

Roma integration is a must for Slovakia

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Slovakian Roma – We Need More Information

- Almost no statistical data for fear of discrimination – our information on Roma and their social situation, as well as on the impact of Roma-focused activities is limited
- Sources of data: Roma Mapping 2013, Roma Mapping 2004, ad-hoc research by NGOs and international bodies, anecdotal evidence
- *We want to know more to be able to focus our assistance and measure its effectiveness (progress made) and efficiency*

Almost Half of Roma is Integrated

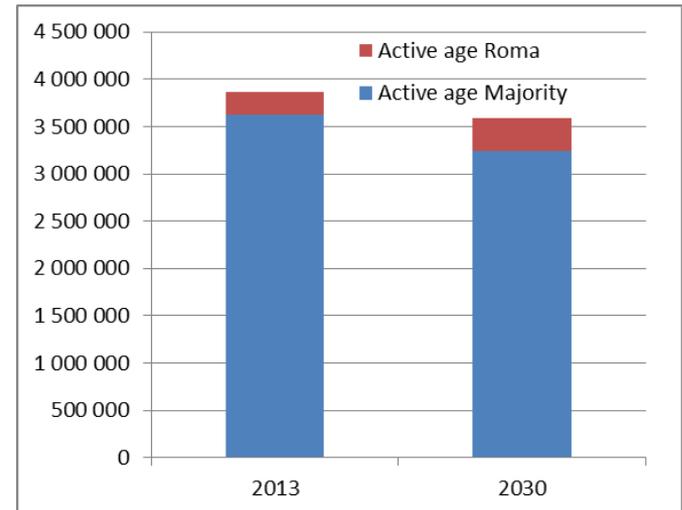
- 403.000 people in 2013 (7% of the Slovakian population, 6% of labor force), up from 283.000 people in 2004
- Almost three quarters of Roma live in less developed regions of the country: in Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica
- Almost half of Roma are integrated, while about 40% of Roma living in some 600 settlements may be segregated
- Some 8.800 illegal houses
- Often poor infrastructure: drinking water, sewerage, roads, kindergartens, schools...

But There Also are Pockets of Deep Poverty

- Low education: mainly ISCED1 (often “special schools”) and ISCED2, some ISCED3C, rarely ISCED5
- Low employment rate: estimated at 15% (36.000 people of 240.000 labor force); while high employment in informal economy
- Very high social dependency
- Young population: 36% 0-14 years, 60% 15-64 years, 4% 65+ years
- Roma form a majority in many municipalities – however, dependent on a social safety net

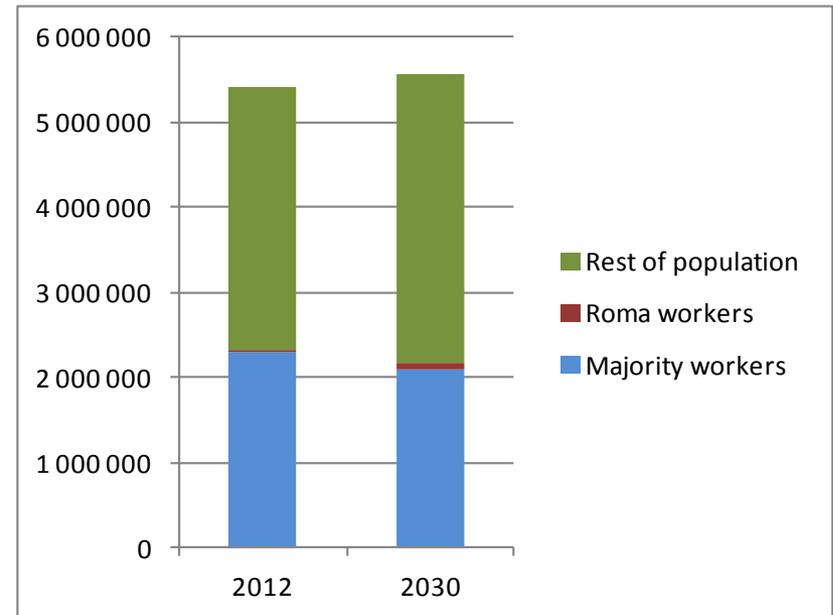
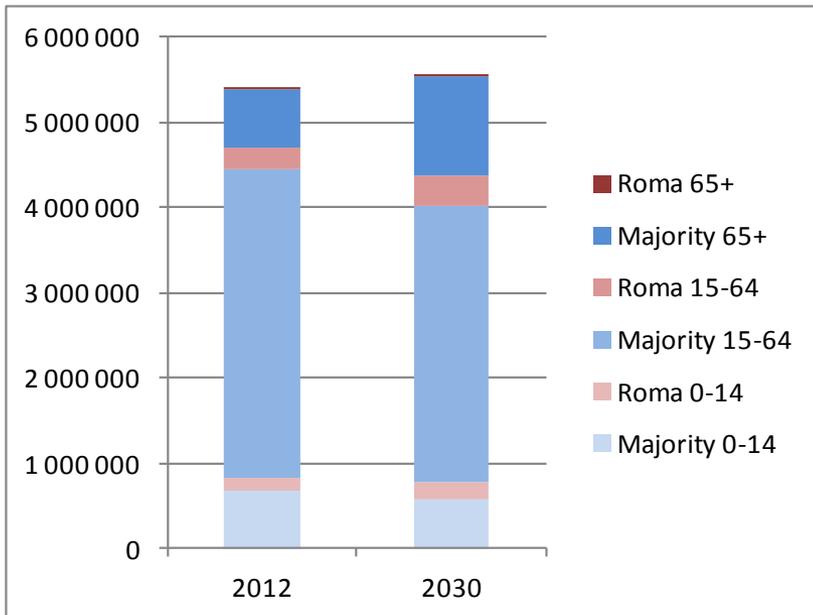
Future Slovakia: importance of Roma increases

- Problems are significant and accumulated over long decades /centuries
 - Assimilation approach was a failure, although granted Roma work (1958 Decree on work among the Gypsy population, Act on permanent settling of nomadic persons, 1965 Decree on destroying Roma settlements and dispersing Roma)
 - Integration since 1990; “civic” approach, but without the same starting conditions like the majority
- Forecasted 600.000 Roma in 2030, almost 11% of the Slovakian population and 10% of the Slovakian labor force



Economic growth impossible without integrated Roma

- Status quo: in 2030 more pensioners, more socially dependent, while less workers
- Ratio of workers to rest of the population would increase from 1:1.3 to 1:1.6



Roma Strategy 2020

- Approved in January 2012, further developed in 2013, sets priorities in the following areas
 - **Education:** improve access to education and care, de-segregate, ensure smooth transition to employment
 - **Employment:** improve access to work opportunities, reduce Roma unemployment by half
 - **Health:** improve access to healthcare, improve health status
 - **Housing:** improve access to housing and infrastructures, de-segregate, reduce shacks and illegal dwellings by a quarter
 - **Finance:** improve financial literacy
 - **Non-discrimination:** implement legislation more effectively, implement functional mechanisms into daily life to reduce tensions
 - **Communication:** remove myths, support inclusion, ensure synergies

Opportunities

- Extensive know-how has been accumulated by NGOs, commercial and public sectors in all areas, including education and employment. We can carefully choose from the local best practices and “replicate” them at the national level
- However, cooperation, coordination, project approach, finance and a drive for results remain a challenge.
- *Significant positive results could be achieved quickly, if existing know how was utilized in an effective way. Action is needed.*

Recent Achievements in Education: Module Schools

- While overall number of pupils in elementary schools continues to fall, it increases tremendously in ethnically mixed municipalities. We have capacity problems in about 70 municipalities, where children are educated in two shifts – morning and afternoon shift
- In spring 2013, we have decided to pilot construction of five module schools, in summer 2013, construction started, and in December 2013, three schools were opened. Another two will be opened till March 2014.
- In spring 2014, we met another 15 mayors and directors of schools to construct another 15 schools this year.
- At the same time, we aim at reducing number of children in special schools and de-segregation.
- This should be the beginning, followed by a preparation and implementation of local development plan (next slide).

Cost of the School and Cost-sharing

- The needs are great, finances are limited
- One container school (8 classes) costs central government €200,000 on construction + €25,000 on equipment, municipality €60,000 on land, infrastructure and documentation.
- Working together to avoid segregation, creating conditions for integrated education and complex approach towards ethnically mixed municipalities.

Other activities and plans

- Special schools: too many “mentally disabled” – wrong financial incentives – we need to change this
- Complex development – kindergartens, quality elementary schools, jobs: better coordination of government institutions
- Involvement of Roma into activities they benefit from

Challenges

- Majority: short term political costs seem to outweigh long term social benefits
 - Focus at mixed municipalities, rather than exclusively on Roma
 - Compensate losers
- Roma: skeptic, dispersed; trapped in poverty, often in illegal work and inactivity
- If we are not successful, tensions may increase and result in more migration to Europe

Integration is inevitable and extremely difficult

- It is not a question of money
- It is not a question of no good practice
- It is not a question of low domestic and international attention
- It is a question of doing things right for future generations
- It is a question of living together