

Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia

Link with national and international standards and legislation, as well as the recommendations of organisations at international and national level.

Given the specific national situation and conditions, such as the small Roma population, Latvia has developed a series of national Roma integration policy measures (hereinafter “measures”). The measures have been included in the development planning document: National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines 2012 – 2018 (hereinafter “Guidelines”).¹

The measures have been developed in accordance with the following European Union (hereinafter “EU”) and other international legislative acts binding on Latvia:

- Communication from the Commission “Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”;²
- Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion;³
- Communication from the Commission: An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (5 April 2011);⁴
- Council conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020;⁵
- Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin;⁶
- Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation;⁷

The following recommendations by the EU and Council as well as by organisations at national level were taken into account when developing the Roma integration measures:

- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation No 13 of 24 June 2011 on combating anti-gypsyism and discrimination against Roma;
- The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma of 20 October 2010;⁸
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe;⁹
- Recommendations of the study “Roma rights to education: implementing the situation in Latvia”.¹⁰

¹ <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=3782> (Viewed 15.11.2011)

² Communication from the Commission. Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Brussels, 3 March 2010 COM(2010). http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/1_LV_ACT_part1_v1.pdf (Viewed 15.10.2011)

³ The national position on adopting the draft Council conclusion on Roma inclusion was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers (minutes No 37 53§ of the Cabinet meeting of 2 June 2009).

See Council document 10394/09 for the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion.

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st10/st10394.en09.pdf> (Viewed 15.10.2011.)

⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf (Viewed 15.10.2011)

⁵ Council conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. 3089th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting Brussels, 19 May 2011.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122100.pdf (Viewed 15.10.2011)

National position on Council conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (minutes No 31 54§ of the Cabinet meeting of 17 May 2011).

⁶ Official Journal of the European Union L 180, 19/07/2000, pp. 23 – 27.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/lv/dd/20/01/32000L0043LV.pdf> (Viewed 15.10.2011)

⁷ Official Journal of the European Union L 303, 02/12/2000, pp. 79 – 85. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=DD:05:04:32000L0078:LV:PDF> (Viewed 15.10.2011)

⁸ http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/events/2010_high_level_meeting_roma/default_en.asp

⁹ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1462637> (Viewed 15.10.2011)

¹⁰ Roma rights to education: implementing the situation in Latvia. Riga: Centre for Education Initiatives, 2011

What are the key elements of the national policy measures?

Description of the current situation

General description

The Roma are one of the oldest ethnic minorities in Latvia, and have been an integral part of Latvia's cultural diversity since the 16th century. The Roma community in Latvia is relatively small; according to data from the population register of the Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs there were 8 517 Roma living in Latvia as at 1 July 2011, comprising 0.35% of the total population. These official demographic figures are rising gradually each year, added to which, the Roma community is the only ethnic group in Latvia that maintains positive natural growth: Roma have the highest birth rates and one of the lowest death rates of all ethnic groups.

Table 1. Number of Roma living in Latvia from 2000 to 2011

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Roma</i>
2000	8205
2003	8358
2004	8420
2005	8491
2006	8512
2007	8545
2008	8582
2009	8591
2010	8558
2011	8536

Source: data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2011.

Of all the Roma that are registered officially, 93.6% are Latvian citizens, and of these approximately 70% speak Latvian. A large majority of Roma regard the Romani language as their native tongue.

Unofficial data provided by the Roma community on the number of Roma is very unspecific and changes according to socio-economic processes and conditions. For example, approximately 13 000 – 15 000 Roma were estimated to be living in Latvia in 2003 and 2005 (the official figures were 8358 in 2003 and 8491 in 2005), but with the intense level of Roma emigration to other Member States as from 2007,¹¹ the Roma population in Latvia may have halved or even fallen to one third of its previous level. More accurate information on the number of Roma and their migration in Latvia will be available after the results of the 2011 census have been collated in the first half of 2012.

Over the last century Latvia's Roma have mainly lived a settled way of life and are not characterised by extensive travel and wide-spread migration.¹² Based on the data that is available the majority of Roma live in the large towns of the Kurzeme and Zemgale regions, such as Jelgava and Ventspils, as well as in Riga. Prior to the active migration of Roma to other Member States, the highest proportion of Roma were found in Talsi (1.22% of the population), Dobele (0.85%), Tukums (0.8%), Limbaži (0.68%) and Daugavpils (0.59%) districts.¹³

In Latvia there is no so-called ghettoisation of the Roma community or segregation at the regional or local level; the Roma have formed a territorially heterogeneous group that communicates actively with the local community. This is also evident from Eurobarometer survey data.

¹¹ http://www.politika.lv/temas/sabiedribas_integracija/iezimeta_identitate/ (Viewed 15.11.2011)

¹² Latvia RAXEN National Focal Point, Thematic Study. Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers, March 2009, p.11.

¹³ Impact of the State programme "Gypsies (Roma) in Latvia" 2007-2009 on the Gypsy (Roma) Community in Latvia, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2008.

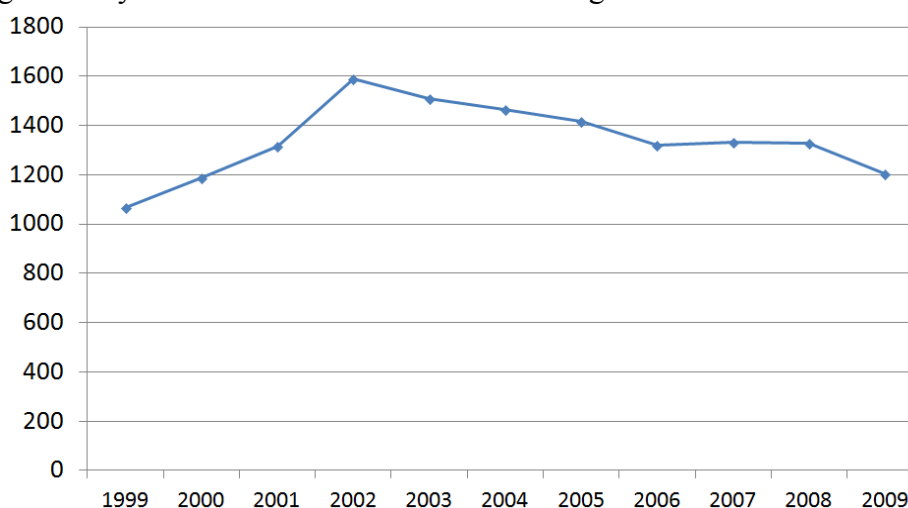
According to the data from the Eurobarometer survey on discrimination in the EU in 2009, 27% of the population of Latvia stated that they have Roma friends or acquaintances.¹⁴ This indicator has increased since 2008 when 26% of the population gave the same response. In other Member States where the Roma population is similar or even larger, this indicator is far lower, and the overall indicator for the EU is 17%.

Latvia's Roma is not an ethnically homogenous community. Two different groups of Roma have lived in Latvia since ancient times: the Latvian Roma (*Lofitke Roma*) and the Russian Roma (*Xaladytka Roma*), whose differences manifest themselves territorially, linguistically, culturally and in their traditional way of life.

Challenges for Roma socio-economic integration, particularly in the areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare

Education

Figure 1. Dynamics of Roma school children in general education schools



Source: data from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Taking into account expert opinions in the area of Roma education, as well as the results and recommendations of the study carried out in 2011 “Roma rights to education: implementing the situation in Latvia”¹⁵, the main challenges for Roma integration in the area of education are as follows:

- 1) To continue the good practice of preparing and facilitating the inclusion of teaching assistants of Roma background in schools by providing for the further professional education of these teaching assistants.¹⁶ To acknowledge, collate and disseminate other examples of good practice in Roma education.
- 2) To develop and improve intercultural competencies in order to facilitate the integration of Roma school children in general education.
- 3) To implement teacher training and continuing education by ensuring a link with practice in classes where Roma children study together with other children.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_en.pdf (Viewed 15.11.2011.)

¹⁵ Roma rights to education: implementing the situation in Latvia. Riga: Centre for Education Initiatives, 2011.

¹⁶ The project to prepare and facilitate the inclusion of teaching assistants of Roma background in educational establishments is presented on the website of the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights as an example of good practice in Latvia in the area of Roma integration. http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/GoodPractices/Latvia_RomaEducation.pdf (Viewed 15.11.2011.)

- 4) To regularly analyse the situation in the work of educational establishments where Roma school children study, such as teachers' professional qualifications for classroom work with children of different ethnic origins.
- 5) To support projects to foster Roma education implemented by non-governmental organisations (or representatives of the Roma community) together with educational establishments or other non-governmental organisations.
- 6) To develop a mechanism for recording the educational age of Roma in order to reduce the risk of school absenteeism and to foster Roma children's regular attendance at school. To collate data on preparing Roma children for pre-school education, mandatory five-year and six-year education, educational results and completing basic education.
- 7) To develop and publish methodological materials for teaching 5-7 year old children the Romani language (with translation into Latvian), with the content representing the traditional key elements of Roma culture.
- 8) To maintain a dialogue with the parents of Roma children, to support and involve them in the education process by explaining the importance of education.
- 9) To foster the improvement of socio-economic conditions for Roma children in preparation for primary school.
- 10) To include experts from the Roma community in the work of the consultative board on issues of minority education of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Employment

Surveys show that of all the ethnic minorities in Latvia, Latvian residents are most critical of the Roma's opportunities to obtain work.¹⁷ The reasons for this situation are as follows: 1) the Roma's low-level of education; 2) the large number of Roma that are registered and unregistered unemployed; 3) society's negative stereotypes and prejudices towards the Roma community, which may become the reason for discrimination of the Roma in the labour market.

Taking into account the proposals put forward by experts, non-governmental organisations (hereinafter "NGO") and representatives of the Roma community at the July 2011 meeting organised by the Ministry of Culture (hereinafter "expert meeting"), the challenges for Roma integration in the area of employment are as follows:

- 1) To foster dialogue between representatives of the Roma community and Roma NGOs with employers in order to develop a platform of cooperation for involving the Roma in the labour market.
- 2) To support measures to popularise good practice for Roma integration in the labour market, thereby reducing the negative stereotypes against representatives of this community. To foster the development of diversity management approaches with respect to Roma who are able to work.
- 3) To broaden the competitiveness of Roma youth by supporting training for Roma career choices and other initiatives aimed at development.
- 4) To improve monitoring of the situation in the area of Roma employment, which includes developing a survey on the situation of Roma in the labour market.
- 5) To actively involve the registered unemployed Roma in employment measures.

Housing and healthcare

Certain surveys that have been undertaken in Latvia on the situation of Roma conclude that a considerable number of the Roma population live in unsanitary conditions, without facilities such as a hot water supply, central heating or gas-fired heating and sewerage.¹⁸ Representatives of the Roma

¹⁷ Specific problems of Latvia and its regions. Riga: Gfk Baltic, 2006; Convention for the protection of national minorities – prevention of discrimination and preservation of identity. Riga: Academic press of the University of Latvia, 2007, p.21.

¹⁸ The situation of Roma in Latvia. Riga: Latvian Human Rights and Ethnic Studies Centre, 2003, p. 41.

community state that, on the whole, Roma housing conditions are not regarded as being very poor: many Roma live in private houses, blocks of flats and in social housing. According to data from the Central Statistical Bureau, in 2000 49.6% of Roma lived in private homes, 14% live in private houses owned by other people, but 36% of Roma lived in housing granted by local authorities or other organisations.¹⁹

Data on the social and ethnic origin of home owners, as well the number of homes owned and the size of households is not collated regularly (annually) in Latvia. Data is also not collected on the impact of housing conditions on residents' health, access to education and employment.²⁰ Only certain local authorities collate data on demands for housing by and granted to the Roma population.

The procedures for receiving healthcare services are laid down in Cabinet Regulation No 1046 of 19 December 2006 „Procedures for the organisation and financing of healthcare”, and they apply equally to all residents of Latvia, irrespective of whether they belong to a particular ethnic group. A survey on the situation of Roma in Latvia concludes that the Roma have lower incomes given their low level of education and employment, as well as the level of intolerance within society towards this ethnic group, and this may limit their access to medical services and increase the risk of suffering from chronic illnesses.²¹

In order to protect those residents on low incomes and allow them to receive healthcare services Paragraph 10.17 of Cabinet Regulation No 1046 of 19 December 2006 „Procedures for the organisation and financing of healthcare” provides that people on low incomes, who have been recognised as such in accordance with legislation on procedures for recognising a family or an individual as being on a low income, are exempt from patient contributions. This means that any person on a low income is entitled to receive state financed healthcare services, without having to pay patient contributions, that is to say, free of charge. Nevertheless, the low level of education, lack of information and, possibly, other factors inherent in the Roma community may hinder them from receiving healthcare services.

In Latvia ethnicity-related data is not collated as part of the routine collection of statistics in the area of healthcare.

In order to foster the social inclusion of the Roma community, projects are being planned or are being implemented at the regional level by local authorities in Latvia and Roma NGOs within the framework of the European Social Fund sub-activity „Development of social care services in the regions as an alternative to social rehabilitation and institutions”:

- 1) Implementation of the activity „Development and implementation of a social rehabilitation programme at a day centre for ethnic Roma residents living in the town of Jūrmala” began in 2011 and is due to continue until 2014;
- 2) Implementation of the activity „Alternative social rehabilitation services and support services for Ventspils evening secondary school children and young people, including Roma” began in 2011 and is due to continue until 2014;
- 3) Implementation of the activity „Social rehabilitation programme for ethnic Roma families with pre-school or school age children living in the town of Jelgava” will begin 2012 and is due to continue until 2013.

Measures that provide information and foster cooperation play an important role during the uptake of financing available under the Structural Funds. For example, in 2011 the Ministry of Culture together with the Ministry of Welfare organised a seminar on the opportunities for Roma, non-Roma NGOs and local authority organisations to cooperate by taking part in the project competition as part of the European Social Fund sub-activity „Development of social care services in

¹⁹ Latvia RAXEN National Focal Point, Thematic Study. Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers, March 2009, p.24.

²⁰ As before, p. 23.

²¹ The situation of Roma in Latvia. Op.cit. 46. According to data from the State register for HIV and AIDS, 1-2% of the entire Roma population in Latvia were infected with HIV in 2002, which is 7.5% of all people infected with HIV. This is the greatest number of people infected with HIV amongst all other ethnic groups in Latvia. As before, p. 44.

the regions as an alternative to social rehabilitation and institutions”, by fostering the social inclusion of Roma. There are plans to continue this practice.

Information has been gathered on the opinions of experts, Roma and non-Roma NGOs, as well as representatives of the Roma community, and the following challenges have been drawn up for Roma integration in the areas of health and housing:

- 1) To continue the uptake of financing from the Structural Funds, and to support social and health rehabilitation measures for the integration of the Roma community through the involvement of representatives from Roma NGOs.
- 2) To inform the Roma population living in anti-sanitary conditions or under the poverty line about health issues, observing general hygiene and opportunities for rehabilitation and social care.
- 3) To gather information on the number of homeless Roma in the regions, with the help of local authorities. To inspect existing homes and, where possible, provide support to ensure sanitary and safety standards.
- 4) To prepare and train social workers in specific aspects of Roma culture, and in the area of culturally sensitive services for low-income Roma families.
- 5) To improve monitoring of the socio-economic conditions of Roma, and this includes developing a study of Roma access to homes and healthcare services.

Human rights

Latvian society still maintains negative stereotypes and prejudices towards the Roma community, which fosters discriminatory treatment towards this community in the areas of employment and social assistance.²² Of all the ethnic minorities living in Latvia ethnic Roma feel the most discriminated.²³ For example, a survey shows that Latvian residents are most critical of the Roma’s opportunities to obtain work.²⁴ In turn, 53% of Latvian residents surveyed state that they feel uncomfortable or are more likely to feel uncomfortable living next door to ethnic Roma.²⁵

According to data from the Ombudsman’s office, the number of complaints of discrimination on the grounds of race and nationality that have been received from members of the Roma community has fallen over the last few years. More than often Roma do not report instances of discrimination to the Ombudsman, because they lack information and the knowledge as to how they can defend their rights. Furthermore, some Roma are convinced that intolerance and discrimination will continue even if they report instances of discrimination to the Ombudsman.

The following challenges have been put forward during the expert meeting and consultations in order to foster tolerance and ensure equality with respect to Roma:

- 1) Implement measures to foster tolerance within society towards the Roma community, such as organising measures as part of the EU’s „For diversity. Against discrimination” campaign, and the PROGRESS programme.
- 2) To provide professional training on inter-cultural communication and dialogue.

²² Reasons for and duration of unemployment and social exclusion. Riga: Ministry of Welfare, 2007, pp. 345-352. http://sf.lm.gov.lv/esf/print.php?doc_id=47 (Viewed 30.10.2011). The study has been carried out as part of the „Studies of the Ministry of Welfare” project No VPD1/ESF/NVA/04/NP/3.1.5.1./0001/0003 of the Structural Funds National Programme „Labour market studies”. The study was carried out by the University of Latvia agency „UoL Philosophy and Sociology Institute”, the association „Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies” and SIA „Institute for sociological surveys”. European Commission against racism and intolerance. Third report on Latvia, 2007. http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/1-ecri/2-country-by-country_approach/latvia/Latvia%203e%20rapport%20-%20cri08-2%20-%20letton.pdf (Viewed 30.11.2011.)

National Minorities Convention – the Prevention of Discrimination and the Preservation of Identity in Latvia, ed. N. Muižnieks, Riga: Academic press of the University of Latvia, 2007, pp. 19-20, 73.

²³ European Commission against racism and intolerance. Third report on Latvia, 2007. Op.cit.21.

http://www.humanrights.org.lv/html/lv/jomas/datu_baze/29355.html (Viewed 03.11.2011.)

²⁴ Specific problems of Latvia and its regions. Riga: Gfk Baltic, 2006.; Convention for the protection of national minorities. Op.cit. p. 19.

²⁵ The average of Member States at this cross-section is 56%. Special Eurobarometer survey No 296. Op.cit.p.121.

- 3) To develop monitoring of discrimination against Roma in the labour market, such as developing the use of test methods in practice.
- 4) To organise measures on the practice of legal proceedings and the application of legislative acts.
- 5) To establish Roma cultural centres in the largest towns of Latvia's regions (Latgale, Zemgale, Vidzeme and Kurzeme), where Roma culture, traditions, way of life and ethnography will be presented. To support measures for the development of Roma culture.

Fostering civic participation

Despite the fact that 12 Roma NGOs were registered in Latvia in 2011, representing the regional interests of the Roma community, the majority of these organisations are not sufficiently active in developing civic participation. Only certain representatives of the Roma community are involved and take part in various state authority consultative mechanisms.

The majority of Roma NGOs lack administrative capacity and information in order to apply for project competitions and receive assistance in implementing projects, and they also lack the experience to enable them to implement projects fully according to the criteria that have been laid down.

The following challenges have been put forward during the expert meeting and consultations in order to foster civic participation by Roma:

- 1) To develop cooperation between Roma and non-Roma NGOs, local authorities and state authorities.
- 2) To ensure the participation of Roma NGO representatives and experts in state authority consultative mechanisms. For example, to ensure representation of the interests of the Roma community in the work of consultative board on issues of minority education of the Ministry of Education and Science.
- 3) To foster Roma NGO capacity building and participation in integration projects.
- 4) To encourage a discussion on more active inclusion of Roma integration issues in the uptake of the Structural Funds.

Cultural and social memory

During the Second World War widespread persecution of the Roma took place in occupied Europe, although their fate was different in various countries. During this period of occupation approximately half of the Roma population in Latvia was murdered or perished in the Nazi death camps. Furthermore, today the majority of society does not know that Nazi regime oppressed the Roma community on the grounds of race, in the same way as the Jews.

To-date, insufficient information has been gathered and little research has taken place into this tragedy, recollections and statements have not been collated, only a minimum of appropriate memorial events have taken place in order to draw the attention of the public and the Roma community to this historical fact.

Policy results to be achieved and result indicators for achieving them.

The Guidelines define the following policy results to be achieved and result indicators which have a targeted approach to Roma:

Table 2. Policy results to be achieved and result indicators for Roma integration

Policy result	Result indicator	2007-2011	2014	2018
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Education				
Effective system in place for the inclusion of Roma children in general education schools	Proportion of ethnic Roma that believes it should be mandatory for Roma to complete a minimum of nine years of education (%)	80 (2011) ²⁶	85	90
Effective system in place for the inclusion of Roma children in general education schools	The proportion of ethnic Roma school children who leave general education schools due to a lack of funds (%)	39 (2011) ²⁷	25	20
Effective system in place for the inclusion of Roma children in general education schools	Correlation of the number of ethnic Roma children who have completed the school year, against the number of children at school at the beginning of the school year in general education schools	An additional indicator will be implemented as from 2012/2013. Following implementation the development of this result will be planned for 2013 and 2018.		
Employment				
Reduction in differences between the employment levels of various ethnic groups	Proportion of ethnic groups amongst the long-term unemployed (%) ²⁸	0.8 (2011)	0.6	0.4
Preventing discrimination				
Increase in the level of awareness and understanding among residents of Latvia regarding issues of discrimination and tolerance	The proportion of Latvian residents who state they feel uncomfortable living next door to ethnic Roma (%)	59 ²⁹ (2008)	55	50
Increase in the level of awareness and understanding among residents of Latvia regarding issues of discrimination and tolerance	The proportion of Latvian residents, who believe that Roma have little opportunity to be offered work (%)	27 ³⁰ (2007)	24	17

The Guidelines also define the policy results and result indicators that have a mainstream approach to Roma, and these are related to increasing the level of tolerance within society, protecting the rights and interests of ethnic minorities, including Roma, fostering civic participation, cultural development and preserving identity:

Table 3. Policy results to be achieved and result indicators which have a mainstream approach to Roma integration

²⁶ Roma rights to education: implementing the situation in Latvia. Riga: Centre for Education Initiatives, 2011, p. 33.

²⁷ As before, p. 30.

²⁸ Calculation made according to data from the State Employment Agency (data as at 01.01.2011)

<http://www.nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=330&txt=336&t=stat> (Viewed 30.10.2011.) The target indicator has been selected according to the proportion of the ethnic group in question against the total population (population as at 01.01.2011, data from the Central Statistical Bureau).

²⁹ Special Eurobarometer survey No 296. Discrimination in the European Union: perception, experiences and attitudes, European Commission, 2008, p.121. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_en.htm.

³⁰ Convention for the protection of national minorities – prevention of discrimination and preservation of identity. Riga: Academic press of the University of Latvia, 2007, p.21.

Policy result	Result indicator	2007-2011	2014	2018
Increased participation by ethnic minorities in the public sector, increase in the proportion of Latvian residents who trust other nationalities living in Latvia	Proportion of ethnic minorities in employment (%)	24.0 ³¹ (2007)	25	26
Increase in the level of awareness and understanding among residents of Latvia regarding issues of discrimination and tolerance	Number of complaints received by the Ombudsman of possible instances of discrimination (number of complaints)	91 ³² (2010)	200	200 ³³
Increased participation by ethnic minorities in the public sector	Proportion of public administration employees who believe that state authorities should aim to attract employees from ethnic minorities (%)	49 ³⁴ (2010)	54	60
Opportunities for Latvia's ethnic minorities to preserve their ethnic identity have been ensured	Number of active ethnic minority cultural associations (number)	55 ³⁵	55	55
Increase in the level of awareness and understanding among residents of Latvia regarding issues of discrimination and tolerance	Proportion of residents that have witnessed instances of discrimination (%)	23 ³⁶ (2010)	23	23
	Proportion of Latvian residents who know their rights in the event of discrimination (%)	24 ³⁷ (2009)	30	40
Inter-cultural dialogue developed and involves all the society integration policy target groups	The proportion of residents who have a favourable attitude towards other nationalities (%)	51 ³⁸ (2007)	59	65

Policy objectives and tasks

As the authority responsible for Roma integration, the Ministry of Culture developed a unified development planning document in 2011 – the Guidelines, of which the action plan contains specific measures that have a targeted approach and mainstreaming approach to the socio-economic integration of Roma (see tables 4 and 5).

³¹ M.Hazans. Ethnic minorities in the Latvian Labour Market, 1997-2009: Outcomes, Integration Drivers and Barriers // *How integrated is Latvian society?* N. Muižnieks (ed.). Riga: Academic press of the University of Latvia, 2010, p.159.

³² Ombudsman's report 2010. Dynamics of complaints: 2007 – 304, 2008 – 320, 2009 – 181.

³³ Expert and Ombudsman's office opinion. Society is taught about discrimination and how to recognise it. Therefore, on the one hand, there could be fewer instances of deliberate discrimination, but on the other hand, people will defend their rights more purposefully in the event of discrimination.

³⁴ M.Golubeva, I.Kažoka, O.Rastrigina. Diversity management in the public sector: experience of developed countries and an assessment of the situation in Latvia. Riga: public policy centre „PROVIDUS”, 2011., p. 22.

³⁵ Data from the Ministry of Culture (01.07.2011)

³⁶ EU average indicator: 26% of those surveyed have witnessed instances of discrimination in the last year. Special Eurobarometer survey No 317., p.27. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_fact_lv_en.pdf

³⁷ EU average indicator – 33%. Special Eurobarometer survey No 317, p.35.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_fact_lv_en.pdf

³⁸ Study of current aspects of society integration and citizenship. Study commissioned by the Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs. 2008, p. 28.

The Guidelines were approved at a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on 11 October 2011 (Cabinet Order No 542 of 20 October 2011). The Ministry of Culture is responsible for the implementation, coordination and evaluation of the Guidelines. Implementation of the Guidelines is due to take place in cooperation with state bodies, local authorities and NGOs, including Roma NGOs that are involved and are active in the area of national identity, society integration and civil society policies.

One of the objectives of the Guidelines is **to foster the inclusion in society of socially excluded groups and prevent discrimination**. This objective also applies to the socio-economic integration of Roma.

In addition, the action plan set out in the Guidelines has the following task: **to provide support measures for Roma integration, increasing the level of education and employment, as well as access to health and social care and housing services**.

In accordance with Latvian legislation³⁹ the maximum planning period for the Guidelines is seven years. Therefore, the objectives, measures and anticipated results of the Guidelines are planned from 2012 to 2018. According to paragraph 12 of the Guidelines, a final impact assessment of the implementation of the Guidelines is due to be prepared in 2019, and future national identity, society integration and civil society policies will be developed on the basis of the assessment, including Roma integration policy. Therefore, implementation of Roma integration policy is ensured until 2020 and in the subsequent period.

Action plan measures

The action plan of the Guidelines includes policy tasks and measures for integration of the Roma community into Latvian society. Some of the tasks and measures set out in the action plan have a targeted approach to Roma, but there are also measures that have a mainstreaming approach, in order to foster an increase in the level of tolerance in society, protect the rights and interests of ethnic minorities, including Roma, foster civic participation, and provide support for cultural development and the preservation of identity.

Table 4. Tasks and measures set out in the action plan of the Guidelines that have a targeted approach to Roma

No in the Guidelines	Tasks and measures	Time-limit for implementation	Responsible body and bodies involved	Operational results 2012-2013 ⁴⁰	Planned financing ⁴¹ and sources of financing
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³⁹ Paragraph 12 of Cabinet Regulation No 1178 of 13 October 2009 „Regulations for preparing development planning documents and for impact assessment” provides that the Guidelines are a mid-term policy planning document aimed at achieving specific objectives of national significance, and it covers a wide spectrum of issues and is developed over a period of five to seven years. <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=200576&from=off> (Viewed 25.11.2011.)

⁴⁰ A description has been provided of the targeted operational results that only apply to action policy for the next two years (2012-2013). After an environmental and impact assessment of the first stage of the planning document has been carried out, a plan will be developed for implementing the Guidelines over the next period 2014-2015, and will clarify the measures for the next period.

⁴¹ Measures planned in the Guidelines will be implemented using state budget funds granted to the responsible and co-responsible bodies. A series of measures will be implemented by attracting funds from international financial instruments. For example, a total of LVL 7 284 522 is available from the EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme “NGO Fund” 2009-2014, for NGO projects and operational support. NGOs will be able to apply for financing from this programme from 2012 to 2016 by participating in project competitions, and this includes the implementation of activities in the area of human rights, incl. minority rights (ethnic, religious, language, sexual orientation); fighting against racism and xenophobia, preventing discrimination and reducing social inequality, poverty and exclusion. There are also plans to attract financing from the European Social Fund (hereinafter “ESF”), the PROGRESS programme 2007-2013 for fostering employment and social solidarity (hereinafter “PROGRESS”), and European Fund for the integration of third-country nationals, in order to implement the measures set out in the action plan of the Guidelines. Specific financing for measures under the Guidelines has not been set out, as it depends on the results of project competitions and on the allocation of financing from a particular financial instrument by measure and priority.

1.3.1.	Task: To include people in society who have been excluded as a result of poverty or geographical isolation.				
1.3.1.2.	Support measures for groups at risk of social exclusion, incl. Roma, to ensure access and provision of social services and healthcare services.	Annually as from 2014	Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Culture		As part of funding allocated from the state budget. For the period 2014-108: indicative – ESF 1st OP „Human resources and employment” sub-activity 1.4.1 „Social inclusion”.
1.3.4.2.	Statistical data collection system for manifestations of discrimination against various social groups.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Society Integration Fund	In 2013 a system to collect and collate statistical data developed on the situation of Roma in socio-economic areas of life (employment, education, healthcare and access to housing).	2013-2014: indicative – PROGRESS. 2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As from 2017, additional financing from the state budget required.
1.3.6.	Task: To provide support measures for Roma integration, and to increase the level of education and employment, as well as in the area of access to health and social care and housing services.				
1.3.6.1.	Measures to increase the level of education of ethnic Roma children, by providing suitable teaching programmes and methods, and increasing opportunities for members of the Roma community who are over the age of mandatory education to take part in the education process. ⁴²	Annually	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Education and Science, local authorities	1) Seminar in Riga in 2012 for training teaching assistants of Roma background for 15 participants. 2) Long-term state authority and local authority coordinated system established in 2012 and 2013 to provide teaching assistants of Roma background. 3) Education seminars held in 2013 for Roma families on the advantages of education and on employment, and discussions on school attendance.	As part of funding allocated from the state budget. 2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As from 2017, additional financing from the state budget required.
1.3.6.2.	Developing a dialogue between the Roma	Annually	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of	Cooperation platform established in 2012	As part of funding allocated from the

⁴² Measure in cooperation with the Educational development guidelines 2007-2013, p. 38.

	community, social partners and NGOs (cooperation projects for Roma integration, developing and implementing a mentoring programme, training representatives of Roma NGOs).		Welfare, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, local authorities	between active members of the Roma community, NGOs and employers.	state budget.
1.3.6.3.	Research into and improvement of the professional skills of Roma, inclusion of Roma in the labour market and fostering entrepreneurship.	2013	Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economics	Study published on the situation of Roma in the labour market.	Additional financing from the state budget required, LVL 7 300.
1.3.6.4.	Study (case studies) „The Roma community and human rights in Latvia” (access to education, housing, healthcare, various services, employment, etc.)	2013	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare	Study published in Latvian with a summary in English; brochures issued on the results of the study in Latvian and English, presentation held of the results of the study.	As part of funding allocated from the state budget. 2013-2014: indicative – PROGRESS.
1.3.6.5.	Support measures for Roma families to resolve housing issues, based on study findings.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Culture, local authorities	1) Further action ensured on the basis of the results of the study under measure 1.3.6.4: discussion held between responsible and involved parties on possible future action to resolve issues concerning Roma access to housing. 2) Informational and educational measures carried out for the Roma community. 3) Training for representatives of those professions that support local authorities in working with the Roma community. 4) Evaluation of the need to amend existing legislation regulating assistance to resolve housing issues.	As part of funding allocated from the state budget. 2013-2014: indicative - PROGRESS. 2012-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014.
1.3.6.6.	Round-table discussion on Roma education (exchange of good practice).	2012	Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science	Four measures held in the regions and one in Riga.	As part of funding allocated from the state budget.
1.3.6.7.	Consultative board at the national level on implementing Roma integration policy and related issues involving	Annually	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of	Consultative board established with representatives from ministries and local authorities, Roma	As part of funding allocated from the state budget.

	representatives of the Roma community.		Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economics, local authorities	NGOs and experts. The board meets at least twice a year.	
2.2.3.	Task: To provide methodological support for teachers.				
2.2.3.2.	The Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture develops a methodological basis for learning Latvian when working with Roma children (children, who have inadequate Latvian language skills).	As from 2012, updated as needed.	Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture	Methodological support provided for teachers who work with Roma children and school children with inadequate Latvian language skills.	2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As from 2017, budget financing allocated from the Ministry of Education and Science.
2.3.5.	Task: Support for ethnic minorities, incl. Roma, to preserve and develop an ethnic, local and European identity and culture. State grants as part of a project competition.	2014, 2016.	Ministry of Culture		Budget financing allocated from the State Culture Capital Foundation (hereinafter „SCCF”). Additional financing from the state budget required, LVL 50 000.
2.3.5.2.	Developing a support mechanism to preserve and popularise Roma cultural identity (traditions, way of life, ethnography).	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund	Roma NGOs supported.	2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As from 2017, additional financing from the state budget required.
3.1.6.	Task: To disseminate information on studies regarding ethnic minority victims of Stalinism and Nazism, and preserve their memory.				
3.1.6.1.	Measures: Scientific research carried out on the extermination of Roma during the Second World	2013	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund, Latvian Museum of Occupation,	Collection of scientific articles published in Latvian and English.	As part of funding allocated from the state budget. 2013: indicative -

	War.		Commission of the Historians of Latvia, Latvian National Archives		EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. EC programme „Europe for citizens”
3.1.6.2.	Scientific conferences on the extermination of Roma and the Jews (holocaust) during the Second World War.	2014, 2016, 2018.	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund, Commission of the Historians of Latvia, Latvian National Archives		As part of funding allocated from the state budget. 2014, 2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. EC programme „Europe for citizens”.

Table 5. Tasks and measures set out in the action plan of the Guidelines that have a mainstreaming approach to Roma

No in the Guidelines	Tasks and measures	Time-limit for implementation	Responsible body and bodies involved	Operational results 2012-2013 ⁴³	Planned financing and sources of financing
1.1.2.	Task: Improving civic knowledge and skills of children and young people in education programmes at all levels.				
1.1.2.1.	Measures: Support for between school civic initiatives, incl. children and young people at risk of social exclusion.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund	Support for at least two measures per year.	2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As from 2017, additional financing from the state budget required,
1.2.4.	Task: Improving the operational conditions of NGOs.				
1.2.4.5.	Developing an inter-ethnic NGO cooperation network.	2013–2016.	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund	One measure held per year.	2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial

⁴³ A description has been provided of the targeted operational results that only apply to action policy for the next two years (2012-2013). After an environmental and impact assessment of the first stage of the planning document has been carried out, a plan will be developed for implementing the Guidelines over the next period 2014-2015, and will clarify the measures for the next period.

					instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As from 2017, additional financing from the state budget required.
1.3.1.	Task: To include people in society who have been excluded as a result of poverty or geographical isolation.				
1.3.1.1.	Measures: To support cooperation between NGOs, libraries, cultural/community centres as social assistance centres, and ensure access to cultural events, particularly for visually impaired people on low incomes (e.g. cultural passports, free internet access points in libraries). Programme co-financing to acquire books, periodicals, electronic information resources needed for social assistance functions, for 832 local authority libraries (832 libraries x LVL 500/year) = LVL 416 000; Programme co-financing to organise training and events (832 x LVL 341.35/year) = LVL 284 000.	Annually as from 2014	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development		Additional financing from the state budget required; LVL 700 000.
1.3.1.3.	To support youth centre events for groups of socially excluded young people.	2012–2017.	Youth international programme agency	Support for work with young people in local authorities	Swiss-Latvian Cooperation Programme. ⁴⁴
1.3.3.	Task: To inform society and train specialists in various support professions ⁴⁵ on tolerance and social exclusion, inter-cultural competence and judicial practice with respect to discrimination.				
1.3.3.2.	Seminars on diversity management and non-discrimination for various target groups.	2013	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare	In 2012 four seminars held in the regions and two in Riga; 180 people trained. In 2013 four seminars held in the regions and two in Riga.	2013-2014: indicative – PROGRESS
1.3.3.4.	Educational events for children and young people on tolerance and non-discrimination.	2012, 2013.	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Society Integration Fund,	„Children’s jury” held in 2012 on books with tolerance and non-discrimination themes; creative workshops in	As part of funding allocated from the state budget.

⁴⁴ <http://www.swiss-contribution.lv/page/1> (Viewed 30.10.2011.).

⁴⁵ Specialists in support professions: employees in the social, educational and health professions, such as social workers, educational personnel (psychologists, teachers), medical workers and other public workers.

			Ombudsman's Office, Latvian National Library	four regional libraries at the Latvian National Library, animation film made on the basis of what was achieved at the workshops, and interactive classes on tolerance held for children in years 6 and 7. „Children's jury" held in 2013 on books with tolerance and non-discrimination themes; creative workshops in four regional libraries at the Latvian National Library.	
1.3.3.5.	Information campaign in the mass media „Tolerance and equal opportunities”.	2012, 2013.	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare	Campaign held on the radio, TV, internet, published media, social media etc.	As part of funding allocated from the state budget. 2013-2014: indicative – PROGRESS.
1.3.4.	Task: Development of an anti-discrimination monitoring and evaluation system.				
1.3.4.3.	Improving methods aimed at recognising discrimination and diversity management approaches.	2014, 2016, 2018.	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Society Integration Fund	In 2014 testing carried out of the situation in preventing discrimination (study). In 2014 development of a standard for providing state and local authority services when working with different clients.	Additional financing from the state budget required, LVL 10 000 (2014)
1.3.4.4.	Public opinion survey on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of Latvian residents in the areas of discrimination prevention and tolerance.	2013, 2015, 2017.	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Society Integration Fund	Survey published in 2013 on Latvian residents' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards people who most often experience intolerance and discriminatory treatment.	2013: indicative – PROGRESS. From 2015, as part of financing from the state budget.
1.3.5.2.	Scientific practical conference on issues relating to inter-cultural dialogue and tolerance.	2015	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund, Ministry of Education and Science,		2015: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014.
2.3.1.	Task: To foster awareness of the Latvian cultural space as being culturally diverse and inclusive.				
2.3.1.3.	Restoring the cultural-historical memories of Latvia's ethnic minorities: support for children's and school pupils' activities that are	Annually	Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture	Annual competition organised for schools	As part of financing allocated by the SCCF, e.g. SCCF budget allocation as part of the

	aware of and popularise the contribution of ethnic minority culture to the Latvian cultural space.				target programme.
2.3.1.4.	Establishing and developing a tradition of an annual ethnic minority day.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture, local authorities	Proposals for developing the concept evaluated in 2012, and concept drawn up where necessary. Establishing the tradition of an ethnic minority day.	2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. As part of funding allocated from the state budget to implement the concept.
2.3.1.5.	Setting up an ethnic minority portal. Cost of developing the portal concept and the portal project = LVL 10 000; maintaining the portal and updating information = LVL 30 000.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture	Portal concept developed in 2013; maintenance of portal ensured in 2014.	Additional financing from the state budget required: LVL 10 000 (2013); LVL 30 000 (2014)
2.3.6.	Task: Potential effective use of cultural education to unite society.				
2.3.6.2.	Joint cultural events for children and young people from different ethnic origins as part of both formal and informal education.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, Cultural Education and Non-material Heritage Centre, local authorities	Three activities held per year.	2013-2016: indicative – EEA financial instrument. As from 2017 state and local authority financing, SCCF.
2.3.7.4.	Support for activities of Latvian and ethnic minority folklore ensembles. Total of five events per year (one event in each of the five planning regions); cost of one event = LVL 2 000.	Annually as from 2013	Ministry of Culture, Cultural Education and Non-material Heritage Centre in cooperation with local authorities	At least one event held in each of the five planning regions.	Additional financing from the state budget required (SCCF): LVL 10 000 (2013); LVL 10 000 (2014)
3.1.6.	Task: To disseminate information on studies regarding ethnic minority victims of Stalinism and Nazism, and preserve their memory.				
3.1.6.3.	To foster the commemoration of victims of Stalinism amongst ethnic minorities in Latvia's districts.	Annually	Ministry of Culture, Society Integration Fund, Latvian Museum of Occupation, Latvian National Archives	Work to begin in 2012 on developing a joint interactive map of commemorative sites of victims of Stalinism.	2013-2016: indicative - EEA and Norwegian financial instrument programme „NGO Fund” 2009-2014. EC programme „Europe for citizens”, As part of funding allocated from the state budget.

Aspects of horizontal policy

The series of national Roma integration policy measures has been developed in accordance with the Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion,⁴⁶ and takes account of principle No 4 which specifies the need to insert the Roma in the mainstream of society, without allowing for the segregation of Roma (in education, the labour market and housing issues). The action plan of the Guidelines provides for general activities to foster inter-cultural dialogue in society, training for professionals in various sectors on issues of cultural diversity, efficiency and motivational measures for civic participation, information seminars on diversity management, fundamental rights and the protection of interests. Attention will also be focused on the Roma community as part of these measures, and Roma participation in implementing the action plan of the Guidelines will be fostered.

Despite the fact that the Ministry of Culture is the responsible body for implementing and evaluating the Guidelines, the measures set out in the action plan of the Guidelines, which includes implementing Roma integration measures, provides for the responsibility and involvement of ministries in several sectors: the Ministry of Welfare (responsible for employment policy), the Ministry of Education and Science (responsible for education policy), the Ministry of Economics (responsible for housing policy), the Ministry of Health (responsible for healthcare policy), the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (responsible for regional policy) and the Ministry of the Interior (responsible for migration and security policy). More detailed information is provided in tables 4 and 5 on the responsibility or co-responsibility of state bodies in various sectors as regards implementing the series of Roma integration measures.

One of the planned activities for implementing and coordinating the Guidelines is cooperation with local authorities, to develop coordinated society integration policy more effectively (including Roma integration), by using examples of good practice. For example information materials „National identity, civil society and integration policy guidelines and target groups: theory and good practice” have been developed for local authorities. In addition there are plans to establish a system of civil society strengthening and society integration regional coordinators, and it is anticipated that there will be one regional coordinator in each of the five planning regions in Latvia.

Link with the National Reform Programme of Latvia for implementing the „EU 2020” strategy⁴⁷

The main policy areas for reducing structural unemployment and defined in general terms in the National Reform Programme of Latvia for implementing the „EU 2020” strategy (hereinafter „Reform Programme”), without highlighting any (including Roma) specific socially and economically inactive group. The document defines the following policy areas:

- 1) improving active labour market policy, by gradually moving away from measures to reduce the effects of the crisis to traditional active labour market policy measures;
- 2) the effective return to the labour market of economically inactive residents and those receiving social assistance, and support for regional mobility;
- 3) making the work of the employment service more effective;
- 4) implementing the principle of life-long learning;
- 5) accelerating the uptake of EU Funds.

All these policy areas also apply to the socio-economic integration of Roma.

Table 6. Trajectory for achieving the employment level target (population aged between 20 and 64) set out in the Reform Programme

	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020
Population (20-64)	1400.3	1403.9	1405.3	1390.4	1322.1
Number of employed (20-64)	1061.1	941.9	907.5	958.4	965.1
Level of employment, %	75.8	67.1	64.6	68.9	73.0

⁴⁶ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st10/st10394.en09.pdf> (Viewed 15.10.2011)

⁴⁷ <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/LoadAtt/file57152.docx> (Viewed 25.11.2011)

The main policy areas set out in the Reform Programme for reducing the proportion of young people who do not finish school are as follows:

- 1) ensuring access to primary and secondary education;
- 2) implementing modern teaching methods.

Given that the Roma are one of the social groups with one of the lowest levels of education, and the fact that a large number of Roma children drop out of the education process before completing their education, the tasks set out in the Reform Programme for reducing the proportion of young people who do not finish school also apply to the Roma population.

Table 7. Trajectory set out in the Reform Programme for reducing the proportion of young people who do not finish school

	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020
Proportion of young people who do not finish school	15.5	13.9	15.2*	14.3	13.4

* EC evaluations

The main policy areas set out in the Reform Programme for reducing the poverty level are as follows:

- 1) reducing income inequality;
- 2) social protection measures aimed at families with children;
- 3) fostering participation in the labour market by people at risk of poverty and social exclusion;
- 4) reducing the threat of discrimination and stereotypes, as well as fostering civic participation.

These series of measures also apply to the Roma as one of the social groups living in the most unfavourable circumstances, but this ethnic group has not been separated. Reference has been made only to the largest social groups: the disabled, large families, the long-term unemployed, residents of pre-retirement age, immigrants etc.

Table 8. Trajectory for achieving the poverty level reduction target set out in the Reform Programme

	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020
Proportion of people at risk of poverty (%)	26	21	21	25	21 (or by eliminating the risk of poverty for 121 000 residents)

Developing policy, as well as mechanisms for managing the implementation and evaluation of policy

Developing a series of policy measures: expert consultation and public discussions

In order to develop a series of policy measures for the socio-economic integration of the Roma, the Ministry of Culture invited national level experts to discuss existing issues concerning Roma integration, share their experience, examine examples of good practice, set out policy priorities, anticipated results, tasks and specific measures etc. The meeting was held on 7 July 2011 with the participation of experts and representatives from the responsible state bodies (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Health and the Ombudsman's Office), representatives from local authorities and educational establishments, representatives from NGOs that work in the area of protecting the rights of the Roma, as well as representatives from the Roma community and Roma NGOs. The meeting participants made several proposals to increase the efficiency and develop the policy, but the representatives of the Roma community pointed out the needs of and current issues concerning the community.

In accordance with Cabinet Regulation No 970 of 25 August 2009 „Procedures for public participation in the development planning process”, public discussions of the draft Guidelines were held from 10 August to 9 September 2011, during which the public were able to submit their proposals and objections. Public discussions of the draft Guidelines was held in all the planning regions of Latvia, as well as in Riga. The Roma were one of the participant groups in the discussions. On 16 August 2011 the draft Guidelines were presented and discussed at the Ministry of Culture’s committee of ethnic minority non-governmental organisations to monitor the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and this committee also included a representative from the Roma community.

A total of 42 opinions were received from 34 public representatives (26 legal organisations and seven individuals).

Involving the public in implementing the action plan of the Guidelines

During the implementation of the Guidelines regular information seminars in the planning regions and local authorities are due to be organised, by informing the public and policy target groups of current issues and on the results of the national identity, civil society and integration policy, and in addition, on the results of Roma integration policy.

It is expected that implementation of the measures set out in the action plan of the Guidelines for Roma integration and fostering public tolerance measures will also involve representatives of Roma NGOs and the community, thereby complying with the principle of „Nothing about Roma without Roma”. In addition, the action plan of the Guidelines includes activities to support the work and strengthen the capacity of Roma NGOs.

Evaluation of the results and impact of implementing the action plan of the Guidelines

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

The Guidelines provide for the following mechanisms to assess the results and impact of implementing the action plan:

1) Consultative boards.

According to paragraph 13 of the Guidelines implementation of the Guidelines is monitored by the Board for monitoring the implementation of the national identity, civil society and integration policy guidelines, the composition of which is approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. It is anticipated that the Board for monitoring the Guidelines will convene at least twice a year as from 2012.

Measure 1.3.6.7 of the action plan of the Guidelines provides for the establishment of a consultative board at the national level for implementing Roma integration policy and related issues, with representatives from state bodies, local authorities, educational establishments, NGOs that work in the area of protecting the interests of the Roma, Roma NGOs and the community, as well as experts in Roma integration issues. It is anticipated that the consultative board for implementing Roma integration policy and related issues will convene at least twice a year.

2) Regular and systematic monitoring of policy.

Regular and systematic monitoring of society integration policy is due to be undertaken as part of the Guidelines. For example, Latvian national identity, civil society and integration policy evaluation system will be developed. There are plans to undertake regular surveys and collate data on the target groups of the Guidelines (nationals living abroad, non-citizens, immigrants, Roma, ethnic minorities, groups at risk of social exclusion and main-stream society), including Roma in the areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare. There are also plans to undertake public opinion surveys on issues such as cultural diversity, non-discrimination, tolerance, protection of interests, civic education and participation, inclusive education etc.

According to point 1.3.4.2 of the action plan of the Guidelines, there are plans to develop a system in 2013 to collect and collate statistical data on the situation of Roma in the socio-economic areas of life (employment, education, healthcare and access to housing). Point 1.3.6.4 of the action plan of the Guidelines provides for the development of a study (case studies) „The Roma community and human rights in Latvia” (access to education, housing, healthcare, various services, employment, etc.).

Information on contact points at the national level

The Ministry of Culture is the state authority responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Roma integration policy (series of measures), as well as for ensuring the work of the Consultative board at the national level on Roma integration policy.

The responsible contact persons are Ruta Klimkāne (Ruta.Klimkane@km.gov.lv, 67330310) Director of the Society Integration Department and Deniss Kretalovs, (Deniss.Kretalovs@km.gov.lv, 67330312), Senior Desk Officer of the Society Integration Department's Society Integration and Civil Society Development Division. Deniss Kretalovs is a national level expert in Roma issues and a member of the Council of Europe's Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM).

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