

The right to education is not merely the right, it is a soft measure that allows the enjoyment of all other rights. Education delivers sustainable social inclusion and breaks the poverty circle, which is why the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Development actively works on the improvement of the accessibility and quality of education of Roma Children. The Ministry is making additional effort through a range of measures and activities aiming at developing the Roma community, and thereby the society on the whole. It is estimated that each dinar invested in Roma children education results in a triple return.

The causes of still unfavourable educational status are poverty, lack of encouraging environment, lack of family patterns in which education is recognised as important, frequent migrations, traditional patterns of early marriages etc. These leads to the dropout in elementary schools as well as an early dropout at the transition from elementary to a high school.

Support to Roma Minority members measures implemented by MoESTD:

- **Enrolment into preschool preparatory programme:** In accordance with the *Law on Preschool Education*¹ children from vulnerable groups are entitled to priority enrolment². *Bylaws on detailed terms of establishing priorities for enrolment of children in preschool institution*³ defines the criteria for priority enrolment, among which **children from socially disadvantaged environment are entitled to prioritised enrolment.**
- **Enrolment in elementary school:** Enrolment procedures for elementary school have been simplified, aiming at a broader inclusion of Roma students in elementary education. Based on the Law on Foundations of Educational System (LOFES)⁴ children from vulnerable groups may:
 - Be enrolled in school without **evidence on residence of parents and necessary documents;**
 - **Child is subjected to testing after the enrolment in school, and this is enabled in child's mother tongue;**
 - Support measures are implemented in the course of elementary education through the elaboration of Individual Educational Plan (IEP), and other institutions are also involved, e.g. Centre for social work and health institutions.
- **Scholarships, accommodation, loans and food** – these support measures are being systematically implemented in order to provide comprehensive support to students in vulnerable groups, encompassing Roma students as well. Out of the total number of scholarships and loans, MoESTD allocates up to 10% of the funds for students, as well as 10% for pupils from vulnerable social groups. Regarding students, these measures also include exemption from tuition, as well as measures based on which the students' centres should allocate up to 10% of their accommodation capacities to these groups. **2999 scholarships were allocated to Roma students of both genders, 65% of which to girls,** from the budget funds and donations.
- **New Bylaws introduced less strict criteria for vulnerable groups for acquiring scholarships – the school grades average requirement has been removed for Roma students, students without both parents and students with disabilities;**
- The process of providing scholarships is continued via the new project IPA 2014; the funds were provided for 303 secondary school students in the last year, and for 547 secondary school students this year, not just for excellent students. These are the targeted measures only for Roma students. Survey of the last 4 years:

¹ <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/>

² Article 13

³ <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/>

⁴ "Official Gazette RS ", no. 72/2009, 52/2011, 55/2013, 35/2015 – authentic interpretation, 68/2015 and 62/2016 – decision of CC

Education of Roma National Minority Students, 2019

| School Year | MoESTD/Budget of Republic Serbia | MoESTD in collaboration with international organisations | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|---|---|--|--------------|
| <u>2015/16</u> | 176 scholarships –condition: excellent grades average: - 65% girls | 510 - grades average between 2,5 and 3,5 68% girls | <u>686</u> |
| <u>2016/17</u> | 150 scholarships - excellent grades average - 60% girls | 510 - grades average between 2,5 and 3,5 65% girls | <u>660</u> |
| <u>2017/18</u> | 303 scholarships – very good and excellent grades average 63% girls | REFPEΦ ⁵ 500 - grades average between 2,5 and 3,5 67% girls | <u>803</u> |
| <u>2018/19.</u> | 547 scholarships – very good and excellent grades average 60% girls | REF- 303 grades average between 2,5 and 3.5 | <u>850</u> |
| Scholarships for 2.999 Roma students, out of this number 65% girls | | | |

- **Affirmative measures programme** of enrolment in secondary schools has been systematically implemented since 2005. After having adopted the “Bylaws on measures and procedures for enrolment of students – members of Roma minority in secondary schools under more favourable conditions, aiming at effectuating full equality“ in February 2016, which is now a part of the “Bylaws on secondary school enrolment“, the process of systemic regulation of this kind of support has been finalised. **Affirmative measures outcomes:** Since the systemic introduction of affirmative measures for the enrolment under more favourable conditions, the total of **8324 students (among them 55% of girls)** have been enrolled in secondary schools; in school year 2017/18, 1969 Roma students have been enrolled in secondary schools, whereas in 2018/19 school year, via affirmative measures, 2220 Roma students have been enrolled in secondary schools, 56% of which are Roma girls. More than 65% enrolled via affirmative measures, beneficiaries of scholarships, and provided with mentor support, complete secondary school education. 1100 Roma students passed final exams under favourable measures, based on attending school after ITP.
- Affirmative action for the enrolment to **higher education institutions** commenced in 2003/04 and up to this moment, total of 1623 students of both genders (51% girls) were enrolled. More precisely, in school year 2016/17, within the implementation of this programme, 182 students 88 M, 94 F, were enrolled, whereas in the academic school year 2017/18 154 students, 71 M, 83 F were enrolled.
- **Action for enrolment in higher education institutions** was introduced in 2003/04, and the implementation of this measure resulted in the enrolment of **1623** students (51% girls) in total.
- **115 Roma students were awarded scholarships, and 17 loans were granted.**
- **Pedagogy assistants** are one of the systemic measures regulated by Law on the Fundamentals of Education System and Bylaws. Currently, there are 225 pedagogy assistants, 35 of which in preschool institutions and others are engaged in elementary schools. The latest 50 assistants engaged **were trained via the third Sector Budget Support (SBS) measure, aimed at increasing the number of pedagogy assistants. The role of pedagogy assistants is to provide support to Roma students** in acquiring language and their integration in the class and education system; they collaborate with all the actors at the local level, work with parents, monitor students and their educational accomplishments. Also, the Ministry is working on regulating their job description, preparing the pedagogy assistants

⁵ REF – Roma Education Fund

network and instruments for measuring their results using the new bylaws. Through the Memorandum of Cooperation with the international organization Save the Children for North West Balkans (SCNWB) within the project “Available and quality education for Roma girls and boys”(2017-2019), the training “Development and learning in early childhood“ for preschool pedagogy assistants has been prepared and licenced, and preschool teachers who graduated in Roma language at Teacher Training College “Mihajlo Pavlov“ in Vršac have also been included in this training. The aim of the training is the professional development of preschool assistants’ capacities in the early development field and work in preschool institutions in the Republic of Serbia.

Roma language with national culture elements

Bylaws on curriculum and syllabus for the first and second grade of elementary education (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia – Educational Courier“, no....10/2004, 20/2004, 1/2005, 3/2006, 15/2006, 2/2008, 2/2010, 7/2010, 3/2011 – state law 7/2011, - state law 1/2011 and 4/2013) curriculum and syllabus have been established for the elective subject Roma language with national culture elements, thus creating one of the preconditions for introducing this subject into schools. In school year 2016/17, the total of 2264 students attended the elective subject *Roma language with national culture elements* in 72 elementary schools in Serbia. Total of 55 teachers teach the subject *Roma language with national culture elements*. In the school year 2017/18 2252 students attend this subject, **and in school year 2018/19, 2850 students attend Roma language with national culture elements subject.**

After the decision of Scientific and Teaching Council of the Belgrade University Philology Faculty, teaching Roma language is introduced in pre-graduate studies since 15th April 2015, and within the Centre for Professional Development and Evaluation, the Faculty organises Roma language courses, thus enabling graduated teachers to acquire the certification on the knowledge of Roma language, and get involved in regular teaching in elementary and secondary schools in which the teaching of the Roma language with national culture elements subject is being thought.

Textbooks in Roma language

Apart from national minorities attending schools with the entire curricula in their mother tongue, The Institute for Textbooks publishes textbooks for minority students who attend schools with curricula in Serbian, and attend the subject **Mother tongue with national culture elements**. For **Roma language with elements of national culture**, 4 textbooks for 4 the first 4 grades have been published, with funds provided from the tender call by the Centre for the Education of Roma and Ethnic Communities.

PRIORITIES

- Increasing availability of education for Roma students and reducing the dropout from the system via:
 - Expanding the network of pedagogy assistants and improving their competences;
 - Continual support to the implementation of the elective subject Roma language with elements of national culture;
 - Monitoring of students’ accomplishments is improved by introducing the Unique Educational Number (UEN) which follows the designee throughout all the levels of formal education and the UISE.⁶ Although LoFES stipulates that the ethnicity may be a part of UEN, a note in the law provides that stating the ethnicity isn’t mandatory (article 177) and therefore there are no data regarding the ethnicity of students or teachers, which should be overcome by designed mechanism.
- APPENDIX: TABULAR OVERVIEW OF AFFIRMATIVE MEASURES

⁶ LoFES, Article 176

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APPENDIX 1. TABULAR OVERVIEW OF AFFIRMATIVE MEASURES

| Activity | Total | School year 2018/19. |
|---|---|---|
| Roma language with national culture elements in 72 elementary schools in Serbia. Total of 55 teachers teaching <i>Roma language with elements</i> have been engaged in teaching this subject | In school year 2016/17. Total of 2.264 students attended the elective subject In school year 2017/18, this subject was attended by 2.252 students In school year 2018/19, 2850 students are involved | Increase of 27% |
| <u>Affirmative measures:</u> since 2005/06. | Total enrolment of 8.324 students (55% girls) | In school year 2018/19 via affirmative measures, 2200 Roma students are enrolled, 56% are Roma girls |
| Scholarships for secondary school students | 2.999 Roma students enrolled (65% girls) | In school year 2018/19. 850 scholarships, increase of 47 scholarships in comparison with the previous year |
| Action for enrolment in higher education institutions is dated as early as 2003/2004. | Up to this moment affirmative enrolment of the total of 1623 students (51% girls) | This academic year 115 Roma students received scholarships , and 17 loans were allocated |
| TEXTBOOKS for Roma language with national culture elements | There weren't in accordance with Text books plan | Four textbooks for the first four grades have been published |
| Pedagogy (Roma) assistants | There were 175 of them | Increased with additional 50 assistants and in the school year 2018/19, 229 PAs work within the system |