor without search warrants; police claim that warrants cannot be obtained for houses that are not legally registered – which is the case for most houses in the Tabor.

There have been few governmental measures to communicate Programme goals and initiatives to the broader public, or to encourage commitment to Programme implementation among the relevant authorities. There are no media in the Romani language, and no measures to encourage mainstream media to integrate Romani perspectives more effectively. The Government should increase its efforts to ensure that State institutions, local authorities, and the public at large are informed about the Integration Programme and its aims and goals, to ensure that its measures are well-received.

Conclusion

Though the adoption of the Integration Programme constitutes an important signal of the Government's intention to bring about improvements in the situation of Roma, most State authorities remain unconvinced that it is needed; in the absence of sufficient political will, funding has been minimal, and progress on implementation has been slow. The Minorities Department has faced difficulties in winning cooperation from bodies tasked with responsibilities under the Programme, and there has been little coordination to ensure that the realisation of discrete projects complements and contributes to overarching Programme goals and objectives.

The Programme itself is in need of review and revision to ensure more effective integration of the perspectives and viewpoints of Roma, and to begin the process of developing a comprehensive, long-term strategy that will provide opportunities for Roma throughout Lithuania to take the lead in addressing the issues faced by their communities.

2. THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME – BACKGROUND

The “Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004” (hereafter, “Integration Programme” or “the Programme”) was adopted on 1 July 2000.⁹ The Programme was developed by the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad (hereafter, “Minorities Department”) on the basis of a recommendation of the Seimas Committee on Human Rights.¹⁰

The Integration Programme represents the first governmental attempt to address the situation of Roma in a comprehensive and systematic manner. It appears to have been motivated, at least in part, by the aspiration to address EU concerns about the situation of Roma in Europe.¹¹

2.1 Background to Present Programme

Prior to the adoption of the Integration Programme, some *ad hoc* initiatives had been undertaken to address issues faced by the Roma community¹² – principally in Kirtimai “Tabor”¹³ in Vilnius – by the Minorities Department, the Ministry of Education and Science (hereafter, “Ministry of Education”), and NGOs.

An NGO project launched in March 2000 can be considered a precursor of the Roma Community Centre which was later supported by the Government under the Programme (see Section 3.2.1).

⁹ Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004, adopted by Government Resolution No. 759 (1 July 2000), in *Valstybės Žinios* (Government News), No. 54, 5 July 2000; see also <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfmt?C1=w&C2=104285>>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

¹⁰ Weekly agenda of the Plenary meetings of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 14 June 1999, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/preps2?Condition1=82742&Condition2=>>, (accessed 16 March 2002).

¹¹ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 1.

¹² The size of Lithuania’s Roma minority is estimated at about 3,000. See Integration Programme, p. 2; see also EU Accession Monitoring Program, *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, September 2001, p. 342 (hereafter, “*Minority Protection 2001*”). The results of a new population census conducted in 2001 are expected in Autumn 2002. See also Section 3.2.3.

¹³ From the Lithuanian word “taboras” referring to a large group of Gypsies. Kirtimai Tabor consists of three sections: the Upper Tabor, the Lower Tabor and the Tabor of Rodunės road; it is located in an industrial area of Vilnius.

2.2 The Programme – Process

In December 1999, the Government acknowledged that special efforts to improve the situation of Roma were necessary, as they “have specific problems which are not experienced by other ethnic minorities;” the Minorities Department and four other ministries were tasked with the preparation by mid-2000 of a programme to promote the integration of Roma.¹⁴

On 14 March 2000 a draft programme was presented to the Government. In the course of preparation, the Minorities Department consulted broadly with a number of ministries¹⁵ as well as with the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, the Migration Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Vilnius County Administration, Vilnius Municipality and the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. None of the institutions which interact directly with residents of Kirtimai Tabor were consulted.¹⁶

Little comprehensive research was available for the purpose of developing the Programme (see Section 2.3) and the Minorities Department did not make up for this deficiency by consulting with Roma representatives and the full range of civil society organisations.¹⁷ Thus, the concerns and perspectives of Roma were not taken into account when establishing priority areas for action and developing measures.¹⁸

The Roma Community Union “Roma Mission” protested the manner in which the Programme was adopted,¹⁹ and the Minorities Department subsequently announced

¹⁴ Government Resolution No. 1497 (28 December 1999) “On the Ratification of Measures for the Implementation of the 1999–2000 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania,” *Valstybės Žinios*, No. 114-3316, 1999, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/preps2?Condition1=93237&Condition2=romų>>, (accessed 16 March 2002).

¹⁵ The Ministry of Public Administration Reform and Local Authorities, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour, and the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Health was consulted but did not participate in drafting the Programme. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Economy were not consulted.

¹⁶ E.g. Vilnius School No. 58, Naujininkai Police, Naujininkai Passport Division, Vilnius Municipal Health Division, and the Naujininkai Primary Healthcare Centre.

¹⁷ See also *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 338.

¹⁸ *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 337–339.

¹⁹ Letter No. 3-02-27 dated 26 June 2000 from A. Kasparavičius, President of Roma Mission, to V. Landsbergis, Seimas Chairman; Letter No. 3-02-39 dated 2 August 2000 from A. Kasparavičius, President of Roma Mission, to the Minorities Department. See also the 21 July 2000 Declaration of Roma NGOs of Lithuania to Prime Minister Kubilius; and the Declaration of the Fifth World Roma Congress to Prime Minister Kubilius and President Adamkus, 26 July 2000 (all on file with EUMAP).

that Roma organisations would be invited to participate in developing measures to be implemented in a second stage.²⁰

2.3 The Programme – Content

The Integration Programme aspires to be comprehensive; it aims to encourage integration while protecting Roma ethnic identity. However, it does not address either discrimination or minority rights to a sufficient extent.

The Programme focuses initially on the situation of Roma in Vilnius, on the basis of a judgement that the living conditions there are the worst and on the fact that Vilnius-based organisations had already received funding for a Roma community centre.²¹ Activities are to be expanded beyond Vilnius in a second stage.²²

Roma representatives have suggested that it would have been preferable to address the entire Roma community from the outset.²³ The Government has pointed out that measures to improve the situation of Roma in other parts of the country are to be developed and implemented in a second stage, and that the Programme also contains a number of measures that promote integration for Roma more generally, without distinction to where they live.²⁴

The Integration Programme identifies problems in the social sphere as well as in relation to education, healthcare, and migration, and enumerates specific measures to be taken in these areas, as well as to support “preservation of ethnic identity.”²⁵ Though the Programme identifies a number of “other problems” such as “a preconceived hostile attitude towards Roma,” poor knowledge of the Roma culture

²⁰ Letter No. 1-01-684 dated 31 July 2000 from the Minorities Department to V. Landsbergis, Seimas Chairman, and A. Kasparavičius, President of Roma Mission, in response to Letter No. 23-6693 dated 18 July 2000 from the Seimas.

²¹ Letter No. 1-01-684 dated 31 July 2000.

²² Integration Programme, Chapter VIII “Stages of Programme Implementation,” pp. 6–7.

²³ Interviews with the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, the Chairman of Bachtalo Drom, the Representative for Lithuania in the Parliament of the International Romani Union, a member of the Council of Roma Mission and member of the Honorary Court of the International Romani Union, the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation in Lithuania, and the Director of the Kaunas Roma Information Bureau, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

²⁴ Letter No. 1-01-684 dated 31 July 2000.

²⁵ See Implementation Measures of the Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004 (hereafter, “Implementation Measures”), adopted by Government Resolution No. 759 (1 July 2000).

among the majority, and stereotyping in the media,²⁶ there is no corresponding section in the annex listing specific measures to be implemented to deal with these problems.

Roma assert that the failure to consult with them during the process of preparing the Programme is evident in the language it uses as well as in its content and approach. For example, Roma leaders identify housing and employment as the most pressing issues for their communities. Though the Programme does mention these problems, neither is addressed in detail, but rather in the context of other “social problems,” such as lack of personal documents, poverty, and criminality, and no specific remedial measures are proposed.²⁷ By contrast, the Integration Programme identifies drug-peddling and addiction as “[o]ne of the most painful problems among Roma, especially among those living in Vilnius [...]”²⁸

Roma claim that consultation could have helped prevent a number of factual inaccuracies in the Programme. For example, it states that “[Roma] only started to live in a settled manner during the 1970s;”²⁹ Roma claim that some Roma had settled already prior to World War II, and that many others were forced to settle starting in 1956.³⁰ Furthermore, the Programme asserts that “most Roma can speak only the Russian language;”³¹ according to Roma leaders, the mother tongue of the majority of Lithuanian Roma is Romanian.³² The Programme often generalises the situation of Roma in referring to the situation of Roma in Kirtimai Tabor, although some authorities acknowledge that the situation in the Tabor is not necessarily replicated elsewhere in the country.³³

Finally, the absence of input from Roma is also evident in the Programme’s perspective and tone. Though the Programme proposes to implement measures to preserve Roma identity, it identifies the “linguistic, cultural and ethnic features” of Roma as obstacles to integration.³⁴ Though it acknowledges that hostile attitudes towards Roma may

²⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter VII “Other Problems,” p. 6.

²⁷ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” pp. 4–5.

²⁸ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” pp. 4, 5.

²⁹ Integration Programme, Chapter I, “Introduction,” p. 1.

³⁰ On the basis of Resolution No. 552 of the Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers of 17 November 1956 “On Labour Involvement of Vagabond Gypsies,” *Chronological Collection of Laws of the Lithuanian SSR, Decrees of the Supreme Soviet Presidium and Resolutions of the Government*, State Publishing House of Political and Research Literature, Vilnius, 1956, pp. 584–585.

³¹ Integration Programme, Chapter IV “Education Problems,” p. 5.

³² Most Roma also speak Russian or Lithuanian as a second language.

³³ Interview with the General Director of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

³⁴ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 1.

affect their ability to find employment,³⁵ it stops short of acknowledging discrimination or stipulating measures to address discriminatory behaviours.

As a result of these shortcomings, the Programme is not well accepted within the Roma community.

2.4 The Programme – Administration/Implementation/Evaluation

The Minorities Department, which bears the principal responsibility for coordinating the Programme, has not been given the necessary competence to do so effectively; the lack of an effective reporting and monitoring mechanism has made it difficult for the Department to compile a detailed overview of the status of Programme projects or expenditures. Funding from the State budget has been in line with projects under the Programme, but appears to be insufficient to achieve full implementation of Programme goals.

The Programme assigns responsibility for implementing its different measures to a variety of State bodies: the Minorities Department, Vilnius Municipality, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour, the Migration Department (Ministry of Interior), the Head of Vilnius County Administration, the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, and the State Language Commission.³⁶

Programme responsibilities are not always clearly defined. In many cases, more than one actor is mentioned without any indication of who bears overall responsibility. Several NGOs are also implementing projects in line with the objectives and measures stipulated in the Programme, with funding from the EU and other sources; though these NGOs are not assigned formal responsibility for measures under the Programme,³⁷ the Minorities Department appears to consider their activities as part of the governmental effort.³⁸

³⁵ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

³⁶ Implementation Measures.

³⁷ For example, the LICF supports some of the activities of the Roma Community Centre with EU funds; yet, only the Minorities Department and Vilnius Municipality are named in relation to the Centre and its activities. See Implementation Measures. However, the LICF is mentioned as one of the actors involved in overall Programme implementation in the text of the Programme itself. Integration Programme, Chapter IX “Implementation and Coordination of the Programme,” p. 7.

³⁸ Interview with the Deputy Director and the Senior Specialist of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 20 March 2002.

The Minorities Department bears overall responsibility for coordinating Programme implementation.³⁹ Accordingly, the Department formed a coordination working group in Autumn 2001. The group has 15 members, 12 of whom are experts appointed by various State institutions and three are NGO representatives – including two from Roma organisations.⁴⁰ In practice, the working group has met infrequently and not all members seem to be involved.⁴¹

Moreover, neither individual working group members nor the Department itself appear to have the capacity to compel effective implementation or reporting. For example, Vilnius Municipality reports not to the Department but to the Ministry of Interior and other ministries;⁴² allegedly, cooperation has been difficult.⁴³ As members are not the heads of their institutions, they have little capacity to influence other divisions within their own institutions.

The Mayor of Vilnius has established a separate working group for coordinating Programme implementation,⁴⁴ *inter alia*, at the request of the Minorities Department.⁴⁵

Funding

The Programme states that financing is to be provided “by the national budget [...] non-governmental organisations, and also by international organisations and

³⁹ Integration Programme, Chapter IX “Implementation and Coordination of the Programme,” p. 7.

⁴⁰ Interview with the Deputy Director and the Senior Specialist of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 20 March 2002. The Director of the LICF is also a member of the coordination working group.

⁴¹ Two meetings were held in 2001; not all members knew that they were part of the group yet or had participated in one meeting only. Interviews with: the Methodologist/Inspector of the Education Division of Vilnius Municipality, Vilnius, 25 March 2002; the Deputy Director of the Passport Division of the Migration Department, Ministry of Interior, Vilnius, 26 March 2002; and the President of Roma Mission, Kaunas, 29 March 2002.

⁴² See Government Resolution of 8 November 2000, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfint?C1=w&C2=159067>>, (accessed 10 August 2002); see also the Law on Local Self-Governance (1994, last amended on 30 June 2002), *Valstybės Žinios*, No. 55-1049.

⁴³ Interview with the Head of the Minorities Division, Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

⁴⁴ Decree No. 492V (16 July 2001) of the Mayor of Vilnius “On the Formation of a Work Group for the Execution of the Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004.” As of 18 April 2002, there was no head of the work group.

⁴⁵ Letter No. 3-10-206 dated 4 April 2001 from R. Motuzas, General Director of the Minorities Department, to A. Zuokas, Mayor of Vilnius.

foundations.”⁴⁶ The Ministry of Finance is requested to secure funding for Programme measures as possibilities permit, on the basis of annual budgets presented by various implementing institutions.

The Minorities Department has made it a practice to address various State and local actors during the preparation of the annual budget, reminding them to set aside funds for the implementation of measures under the Programme.⁴⁷

No State funding was allocated for implementation of the Programme in 2000, as it was approved during the second half of the year. In 2001, funding from the State budget was roughly in line with what was planned, though this level of funding is rather low.⁴⁸ For 2002, LTL 157,000 (€44,511) has been made available for some of the activities of the Roma Community Centre from various governmental sources,⁴⁹ and Vilnius Municipality is also expected to contribute (see Section 3.2.1). No information is available on governmental funding of the Integration Programme in 2002 more generally.

The Minorities Department also funds several initiatives which are not specifically stipulated in the Programme, including the construction of a laundry and shower

⁴⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter IX “Implementation and Coordination of the Programme,” p. 7.

⁴⁷ Interview with the Head of the Minorities Division, Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

⁴⁸ In 2001, a total of LTL 730,605 (€207,135) was allocated for Programme measures by various governmental bodies (about 80 percent of the planned budget for 2001). The Minorities Department allocated LTL 601,100 (€170,418) (see Annex A); Vilnius municipality contributed LTL 119,705 (€33,938) for the maintenance of the Roma Community Centre and the installation of water pumps (interview with the First Vice Mayor of Vilnius, Vilnius, 25 March 2002 and information provided by the water utility company “Vilniaus Vandens” on 18 June 2002); Vilnius County Administration – LTL 4,000 (€1,134) (interview with the Director of the LICF, 28 March 2002 and with the Specialist of the Education Division of Vilnius County Administration, Vilnius, 25 March 2002); the Lithuanian Language Commission – LTL 1,400 (€397) (telephone interview with the Senior Programme Coordinator of the Lithuanian Language Commission, 19 June 2002. LTL 4,400 (€1,247) was also provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection through Vilnius Municipality to pay for meals for children attending the pre-school classes (interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002).

⁴⁹ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

facility in Kirtimai Tabor and the renovation of a building for the use of a Roma NGO in Kaunas.⁵⁰

Roma organisations may apply for funding from the Minorities Department for projects that are carried out under the Programme's component on "Preservation of Ethnic Identity;" these proposals are evaluated together with applications from other minorities, which are also funded by the Department. Five elected members of the Council of National Communities play an advisory role in the process of project selection; the Roma representative on the Council is not among them, although he participates in selecting those five members.

Roma leaders are critical of the fact that few Roma are active participants in Programme implementation; most projects for Roma are not developed or led by Roma. They feel that the absence of Roma participation leads to projects which do not reflect the needs and interests of their communities, and which may do little to change negative perceptions of Roma as the passive beneficiaries of governmental assistance. Roma leaders unanimously call for a more active role in Programme implementation.⁵¹

Monitoring and evaluation

The Integration Programme lacks a centralised mechanism for monitoring and evaluating implementation of its various components. Some implementing bodies have collected information on their own activities and expenditures, but no public report on overall implementation had been prepared by the Minorities Department as of mid-2002. Information on the results of the various measures taken to date is incomplete, not easily available or not up-to-date.

Moreover, the reports of the various implementing bodies often do not indicate activities for Roma separately, or whether they were implemented within the context of the Integration Programme. For example, a report of the Ministry of Education on activities realised in 2001⁵² provides information on the goal of "supporting education

⁵⁰ LTL 100,000 (€28,351) has been allocated to date, and the Department has committed to fully fund renovation and to contribute to maintenance. Letter No. 3-03-92 from S. Vidtmann, Deputy Director of the Minorities Department, to the Mayor of the City of Kaunas, 15 February 2001.

⁵¹ Interviews with the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, the Chairman of Bachtalo Drom, the Representative for Lithuania in the Parliament of the International Romani Union, a member of the Council of Roma Mission and member of the Honorary Court of the International Romani Union, the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation in Lithuania, and the Director of the Kaunas Roma Information Bureau, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

⁵² 2001 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education and Science, at http://www.smm.lt/Bendr_info/smm_atask_02.doc, (accessed 26 September 2002).

initiatives through the Foundation for Educational Change,” which appears to include measures for which the Ministry is responsible under the Integration Programme, although this is not specified (see Section 3.2.1).

There are no common accounting guidelines for reporting expenditures under the Programme, and executing bodies are not required to submit such information to the Minorities Department. Some actors, such as Vilnius Municipality, do not distinguish in their reports between expenditures under the Programme and other municipal initiatives which may also benefit the Roma minority.⁵³ The Board of the Roma Community Centre does not prepare any evaluation reports. Executing bodies are not required to submit information to the Minorities Department on how much they have allocated for measures of the Programme. As a result, the Minorities Department does not have an overview of sources of funding for various measures or of Programme expenditures, apart from its own.⁵⁴

2.5 The Programme and the Public

The Integration Programme is little known among the Roma community or the general public and is rarely presented in the media.

The Minorities Department has not developed a coordinated public relations strategy to ensure regular communication of information about Programme goals and activities. Roma leaders claim that the Government has not done enough to express clear support for the Programme.⁵⁵

⁵³ Interview with the First Vice Mayor of Vilnius, Vilnius, 25 March 2002.

⁵⁴ This information was gathered by EUMAP by requesting data from different institutions responsible for executing components of the Integration Programme, and from members of the coordination working group of the Minorities Department (see Annex A). Information on funding allocated for 2002 was also requested but had not been received as of 6 August 2002. The Minorities Department reports only about its own expenditures in its Annual Report. See Section 1.2 “Support for the integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society,” 2001 Annual Report of the Minorities Department, 26 February 2002, at <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfmt?C1=w&C2=165800>>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

⁵⁵ Interviews with the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, the Chairman of Bachtalo Drom, the Representative for Lithuania in the Parliament of the International Romani Union, a member of the Council of Roma Mission and member of the Honorary Court of the International Romani Union, the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation in Lithuania, and the Director of the Kaunas Roma Information Bureau, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

The adoption of the Programme was announced on national television and in the national press.⁵⁶ The media has not covered implementation systematically, but a number of articles on the establishment of the Roma Community Centre and its activities have appeared in national dailies. Some presented this initiative and the Roma community in a negative light,⁵⁷ while others presented the concerns of the Roma community more sympathetically.⁵⁸

Awareness of the Integration Programme among the Roma community, even among Roma representatives⁵⁹ and direct beneficiaries, is very low.⁶⁰ Tabor residents appear to be aware of some of the measures taken under the Programme, but not that these form part of a broader governmental programme.

The Minorities Department has taken some steps to disseminate information on the activities of minority NGOs through the publication of a regular newsletter,⁶¹ which

⁵⁶ G. Vitkus, "Valdžia ketina keisti čigonų gyvenimą" (Authorities intend to change the life of Gypsies), *Lietuvos Aidas*, 4 July 2000, p. 9; see also R. Grumadaitė, "Čigonams – valstybės globa" (For Gypsies – State care), *Lietuvos Rytas*, 22 June 2000, pp. 1, 2; A. Andriuškevičius, "Skurdas nutildė čigonų dainas" (Poverty has silenced Gypsy songs), *Kauno Diena*, 27 June 2000, pp. 1, 4.

⁵⁷ One article about the establishment of the Roma Community Centre in Kirtimai Tabor included the following statement: "Already earlier a conclusion was drawn that Gypsies had to be beckoned to school by material offers: free food and clothing, and that is also intended to be done through the establishment of the Gypsy Community Centre." D. Babickas, "Čigonai – busimi profesoriai" (Gypsies – Future Professors), *Sostinė (The Capital)* (Supplement of *Lietuvos Rytas*), 10 March 2001, p. 3. See also: R. Parafinavičius, "Čigonai nori mokytis" (Gypsies want to study), *Lietuvos Žinios (Lithuanian News)*, 10 September 2001, p. 5; M. Peleckis, "Čigonai nori uždaryti jiems pastatytą visuomeninį centrą" (Gypsies want to close the Community Centre built for them), *Respublika*, 5 October 2001, p. 18.

⁵⁸ Some articles quoted Roma leaders on the poor level of collaboration with the Minorities Department and their doubts about the Programme's selected priorities, emphasising the need to implement measures for the entire Roma community of the country. See e.g. A. Andriuškevičius, Poverty has silenced Gypsy songs, pp. 1, 4.

⁵⁹ Interviews with: the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 25 March 2002; and the President of Roma Mission, Kaunas, 29 March 2002.

⁶⁰ Interviews with residents of Kirtimai Tabor, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

⁶¹ The quarterly "Informational Newsletter of the National Communities" has a circulation of 200 copies which are distributed to each of the 200 minority organisations.

has featured articles on the Roma Community Centre.⁶² However, the newsletter does not appear to be broadly known among Roma leaders.⁶³

2.6 The Programme and the EU

The EU has not directly supported implementation of the Integration Programme as the protection of minorities is not considered a priority area for Phare funding in Lithuania.⁶⁴ However, some EU funding has been allocated in support of NGO projects to benefit the Roma community, mainly in the area of education and also healthcare; some of these projects support broader Programme objectives.

For example, the Lithuanian Children's Fund (LICF) and the French NGO "*Un Enfant par la Main*" received funding under the 1999 and 2000 Phare LIEN Programmes to support activities for Roma in Kirtimai Tabor, including the establishment of the Roma Community Centre.⁶⁵ The Foundation for Educational Change (FEC) received funding under the 1999 European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Programme for a project to mentor Roma pupils.⁶⁶

An assessment of the effectiveness of EU support is difficult to make as no public report is available on project implementation or expenditures. The European Commission Delegation provides information on recipient organisations, but not about specific projects supported or amounts of funding provided; there are no public reports on EU support for Roma projects in Lithuania.⁶⁷

⁶² See for example, J. Rumša, "*Atidarytas Romų centras*" (The Roma Centre has opened), *Tautinių Bendrijų Informacinis Biuletenis*, (Informational Newsletter of the National Communities) No. 4, July–September 2001, p. 8.

⁶³ Interviews with: the Chairwoman of Nevo Drom, Vilnius, 18 March 2002; a representative of Lithuania in the International Romani Union, the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, a member of the Council of Roma Mission, Vilnius, 20 March 2002; and the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 6 May 2002.

⁶⁴ See e.g. the 2001 Accession Partnership at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2001/aplt_en.pdf, (accessed 26 September 2002).

⁶⁵ Interview with the Director of the LICF, Vilnius, 28 March 2002.

⁶⁶ See 2001 Annual Report of the Foundation for Educational Change, <http://skf.osf.lt/Ataskait2001.doc>, (accessed 12 August 2002).

⁶⁷ Information provided by the Public Relations Administrator of the Information Centre of the Delegation of the European Commission to Lithuania, via e-mail, Vilnius, 25 March 2002.

No Roma NGOs have been recipients of EU funds. Many lack staff with experience in the preparation and administration of project proposals; many lack the funding to retain permanently employed staff at all. Roma representatives also claim that it is difficult to obtain information on available funding and applications procedures. The Delegation would perform an important service if it provided targeted outreach and training support in these areas to Roma organisations in particular, and civil society organisations more generally.

The European Commission has not yet evaluated implementation of the Integration Programme; it has, however, noted the difficult situation of Roma in its 2001 Regular Report, emphasising that “much more attention” should be paid to the issue of housing; it has also called for more State funding as well as for an increase in the capacity of the Minorities Department in order to improve effectiveness of minority programmes generally.⁶⁸ While the European Commission had previously called for increased consultation with the Roma community,⁶⁹ it did not assess progress on this point; nor did it draw attention to problems of discrimination, or the need for more targeted action in the areas of employment, healthcare and access to social services.

3. THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME – IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Stated Objectives of the Programme

The goals of the Integration Programme are to create the conditions for the integration of Roma into majority society and to provide for the protection and cultivation of Roma ethnic identity “by taking into account the specific conditions of their lives.”⁷⁰

To achieve these goals, the Programme proposes to: implement a national policy for Roma integration; take effective measures to promote equal opportunities for Roma and other inhabitants of the country; promote tolerance and a more positive image of Roma through efforts to provide information about Roma culture and history; and

⁶⁸ European Commission, *2001 Regular Report on Lithuania's Progress Towards Accession*, Brussels, 13 November 2001, p. 23, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2001/lt_en.pdf>, (accessed 1 February 2002) (hereafter, “2001 Regular Report”).

⁶⁹ *2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Lithuania's Progress Towards Accession*, Brussels, 8 November 2000, p. 21, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_11_00/pdf/en/lt_en.pdf>, (accessed 15 April 2002) (hereafter, “2000 Regular Report”).

⁷⁰ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 2.

encourage Roma integration at the national and municipal levels through cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations.”⁷¹

The first stage of the Programme, which is principally designed to benefit Roma in Vilnius, aims to achieve the following:

- Establishment of a “Roma Community Centre;”
- Guidance for school-age children;
- Improvement of social conditions;
- Access to primary healthcare;
- Promotion of cultural activities.⁷²

The goals of the second stage are “to prepare and implement measures for improvement in the situation of Roma living in other towns and regions of Lithuania.”⁷³ Implementation of the second stage has not yet begun.

3.2 Government Programme and Discrimination

The Integration Programme recognises the existence of negative societal attitudes toward Roma, noting that “[a] preconceived hostile attitude towards Roma has still not been overcome [...]. Frequently, persons of their ethnicity are regarded as potential criminals.”⁷⁴ However, no specific measures are proposed to counter these perceptions.

Moreover, the Integration Programme does not acknowledge that negative attitudes may lead to discriminatory behaviour, and thus proposes no specific measures to combat discrimination or to promote equal opportunities. In fact, Roma themselves appear to be held responsible for the slow pace of integration.⁷⁵

Rather, the Programme proposes “to take effective measures to form equal opportunities for Roma *and other inhabitants of the country* to participate in the life of society (emphasis added).”⁷⁶ This reflects the concern that positive measures on behalf

⁷¹ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 2.

⁷² Integration Programme, Chapter VIII “Stages of Programme Implementation,” pp. 6–7.

⁷³ Integration Programme, Chapter VIII “Stages of Programme Implementation,” pp. 6–7.

⁷⁴ Integration Programme, Chapter VII “Other Problems,” p. 6.

⁷⁵ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 1.

⁷⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 2.

of Roma could provoke a backlash from socially disadvantaged segments of the majority population.⁷⁷

High level Government officials responsible for minority protection deny that Roma face discrimination.⁷⁸ The Office of the Seimas Ombudsman has not received any complaints of discrimination from Roma.⁷⁹ The Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Human Rights and the General Director of the Minorities Department also state that they have not received any complaints of discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds from Roma.⁸⁰

On the other hand, Roma leaders report that discrimination is an everyday experience, and discriminatory attitudes towards Roma have also been identified by some employees of public institutions and domestic NGOs.⁸¹ They criticise the Programme for its lack of measures to enhance legal protection against discrimination and violations of human rights.⁸² In fact, a recent review of Lithuanian legislation in

⁷⁷ Integration Programme, Chapter VII "Other Problems," p. 6. See also Section 3.2.3.

⁷⁸ Telephone interview with the Head of the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office, Vilnius, 12 April 2002; telephone interview with the Senior Specialist of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 15 April 2002. Also, in 2000, the General Director of the Minorities Department submitted a report at an international meeting on Roma issues where he stated that: "racist persecutions, discrimination or intolerance cases were recorded neither in Soviet period, nor in independent Lithuania." R. Motuzas, General Director, Minorities Department, "Situation of Roma Minority in Lithuania," paper presented at a Roundtable Meeting of the Council of Europe, Tallinn, 24 November 2000, p. 1. See also Section 3.2.2.

⁷⁹ Letter No 01-100 dated 22 April 2002 from the Head of the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office to E. Kučinskaitė. The annual reports of the Seimas Ombudsmen do not cover the situation of Roma.

⁸⁰ Interviews with: the Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Human Rights, Vilnius, 29 July 2002; and the General Director of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

⁸¹ Interview with the Director of the Centre for Dependency-Related Illnesses, Vilnius, 8 April 2002; see also the Roma Pupils Mentoring Programme of the Foundation for Educational Change, EIDHR, Microprojects Compendium 2000, pp. 4–5.

⁸² Interviews with the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, the Chairman of Bachtalo Drom, the Representative for Lithuania in the Parliament of the International Romani Union, a member of the Council of Roma Mission and member of the Honorary Court of the International Romani Union, the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation in Lithuania, and the Director of the Kaunas Roma Information Bureau, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

comparison with the EU Race Equality Directive has concluded that such measures are necessary.⁸³

3.2.1 Education

The Programme places a priority on improving access to education for Roma, focusing on the problems of absenteeism, low school attendance, and high drop-out rates.⁸⁴ It attributes these problems principally to the “non-traditional way of life of Roma,⁸⁵ though poverty, insufficient knowledge of Lithuanian, early marriage for girls, and lack of motivation are also identified as factors. The Programme asserts that “children living in other social environments could achieve better results at school.”⁸⁶

A number of Programme measures aim to create a positive learning environment for Roma children at the Community Centre in Kirtimai Tabor. Other measures are intended to help overcome disadvantages in the area of education more generally. Most activities implemented in 2001 and the first half of 2002 have been connected with the Roma Community Centre, and have relied heavily on NGO involvement and external funding. Attendance rates at the Centre’s pre-school and Lithuanian language classes have been rather low, and funding for necessary textbooks and other school materials was insufficient.

There have also been initiatives to improve school attendance and performance by establishing separate classes for Roma children at School No. 58 in Vilnius.⁸⁷ Roma leaders have expressed ambivalent attitudes towards this initiative; while the measure does appear to have improved attendance levels, some assert that establishing separate classes for Roma is not an appropriate means of doing so.⁸⁸

⁸³ T. Baranovas, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation. A comparison of the EU Racial Equality Directive & Protocol No. 12 with anti-discrimination legislation in Lithuania*, European Roma Rights Center/Interights/Migration Policy Group, Budapest/London/Brussels, September 2001, <<http://www.migpolgroup.com/uploadstore/Lithuania%20electronic.pdf>>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

⁸⁴ Integration Programme, Chapter IV “Education Problems,” p. 5. See also *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 321–322.

⁸⁵ Integration Programme, Chapter IV “Education Problems,” p. 5.

⁸⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter IV “Education Problems,” p. 5.

⁸⁷ For more on prior initiatives in the area of education, see *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 322–323.

⁸⁸ Interview with the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

The Roma Community Centre

The Minorities Department shares formal responsibility for the establishment of the Roma Community Centre with Vilnius Municipality. In practice, the Centre, which was inaugurated in September 2001,⁸⁹ has been constructed and operates as part of a collaborative effort with an NGO.

Most of the planned budget of the Integration Programme for 2001 was related to construction of the Community Centre.⁹⁰ It is jointly managed by its four founders: the Minorities Department, Vilnius Municipality, the LICF and the Roma Community Organisation "Gypsy Bonfire," through a Board of nine persons (two from each founding organisation and the Director of the Centre). Five of the Board members are also members of the Minority Department's coordination working group for the Integration Programme.⁹¹

Roma have been appointed to several positions of responsibility at the Centre: the President of "Gypsy Bonfire" serves as Chairman of the Board and five of the 12 employees of the Centre are of Roma origin, including the Deputy Director (the Deputy President of Gypsy Bonfire). However, representatives of Gypsy Bonfire claim that they have not been sufficiently informed about the Centre's activities and plans,⁹² and that the original intention to serve the entire Tabor community has not been achieved.⁹³

A "Council of Observers" was established by the Board of the Roma Community Centre in March 2002 in an effort to strengthen Roma participation in Centre activities; it consists of seven Roma representatives

⁸⁹ The Centre is the property of the Government (Minorities Department), while the land on which it was built was leased by Vilnius Municipality to the LICF free of charge for construction of the Centre with the right to use it for 99 years. The legal status of the Centre is that of a public institution.

⁹⁰ Planned construction costs represented nearly 20 percent of the total budget for 2000–2004, and 75 percent of the budget for 2001. LTL 450,000 (€127,580) was allocated by the Government. One-third of overall construction expenses was covered through non-governmental sources, with support from a coalition of Dutch foundations. Information provided by the Director of the LICF, Vilnius, 19 July 2002.

⁹¹ Two representatives of the Minorities Department, the Chairman of Gypsy Bonfire, a methodologist of the Education Division of Vilnius Municipality, and the Director of the LICF.

⁹² Interview with the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 13 August 2002.

⁹³ Most residents of the Upper Tabor participate in the activities of Gypsy Bonfire and of the Roma Community Centre. The Chairman of the Board has also made efforts to involve unofficial Roma leaders and activists from the Lower Tabor in the Centre's activities; the Lower Tabor is also represented on the Board and Council of Observers (see below).

nominated by Gypsy Bonfire. The Council's task is to increase awareness of the Centre's work among the Tabor's Roma community.⁹⁴

Future funding for the Roma Community Centre is uncertain and the Centre is expected to apply for additional project money from external sources to cover its staff salaries and activity costs. Vilnius Municipality earmarked LTL 161,600 (€45,815) to cover salaries in 2002.⁹⁵ However, according to the First Vice Mayor, this amount will be provided only if an equivalent amount is received from the State budget.

LTL 157,000 (€44,511) was allocated for education activities under the Programme in 2002;⁹⁶ LTL 233,000 (€66,058) had been foreseen. No funds had been allocated by Vilnius Municipality for activities in 2002 as of July 2002.

Pre-school education

An EU-funded educational project for Roma children⁹⁷ served as a precursor to the Roma Community Centre. As part of this project, 21 Roma children began attending a pre-school class in September 2000 at School No. 58, a school which is located outside the Tabor, and which uses Russian as the language of instruction.⁹⁸ According to the school's principal, those Roma children who

⁹⁴ The Council of Observers is also supposed to sit in on Board meetings. As of July 2002, it had not yet been able to attend, as the Board had last met in May 2002. The Board meets less frequently than it did in the past.

⁹⁵ Summary of the 2001–2004 Programme Objectives, Tasks and Budget, Strategic Action Plan of Vilnius Municipality for 2002–2004, 1 March 2002, <<http://www.vilnius.lt/new/vadovybe.php?open=135>>, (accessed 22 March 2002).

⁹⁶ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

⁹⁷ "Roma Problems: Social Integration," leaflet from an international workshop, Vilnius, 10–11 January 2002, organised by the Project "Kirtimai Roma Community Centre," Un Enfant Par La Main and LICF; supporters: Minorities Department and Vilnius City Municipality; funding: EU (Phare).

⁹⁸ This initiative covered only a portion of Vilnius' school-age Roma population. A total of 94 Roma children were studying at School No. 58 during the 2001/2002 school year at various levels in integrated classes as well as in one separate class taught in Lithuanian. All receive free meals. Interview with the Principal of School No. 58, Vilnius, 19 March 2002. Roma children had previously attended this school in integrated classes only: three Roma children attended in 1986/1987; three between 1989 and 1995; nine in 1996/1997; 13 between 1997 and 1999; and 28 in 1999/2000. See Appendices No. 2 and 3 to the presentation of the Principal of School No. 58, "Artistic training is a factor of integration into the culture of the country," Vilnius, 22 January 2001 (unpublished). There are also Roma children attending other schools in Vilnius.

have received pre-school education are more motivated and achieve better results than those who have not.⁹⁹

This project was continued in 2001/2002 at the newly-established Roma Community Centre; in line with the measures outlined in the Integration Programme, two pre-school classes were launched in September 2001; the two teachers of the pre-school classes also organise cultural activities and excursions.¹⁰⁰ Classes are taught primarily in Lithuanian, but a Roma teacher's assistant has also served as an interpreter. According to the Director, the aim is to integrate Roma children from the Tabor into Lithuanian-language elementary classes.¹⁰¹ The teachers who work at the Centre also attend a Romani language course at Vilnius University.

According to the Director of the Centre, attendance has been a problem. Only 18 of the 26 children enrolled completed pre-school classes in the 2001/2002 school year.¹⁰² Following testing organised by the Municipal Division of Education in Spring 2002, about 50 percent of these children were recommended for elementary school.¹⁰³ Thus, only about 35 percent of the children who started the classes will move on to first grade.

While some of the parents interviewed were satisfied with the classes and activities at the Centre, as well as at School No. 58, they emphasised that harsh living conditions, especially in the winter, makes education a secondary concern. Lack of transportation to School No. 58 (and other schools) also makes school attendance difficult.¹⁰⁴ Some parents said they were reluctant to allow their children to go to school unaccompanied, as drug-users are known to frequent the Tabor.¹⁰⁵ Finally, though the children in pre-school classes have been

⁹⁹ Interview with the Principal of School No. 58, Vilnius, 19 March 2002.

¹⁰⁰ In 2001, the Minorities Department allocated LTL 45,000 (€12,760) for four months of activity; Vilnius Municipality also contributed LTL 40,000 (€11,340). Phare funding helped cover staff costs through March 2002. Main Roma Community Centre 2002 Organisational Plan, Appendix to Minutes of Meeting No. 4, of the Board, 23 January 2002.

¹⁰¹ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

¹⁰² Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

¹⁰³ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

¹⁰⁴ Apparently, there is no administrative basis for making the State programme of school transportation for rural children available within Vilnius. During the 2000/2001 school year, the LICF covered transportation costs to the pre-school class at School No. 58.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with residents of Kirtimai Tabor, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

learning Lithuanian, most will attend the Russian-language School No. 58;¹⁰⁶ at present their numbers are not enough to form a Lithuanian-language class at the school.¹⁰⁷

Some parents have requested the establishment of a first grade class at the Centre.¹⁰⁸ However, this option has not been pursued, as the Centre is not equipped to meet schooling requirements; moreover, the aim of the Programme is to integrate Roma children into classes at regular schools.¹⁰⁹

Lithuanian language classes for adults

The Centre planned to offer Lithuanian language courses to four groups of approximately 45 students; in October 2001, two groups were formed for about 20 students of different ages. EU funding covered the costs of one group (through the LICF), and the Lithuanian Language Commission the other; the Language Commission has provided funding for 2002 as well.¹¹⁰

Attendance has also been a problem in regard to these classes. It is not known how many of the students who registered actually completed the classes. The aim of these courses was not clearly defined, which may have contributed to low interest. However, they may have been intended to enhance employment opportunities by improving Lithuanian language skills.¹¹¹ Also, the courses have not been linked directly with employment training or counselling, which may be another factor contributing to low motivation.

Other initiatives

In addition, a number of *ad hoc* educational initiatives are identified under the Programme, such as recreational camps, the purchase of textbooks and school

¹⁰⁶ Some parents actually prefer their children to attend School No. 58, as their siblings are already enrolled there. Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

¹⁰⁷ A minimum of 20 children is needed to establish a Lithuanian language class according to the 2001 bilingual education project for minority schools of the Ministry of Education and Science.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of Meeting No. 5 of the Board of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 20 March 2002. Interview with the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 3 August 2002.

¹¹⁰ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

¹¹¹ Interviews with: the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 25 March 2002; and the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

materials,¹¹² and teacher-training. The Programme also proposed the development of a concept of education for Roma. The Minorities Department also supported the organisation of a Sunday school class for Roma children in Kaunas,¹¹³ as a Roma NGO project complementary to Programme goals.

The FEC implements many activities that are directly or indirectly linked to the Integration Programme, some independently, and some with Government funding. In some cases, governmental bodies appear to consider the FEC's activities as the equivalent of State action to implement the Programme.¹¹⁴ For example, though the Ministry of Education is assigned responsibility for organising teacher-training courses under the Programme, it has not implemented any measures in this area; however, in 2002 it did provide full funding for a number of workshops for teachers organised by the FEC.¹¹⁵

The Programme proposes to develop a "concept of education for the Roma of Lithuania,"¹¹⁶ though this is not identified as a specific measure to be implemented. As part of an initiative to develop a "Concept of Ethnic Policy of Lithuania," the Minorities Department has established a working group to prepare a "concept of education of ethnic minorities" by the end of 2002, on the basis of which a separate concept for Roma is to be developed; no Roma

¹¹² No Government funding was provided for this purpose in 2001, though the FEC allocated LTL 47,798 (€13,551), and estimates that this provided for about 70 percent of Roma pupils. However, Roma representatives claim that lack of textbooks and school supplies is a persistent problem among Roma communities. According to the Director of the Community Centre, there is a lack of adequate textbooks, methodologies and training materials for the Centre's pre-school classes. Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

¹¹³ This is an initiative of the Roma NGO Nevo Drom. The Sunday school, which offers mathematics, Lithuanian language classes and art classes, is attended by about fifteen Roma teenagers and youth who have not attended any school previously or have dropped out. The Minorities Department provided LTL 2,400 (€680) in 2001 and the same amount in 2002, under Section V of the Implementation Measures "Preservation of Ethnic Identity."

¹¹⁴ Interview with the Deputy Director and the Senior Specialist of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 20 March 2002. Also, the Ministry of Education and Science is one of the founders (and funders) of the Foundation for Educational Change (the Open Society Fund–Lithuania/OSFL is the other founder).

¹¹⁵ The FEC also realised a number of initiatives for teachers in 2001 as part of the "Support for Roma Pupils" programme, with funding from the EU and the OSFL. Information provided by the Director of the FEC, via e-mail, on 10 April 2002, and in an interview in Zubiškės (Jonava district), 28 July 2002.

¹¹⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter IV "Education Problems," p. 5.

representatives have been directly involved in this working group thus far.¹¹⁷ In preparing this programme, the experience of pre-school preparatory classes and other educational initiatives should be taken into account. Moreover, a broad range of Roma representatives, parents, and community leaders should be consulted and involved directly in the preparation of specific initiatives to improve the situation for Roma at all levels of education.

In implementation of the new Concept, Government partnership with expert civil society organisations should be encouraged; however, the State should assume primary responsibility for implementation of the Concept and for efforts to improve access to education for Roma more generally.

3.2.2 Employment

A chapter on “Social Problems” identifies lack of education, job qualifications and training as key causes of widespread unemployment among Roma, and points out that many experience difficulties in arranging the necessary documents to set up their own businesses.¹¹⁸ The Programme states that, in these conditions, Roma are prone to “conditions for illegal work or involvement in criminal activities are formed.”¹¹⁹ However, only one measure has been proposed to address these problems – a vocational training programme; furthermore, while some funding is foreseen for its development, no provision has been made for implementation of the actual programme.¹²⁰

There are no official data on unemployment among Roma,¹²¹ or on the percentage who are not officially registered at the Labour Exchange, which does not keep ethnic

¹¹⁷ The working group consists of two members from the Minorities Department, two experts, and one representative of the Russian minority. Other persons are also being consulted, such as the Coordinator of the Council of National Communities. The Concept will be placed on the website of the Minorities Department once it is ready. Interview with the Head of the Minorities Division, Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

¹¹⁸ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

¹²⁰ Comments on the Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004 and Its Implementation Measures, Appendix No. 5 to the Letter dated 3 August 2000 from Roma Mission to the Seimas Committee on Human Rights.

¹²¹ However, a Government-sponsored survey conducted in May 2000 indicated that members of ethnic minority groups are at higher risk of unemployment. Government Resolution of 8 May 2001 “On the Confirmation of the Programme for Increased Employment 2001–2004,” Point 2.4.1: Formation of a labour market that is accessible to everyone, *Valstybės Žinios*, No. 40-1404, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfmt?C1=w&C2=132114>>, (accessed 16 March 2002).

statistics. However, as most Roma from the Tabor are registered under one address, it is possible to determine from records at the Labour Exchange that many Roma are not registered.¹²² According to the Programme “[e]ven those [...] who are registered at the labour exchange do not get unemployment benefits because usually they have no record of employment.”¹²³ Unemployment benefits are only available for persons who have worked no less than 24 months during the preceding three years,¹²⁴ and social support is linked to so-called “public benefit jobs.”¹²⁵

While it acknowledges that “[e]ven those [Roma] who do have [a speciality] are unemployed because it is especially difficult for Roma to compete in the labour market due to negative public attitudes towards them,”¹²⁶ the Programme does not acknowledge the problem of discrimination in the labour market explicitly.

State officials also maintain that discrimination is not an issue. For example, the Head of the Seimas Committee on Human Rights stated in a recent interview that the problems faced by Roma in the sphere of unemployment are similar to the problems experienced by non-Roma, asserting that many Roma are “unable to work,” and that they “need to want to work.”¹²⁷ The General Director of the Minorities Department acknowledged that the State has done little to provide employment opportunities for Roma, but added that “Roma do not like to work.”¹²⁸

¹²² A total of 122 persons from this address had registered as unemployed since the beginning of 2000 when the electronic database of Vilnius Labour Exchange was started. By the end of April 2002, only 25 were still registered. Only six of the 122 found employment, and only three of those had been trained under programmes offered by the Labour Exchange. Information provided by the Head of the Information System Management Division of Vilnius Labour Exchange, Vilnius, 11 April 2002.

¹²³ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

¹²⁴ Government Resolution No. 836 (14 July 2000) “On the Partial Amendment of Resolution No. 441 of 17 April 2000 ‘On Regulations for the Granting and Payment of Social Welfare Benefits’,” *Valstybės Žinios*, No. 58-1736, 19 July 2000, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/preps2?Condition1=105324&Condition2=>>, (accessed 18 April 2002). Earlier, an unemployed person had the right to social protection after six months of being registered as unemployed.

¹²⁵ An unemployed person acquires the right to six months of support after completing a two-month contract for a public benefit job or for jobs supported by the Employment Fund. This support is cancelled if the person refuses to do these jobs, attends a training course, and/or accepts the work that is proposed. However, labour exchanges offer only a limited number of public benefit job opportunities; Vilnius Labour Exchange was able to propose public benefit jobs for about every ninth registered unemployed person in 2001.

¹²⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

¹²⁷ Interview with the Head of Seimas Committee on Human Rights, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

¹²⁸ Interview with the General Director of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

Occupational Training Programme

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority (LLMTA)¹²⁹ was tasked under the Programme with developing a “Programme of Vocational Training and Employment for Vilnius Roma,” together with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. The budget foreseen for this measure is very small,¹³⁰ and no funds have been allocated. The same task is also mentioned in the Programme for Increased Employment 2001–2004, intended for the whole population.¹³¹

Accordingly, experts of the LLMTA prepared a draft Vocational Training Programme in Autumn 2001, with the following objectives:

- Informing the Vilnius Roma community about the labour market situation and employment opportunities;
- Preparing short-term training programmes for Roma in order to improve their employment opportunities.¹³²

In preparing the Vocational Training Programme, LLMTA experts asked Roma representatives to select training interests from a list of professions;¹³³ they were not asked for their opinions as to what kind of measures would be needed to promote employment. The Vocational Training Programme was submitted on 18 April 2002 to the Ministry of Education and was under review by the Ministry of Labour as of August 2002. It is not clear whether and when it will be implemented. Furthermore, the general Employment Programme explicitly

¹²⁹ The LLMTA at the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour is a national agency responsible for developing vocational training and job counselling programmes and for coordinating their implementation. For more information about the LLMTA, see <<http://www.lmrmt.lt>>, (accessed 8 April 2002).

¹³⁰ LTL 10,000 (€2,835) for 2001, and the same amount for 2002, to cover, *inter alia*: professional orientation and consultations for Roma, licensed programme expertise, and “adaptation” costs of programmes. LLMTA, Draft Programme for Vocational Training and Employment of Vilnius Roma, 5 October 2001.

¹³¹ Government Resolution of 8 May 2001 “On the Confirmation of the Programme for Increased Employment 2001–2004,” Point 2.4.1: Formation of a labour market that is accessible to everyone (hereafter, “Employment Programme, Point 2.4.1”), *Valstybės Žinios*, No. 40-1404, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfint?C1=w&C2=132114>>, (accessed 16 March 2002).

¹³² LLMTA, Draft Programme for Vocational Training and Employment of Vilnius Roma, p. 2.

¹³³ Information provided by the Specialist of the Curriculum Division of the LLMTA, Vilnius, 10 April 2002. The selected professions include: tree trimmer and grass mower; motorised loader operator; electric loader operator; cleaner; and nursing assistant, *inter alia*.

rejects the possibility of employing affirmative action measures or quotas¹³⁴ and does not clearly link training to employment opportunities.

The general Employment Programme contains other measures aimed at ethnic minorities. For example, the Department of Statistics was asked to prepare an analysis of the employment situation of minorities in 2002, and the Ministry of Labour was asked to develop proposals for improving their employment prospects. No further information on either of these initiatives was available for this report.

Roma representatives have been particularly critical of the Programme for its lack of a strategy to tackle unemployment – an area they consider a priority. Comprehensive measures should be developed in close consultation with Roma communities, clearly linking training to the possibility of employment. Roma should be encouraged to register with the Labour Exchange by providing them with information about how doing so can work to their benefit. Legal assistance and counselling should be made available to Roma entrepreneurs who wish to establish their own businesses.

3.2.3 Housing and other goods and services

Housing

In the chapter on “Social Problems,” the Programme identifies housing as “one of the most sensitive problems,” highlighting the fact that many Roma have not been able to obtain legal ownership of land or houses in the Tabor, due to lack of personal documents and permanent jobs. The Programme acknowledges that some of the dwellings in Kirtimai Tabor “could meet current requirements and could be legalised,”¹³⁵ but it proposes no measures for doing so.

The Second Vice Mayor of Vilnius has emphasised that a generalised housing shortage is affecting the population as a whole, making it difficult to adopt special measures to benefit Roma in particular.¹³⁶ Most Roma do not qualify for housing loans, as only families with a steady, legal source of income higher than the minimum wage are eligible. Moreover, according to Roma leaders, many Roma are not aware of application procedures for municipal housing.¹³⁷ In practice, then, most Roma living in the Tabor have few practical alternatives for seeking better housing elsewhere.

¹³⁴ Employment Programme, Point 2.4.1.

¹³⁵ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

¹³⁶ Interview with the Second Vice Mayor of Vilnius, Vilnius, 31 July 2002.

¹³⁷ Interview with representatives of Bachtalo Drom and Roma Mission, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

The Programme does propose to improve living conditions and basic infrastructure in Kirtimai Tabor by ensuring regular garbage removal and providing a water pump as well as a pay telephone booth.¹³⁸

Improving conditions in Kirtimai Tabor

The extremely difficult living conditions at the Tabor¹³⁹ have not improved significantly as a result of Programme implementation, although residents admit that some progress has been achieved.¹⁴⁰ In line with Programme measures, Naujininkai district officials arranged for five garbage containers to be installed, and a new water pump was installed (and another repaired) in 2001; Kirtimai now has five working pumps to serve its approximately 500 inhabitants.¹⁴¹ Costs were covered by the water utility company, the State Energy and City Economy Department and the LICF. The plan to install a public telephone booth was not realised because it was considered too expensive.

According to the Minorities Department, discussions with Vilnius Municipality have been initiated regarding steps to resolve the ownership of Tabor land; by the end of 2002, planning will be completed, on the basis of which plots will be legalised and renovations will take place.¹⁴² The First Vice Mayor of Vilnius stated that legal issues represented a significant barrier to improving conditions in the Tabor, and claimed that the resolution of these issues would require decisions at higher political levels.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Section II "Social Issues," Implementation Measures.

¹³⁹ Very few houses in the Tabor have proper heating, running water, or indoor plumbing; the water drainage and sewage system is poor to non-existent; streets are not paved, and are littered with used syringes and other refuse.

¹⁴⁰ Interviews with residents of Kirtimai Tabor, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

¹⁴¹ According to the preliminary data of the 2001 Census, there were 428 persons living in 72 houses at Kirtimai Tabor. Interview with the Head of the Naujininkai District Office, Vilnius, 19 March 2002. The official number of Roma in Lithuania registered during the 2001 Census of Population and Households was 2,571 persons, <http://www.std.lt/Surasymas/Rezultatai/PDF/Tautybes_e.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

¹⁴² Interview with the General Director of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002. The General Director emphasised that lack of funding and low priority of the issue may impede implementation, and expressed the hope that EU structural funds could be allocated for this purpose.

¹⁴³ The residents of the Tabor would have little chances of winning a public tender for privatisation of land lots due to the fact that these are in great demand in Vilnius, and are therefore expensive. Interview with the First Vice Mayor of Vilnius, Vilnius, 25 March 2002.

Roma representatives have criticised the lack of measures to resolve the issue of illegal housing and of land ownership, and assert that measures proposed to improve conditions in the Tabor are insufficient.¹⁴⁴ Clearly, political will to improve the situation significantly by removing legal barriers to land ownership and access to affordable municipal housing is necessary – but has been lacking to date.

Other goods and services

The Integration Programme does not deal with the issue of equal access to public goods and services. The delivery of public utilities services to the inhabitants of Kirtimai Tabor is sporadic and uncertain, and depends largely on ongoing mediation by Roma representatives¹⁴⁵ as well as by the Minorities Department. Individual electric meters have been installed in homes and higher amounts are currently being charged to all families to pay off the accumulated debts of the Tabor.¹⁴⁶

3.2.4 Healthcare and other forms of social protection

Healthcare

The Programme highlights health problems such as tuberculosis and other respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases, as well as a lower life expectancy,¹⁴⁷ which it attributes to “difficult material and household conditions”¹⁴⁸ and insufficient education about hygiene.¹⁴⁹ Residents of the Tabor assert that they experience difficulties accessing certain healthcare services, such as dental care,¹⁵⁰ but there is little official data to provide more detailed information. In fact, the Programme acknowledges that lack of

¹⁴⁴ Comments on the Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004 and Its Implementation Measures, Appendix No. 5 to the Letter dated 3 August 2000 from Roma Mission to the Seimas Committee on Human Rights.

¹⁴⁵ See e.g. Letter No. 631-92 dated 15 March 2002 from Rytų Skirstomieji Tinklai Company (the utility distribution network) to J. Tyčina, President of Gypsy Bonfire; see also Letter dated 19 February 2002 from Vilniaus Vandenyys (the municipal water utility company) to J. Tyčina, President of Gypsy Bonfire, regarding a contractual arrangement.

¹⁴⁶ As of 10 April 2002, the Tabor’s electricity debts totalled LTL 153,088 (€43,402).

¹⁴⁷ Integration Programme, Chapter V “Problems of Healthcare,” pp. 5–6.

¹⁴⁸ Integration Programme, Chapter V “Problems of Healthcare,” p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ According to the text of the Programme, “a number of Roma do not have the simplest habits of sanitary hygiene.” Integration Programme, Chapter V “Problems of Healthcare,” p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with residents of Kirtimai Tabor, 18 March 2002.

data impedes effective implementation of disease-prevention programmes¹⁵¹ and that Roma face obstacles to access to healthcare services.¹⁵²

Three health-related measures are proposed under the Programme: organising primary and secondary healthcare for Roma without social health insurance; providing training on health and hygiene issues for Roma; and implementing a drug-abuse prevention and treatment programme at the Tabor.¹⁵³

Healthcare for Roma without insurance

This task has not been implemented. According to the Minorities Department, most Tabor inhabitants already receive social welfare benefits or are registered with the Labour Exchange and have social health insurance.¹⁵⁴ However, Exchange statistics suggest that this may not be the case (see Section 3.2.2).

Naujininkai Primary Healthcare Centre (hereafter, “PHC”), which serves the territory of Kirtimai Tabor, did not receive any additional funding under the Integration Programme to provide healthcare services to Roma. Nonetheless, a general practitioner (GP) and a pediatrician were recruited to serve the Tabor community and to carry out an immunisation programme.¹⁵⁵ The Director of the Roma Community Centre proposed that a dispensary should be established at the Centre, but the idea did not win support from the Municipality.¹⁵⁶

Education on hygiene issues

No Government funds were allocated for this measure. However, as part of its EU-funded project, the LICF provided support for the designated GP and pediatrician from the Naujininkai PHC to engage in supplementary activities, including home visits. In the opinion of some Roma leaders, poor sanitation is due to the lack of basic services and poor living conditions rather than poor hygiene; some also consider this measure demeaning.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Integration Programme, Chapter V “Problems of Healthcare,” p. 6.

¹⁵² If unemployed persons are not registered at the labour exchange, they are excluded from social welfare support and therefore social security health insurance. Healthcare for children under 18 is free. See also *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 323.

¹⁵³ Section III “Health Protection,” Implementation Measures.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with the Deputy Director and the Senior Specialist of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 20 March 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with the Deputy Director of Naujininkai PHC, Vilnius, 19 March 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with the President of Roma Mission and a member of the Council of Roma Mission, Kaunas, 20 March 2002.

Drug prevention and treatment programmes

In June 2001, Vilnius Municipality started a “Blue Bus” programme for AIDS prevention among intravenous drug users; this initiative was continued in 2002. The programme was not implemented as part of the Integration Programme but as an independent initiative of Vilnius Municipality.¹⁵⁸ However, as the bus serves different parts of Vilnius, including the Tabor, it does reach a small number of Roma.¹⁵⁹

A number of other projects have also targeted drug-users in the Tabor. Prior to the adoption of the Integration Programme, in Autumn 1995, the Vilnius Centre for Dependency-Related Illnesses launched a programme in response to concerns about the danger of HIV infection from intravenous drug use of inhabitants of Kirtimai Tabor who were not using its services. According to the Director of the Centre, Roma who came to use its services were abused and insulted by other drug-users.¹⁶⁰ A GP from the Naujininkai PHC was also recruited for an AIDS prevention programme in which 37 persons of Roma origin participated from 1996 to 1998.¹⁶¹

Other initiatives

Preparations are underway for the construction of a “hygiene centre” next to the Roma Community Centre, which is to offer laundry and shower facilities for a

¹⁵⁸ Interview with the Head of the Health Division of Vilnius Municipality, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

¹⁵⁹ A total of 899 people of Vilnius had used this service by the end of its first month in 2001 but only four to six percent of daily visitors were estimated to be Roma by the medical staff. “Pirmasis ‘Mėlynojo autobusiuko’ programos mėnuo pranoko jos vykdytojų lūkesčius” (The first month of the ‘Blue Bus’ Programme surpassed expectations of executives), website of the Lithuanian Association of Dependency Psychiatry, <<http://www.lppa.lt/vnc/autobusiukas2.html>>, (accessed 3 April 2002). About 30 Roma from the Tabor, aged 16 to 22, had used the programme’s services in 2002 (as of April). Information provided by the Head of the Social Assistance and Prevention Division of the Centre for Dependency-Related Illnesses, Vilnius, 9 April 2002.

¹⁶⁰ The Centre operates under Vilnius County Administration with funding from Vilnius Municipality. Interview with the Director of the Centre for Dependency-Related Illnesses, Vilnius, 9 April 2002.

¹⁶¹ The GP estimated that this number represented about 70 percent of the Tabor’s Roma who were using intravenous drugs. Interview with the Director of the Centre for Dependency-Related Illnesses, Vilnius, 9 April 2002; see also E. Subata and Y. Tsukanov, “The Work of General Practitioners Among Lithuanian Roma in Vilnius: Incorporating Harm Reduction into Primary Medical Practice,” *Journal of Drug Issues* 29(4), Fall 1999, pp. 805–806.

small fee. Funding for the centre is to be fully provided by the Minorities Department.¹⁶²

Social protection

As noted above, many Roma are not eligible for unemployment benefits (see Section 3.2.2). In addition, the Integration Programme acknowledges that social welfare allowances (LTL 80 to 90 per month, €23 to 25) are extremely low.¹⁶³ Most Tabor residents receive social welfare payments.

Receipt of certain social benefits is contingent upon proof of familial relationship; this causes difficulties for residents of the Tabor, who lack necessary documents such as certificates, etc. Residents have lost social benefits as a result of their inability to prove marriage, parenthood, or registration at the Labour Exchange,¹⁶⁴ *inter alia*. Many residents claim to have lost benefits in the early months of 2002; some believe that this may be a result of surveys conducted by various authorities in the Tabor in Autumn 2001 (see below).¹⁶⁵

Three Programme measures indirectly address access to social protection: the employment of social workers; a sociological survey; and a measure to put personal documents in order.

Social work

At the request of the Minorities Department, the Deputy Director of the Roma Community Centre works as a social worker for the Tabor on a part-time basis, presumably in fulfilment of the Programme measure “to establish a service of special teachers and social workers and to ensure their activities.”¹⁶⁶ The Deputy Director received no special training in social work as preparation for this task; his work consists principally of acting as an intermediary for residents at the

¹⁶² Interviews with: the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002; the General Director of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

¹⁶³ Integration Programme, Chapter III “Social Problems,” p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ Letter No. 10-08-510 from the Director of the Social Support Department of the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour on behalf of the social support divisions, 23 January 2002.

¹⁶⁵ In Autumn 2001, information was collected from Tabor residents by officials from the Naujininkai District of Vilnius, the local police, and the Passport Office, as well as by interviewers conducting a sociological survey. Information collected by the police was also submitted to the Social Welfare Office. Interviews with: residents of Kirtimai Tabor, Vilnius, 18 March 2002; and the Chief Commissioner of the Naujininkai Police Division, Vilnius, 19 March 2002.

¹⁶⁶ Section I “Education,” Implementation Measures.

municipal Social Welfare Office, the Passport Division and other institutions. There are no other social workers working in the Tabor.¹⁶⁷

Sociological study

In line with the Programme,¹⁶⁸ the Minorities Department commissioned a sociological study from the Institute of Labour and Social Research on the situation of Roma living in the Tabors. 151 heads of families were interviewed for the survey in September 2001; they were asked questions on a broad range of issues, including family size and structure, birthplace, nationality, employment, sources and structure of income, school attendance, viewpoints on education, knowledge of Lithuanian, media used, participation in community work, frequency of use of medical services, and perceived level of integration in Lithuanian society.¹⁶⁹ The results of the study and recommendations were published¹⁷⁰ and presented at an international workshop.¹⁷¹

Although it is clear that lack of information about Roma communities presents an obstacle to the development of more effective public policies in a wide range of areas, Roma leaders have expressed concern about the aims of the study,¹⁷² and about the way in which it was carried out. According to residents, interviewers were accompanied by a police officer or an employee of Naujininkai District; in some cases, in order to ensure the accuracy of the information,

¹⁶⁷ The LICF (Phare Lien) project funded the employment of a student of the Pedagogical University as a social worker for the Tabor from March 2001 until March 2002, although information on the results of his work was not available for this study. Interview with the Director of the LICF, Vilnius, 28 March 2002.

¹⁶⁸ Section II "Social Issues," Implementation Measures.

¹⁶⁹ Results showed that a household consisted of five to six persons on average; that housing of 62 percent of families consisted of one room, and housing of 30 percent of families – of two rooms. 76 percent said that conditions of life were bad in the Tabor. Institute of Labour and Social Research, "Sociological Study of Roma living in Vilnius City Tabors: Report of the Second Stage of Research," Vilnius, 2001 (on file with EUMAP).

¹⁷⁰ "Vilniaus romai" (Roma of Vilnius), *Žmogaus Teisių Žinios (Human Rights News)*, No. 6, 2002, p. 7.

¹⁷¹ "Roma Problems: Social Integration," Vilnius, 11 January 2002.

¹⁷² Interviews with the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, the Chairman of Bachtalo Drom, the Representative for Lithuania in the Parliament of the International Romani Union, a member of the Council of Roma Mission and member of the Honorary Court of the International Romani Union, the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation in Lithuania, and the Director of the Kaunas Roma Information Bureau, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

residents were visited by these interviewing “teams” again.¹⁷³ Some residents reportedly felt that their right to privacy had not been respected and that they were not sufficiently informed as to the purposes for which the information collected is intended to be utilised.

The study made a number of recommendations, including: continued support for the Roma Community Centre’s activities to promote employment, with the involvement of experts on Roma culture as well as Roma themselves; the proposal of public benefit jobs by the Vilnius Labour Exchange; and additional research by students of social work on attitudes towards existing programmes among Tabor residents as well as on the Labour Exchange’s capacity to offer them appropriate employment opportunities.¹⁷⁴

Regularisation of personal documents

The Programme proposes to facilitate the process of obtaining personal documents for those Roma who are legal residents only,¹⁷⁵ referring particularly to those who arrived from the Kaliningrad region, and still have old Soviet passports.¹⁷⁶ No information on implementation was available for this report.¹⁷⁷

The Chapter on “Migration Problems” asserts that these Roma “do not care about acquiring citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania or permits for permanent residence in Lithuania. For this reason, some Roma cannot make use of the social guarantees provided by the State of Lithuania.”¹⁷⁸ At the same time, some Roma claim that they have not been able to obtain their documents due to language barriers or illiteracy.¹⁷⁹

According to data from the Passport Division, as of 10 May 2002, of the 554 persons living on the territory of the Tabor, 242 were citizens of Lithuania; 82 were non-Lithuanian citizens with permanent residence, of whom 57 had no citizenship (stateless persons);¹⁸⁰ 14 were persons without documents and who

¹⁷³ Interview with residents of Kirtimai Tabor, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

¹⁷⁴ Roma of Vilnius, *Žmogaus Teisių Žinios*, No. 6, 2002, p. 7.

¹⁷⁵ The Migration Department is listed as responsible for this measure for which LTL 500 (€142) is foreseen annually over 2001–2004. See Implementation Measures.

¹⁷⁶ Integration Programme, Chapter VI “Migration Problems,” p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with the Deputy Director of the Passport Division of the Migration Department, Ministry of Interior, Vilnius, 26 March 2002.

¹⁷⁸ Integration Programme, Chapter VI “Migration Problems,” p. 6.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation, Kaunas, 17 March 2002.

¹⁸⁰ These stateless persons have permission to live in Lithuania and have travel documents; they have a right to apply for social support, but cannot participate in elections.

had not yet applied.¹⁸¹ The remaining 216 persons were reportedly not of full legal age and were therefore not required to have their own passport.

The number of Roma without personal documents is believed to be higher. According to Gypsy Bonfire, in 1996 about 250 persons from the Tabor did not have documents, and Roma without documents from other parts of the country have moved into the Tabor since then.¹⁸² Some have difficulties documenting long-term residence – a requirement for obtaining a residence permit or a passport.¹⁸³

3.2.5 The criminal justice system

A recent study concluded that, “[a]ccess to justice remains a problem, especially for vulnerable groups [...]. The Roma remain the most vulnerable ethnic community in Lithuania.”¹⁸⁴ The Seimas Ombudsman has pointed to the existence of general problems such as violations of laws and ethics, bureaucracy, violence towards prisoners, overcrowded cells and lack of medical services.¹⁸⁵ The Chief Commissioner of the Naujininkai Police Division denies that Roma experience particular problems in the criminal justice system.¹⁸⁶

While the Integration Programme does not explicitly discuss the issue of equal access to the criminal justice system, it does propose to raise awareness of possibilities for legal recourse among Roma and to offer legal assistance.¹⁸⁷ In line with this proposal, the

¹⁸¹ Interview with the Chief Commissioner of the Third Police Commissariat of Vilnius, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

¹⁸² Interview with the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 25 March 2002.

¹⁸³ “Roma Denied Documents and Rights in Lithuania,” *Roma Rights*, No. 1, 2002, pp. 126–127.

¹⁸⁴ T. Baranovas, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 7.

¹⁸⁵ See *2000 Annual Report of the Seimas Ombudsmen’s Office*, Vilnius, 2001, at <<http://www3.lrs.lt/owa-bin/owarepl/inter/owa/U0038428.doc>>, (accessed 20 August 2002), and *the 2001 Annual Report of the Seimas Ombudsmen’s Office*, Vilnius, 2002, at <<http://www3.lrs.lt/owa-bin/owarepl/inter/owa/U0070562.doc>>, (accessed 20 August 2002).

¹⁸⁶ Interview with the Chief Commissioner of the Naujininkai Police Division, Vilnius, 19 March 2002.

¹⁸⁷ Section IV “Migration Problems,” measure #17, Implementation Measures. The Law on Guaranteed Legal Assistance, which entered into force in 2001, ensures equal access to legal information, consultations, defence, and representation during court proceedings. See also T. Baranovas, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 20.

Minorities Department organised two workshops on legal issues.¹⁸⁸ The first, in Autumn 2001, focused on passport issues which were discussed together with the Chief Commissioner of the Third Police Commissariat of Vilnius who is responsible for Kirtimai Tabor. At a second, Roma representatives met with police to discuss the problem of police searches in the Tabor (see below).

3.3 Protection from Racially Motivated Violence

Racially motivated violence is not identified as a problem in the Integration Programme. No statistics on racially motivated violence against Roma are available. According to the Chief Commissioner of the Third Police Commissariat of Vilnius, there has been no case of racially motivated violence during the past two years.¹⁸⁹

No claims have been brought under the Lithuanian Criminal Code.¹⁹⁰ Individuals can also apply to the Seimas Committee on Human Rights but there are no known cases of any Roma having filed such a complaint.

Complaints of police abuse have also been reported, mainly in connection with the police raids which are carried out at the Tabor.¹⁹¹ The police frequently search houses without warrants, claiming that warrants cannot be obtained to search unregistered houses;¹⁹² moreover, as most residents are registered under a single address, if police officers obtain a warrant for that address, they can effectively search any house in the Tabor. Police authorities view raids as a preventive measure, as they believe that “90 percent of the Tabor inhabitants sell drugs.”¹⁹³ Some efforts have begun to encourage discussion of this problem to bring about improvements in relations between the police and the Roma community, but no concrete measures have been proposed or taken to regularise procedures for policing the Tabor. Legal registration of home ownership would be an important first step.

¹⁸⁸ LTL 4,000 to 5,000 (€1,134 to 1,418) is foreseen per year. Implementation Measures. The Minorities Department allocated LTL 2,000 (€567) for the two workshops.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with the Chief Commissioner of the Third Police Commissariat of Vilnius, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

¹⁹⁰ Under the Criminal Code, Article 72(1), racially motivated actions that have “serious consequences” are punishable by up to ten years’ imprisonment.

¹⁹¹ Interviews with residents of Kirtimai Tabor and the President of Gypsy Bonfire, Vilnius, 18 March 2002; see also *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 327–328.

¹⁹² Interviews with residents of Kirtimai Tabor, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.

¹⁹³ Interview with the Chief Commissioner of the Third Police Commissariat of Vilnius, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

3.4 Promotion of Minority Rights

The Programme aims “to promote mutual tolerance and confidence [and] to acquaint society with Roma culture and history” as a way of promoting a more positive image of Roma among the public.¹⁹⁴

Six Programme measures support these aims,¹⁹⁵ mostly through support for the cultural and educational activities of Roma organisations. Two other proposed measures – the preparation of a publication and a film on Roma history and culture – target the majority population.¹⁹⁶ A textbook for studying Romanes is under preparation.

Roma representatives are critical of the fact that they have been assigned only a limited role in implementation of this part of the Programme. At the same time, they feel that the Programme’s approach, by which Roma are primarily the recipients of support for cultural activities rather than active agents in efforts to improve their situation, only reinforces existing stereotypes.

Roma leaders are agreed on the need to protect Roma identity and culture, and support measures to expand opportunities to learn Romanes at school and to provide more information about Romani culture and history to the majority society.¹⁹⁷ However, they claim that Roma cultural associations lack the means to undertake such projects on their own.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ Section V “Preservation of Ethnic Identity,” Implementation Measures. A total of LTL 23,000 (€6,521) (2.5 percent of the overall budget for 2001) was planned for these measures in 2001.

¹⁹⁶ Measure #22: to issue a publication on Roma history and culture, and measure # 23: to create a film about Roma history and culture. LTL 50,000 (€14,176) is foreseen for each.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with the President of Roma Mission and Representative on the Council of National Communities, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

¹⁹⁸ Interviews with the President of Roma Mission, the Chairman of Romen, the Chairman of Bachtalo Drom, the Representative for Lithuania in the Parliament of the International Romani Union, a member of the Council of Roma Mission and member of the Honorary Court of the International Romani Union, the Chairman of the Gypsy Community Organisation in Lithuania, and the Director of the Kaunas Roma Information Bureau, Kaunas, 28 July 2002.

A new Minority Law is due to be adopted by the end of 2002.¹⁹⁹ Some measures for the protection of minority rights are also expected as part of a new National Action Plan for the Protection and Support of Human Rights, which is being prepared by the Seimas Committee on Human Rights with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).²⁰⁰ Roma organisations claim that though they are aware this plan is under development, they have not been consulted further.

3.4.1 Education

The Integration Programme does not propose to organise education in Romanes,²⁰¹ nor does it seek to assess the demand for such classes among Roma parents and the Roma community as a whole. However, it does propose to prepare a textbook for studying Romanes.

Roma leaders attach great importance to the use of Romanes in pre-school education establishments and, where possible, also at schools.²⁰² Some Vilnius Roma organisations have expressed concern that children attending pre-school classes at the Roma Community Centre might lose their command of Romanes, as they receive

¹⁹⁹ Interview with the Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Human Rights, Vilnius, 29 July 2002. The current Minority Law dates back to 1989 and was last revised in 1991; the Constitution (Art. 37, Art. 45) also provides basic minority rights guarantees. See *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 320, 328–329; see also *Report Submitted by Lithuania Pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 5, of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, received on 31 October 2001, <<http://www.humanrights.coe.int/Minorities/Eng/FrameworkConvention/StateReports/2001/lithuania/Lithuania.htm>>, (accessed 6 April 2002).

²⁰⁰ The first two stages, which included data gathering and analysis of the situation, were completed in May 2002. The Plan is currently being prepared for approval by the Seimas (deadline not indicated). See the text of the background document (in English) at <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w3_viewer.ViewDoc?p_int_tekst_id=10162&p_int_tv_id=844>, (accessed 21 July 2002).

²⁰¹ There is no network of State-funded schools in the Romani language. See *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 330–331.

²⁰² Interview with the President of Gypsy Bonfire and the Chairwoman of Nevo Drom, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

instruction principally in Lithuanian;²⁰³ at present, opportunities for these children to be taught Romanes are limited to a once-weekly class.²⁰⁴

There is reportedly little or no information about Roma culture and history in the textbooks used in mainstream schools,²⁰⁵ and no specific measures are proposed to remedy this deficiency.²⁰⁶ However, the Ministry of Education has adopted new regulations regarding the preparation of textbooks, and reportedly more information on the Roma minority may be included in new textbooks. Roma representatives should be consulting during the preparation process.

The Programme's proposed measure to prepare a publication on the Roma culture and history in 2002 has been postponed; according to the Minorities Department, this was due to a lack of qualified staff.²⁰⁷ It is not clear whether the proposed publication is intended for use in schools.

Romanes textbook

A textbook for studying Romanes is under preparation, in consultation with a Romani language expert, and is scheduled for publication in 2002. The Ministry of Education, which is responsible for this measure under the Programme, formed a

²⁰³ However, the teacher's assistant employed at the Centre speaks Romanes, and reportedly provides translation assistance to the children as necessary.

²⁰⁴ In the 2001/2002 school year, a lecturer of Romani from Panevėžys (the Chairwoman of Nevo Drom) came to Vilnius once a week to teach the pre-school groups at the Roma Community Centre with support from Phare LIEN funds. Since March 2002, as the Phare LIEN project has ended, her salary is fully covered by the OSFL. It is expected that these classes will be continued in the 2002/2003 school year. The Chairwoman of Nevo Drom also teaches a Romani language course at Vilnius University.

²⁰⁵ A study was conducted to investigate how minorities are presented in textbooks. The findings were presented in March 2001 at a workshop organised by the FEC. See T. Tamošiūnas, "*Ar europietiški mūsų vadovėliai: multikultūrinis požiūris?*" (Are Our Textbooks European: A Multicultural Approach?), cited in the 2001 Annual Report of the FEC, p. 17.

²⁰⁶ It is not clear whether a proposed publication on the Roma culture and history (measure #22) is intended for use in schools and, furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Science is not listed as responsible for this task.

²⁰⁷ Interview with the Deputy Director and the Senior Specialist of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 20 March 2002. In 2001, the FEC published a book on Roma: *Lietuvos Čigonai: Tarp Praeities ir Dabarties (Lithuanian Gypsies: Between Past and Present)*, V. Toleikis (ed.), Garnelis, Vilnius, 2001. However, this initiative was not funded by either the Ministry of Education and Science or the Minorities Department.

working group to facilitate preparations, with participation from the LICF as well as a Romani language expert. However, no funds had been allocated as of July 2002.²⁰⁸

According to a specialist of the Ministry, the book could be used at schools with high concentrations of Roma students.²⁰⁹ However, many Roma students either attend integrated classes or do not attend school at all. There are few teachers qualified to present classes in Romanes.²¹⁰ Once the textbook has been finalised, the working group should be tasked with developing a comprehensive strategy to promote its use, including training for teachers and possibilities for organising study groups at mainstream schools; these efforts should be supported by the Ministry of Education.

Other initiatives of the Ministry of Education

On 16 January 2002, the Ministry of Education approved new regulations for minority education.²¹¹ A working group on Polish minority education has prepared a draft plan of measures, and working groups for other minorities are also planned. It is unclear whether a separate such group will be formed on minority education for Roma; according to one expert, this will probably be covered through the Integration Programme.²¹² As Roma leaders have expressed interest in mother tongue education, a working group should be established for Roma as for other minorities.

There is also an Expert Commission on the Mother Tongue of Ethnic Minorities consisting of nine members, which was established at the Ministry of Education on 29 February 2000. At present, there are no Roma sitting on this Commission.

²⁰⁸ Interview with the Chairwoman of Nevo Drom, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

²⁰⁹ Interview with the Specialist of the Division of Basic and Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Science (also a member of the work group of the Minorities Department for the Integration Programme), Vilnius, 10 April 2002.

²¹⁰ Interview with the Specialist of the Division of Basic and Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius, 10 April 2002.

²¹¹ Resolution of the Ministry of Education and Science of 16 January 2002 "On Regulations on the Education of Ethnic Minorities," *Valstybes Žinios*, No. 9-337, 2002, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/getfmt?C1=w&C2=159045>>, (accessed 12 August 2002).

²¹² Interview with the Director of the Department of General Education, Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius, 12 August 2002.

3.4.2 Language

The Integration Programme does not propose specific measures to promote the public use of Romanes.²¹³ Although Romanes is widely spoken among Lithuanian Roma, it is believed that there are no public officials of Roma origin, and the use of Romanes in official communications has not been raised as an issue. Translators are not available in the court system, but opinions are mixed among Roma leaders as to the degree to which this constitutes a problem, and there has been no research on the issue.

The new Minority Law is expected to address issues related to the use of minority languages in the private and public spheres.²¹⁴

3.4.3 Participation in public life

The Integration Programme proposes to “take effective measures to form equal opportunities for Roma and other inhabitants of the country to participate in the life of the society,”²¹⁵ and for Roma women in particular. Roma representatives have called for a greater role in developing and implementing governmental policy towards Roma, including in implementation of the Integration Programme.

There is no Roma representative in the Seimas;²¹⁶ no Roma are known to be employed in Government bodies, public administration bodies, the criminal justice system, or the police. The Government has attempted to provide a mechanism for structured input from minority groups through the Council of National Communities,²¹⁷ which includes one seat for a Roma representative.²¹⁸

²¹³ Lithuanian is the sole State language (Constitution, Art. 14; see also the Law on the State Language, adopted on 31 January 1995); however, according to the Minority Law, minority languages may be used in addition to Lithuanian in “offices and organisations located in areas serving substantial numbers of a minority with a different language.” Minority Law, Art. 4 (as amended on 29 January 1990).

²¹⁴ As of August 2002, Lithuania had not signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

²¹⁵ Integration Programme, Chapter I “Introduction,” p. 2.

²¹⁶ Members of all ethnic groups have equal rights to propose candidates and participate in elections but lack of citizenship or difficulties with documents prevent participation in political life. See *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 332–333.

²¹⁷ An advisory body to the Minorities Department established in 1995 in which 18 ethnic groups are now represented; the Roma community is represented since 1997.

²¹⁸ Minorities of under 10,000 members can elect one representative to the Council.

There have been some difficulties in the process of identifying a single person to represent the entire Roma community. The selection of the first Council representative in 1997 was apparently based at least partly on residence in Vilnius.²¹⁹ After Roma leaders called for improved exchange of information between the Council and the Roma community, a new representative, the President of Roma Mission, was selected in 2000. Council work is carried out on a volunteer basis; transport and other representational expenses are not compensated (for any minority group). The current representative claims that his advisory capacity has not resulted in sufficient consultation on a partnership basis with the Government.²²⁰ Mechanisms should be explored to provide opportunities for input for a broader range of representatives of the Roma community, from different geographical regions.

As communications with public administration officials can be difficult, individual Roma often look to their community leaders for assistance in resolving a host of issues that are properly the responsibility of the State. At the same time, Roma leaders claim that many governmental and non-governmental bodies ask them to provide information, mediation, or project preparatory work – often on a volunteer basis. Given the demands placed upon them, Roma community leaders should be supported with as much training and support as possible; to the extent possible, Roma should be recruited for paid positions in public administration.

Participation of Roma women

The Integration Programme draws attention to low levels of public participation by Roma women,²²¹ and recommends the Minorities Department to develop activities to promote greater involvement. No information was available for this report on implementation of this measure. The first Roma women's NGO, the Roma Women and Youth Community Organisation, was formed in late 2001 and registered in 2002; however, it has received no governmental support to date.²²²

²¹⁹ When two Roma representatives (one from the city of Panevėžys, the other from Kaunas) went to the selection meeting, they were strongly advised to select a representative from Vilnius, as meetings would be organised there. Interview with the President of Roma Mission, Kaunas, 12 April 2002.

²²⁰ Interview with the President of Roma Mission, Kaunas, 12 April 2002.

²²¹ Integration Programme, Chapter VII "Other Problems," p. 6.

²²² Interview with the Chairwoman of the Roma Women and Youth Community Organisation, Vilnius, 29 July 2002.

3.4.4 Media

The Integration Programme identifies stereotyping in the media as a matter of concern,²²³ but presents no concrete measures to promote tolerance or a more positive image of Roma in the media. According to Roma leaders, this is a significant shortcoming, as media articles tend to reinforce negative attitudes towards Roma.²²⁴ Articles often present Roma as crime suspects; when a Rom is arrested, his or her ethnicity is stressed.²²⁵

There are also instances in which reporters present the opinions of Roma,²²⁶ but there has been no systematic attempt to encourage them to do so on a more consistent basis, or to provide mainstream newspapers with Romani perspectives on current issues on a more regular basis. There are no television or radio programmes especially devoted to the Roma minority, and no broadcasts or newspapers in Romanes.²²⁷ Roma organisations have expressed interest in establishing a periodical but have emphasised their lack of training and experience in this area.

Roma press agencies established in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia could provide a useful example of how more positive reporting – and thus a more positive image of Roma communities – could be promoted. These agencies have provided

²²³ “A preconceived hostile attitude towards Roma has still not been overcome in Lithuania. Frequently, persons of their ethnicity are regarded as potential criminals. The media has not been successful in dissociating itself from certain stereotypes.” Integration Programme, Chapter VII “Other Problems,” p. 6.

²²⁴ See e.g. K. Griškevičius, “*Policijos operacija čigonų tabore sukėlė sumaištį*” (Police Operations Caused Chaos at the Gypsy Tabor), *Valstiečių Laikraštis* (News of the Rural Population), 13 March 2002, p. 13; “Gypsies look for asylum in Finland,” *Respublika*, 16 August 2001, p. 2; E. Utyra, “*Vilniaus čigonų taboras išvažiuoja į Rusiją*” (The Tabor of Vilnius Gypsies emigrates to Russia), *Lietuvos Žinios*, 13 May 2002.

²²⁵ See e.g. V. Trainys, “*Pakaunėje čigonai nepamiršta savo tradicinio amato*” (Gypsies do not forget their traditional craft), *Laikinoji Sostinė* (Provisional Capital), 9 February 2001, p. 4; A. Dumalakas, “*Sostinėje siautėja nesugaunamas čigonas*” (A Gypsy that can’t be caught goes on a rampage in the capital), *Sostinė* (Supplement of *Lietuvos Rytas*), 10 March 2001, p. 8; A. Kuzmickas, “*Garsiame narkotikų prekybos ‘taške’ šeiminkavo čigonės*” (Gypsy women ran the well-known ‘point’ of drug sales), *Lietuvos Žinios*, 9 November 2001, p. 6; N. Mitkevičienė, “*Čigono gaujos galas*” (End of a Gypsy Gang), *Valstiečių Laikraštis* (News of the Rural Population), 3 January 2002, p. 13.

²²⁶ E.g. S. Pocius, “*Skurdo nualinti čigonai palieka miestą*” (Gypsies, worn out by poverty, leave the city), *Laikinoji Sostinė*, 10 March 2001, pp. 1–2.

²²⁷ The Minority Law guarantees all minorities the right “to have newspapers and other publications and information in one’s native language” (Art. 2). As part of a new programme on State Television on Sunday mornings which presents a different minority each time for about ten minutes, the initiatives of the LICF for the Roma were presented.

training to Roma journalists, who prepare regular news reporting for publication in mainstream newspapers on Roma issues. In the absence of such initiatives, the public receives little direct information regarding Roma communities or the activities of Roma organisations to counter prevailing stereotypes.²²⁸

3.4.5 Culture

The Programme allocates a small amount of funding for the organisation of cultural projects by Roma organisations.²²⁹ Cultural activities are also organised at the Roma Community Centre. EU funding has supported classes on dance, visual arts and music.

Before the adoption of the Integration Programme, Roma NGOs could apply for support to the Minorities Department under the “Programme of Social and Cultural Integration of Ethnic Minorities;”²³⁰ the Integration Programme itself is partially funded through this Programme.²³¹ The Minorities Department has also provided some funding to allow Roma organisations to participate in international events.²³² Finally, Roma NGOs can also apply for funding to the Ministry of Culture as part of its programme of support to NGOs.

Though these programmes are important for preservation of ethnic identity *within* the Roma community, little information is available about the extent to which they promote awareness of minority identity and culture *beyond* this community, within society as a whole.

²²⁸ According to a 2000 survey, 47.4 percent of respondents had not heard about the activities of Roma organisations. The main sources of information about Roma mentioned were: television and radio broadcasting (29.2 percent), daily newspapers (20.8 percent), and friends and acquaintances (15.3 percent); only 7.6 percent stated that they had received most of their information about Roma from Roma themselves. See I. Čepulkauskaitė-Žilionienė, “*Kam patinka čigonai?*” (Who likes Gypsies?), *Penki kontinentai Online*, 4 January 2001, pp. 2–3, <<http://www.online.5ci.lt/Article.asp?Lang=L&ArticleID=2032>>, (accessed 1 January 2002).

²²⁹ A total of LTL 20,000 (€5,670) was allocated to support cultural and educational projects and Roma amateur arts in 2001, out of an overall budget of LTL 23,000 (€6,521) for activities for Section V of the Implementation Measures, “Preservation of Ethnic Identity.”

²³⁰ Under this Programme, the Minorities Department provides support to 18 minorities, including the Roma. The Programme consists largely of supporting the activities proposed by minority NGOs; no separate Programme text or description/evaluation of activities supported is available. No information is available on the amount of funding allocated to Roma NGOs. Telephone interview with an official from the Minorities Department, 24 July 2002.

²³¹ Interview with the General Director of the Minorities Department, Vilnius, 30 July 2002.

²³² See e.g. Letter No. 3-01-532 dated 15 October 2001 from S. Vidtmann, Deputy Director of the Minorities Department, to the President of Roma Mission.

4. EVALUATION

The Integration Programme represents a clear sign of the Government's positive intention to address some of the difficult issues faced by the Roma minority. There are a number of important ways in which its content and implementation can be improved upon.

Lack of data and research on Roma communities presented a significant difficulty to those who drafted the Integration Programme. The drafters did not engage in consultations with Roma representatives, though this might have helped compensate for this deficiency. Engaging in such consultations during the preparation of stage two of the Programme will allow for expansion to other areas of Lithuania as well as necessary modifications to content and approach. In order to demonstrate its commitment to the Programme, the Government should begin these consultations as soon as possible.

Additional research among Roma communities to better articulate the problems and issues they confront could enhance these efforts; at the same time, the mistrust engendered by a sociological survey conducted without adequately informing the Roma community of its aims and goals clearly demonstrates that such research should only be conducted in close partnership with Roma community leaders.

Review of the content of the Programme in consultation with Roma representatives is likely to result in the elaboration of concrete measures to address issues in several areas that it does not currently address sufficiently, such as employment, housing and social protection. Integration of Romani perspectives would also entail greater acknowledgement of the reality of discrimination against Roma, and the development of measures to raise awareness among public officials of their duty not to discriminate in the provision of public goods and service, as well as among Roma communities of their right to file complaints. Additional measures in this area are also required to bring Lithuanian legislation into compliance with the EU Race Equality Directive.

At present, Programme measures to protect and promote minority identity have been limited to support for Roma NGOs. Additional measures are needed to enhance opportunities to study Romanes, promote broader and more effective participation in public life for Roma, and encourage a more positive presentation of Roma communities in the mainstream media.

Programme implementation has been hampered by poor coordination and limitations on the Minorities Department's ability to influence other key actors. Responsibilities are not clearly distributed among the national, county and municipal levels. Levels of funding from the State budget have proven insufficient to meet Programme goals; moreover, in many cases, the sources of funding and financial obligations of implementing authorities are not clearly spelled out in the Programme.

Implementation has depended to a great extent on EU and non-governmental funding; indeed many Programme initiatives are being carried out principally by NGOs. This causes confusion as to which initiatives constitute measures of the Programme, and blurring of responsibility between State and non-State actors. The Government should clearly and unequivocally assume overall responsibility for Programme implementation.

There has been no systematic effort to evaluate or assess progress on Programme implementation to date, and no provision has been made to ensure regular reporting from implementing bodies. The coordinating working group established by the Minorities Department should be tasked with regular review and evaluation of the individual projects implemented under the Programme, with a view towards ensuring that experiences and lessons-learned are utilised to modify existing projects as necessary as well as to develop proposals for new projects. The working group should solicit broad and active participation from a broad range of Roma community representatives and activists.

Most importantly, the Roma community feels that the Programme conforms to stereotype by placing them in the role of passive recipients of Government assistance, and have called for a more active role in implementation. Some efforts have been made to encourage active Roma involvement in the management of the Roma Community Centre. These efforts should be expanded and complemented by practical training in project development and management, to enable Roma leaders to articulate clear proposals on behalf of their communities, and to take the lead in project implementation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government

- Open consultations with a broad range of Roma representatives and activists to review the Integration Programme and begin preparations for stage two, with a focus on filling existing gaps in content and approach.
- Define the managerial and financial responsibilities of State institutions in Programme implementation and evaluation, drawing a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the Government and those of NGOs.
- Enhance the capacity of the Minorities Department to coordinate Programme implementation by providing it with high-level political support and sufficient staffing, training, and financial resources; provide appropriate training and resources to local bodies tasked with responsibilities under the Programme.

- Provide for the establishment of a mechanism to monitor Programme implementation; to review its content and approach on a regular basis in light of project experience; to issue public implementation reports; and to make recommendations for improvements.
- Ensure enhanced opportunities for Roma to participate fully in all aspects of Programme implementation and assessment; provide training in project development, budgeting and management to community leaders and activists to enable them to take a leadership role.
- Take measures to ensure full compliance with the EU Race Equality Directive; conduct training courses for public administration officials and court personnel on their obligation to ensure provision of public goods and services without discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds.
- Conduct monitoring in various areas and propose effective remedies if discrimination is ascertained; provide training to raise awareness of opportunities for legal recourse within the Roma community.
- Consider the adoption of positive measures to enhance capacity among Roma leaders to take on paid employment within the public administration of municipalities and State services in areas in which large numbers of Roma reside.
- Integrate human and minority rights and multiculturalism into the university curricula for public administration, social work, healthcare workers, teachers, and judges, *inter alia*.
- Develop comprehensive measures to address large-scale unemployment among Roma, combining language training with employment counselling and training in job skills; training courses should reflect both the interests and needs of local communities and actual job opportunities.
- Consider establishing a minority press centre to provide training to minority representatives, including Roma, and to ensure the preparation of news and broadcast material that more effectively integrate the perspectives and views of minorities.
- Provide for the early resolution of housing and land ownership; facilitate access to citizenship, legal residency, and other personal documents for Roma who do not possess them, as a means of facilitating access to public housing, unemployment benefits, and other social services.

ANNEX A – IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES – 2001

Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society 2000–2004

Areas	Executing Bodies	Planned expenses (000) LTL	Amount allocated by the Minorities Department (000) LTL	Funding recipient and title of project/expenses, if funding was allocated by the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad
I. Education				
1. To establish a Roma Community Centre:	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians		0.1	The Roma Community Centre was established 1 August 2001 (Bylaws drafted, officially registered, and name patented).
1.1. To support construction of the Community Centre building	Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	450	450	The Roma Community Centre was built (with two-thirds funding from the Government).
1.2. To provide basic facilities and other goods		100	100	Main office furnishings were acquired (desks, tables, chairs, bookcases, boards, etc.).
1.3. To ensure maintenance of the building		26	15	Sum allocated for Centre maintenance, 1 August 2001 to 31 December 2001.
2. To support the activities of the Roma Community Centre:	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians			
2.1. To establish pre-school learning groups and ensure their activities	Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	35		Two pre-school learning (development) groups established for which two teachers teach 26 pupils (2001/2002 school year).
2.2. To organise additional learning activities for children		35		Visual arts, music, and dance circles are organised; the position is for one, but three persons job share.
2.3. To establish a service of special teachers and social workers and to ensure its activities		30		Half of the workspace was designated for social work in 2001; one employee is of Roma ethnicity.
3. To organise education of Roma (children and adults).	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	18		Computer courses were organised jointly with the LICF.
4. To organise free meals for Roma children attending pre-school groups.	Ministry of Social Protection and Labour with Vilnius Municipality	31		<i>(Note: The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection allocated funds for this purpose through Vilnius Municipality. Source: Interview with the Director of the Roma Community Centre, Vilnius, 18 March 2002.)</i>
5. To organise State language courses for adult Roma.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad, State Lithuanian Language Commission under the Seimas	12		Courses were organised from 1 September 2001 to 31 December 2001 with funds provided by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. <i>(Note: another class was also organised by the LICF with Phare LIEN funding. See Section 3.2.1.)</i>

6. To organise summer recreation for Roma children.	Head of Vilnius County Administration	25		<i>(Note: Summer camps were organised by the FEC with international funding. The LICF also organised one camp with partial support from Vilnius County Administration, as part of its programme of support to NGOs. See Section 3.2.1.)</i>
7. To provide textbooks and other training materials for Roma children, both at the Centre and those attending general education schools.	Ministry of Education and Science, and the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad	30		The Minorities Department purchased exercise books. However, this measure is essentially realised by the Ministry of Education and Science through the FEC.
8. To prepare individual training programmes for Roma children.	Ministry of Education and Science	5		No information available.
9. To organise professional advancement courses and seminars for teachers who work with Roma children	Ministry of Education and Science	10		<i>(Note: The FEC organised workshops for teachers with international funding. See Section 3.2.1.)</i>
II. Social Issues				
10. To develop a vocational training and employment programme for Roma of Vilnius.	Ministry of Social Protection and Labour, Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, Ministry of Education and Science	5		<i>(Note: the Programme was developed by the LLMTA as planned, even though no funding was allocated. See Section 3.2.2.)</i>
11. To perform a sociological study of Roma living in the Vilnius Tabors.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad	5	15	Study completed.
12. To improve living conditions for Roma living in Tabors (ensure regular garbage removal; provide a water supply pump and a pay telephone booth).	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	20		A measure of Vilnius Municipality.
III. Health Protection				
13. To organise primary and secondary healthcare for Roma without social health insurance.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	20		A measure of Vilnius Municipality.
14. To organise education for Roma on sanitary and hygiene issues	Head of Vilnius County Administration	1		<i>(Note: This measure was realised by the LICF.)</i>
15. To carry out drug-abuse prevention and treatment programmes at the Tabors.	Head of Vilnius County Administration with Vilnius Municipality	25		
IV. Migration				
16. To put in order personal documents for Roma legally residing in Lithuania.	Migration Department at the Ministry of Interior	0.5		

17. To organise legal education for Roma and provide counselling on legal issues.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad	4	2	Two workshops were organised.
V. Preservation of Ethnic Identity				
18. To support Roma public organisation projects for cultural and educational activities.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	15	14	Nine cultural and educational projects accomplished.
19. To support Roma amateur arts.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality	5	5	One international Roma festival organised by Gypsy Bonfire.
20. To initiate public activities by Roma women.	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad	3		Public organisation for Roma women established.
21. To prepare a Romani language textbook	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality		<i>n.a. (measure to be implemented starting in 2002)</i>	
22. To issue a publication on Roma history and culture	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality		<i>n.a. (measure to be implemented starting in 2002)</i>	
23. To create a film about Roma history and culture	Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad with Vilnius Municipality		<i>n.a. (measure to be implemented starting in 2004)</i>	
TOTAL		910.5 (€ 258,137)	601.1 (€ 170,418)	

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad, information provided via e-mail, on 17 April 2002, compiled for the EU Accession Monitoring Program. The table provides information on actual expenses for different components of the Integration Programme, as well as the title headings of projects/expense categories when funding was provided directly by the Minorities Department (noted in bold italic font). A column is also inserted indicating the budget as foreseen in the Annex to the Integration Programme on Implementation Measures. No funding was allocated for implementation of the Programme in 2000 and the Minorities Department had not provided any information about financing and projects for 2002 as of 6 August 2002.