SSOAR

Open Access Repository
www.ssoar.info

Is There Any Light in the Tunnel? On the Drawbacks of the Roma Educational Integration in Bulgaria

Milenkova, Valentina; Hristova, Svetlana D.

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Milenkova, V., & Hristova, S. D. (2017). Is There Any Light in the Tunnel? On the Drawbacks of the Roma Educational Integration in Bulgaria. *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, *6*(1), 1-16. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-50229-1

Nutzungsbedingungen:
Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY-NC-ND Lizenz (Namensnennung-Nicht-kommerziell-Keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de

Terms of use:
This document is made available under a CC BY-NC-ND Licence (Attribution-Non Comercial-NoDerivatives). For more Information see:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities EQPAM
Volume 6, No.1, January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Is There Any Light in the Tunnel? On the Drawbacks of Roma Educational Integration in Bulgaria

Valentina Milenkova
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Philosophy
South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
Bulgaria

Svetlana D. Hristova
Department "Communities and Identities"
Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Sofia, Bulgaria

Date of submission: December 21st, 2016

Date of acceptance: January 14th, 2017

Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to identify the issues, which have led to Roma exclusion from the mainstream education. The first part of the paper is focused on data, correlating unequal educational opportunities and the ethnicity factor. The text presents an insight into the widely argued Roma dropout phenomenon. Different sets of reasons for dropping out from school are being discussed, i.e. educational, ethnic and cultural, economic, and family reasons. In addition, the article reflects on the retrograde beliefs of the majority population as a prerequisite for Roma reluctance towards continuing education. Moreover, the article puts forward a review on the most recent key policy measures for equal educational opportunities, targeting the Roma. Various aspects of adopted policy interventions for stimulating educational inclusion are illustrated, and supplemented by a critical analysis. The authors conclude that the required strategic actions, targeting educational equity for marginalized social groups, such as the Roma, have been indeed formulated by the stakeholders; yet, certain shortcomings have been noticed and these are primarily linked to the practical implementation of the national documents into real actions.

Keywords: Roma dropouts, educational equity, Roma cultural factors

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

1. Introduction

Corresponding Author: Svetlana D. Hristova, Senior Assistant Professor
Affiliation: Department "Communities and Identities", Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Address: #4, "Serdika" Street, 1000-Sofia, Bulgaria
e-mail: Svetlana1606@gmail.com

Copyright @ 2017, Valentina Milenkova and Svetlana D. Hristova
European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities - EQPAM, Volume 6, No.1, January 2017, pp. 1-16.
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN–L 2285 – 4916

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Alarmingly, the latest Bulgarian census showed that 11.8% of the Roma in the country reported themselves as illiterate. A FRA agency multinational survey adds to that by describing the share of self-perceived illiterates among young Roma aged 16 – 24 is 10% of all respondents (FRA 2014a, 27). These figures are directly related to a local, ethnically-driven tendency, stemming from the deficit of equal educational opportunities, e.g. the Roma dropout phenomenon. Dropping out from school causes illiteracy and seriously harms the chances of any individual to socialize and be compatible when applying for (the simplest) job.

The reason for illiteracy is the event of regular school absences and the subsequent dropout. The share of minority children dropping out from school in disturbingly high in Bulgaria: in the school year 2013/2014, 17 794 pupils have left the mainstream education as 30 percent of them were up to 4th grade (ISCED 1), and 27.5 % – up to 8th grade (ISCED 2) (NSI, 2015). Almost half of them dropped out due to family reasons (44.5%), followed by those who migrated abroad (34.4%), or as a result of reluctance to study further (14%). In a broader European perspective, FRA data convey (2014a) that the portion of people who quitted in primary school is the biggest in Bulgaria and Portugal (respectively 38% and 40% of all early school leavers per country). It is noteworthy that the biggest percentage of dropouts could be observed in the poorest Severozapaden (NorthWest) region in Bulgaria, also notorious with its highest unemployment levels (EUROSTAT 2015).

In the long run, early school leavers bring about high economic costs. People with lower secondary or no education at all are affected by unemployment and they are more likely to rely on social aids; all these aspects have had influence on their health, wellbeing and lifetime earnings (www.europa.eu 2011). Dropouts are considered those who recently quit schooling, usually up to 8th grade (14.3 years old at average), whereas early school leavers are people of age 18–24 who have only lower secondary education or less and have no interest in continuing education and training. Their portion in Bulgaria is 12.9% in 2014 (EUROSTAT). The demographic crisis and rural–urban disparities further deepen social segmentation. The shrinking population of Bulgaria (due to migration, decreasing number of births, ageing) has brought about stern issues related to unemployment, lower quality of life, insecurity and marginalization, which also assist the trend to drop out from the educational system over the last decades. There is a continuous decrease in the number of pupils in all categories of mainstream education – in the school year 2009/2010 they were 627 200, while in 2014/2015 the number of pupils shrank to 604 481. In a short period of time, the number of schools in the country declined by 455. Village schools are the most vulnerable in relation to population decrease, as the surviving ones are predominantly attended by Roma pupils from disadvantaged families at risk of early school leaving (NSI 2015).

Looking at the early childhood education, records reveal that no more than 42% of Roma children aged four and up (ready for compulsory education) were attending preschool or kindergarten in 2010/2011 (FRA 2014a, 16). Furthermore, the official census of 2011 disclosed that 23.2% of Roma children (aged 7 – 15) are excluded from the schooling process. The Bulgarian educational system persistently perpetuates inequity and presupposes high dropout rates and low enrolment of minority pupils in secondary and university education, experts claim (Marushiakova 2007, 9–10). PISA 2012 results show huge inconsistencies in access to education between Bulgarian-speaking pupils and those, belonging to linguistic minorities, as the latter group lags behind in reading, math and science (Danova 2015, 7). Poverty and judgmental attitudes are considerable factors in the exceptionally low enrolment rates of minority children in pre-schooling which further exacerbate the impediments they face later at school. Another key factor is that disadvantaged Roma families demonstrate weak interest in schooling and parental deficiency of educative style towards their children (Tilkidjiev et al. 2009, 51, 67).

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

The present paper proposes a desktop study based on analysis of statistical data, correlating poverty, educational attainment, ethnicity and some gender prospects. Basic concepts for observing the Roma dropout phenomenon across its different facets have been put forward in the text, leaning on rationalizations of various researchers on the topic. In addition, the article illustrates the most recent key policy measures for equal educational opportunities, targeting the Roma and supports that with a critical insight.

2. Problem Statement

Of all EU countries Bulgaria's population is at the highest risk of poverty. According to EUROSTAT data for the period 2012–2013 almost half of the Bulgarians (49.1%) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, which is equivalent to nearly 3.49 million people (EUROSTAT 2015). Poverty in Bulgaria is disproportionately distributed and concentrated mainly among the ethnic groups of Roma and Turks. According to a research led by the World Bank in 2010, 67% of Roma are among the poorest part of the population and account for 20% of the poorest Bulgarian citizens in general (De Laat et al. 2010, 7).

There is a direct correlation between educational attainment, employment status and poverty. EUROSTAT figures show that in 2012, 42.1% of Bulgarian citizens with pre-school, primary and lower secondary school attainment were at risk of poverty against 13.2% of those who have attained secondary or post-secondary diploma. Moreover, only 5.5% of tertiary diploma holders were at risk of poverty (National strategy for poverty reduction 2020). Furthermore, the research scrutinizes what is the correspondence between education and poverty among the Roma population, as a particular object of this study, and reveals some reflections:

a. *Low educational qualification* leads to low participation in the labour market for Roma in economically active age. An equal proportion of Roma have completed primary education (33.7%) and lower secondary education (37%). There is an intimidating trend: the share of Roma in higher education has continuously been below 0.5%, whereas the portion of Roma with upper secondary education has remained at 6.5%. The share of Roma deemed illiterate or who have less than primary-level education is estimated to be 22.3% (NSI 2011). Conversely, two-thirds of Roma with tertiary or post-secondary education (though their percentage is small) are employed, shows a study on the results of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (Dimitrov et al. 2012, 41). For comparison, 35% of those with primary education have jobs. An interesting tinge is that when asked about their inability to find a job, only 17.3% of unemployed Roma indicated their ethnic background as a reason, whereas most of the Roma respondents pointed out their lack of adequate qualification (Metodieva et al. 2012, 69).

b. For many disadvantaged Roma families, *tertiary schooling does not appear to be a priority*. The UNDP/WB/EC Regional survey (2011) and FRA Pilot Survey says that educational aspirations for the children in vulnerable Roma families do not reach far beyond secondary schooling (Brüggemann 2012, 50). A clear correlation, demonstrated in the survey, is that Roma with higher educational level aspire higher educational level for their children. Experts' explanation is that Roma respondents possibly assume eventual discrimination on the labour market, and this way they expect lower benefits from continuing education (opp.cit).

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

c. *Specific culture factors*. There is a visible gender dimension gap between the aspirations for a girl and for a boy: to a greater extent Roma people believe that lower secondary education is enough for a girl, while upper secondary is sufficient level for a boy. Primary education is regarded enough for a girl in terms of protecting her virginity on one's way to become "a good wife and a good mother" (Kosuke et al. 2014, iv-v). Because of the prevailing images and values about traditional domestic roles within the community, parents are makers of their daughters' life choices and they are aware that a girl in continuing education would risk finding a proper husband. As an outcome, marriage often overlaps with the closing stage of girls' education. For boys, earning for family livelihood takes priority over schooling (opp.cit, vii).

d. *Transmission of poverty between generations*. There is a risk for younger generation to inherit certain patterns by the parents, such as low educational status, early marriages, and backward attitudes towards work and continuing education. Insufficient command of the official language leads to limited access to information and communication which itself prevents from opportunities to approach various public services. On the other hand, inadequate admission to public goods is a fair manifestation of poverty, which obstructs people from inclusive participation in social life.

e. *Residential (spatial) segregation as a factor for lower qualification level.* The concentration of Roma in certain residential districts may also be an engine of school segregation. Pupils tend to enroll in schools near their homes; hence, the ethnic structure of classes resembles the ethnic composition of the area. Roma children, living in neighborhoods with prevailing number of Roma households, are very likely to attend segregated schools with high share of Roma pupils, especially in countries like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. In Bulgaria, 58% of the Roma children, residing in segregated areas, actually attend 'ghetto' schools where their peers are mostly Roma as well (FRA 2014a, 46-47).

2.1 "Ghetto" Schools

The schools with predominant number of Roma pupils, located inside areas which are densely populated with Roma, are known as "ghetto" schools. Unlike the urban ghetto schools, the rural educational institutions with prevailing number of Roma attendees have not been created particularly for the Roma; however, they occurred as a result of the outward migration of majority of Bulgarian families from the country towards the cities. The exclusionary Roma schools can be illustrated through a series of shortcomings. First, material and technical conditions in Roma schools are considerably worse than those in other educational institutions in Bulgaria. For most of the teachers, working in Roma schools is considered unworthy vocation. Therefore, teachers prefer leaving such jobs at first opportunity. In some cases, teachers in "ghetto schools" are insufficiently qualified. Furthermore, many teachers have not undergone the necessary training for working with minority children, which hampers communication and deepens the gap between pupils and professionals.

As a result from this phenomenon, a number of non-governmental organizations, focusing on minority–related issues, have emerged in mid–1990s to launch externally-funded programs. The first step was "Desegregating Roma schools" project which granted funds for transportation of Roma pupils from the "ghetto" schools to mainstream ones. The project was piloted in the town of Vidin in 2000–2001 and subsequently replicated in the cities of Montana, Pleven, Sliven, Haskovo, Stara Zagora, Sofia, Samokov and Kyustendil. The then newly-introduced positions of Romani-speaking assistant teachers and the active

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

participation of Roma parents contributed to a large extent to the efficiency of the intervention. However, some serious shortcomings have emerged (Kanev et al. 2005, 28-39): Roma pupils generated a feeling of insecurity in a Bulgarian-speaking environment, since they were lesser than the Bulgarian peers. Roma pupils declared they felt discouraged by the attitude of their Bulgarian classmates and some teachers. Moreover, the parents of the non-Roma children started to believe that Roma pupils threaten the quality of classes and, as a consequence, a number of parents transferred their children to other schools. This so called "the white flight" phenomenon has led to cease of enrolment of Roma pupils in particular mainstream schools, a tough measure, introduced by several school principals.

2.2 Who Are the Roma?

Roma are diverse, heterogeneous, yet recognizable group of people across Europe who encounters the same kind of challenges and problems – a low level of education, limited employment opportunities (low income, high unemployment), low standard of living, poverty and poor health (Popova 2014, 18-19). As defined by the Council of Europe, the "Roma" construct is fluid and open to other groups that correspond to similar patterns of vulnerability. These are populations who share more or less same kind of cultural characteristics and a history of persistent marginalization in European societies, including Roma, Sinti, Travellers ("travelers"), Ashkali, Kale, etc. There is a common awareness that the "Roma" encompasses various communities; yet this term is used as a summarizing concept of policies and documents, dealing with issues of social exclusion and discrimination. Although the Roma comprise different subgroups, divided mostly on the basis of religion or occupation, the non–Roma people tend to see them as a single ethnic entity.

An interesting quest is how Roma minority has been composed of in surveys: the "umbrella" term is compiled by those who identify themselves as Gypsies/Roma ("self-identification") during national censuses, while the broader concept embraces all those who are regarded as such by outsiders ("external identification") (FRA 2014a, 55). Andrey Ivanov argues that not all Roma groups have to be seen as marginalized. Reality reveals that not all of them are discriminated against, and the inclusion policies are mainly designed for those who have not adopted the values of the dominant society; have not renounced their ethno-cultural group identity; those who have no social contacts with other communities (except economically) and therefore do not have access to the opportunities of modern society (Ivanov 2012, 119-139). Moreover, some contemporary international documents refer to "segregated ethnic communities" instead of the term "Roma".

The Roma in Bulgaria represent the third largest ethnic group (4.9 % of the total population, or 325, 343 people) after Bulgarians (85%) and Turks (9%), according to the latest national census (NSI 2011). Experts and researchers, however, argue that not all Roma people self-identified as such during the census and that their real number is close to 800,000. The official demographic survey found that 44.6% of the Roma live in rural areas and 55.4% reside in the cities. Roma people are the youngest population in the country: 57.33 % of those are under the age of 30 in contrast to 28.11% of Bulgarians in the same age group.

2.3 Ethno-Cultural Retrograde Beliefs of the Majority Population about the Roma

The image of Roma in the public domain is a controversial symbiosis between rigidity and flexibility. Rigidity, in particular, stems from stereotypes and everyday knowledge, while flexibility is rather linked to the susceptibility of the image to alteration due to any recurring societal change. The recognized and visible representation of the Roma is based on everyday collective notions, known also as hetero-

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

stereotypes. Generally speaking, ethnic stereotypes can be deciphered as a function of limited and insufficient communication between representatives of different ethnic groups. Prejudices and stereotypes are not grounded on individual knowledge or perceptions; rather, they serve as a shortest path to understanding of the "the ethnic Other" due to the lack of authentic face-to-face experience. Oftentimes, these retrograde beliefs suggest deeper issues which have been argued in society at large. A few quite rigid representations of „the gypsies" thrive in everyday space, and the image generally held by society involves violence, crime, and illiteracy as characteristics of this minority; "the gypsies" have been viewed as a privileged object of affirmative policies and as a problematic group in both social and economic terms (Hristova 2015, 152-167).

Two focus groups, conducted in 2007 (consisting of Bulgarian sociologists and of Bulgarian journalists, most of them of Roma roots) tackled the discussion topic of to what extent the "Roma identity" has been a construction of the non–Roma world with the whole bunch of negative characteristics, ascribed to the Roma. The core hypothesis was whether the broadly disseminated perception of Roma, which is noteworthy for the public, is the perception, ascribed to the Roma by the non–Roma. The respondents discovered that there is not a big difference between public perception of Roma, stemming from everyday face–to–face communication with the group, and the portrayal of Roma, produced by media. Three groups of perceived representations have been differentiated:

(1) Deficiency of social manners and unwillingness to observe commonsense rules. Roma are seen as "careless", "irresponsible", "totally relying on social aids", "violators of social norms, values and principles", "economizing their efforts".

(2) Social unawareness: the community is being viewed as "ignorant", "unenterprising", "pompously emotional", "illiterate", "a group with generally very low level of common culture", "a group which tremendously increases in number", "with low quality music", "primitive".

(3) Hygiene–related notions: Roma are regarded as "dirty", "people of low or no hygienic habits", "people of ill–favoured appearance and unarticulated speech", "cultural shock, misery, causing physical disgust", "snotty, and unschooled gypsy with a scraggy dog sitting next to a rubbish bin".

Another series of surveys add value to the manifestation of retrograde beliefs of the majority over the Roma minority. The concept of social distance refers to the geometry of tolerance among different ethnic groups. The measuring method is the scale of Bogardus. In Bulgaria the series of national representative studies of social distance began in 1992 (Pamporov 2009, 12). The consecutive surveys reveal that Roma are least desired for spouses (95% of respondents are not willing to marry a Roma partner in 1992 compared to 88.4% in 2012). Roma are unwelcome for friends by 70% in 1992 and by 67% in 2007; Roma are unaccepted for neighbours by 48% in 1992 and by 59% in 2012. In 1992, 45% of respondents would refuse to work at the same workplace with a Roma person, as this share raises in 2012 to 58.6 per cent. Roma are unwanted for fellow citizens by 42.4% of the respondents in 2012 compared to 39% in 1992. Also, one fifth of the respondents would rather not live in the same country with Roma (data from 2007) (Pamporov 2009, 15; Pamporov 2012).

The interpretation of the ethno-cultural causes for Roma educational exclusion largely pertains to the above-mentioned retrograde beliefs of the majority people. However, there is another explanation for educational inequality which comes from inside the Roma communities and their mode of living and

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

perceptions on social environment. A thorough insight into the dropout tendency among the Roma will be discussed next. The set of reasons for dropping out from school are complicated, as they are seen as educational, ethnic–cultural, economic, family, psychological, institutional, etc. by the "Roma dropouts" survey (Tilkidjiev et al. 2009, 51–86).

3. Causes of Dropping Out from Education

3.1 Educational Causes

Educational causes for dropping out from school represent a complex set of characteristics that hamper the training and upbringing of young people, in particular:

- *Institutional and organizational causes* related to observable shortages in resources within an educational environment, such as manuals, reference books and textbooks, specifically equipped classrooms, computers, extracurricular and out-of-class forms of teaching, full-day school activities, and other important components.
- *Teaching-related causes*, concerning curriculum, the study content and the personality of the teacher as an active agents of coaching and developing pupils' learning habits.

To a large extent, *teaching-related causes for dropout* refer to pupils' difficulties in acquiring the learning content. They are generally linked to negative attitudes towards typical educational elements: textbook content, exams, personality of teachers, learning habits, etc.

The difficulties related to the *excessive learning load* have been often stressed as a shortcoming of the Bulgarian educational system. It has been found that the overly complicated material and accumulation of excessive information in textbooks tends to discourage pupils; it is hard for them to understand the context of the content and to cope with it.

An interesting finding of the study is which the three least preferred groups of disciplines are (Milenkova 2004, 117). It occurred those are Technical subjects and Physical culture; Mathematics and Natural Sciences and Humane disciplines. As for the Roma, they are least likely to skip Music classes, Fine Arts and Vocational training – the distribution by ethnicity regarding the absence of pupils, in relation to these three groups of school subjects, is the following:

- Mathematics and Natural Science disciplines (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology) – the share of absent Roma pupils is 71.4%, Bulgarians – 12.2% and Turks – 12.6%.
- Technical subjects (Fine Arts, Musicology, Time tutorials, Vocational training) – the share of absent Bulgarians is 49.4%, Turks – 37.5, Roma – 8.3%.
- Humane disciplines (Bulgarian Language and Literature, Foreign languages, History, Geography) – the share of Roma pupils who are likely to skip these classes is 61.4%; Bulgarians–14.2% and Turks – 22.2%.

Among the *teaching-related* causes of the dropout phenomenon the most important one is *the personality of teachers.* Teachers are expected to encourage and give directions to young people's determination, and, to stimulate pupils' willpower to learn and commit to school activities. During the survey, the teachers, especially those, working in rural or isolated areas, shared that children were emotionally attached to their role of mentors and educators. The interviewed teachers and school principals

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

emphasized on the necessity of undertaking intercultural pre-qualification. They believe that intensive intercultural training would give them clarity on proper approaches towards Roma parents, especially in regard to mobilizing resources from the ethnic community to assist them in promoting regular school attendance.

An endeavour to decline the number of school children at risk of dropping out are the personal meetings *between teachers and parents.* All interviewed teachers and school principals under the survey "Roma dropouts" (Tilkidjiev et al. 2009, 71) declared that they typically visit pupils' families, and even more frequently if pupils are absent from class. Virtually, teachers face the mischance to be dismissed from their job if they do not have enough pupils to teach. (For example, closing down schools in Bulgaria because of the decreased number of young people in school age has led to decline in the number of teachers).

3.2 Economic Causes

Income figures indicate that the poverty among Roma is four times higher in comparison to that of the majority population in Bulgaria (Frazer and Marlier 2011, 23). Low economic status and insufficient household income are considered basic factors for dropping out. This statement is supported by a World Bank study saying that the share of children enrolled in school, who come from the 20% poorest households in the country, is considerably lower than the average share of children, attending school in the country (Nonchev et al. 2006, 27-28). The notion that low family earnings are an indisputable motive for giving up class attendance in compulsory school age (opp. cit), have been put into arguments:

- 24% of the interviewed dropouts declared that "we did not have money for textbooks and notebooks". Lack of funds for books is mentioned by 26.2% of the Roma youth; 26.3% of the Turkish youth; 16.1% of the Bulgarian youth;
- 19% of the respondents accentuated on the scarcity of "appropriate clothes and shoes"; as the ethnicity shares are as follows: 21.7 % Roma; 16.9 % Turks; 10.2 % Bulgarians.
- "I had to help at home, to work for family sustenance" is among the reasons for dropping out from school, indicated by 12% of the children aged 12–16. "Taking care for the family" is pointed out by 23.4% of the Bulgarians, 15.3% of the Turks and 59.1% of the Roma pupils.

Dropping out for economic reasons could also derive from family migrating in search of a job (i.e. from village to city; from one city to another, or abroad), as certain forms of child labour could be involved. Unemployment status of adult household members and, generally, low quality of life, typically lead to forcing children to participate in earning livelihoods and taking responsibility for family survival.

3.3 Ethno–Cultural Causes

The set of ethno-cultural causes for dropping out are strongly related to the impact of different ethnically–determined stereotypes and beliefs, according to which the state education system supports the majority culture and imposes it as dominant in teaching. It is widely believed by the respondents that school, through its institutional mechanisms, consolidates the deficiency of equal opportunities and situates children belonging to ethnic minorities in disadvantaged position, with little hope to avoid poverty and exclusion. In most cases, the dynamics of frequent absences and dropping out are linked to reasons, determined by the minority culture.

Prevention from cultural loss is viewed as a basic reason for dropout and subsequently, for the low educational status of the Roma. Roma culture represents a specific community value system where oral

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

tradition is assigned the biggest gravity for upbringing individuals. The widespread community view that institutionalized education is a waste of time and energy determines Roma attitude towards formal schooling (Barany 2001, 54). Roma people cherish traditional way of living, whilst school (as a modern institution) has not been recognized as entirely supportive model for socialization of the youngsters. Roma family model is dominated by community cohesive efforts, for instance performing community-established handicrafts; hence, it is expected from the children to master particular occupational skills and transfer the know-how to the next generation as a form of rearing and incorporating into the local social context. In this regard, school is perceived as an extraneous place which detaches children from family environment for a long period of the day. Thereby school is viewed as depriving the family from children's contribution; most of the Roma believe that school is a restricting establishment that hampers and destabilizes family interactions. Hence, Roma demonstrate "quiet resistance as a community that sees the school as an alien and hostile institution intending to destroy their traditions and aiming at cultural assimilation" (Tomova 1995, 57).

On the other hand, Bulgarian school has not been well-adjusted to learning needs of a minority person. A UNDP study revealed, 85% of Roma learn Romani language in their community, 49.7% of them learn Romani history in the community; 63.8% of the Roma are taught in moral values in their communities; 59.1% of the Roma said that they learned traditional ethnic crafts only in the community; and, two-thirds of the Roma acquired cooking skills or knowledge on herbs, tailoring, embroidery, etc. in the community rather than in school (Ivanov 2002, 107–108). Therefore, formal education is seen as irrelevant to Roma everyday life. In line with that, researchers noticed a clearly repetitive model: "vicious circle" of poverty and lack of vision for future fulfilment generates and perpetuates deficit of learning habits and motivation, which would be otherwise a necessary prerequisite for school socialization; and this explains most Roma pupils' reluctance to study.

3.4 Family Causes

Despite of the distrustful attitude of many Roma parents towards schooling, the community does not utterly ignore formal education. The contemporary living patterns have irreversibly altered the retrograde beliefs for continuing intergenerational illiteracy within the ethnic group. Nowadays many Roma parents recognize education as a faster way for adaptation into dominant society, yet trying to preserve their family and cultural patterns as much as they could. In respect to the above-mentioned, *working with parents* occurred as a necessary step for prevention from dropping out.

Family has a strong impact on formation of attitudes towards the learning process as a whole – this is the place where perceptions, judgements and opinions discover legitimacy. The level of parental education is a decisive factor for school dropout. As already discussed, the more educated the household head is, the bigger the educational aspirations for the children are. For example, upper secondary education for their children was aspired by 71% of the Roma, who have completed no higher than primary school, in contrast to 89% of those Roma who have completed upper secondary education (Brüggemann 2012, 50). Respectively, the chances for a pupil with more educated parents to continue studies are bigger because education is attached more value.

Children who reside in unhealthy social environment, such as places of domestic violence, extended families with scarcity of living space, etc. tend to quit school attendance more frequently. To the question "How does your family solve domestic issues?" 47.6% of the Roma pupils answered "only the parents take decisions" whereas 52.4% stated that "only father decides at home" (Milenkova 2004, 114-124). The problems within such type of families tend to be solved more or less in a punitive manner: more

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

than 1/3 of the respondents stated they are regularly punished by their parents for misbehaving (opp.cit). 44.4% of the Roma children, who have been punished at home, also stated that "they go to school less often than last year". The survey shows that home violence and parental inflexibility is a precondition for deteriorated school participation of young people.

To conclude this paragraph, the presented causes for school dropout interconnect general social context, state educational policy and community value system. Apparently, these causes pre-define one another in overlapping fields of relevance. The predominant numbers of those who never attended school, or who have been regularly absent from school or who cease attending classes, are belonging to the ethnic minorities (Roma or Turks). Yet, the dropout phenomenon reflects not only the failure of school authorities to cope with cultural and linguistic differences. Rather, school dropout penetrates economic and institutional trajectories and touches upon majority vs. minority cultural values and how the social order copes with that dichotomy.

Lack of education and skills exclude the low qualified individuals from labour market and social participation. Thus, the next section will outline and describe the most recent national policy documents and initiatives that address (directly or less directly) major educational equity-related challenges in Bulgaria, as well as the funding dimensions for the stakeholders.

4. Review of Policy Measures towards Roma Educational Integration

In the recent years a series of policies and measures have been introduced aiming at reducing dropout rate in primary schools, stimulating continuous education and raising the chances for marginalized communities to participate in social and economic life. There are three sets of measures: 1) preventive (e.g. compulsory preschool, introducing full-time school day, out-of-class and out-of-school activities, improving the command in the official language for linguistic minorities, etc.); 2) intervening (e.g. delivery of career orientation services, prequalification of teachers and the school staff to work in multicultural environment) and 3) compensatory (e.g. projects for reintegration of dropouts, improving adult literacy, etc.).

Overall, the non–governmental sector became a vital partner and contributor to Roma educational inclusion by motivating Roma pupils and communicating individually with Roma parents, teachers and pedagogical experts. This routine has converted the responsible NGOs into accumulator of huge bridging social capital, attributing to success of educational equity projects and communication with vulnerable communities. Bridging social capital refers to relations among people who find it difficult to trust each other, such as vertical relations, and among people belonging to different ethnic groups or social classes (Radu and Radišić 2012, 30). Despite all efforts, most of the NGO educational interventions have been somewhat local or performed on a minor scale.

A significant step forward in the development of the Bulgarian school is the eagerness to take up and implement renewed patterns and good practices from the global educational experience. In this context, the European Social Fund (ESF) has been offering funds to various social actors (i.e. schools, kindergartens, NGOs, municipalities) for launching and practising inclusive educational approaches. These are aiming at making the school attractive to young people through initiating extracurricular activities (hobby clubs, etc.); establishment of intercultural learning environment; pre-qualification of teachers for working with bilingual technologies, etc.

Roma educational inclusion policies seek to revise and modernize the educational system (in regard to equal chances for minority pupils) through enhancing the responsibilities of all actors alongside the process: teachers, parents, children, non–governmental organizations, Regional Inspectorates of Education, Ministry of Education and Science (MES), policy-makers, etc. In line with that, consistent

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

educational policies are regularly re-initiated given that so far these instruments have been, to a lesser extent, coordinated and resourceful. The paper presents in the followings some of the recent documents on educational equality.

Documents on Educational Equality

"Strategy for the Educational Integration of Children from Ethnic Minorities (2005–2015)", adopted by the Ministry of Education, guarantees to children, belonging to ethnic minorities, the right for equal access to quality education, through promoting cultural diversity, mutual understanding, respect and tolerance at school. In 2010 the responsible Ministry came up with the following outcomes:

- 3 500 students from "ghetto" schools have been integrated in mainstream schools outside the Roma neighbourhoods.
- 107 assistant teachers of Roma origin have been recruited to support educational integration of Roma children.
- 360 primary teachers have been trained in teaching in a multi-ethnic environment.

In compliance with the above-mentioned strategy, the Council of Ministries of Bulgaria has launched a "Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from the Ethnic Minorities". In 2014 the Center funded 21 projects targeting at provision of appropriate environment for gradual inclusion of children from ethnically segregated kindergartens into multi-ethnic groups in ones outside the Roma neighbourhoods. The following indicators of success were reported: 387 Roma children and pupils were integrated in multi-ethnic groups; 356 teachers were trained to work in intercultural environment; 370 bilingual children in kindergarten and pupils from primary schools were integrated into educational facilities and 580 ethnic minority pupils were reintegrated into the educational system. As an adjunct to these outcomes, in the 2014/2015 school year, 99 groups of pupils opted to study "Folklore of the ethnicities – Roma folklore", a class which contributes to preservation of cultural identity (NCCEII 2014, 6).

The Plan of the Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers (2013–2020), which puts forward:

- Additional classes in the official language of the country;
- Enhanced information activities to promote the benefits of education;
- Development of an early warning system which is to provide consistent and reliable information about the movement of students, including those of Roma origin, within the country and to trace their educational development;
- In schools and kindergartens, upon consideration of the Principal, assistant tutor and assistant teacher might be appointed to support the educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities.

National Strategy to Promote and Improve Literacy Skills (2014-2020) entails overcoming the causes of low literacy among the vulnerable groups of the poor and that of the bilingual people (i.e. the Roma) where poverty and insufficient command of the official language serve as major barriers for acquiring diploma. In addition, the Strategy for Roma Integration (2020) implies that Roma pupils over 16 years old should be motivated to continue their studies in vocational training. Since 2014, 80 214 Roma over 16 years old graduated from vocational training.

Another relevant policy document is the Operational Program „Science and Education for Intelligent Growth" (2014-2020), which envisages two thematic objectives, related to Roma integration: 1)

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

early education for children 3-6 years old whose mother tongue is different from the official with the aim to prevent dropout, and 2) overcoming ethnically differentiated admission to schools and improving school environment.

With the change of the Education Act (2010), 'focal' schools have been introduced; hence, pupils who come from villages with no schools are eligible to attend a focal school and benefit from full-time activities. The gradual launch of mandatory two-year full-day preparation for children before entering the first grade has begun in 2010/2011 with the purpose to raise enrolment rate. During 2013/2014, with the assistance of EU funds, the number of the semi-boarding school groups is 7 642 with 177, 734 participants (1st to 4th grade) and 1 659 groups with 38, 924 participants from 5th to 8th grade (NCCEII 2013, 6). The full-day schooling is essential for early age pupils because it enables them to adopt the educational content better, to overcome gaps in knowledge through consultation with educators and individual work.

With the modification of the Education Act, classes in Bulgarian language were introduced for children with different mother tongue (art. 20, par. 5). Besides, minority pupils were given the chance to study their mother tongue as an optional subject. In the year 2014/2015, 7 943 pupils in mainstream education studied Turkish language and 587 – Roma language at school (NSI, Education 2015, 48).

- The amendment of the *Vocational Education and Training Act* (2015) offers an upgrading of the system for vocational training with the purpose to become more attractive to children 1) from deprived families; 2) with special educational needs; 3) homeless and institutionalized; 4) young delinquents.
- A key policy document, the *Operational Program "Human Resources Development"* (2014-2020) assumes that the issues of social and economic integration of marginalized groups have a multifaceted character. The stream of the OP „Improving access to education", being in harmony with the *National Strategy on Roma Integration* 2012-2020, involves prevention of early school leaving; re-integration of youth in the system of education; enhancing early childhood development and adult literacy.

It is necessary to note that the education policies and practices on the state and non–governmental level reveal serious attempts to increase the equal educational access for Roma pupils. At the same time, the ethnic problems in education must not be regarded only as inability of school to perform its functions for integration; it is a far more serious problem, involving other agents, interactions and circumstances. The unsatisfactory performance of certain policies was due to two basics sets of shortcomings: management-related and ethnically-determined inefficiencies.

Management-related Issues

Inter–institutional policies for increasing equal access to education are rather complex entities which have been determined by school environment, regional/local specificity and broader social milieu. The guiding policies engage quite a few public organizations on national, regional, municipal and school level; yet no effective coordinating mechanism exists to guarantee equal educational opportunities in Bulgarian policymaking.

Governmental commitments are long–term based and demanding consistent institutional memory and sense of cohesion and continuity between two sequent governments; which very often is not the case. Such occurrence leads to ineffective communication among various policy actors and reflects the implementation of the policies.

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

OP HRD is a huge pool for financing interventions in the sphere of educational equality (with the particular focus on Roma). However, due to regional disparities, not all the regions in need could benefit to the fullest from the structural funding. It is not surprising that the biggest Bulgarian cities with active civil–society sector have attracted more grants under the ESF-funded schemes. The larger number of contracts, however, has been diverted to Sofia because the capital has the strongest civil society sector, including human and financial resources, administrative and professional capacity. There is a disproportion between best grant–served regions in regard to educational interventions and those regions which are "low-populated/ with underprivileged population" – Vidin and Montana. The percentage of dropouts from the educational system in Vidin region is not high compared to average in the country; though there is sufficient percentage of pupils at risk (the Roma population exceeds 7%). The region suffers unemployment, ascending brain-drain to the capital and abroad, which results in a fading civil society and a weakened role of public institutions, such as municipalities and schools (Educational Selectivity effects study, OSI-Europe 2013).

Regarding small-scale interventions in the educational sphere, urged by the OP HRD, a deficiency of sustainability is clearly noticeable. The activities supported by the European Social Fund and implemented on local level (mainly by NGOs and schools) appeared to have not contributed to a significant change in education due to their minor scope of action.

Apart from the weaknesses in administering the policies, two examples of ethnically-determined inefficiencies of legal sanctions, coined to combat educational inequality, are presented:

- The Education Act envisages a sanction for the parents who do not send their children to preschool. Through the sanction, a large number of Roma families were penalized, but they have not been able to pay the fine. A more up-to-date survey on employment in the EU (FRA 2014b, 35) reveals that in Bulgaria 87% of the Roma households have disposable incomes below the national at-risk-of-poverty gap.
- According to the 2013 amendment in the Law on Family Allowances, the monthly allowance for children of school age has been bound to regular class attendance, or to regular attendance of preparatory groups at kindergartens or to compulsory preschool. This rule is seen as unproductive because it does not create a better understanding on how valuable education is and which way life chances of Roma children could be improved through continuing education. Education is not appreciated as a necessity by low qualified Roma parents; rather, this measure serves as "an exchange of benefits": the state guarantees the Roma parents child allowances, and in return, the parents send their children to school.

5. Conclusion

Early school leaving and dropout phenomenon are interconnected with social and economic disadvantage and low educational background. The reform paper "Bulgaria 2020" set the objective of reducing the share of early school leavers under 11% by benefitting from the governmental budget and the structural funds. In an era of technological and inclusive growth, unequal prospects for employability of young people further contribute to deprivation, social exclusion and poverty. The issues embedded in this paper require researchers' recommendations for up-to-date interventions towards educational equity. In regard to raising the level of involvement of national educational authorities, certain innovative actions fall into the scope of solutions. First, European structural funding, especially targeting underprivileged NUTS III regions and separate municipalities, should be earmarked. Next, state educational standards are in demand for remodeling in a way to accentuate on practical competences rather than on learning facts. Hence, new

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

teaching aids must be developed to rather build up on civil competences and communication skills; and the acquired knowledge should imply a broader picture of the global world. In respect to the professionals, supplementary financial motivation should be offered to highly-qualified teachers to work in rural and isolated areas and/or with at-risk pupils.

In regard to encouraging the level of involvement of municipal authorities (e.g. school management, Regional educational inspectorates), efficient incentives could be guaranteed, contributing to the retention of socially vulnerable children in fostering kindergartens or schools through extracurricular activities or alternative schooling. A wise practice would be the maintenance of a database and individual portfolio for each child at risk of dropping out and official information on the achievements of vulnerable pupils. Popularization and advocacy of continuing education into higher degrees and career guidance are initiatives which could be regularly implemented throughout the academic year. Work-based learning, utilization of high technology and technical preparation (i.e. through launching school-based enterprises, internships, job shadowing, etc.) must be secured, especially for children at risk of early school leaving. Last but not the least, family involvement in joint activities and general enhancing of parental participation in school boards is among the new approaches which prove effective in increasing graduation rates and continuing education.

References

Anan, Kosuke; Morrica, Valerie; Nayak, Ranjit; Harrold, Peter; Murthi, Mamta; Radwan, Ismail; Repnik, Markus; Mathernova, Katarina; Huybens, Elisabeth; Turk, Carrie. *Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion: Perspectives from Four Roma Communities in Bulgaria*. Washington: World Bank Group, 2014. Available online at url: http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/Bulgaria/Roma_Gender-ENG.pdf . Accessed 1 April 2016

Andjelkovic, Branka; Ivanov, Andrey; Horváth, Balázs; Marnie, Sheila; Mihailov, Dotcho; Milcher, Susanne; Peleah, Mihail; Peric, Tatjana; Rende, Sevinc; Spoor, Max; Stubbs, Paul and Tadjbakhsh, Shahrbanou. *Beyond Transition towards Inclusive Societies*. Bratislava: United National Development Program, 2011. Available online at url: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/Beyond-Transition-Inclusive-Societies/ . Accessed March 5, 2016

Barany, Zoltan, "The East European Gypsies in the Imperial Age", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24 (1) (2001): 50–63

Boyadjieva, Pepka, Petkova, Kamelia, Milenkova, Valentina, Gornev, Galin, and Nenkova, Diana, "Lifelong learning for all: Policies towards underrepresented groups *in Bulgaria*" [online], *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 5 (1), Nov 2012: 83–105. Available online at url: http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=015244326504083;res=IELHSS ISSN: 1997-7034. Accessed 13 March 2016.

Brüggemann, Christian. *Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011*. Bratislava: United Nations Development Program, 2012. Available online at url: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Roma-Education-Comparative-Perspective-UNDP.pdf, accessed 7 July, 2016

Brüggemann, Christian. Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Bratislava: United Nations Development Program, 2012. Available online at url: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Roma-Education-Comparative-Perspective-UNDP.pdf . Accessed 7 July, 2016

Danova, Savelina. *Advancing the Education of Roma in Bulgaria. REF Country Assessment – 2015.* Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2015. Available online at url: http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/bg_country_assessment_2015_web.pdf.Accessed December 9, 2016

De Laat, Joost, Bodewig, Christian., Arnhold, Nina, Linden, Toby, Dulitzky, Daniel, Kosko, Stacy and Torracchi, Federico. *Europe and Central Asia Roma Inclusion: An Economic Opportunity for Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia Policy Note Human Development Sector Unit Europe and Central Asia Region*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2010.

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Available online at url: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/196921468261335364/pdf/696550ESW0P1180Economic0Opportunity.pdf . Accessed 7 December 2016

Dimitrov, Dimitar, Grigorova, Vania and Decheva, Ioana. *Civil Monitoring Report on the implementation of the National strategy for Roma integration and the Action Plan for implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Bulgaria in 2012*. Open Society Institute – Sofia /Roma Decade Secretariat, 2012. Available online at url: http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file4_bg_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf. Accessed 8 July 2016.

"European Commission. *Early school leaving in Europe – Questions and answers*", Brussels: EU, Memo /11/52/2011. Available online at url: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-52_en.htm, accessed 9 March, 2016

"EUROSTAT European Office. *Early leavers from education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions*", Brussels: EU. Available online at url: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/edat_lfse_16, accessed 9 February 2016

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014a. Available online at url: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf. Accessed 8 April, 2016

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Roma survey – Data in focus. Poverty and employment: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014b. Available online at url: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf. Accessed 8 April, 2016

Frazer, Hugh and Marlier, Eric. *Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma. Synthesis Report*. Brussels: EU Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion, 2011. Available online at url: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1025&langId=bg&newsId=1407&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news , accessed 4 December, 2016

Hristova, Svetlana D. "The Counter-Journalism of Roma Minority Media in Bulgaria." In *Journalism, Audiences and Diaspora*, edited by Ola Ogunyemi, 152-167. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

Ivanov, Andrey. *The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. Avoiding the Dependency Trap*. Bratislava: UNDP, 2002.
Available online at url: http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Avoiding-the-dependency-trap.pdf, accessed 20 April 2016

Ivanov, Andrey, "Quantifying the Unquantifiable: Defining Roma Populations in Quantitative Surveys," *Naselenie Review* 3-4 (2012): 79-95

Kanev, Krassimir, Simeonova, Desislava and Cohen, Emil. *Pet godini po-kasno: nepravitelstvenite proekti za desegregacia na romskoto obrazovanie v Bulgaria* [Five Years Later: Non-Governmental Projects for Desegregation of Roma Education in Bulgaria]. Sofia: Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2005. Available online at url: http://www.bghelsinki.org/media/uploads/special/desegregation-2006.pdf. Accessed March 5, 2016

Marushiakova, Elena, Popov, Veselin and Kovács-Cerović, Tünde. *Advancing Education of Roma in Bulgaria. Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions*. Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2007. Available online at url: http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/bulgaria_report.pdf. Accessed December 8, 2016.

Metodieva, Maria, Avramova, Svetlana, Belcheva, Dragomira, Braynova, Petya, Grigorova, Liliya, Kabakchieva, Petya, Pamporov, Alexey. *Beyond Myths and Prejudices: Roma in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Open Society Institute/ Soros Foundation Romania, 2012. Available online at url: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/93/67/Bul_Beyond_myths_and_prejudicies-_Roma_in_Bulgaria__sociological_study__3.pdf . Accessed May 2, 2016

Milenkova, Valentina (2004). *Otpadaneto ot uchilishte* [Dropping Out from School]. Sofia: BAS Publishing House "M. Drinov", 2004.

"National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues. *Administrative monitoring reports for 2013 and 2014 on the implementation of the National Strategy of Bulgaria for Roma integration 2012-2020*". Available online at url: http://www.nccedi.government.bg , accessed 20 January 2016

"National Statistical Institute. *Education in the Republic of Bulgaria- 2015*. Available online at url: http://www.nsi.bg , accessed 11 January 2016

"National Statistical Institute. *Census 2011*", Sofia: NSI. Available online at url: http://www.nsi.bg/census2011 , accessed 9 April 2016

Nonchev, Andrey; Mondon, Pierre; Donkova, Maria and Milenkova, Valentina. *Prichini za otpadane na detsata ot uchilishte v Bulgaria* [Causes for Dropping out from Bulgarian School]. Sofia: East–West, 2006

EQPAM Volume 6 No.1 January 2017
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

"*Operational Program Science, Education and Intelligent Growth 2014-2020*," Sofia: Ministry of Education and Science, accessed 16.02. 2016. Available online at url: http://sf.mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=32

"*Operational Program Human Resources Development 2014-2020* (draft)", Sofia: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, accessed 16.02. 2016. Available online at url: http://ophrd.government.bg/view_doc.php/6016

Pamporov, Alexey. *Socialni distantsii v Bulgaria v perioda 2008 – 2012* [Social distances in Bulgaria in the period 2008–2012]. Sofia: Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2012. Available online at url: http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/aleksei-pamporov/2012-07/socialni-distancii-v-blgariya-v-perioda-2008-2012-g/. Accessed May 24, 2016

Pamporov, Alexey. *Socialni distantsii i etnicheski stereotipi za maltsinstvata v Bulgaria* [Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minorities in Bulgaria]. Sofia: Open Society Institute, 2009. Accessed November 28, 2016. Available online at url: http://www.osi.bg/downloads/File/SocialDistancesReport.pdf

Popova. Zora. *Roma inclusion: a feasible EU project?* Flensburg, Germany: European Centre for Minority Issues, 2014. Available online at url: http://www.ecmi.de/publications/detail/75-roma-inclusion-a-feasible-eu-project-292/ Accessed March 9, 2016

Radu, Roxana and Radišić, Jelena. *Well-being Reconsidered: Empowering Grassroots Organizations. Cross-country Experiences from the Grassroots Europe for Local Well-being Initiative*. Budapest: Open Society Foundations, 2012. Available online at url: https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/grassroots_08022012.pdf . Accessed November 29, 2016

Tilkidjiev, Nikolay; Milenkova, Valentina; Petkova, Kamelia and Mileva, Natasha. *Otpadashtite romi* [Roma Dropouts]. Sofia: Open Society, 2009

Tomova, Ilona (1995). *Tsiganite v prehodnia period* [Gypsies in the Period of Transition]. Sofia: International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Interactions, 1995

Open Access
This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial License which permits any noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are credited.