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Education of the Roma in Europe: current thinking and comparative analyses

This issue aims at giving an account of the educational situation of the Roma in Europe. The introductory section clarifies the terminology used, gives a historical presentation, and specifies some aspects of Roma social and economic organization and expectations of the Roma community with regard to the educational establishment. The second section deals more explicitly with the recurring features of their schooling in Europe, in particular the segregation they undergo, clarifies their relationship with the educational establishment, gives an account of the teaching approaches used and the educational facilities available for helping them to integrate. The third section relates specifically to the schooling of Roma in France (from nursery school to the first four years of secondary education). The last part takes a look at questions to do with their schooling in various European countries, revealing the educational policies and the experiments which have arisen from them.

Introduction

Terminology

The term "Roma" designates certain groups living in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, but it is also used by international Romany organizations (*Roma National Congress*), political leaders and intellectuals as a generic term to include all those who are locally known as Manouches, Gypsies, Tsiganes, Kalé, Sinti or Roma (Rothéa, 2003, p. 13-14). We will also use "Roma" as generic term in this document to make it easier to read (various names being used according to national contexts).

Since the first Roma world congress in 1971, international Romany organizations have been making claims for a nation without a state, with no geographical limits to its sovereignty. The Roma have of a flag, an anthem (*Gel'em Gel'em*) and a parliament which federates and represents most of the Romany organizations. This "nation without a compact territory" corresponds to many and variable territories, considered as their own, but without this leading to the exercise of exclusive sovereignty by all the Roma people. The international Romany associations demand recognition of this "noncompact territory" from European authorities, some calling for the creation of transnational European minority status (Rothéa, 2003, p. 19-20).

Contrary to certain generally accepted ideas, 90 % of Roma in Europe are settled (Courthiade, 1995, p. 18). In those European countries where there are the most nomads, such as in France or Great Britain, two thirds are settled and semi-settled, the latter moving only at certain periods for professional, family or religious reasons (Rothéa, 2003, p. 15).

Historical overview

Originating in the North-West of India, the Tsiganes left this area towards the tenth century. Their language derives from Sanskrit and it is from linguistic borrowings during their migrations that it has been possible to work out the route they took. The Tsiganes broke up into several groups, which helped to encourage the growth of different dialects. As of the fourteenth century, certain Tsigane populations settled in Romania, but they were forced into slavery, while others migrated towards Serbia and Croatia. Some arrived in Western Europe towards the beginning of the fifteenth century after passing through the territories of Slovakia and Bohemia carrying letters of protection. The Manouches settled in German-speaking countries, and the Gypsies in the Iberian peninsula where they were subject to an assimilation policy as of 1499. These groups were to be found throughout the whole of Europe in about 1500: they began to settle temporarily around the outskirts of cities, but remained essentially nomadic. In France, these populations began to be rejected under the reign of François 1st and were even more so under Louis XIV (Reyniers, 2003, p. 2-3). This spread throughout Europe, which forced the Tsiganes to settle in the least accessible border regions. In Western Europe, following political decisions aiming at compelling them to settle, they went from an economic nomadism dictated by their professions to a form of nomadism dictated by the need to escape. The Tsiganes of Central Europe lived from an itinerant economy, while in the Balkans, following the disappearance of the Byzantine empire, they became assimilated and settled *en masse*. In the nineteenth century, new waves of migration brought Roma groups originating in Transylvania and the Balkans into Western Europe. As of 1960, other Roma, coming mainly from Yugoslavia, joined them. Following the collapse of the communist bloc, which led to many dismissals and the deconstruction of the social assistance system, and also to xenophobic and ultranationalist movements, other Roma groups had no choice but to emigrate to Western Europe. These various Roma communities joined up with other nomads, the Travellers, who are of European origin, a great many of whom come from the Rhineland (Reyniers, 2002, p. 18).

Social organisation

❑ The family

The basic structure of Romany society is the family or, to be more accurate, the elementary family unit - which is independent - and its coming together with the other units - when grouping together is required, for example to perform some common work necessary to the survival of all. Family solidarity is generally total: each individual is part of it and takes part in it. This implies a certain subordination of each individual to the needs of the family as a whole (Rothéa, 2003, p. 20-21).

From his earliest years, the child is accustomed to a rhythm of life in which he can easily and quickly satisfy his needs while being aware of those of his relations: elders will encourage children to do favours or to share property by means of tips or reproaches. This will lead the child to call for help from others without feeling awkward and to respond to the needs of others spontaneously and positively. These arrangements tend to develop a personality that can be qualified as "oral optimistic" (Roheim, 1967, p. 93) characterized by a tendency to live from day to day, a far-reaching and non-selective sense of hospitality and ostentatious expenditure (Formoso, 1989, p. 240). The child does, however, learn how to meet with the group's expectations, and the rights and obligations which result from these. He knows how to behave with his pairs or with his elders, depending on their gender. Towards the age of 12-13, Roma children take an active part in the economic and social activities of their parents, not that these are dissociated, family education being perceived as a whole. This sense of security within his community is based on the cultural tradition and social cohesion. This family education does not incline him to become a *gadjo*: by frequenting young *gadjé*, by experiencing delinquency or contact with the police, he can compare the dangers of the outside world with the privileged situation he enjoys within his family group.

❑ Social roles according to gender

The socio-economic roles of the two genders are different and complementary. Women have a major economic role: ensuring the day-to-day subsistence of the family (food, clothing) and dealing with administrative formalities from social welfare departments. In this, they have a fair degree of independence. Historically, while men were pursued, imprisoned and punished in contexts of rejection and persecution, women, often accompanied by their children, were less prone to being the victims of violence.They also have a fundamental educational role, since they are in charge of the education of young children and girls until their generally early marriage (at age 14-16). Women have a notable influence on the survival of the group and its traditions, which can make them factors of change. Within the group, the man is the head of the household, holds authority and decision-making power. Outside, he represents and defends his family's prestige. His social (maintaining the social ties, dealing with social issues) or professional (prospecting, canvassing) obligations mean that he is usually not at home. Generally, the money he brings in is used for special expenses or status-symbol purchases, such as a car, organizing parties or banquets (Liégeois, 2007, p. 72).

Young women are often very "protected" by their community with respect to the outside world. Women's virginity is an issue related to the collective identity of the group. The image of the woman in Roma society sets her in a central position in the domestic economy and the education of the children. These representations and the practices which result from them can make some of them feel doubly marginalised: both as travellers and as women within the group to which they belong (Reyniers, 2002, p. 23). When girls go to school, particular during secondary education, some of them become more critical of their social roles in the community and in particular in their own home. Certain parents fear that schooling, after the example of certain TV programmes, will distance their daughter from the aspirations they have for her and will make her less of an attractive proposition for matrimony. Nevertheless, while a minority of them question the distribution of the roles within the home, they do not call their lifestyle into question (Levinson & Sparkes, 2006, p. 94-96).

❑ Social relations inside and outside the group

Within the community, exchanges are based on measures that make it possible to act generously and to ask without scruple. They involve a generalized system of give and take such as is defined by M. Sahlins (1976, p. 247). This system can be transposed to a variety of fields because it structures the child's or the adult's behaviour and in so doing, interpersonal relationships. Reactivated in this way, these condition how parents act and the representations they have (Formoso, 1989, p. 242).

On the outside, relationships are kept to a minimum, regarded as a source of worry, and perceived as harmful. This reinforces the protective character of the community and the violence felt in relations with alien environments. This violence is psychological (fear, suspicion), social (opposition) and sometimes physical (rejection, aggressiveness). Relationships therefore remain superficial in the context of professional activities. Each group identifies itself with a particular space and, more precisely, with a territory which is defined and used as economic needs or family relations dictate. This territory is where family and commercial relations are experienced. This, for example, is the case with the Roussillon Gypsies, who will do the grape harvest in Germany, go to family get-togethers in Catalonia and go back to France for a fair. So it is that each family builds its own territory rather than being locked up in a confined space that partitions off its activities. Here, the territory appears as unbounded or without borders, depends on economic needs and social relations, and implies freedom of movement (Rothéa, 2003, p. 21).

When social relationships with the environment become more regular and institutionalized, such as frequenting specially designed parking spaces or schooling over a long period of time, the Roma lose the initiative. School is then perceived as getting in the way of family education. Parents who attended school often have a bad memory of it and so hesitate to send their children there, especially so since they observe that there is little relationship between academic success and social or economic success. So when Tsigane children have interiorized their fear of foreigners, they develop an attitude of opposition to the educational establishment. In no way has their education prepared them to receive orders, to accept "arbitrary" rules, to be separated from their siblings for reasons of age, to agree to limit their initiatives and to hold back their feelings. In addition, school attaches value to certain aptitudes and attitudes for which they are not prepared, and is based on linguistic structures which are generally foreign to them, even going so far as to regard them as mental misfits. However, when the educational establishment makes the effort to adapt to this unusual public of pupils, it can become a means of opening up to the outside world which then appears less threatening.

The history of the Roma and the segregationist and xenophobic practices from which they still suffer in certain European countries corroborate this mistrust with regard to the world outside their own community. However, conflicts may also be between the Roma groups themselves. For them, social cohesion is a need. When conflicts appear between various groups, in particular over the areas in which they carry out their trade, community decisions can be made to divide these up. In view of the absence of a common higher authority that could impose directives, an attempt is made to find a consensus. To maintain social cohesion and the respect for community rules, disagreements between groups or families are solved within the framework of a community consultation, an assembly and sometimes, in certain groups, a Court of Justice (*Kriss*). These are made up of household heads (men) who have acquired experience and whose opinion is valued in their community. As decisions and punishments must be accepted by the community as a whole (there is no police force or mandate to apply them), the attempt to reach a consensus is a priority. However, when a decision is made, such as general reprobation, compensation for damages or banishment, this is not called into question (Rothéa, 2003, p. 22-23).

❑ Economy of the travellers

Generally, in the majority of the countries of Western Europe, the Roma economy is one of peripatetic nomadism, i.e. professional activities (arts, crafts, trades), carried out as they wander around as a family. Roma perform trades which generally meet with a temporary demand. This mobility enables them to be available for their customers or to call on them periodically. Their economy is defined by the specific needs of a widespread clientele. When they specialize in a specific activity, they tend to settle. Generally, community activities are carried out by the whole family and the most lucrative are highly prized. Roma can be regarded as freelances since they keep control over their working time. Prospecting and canvassing are activities that are in line with their traditional education. The Roma are in a minority as compared to the *gadjé* and their trades are aimed at very secondary and less and less relevant needs in our consumer society: knife grinding, wickerwork, re-bottoming chairs, scrap dealing, etc But these activities mean that the Roma depend primarily on the *gadjé* for their subsistence, even if the contacts remain generally superficial and anonymous. While a system of give and take prevails inside the Roma community, the relationship which forms outside is an unbalanced one, since the *gadjo* generally makes a gift without really getting anything in exchange which would make it possible to balance things up again. In addition, as the perception that the *gadjé* have of the Roma is generally a negative one (they are often regarded separately or at the same time as swindlers, parasites, lazy or robbers) – in contrast to the positive relations existing inside the Roma community – they tend to reject the Roma's requests, which means that the latter have to become adept at arguing and acquiring know-how to get round the resistance that the *gadjé* put up in the transaction process (Formoso, 1989, p. 242).

With regard to the requirements of society today, the economic dimension of the Roma remains precarious and is becoming difficult. Certain marginal or informal activities are being lost; others now require diplomas and recognized qualifications, as is the case for the trade second-hand car dealer. Some of them, through illegal or criminal activities, heap opprobrium on the whole of the Roma community. However, in many countries, sedentary societies have not sought to provide legislation which would give recognition to their economic practices, which tends to push back them into *de facto* marginality (Reyniers, 2002, p. 21).

Expectations of the Roma community with regard to schooling

In Roma culture, the child has a great amount of freedom and learns implicitly by observing others and by taking part in their activities. At puberty, boys are integrated into the professional activities of adults and they consider that helping the family is priority. Up until this age, Roma families and children are generally not opposed to schooling, as it helps them acquire basic knowledge, in particular learning to read and write. However, school is primarily of purely functional importance and answers the needs of community life. This starts by being able to read signs, press ads for work opportunities, prices and labels in shops, and administrative documents. Anyone who can read or write does it for the whole community, which is basically founded on an oral tradition. This is also the case for useful knowledge and practices which are generally discredited or which enjoy little recognition at school. Even though most adults remain illiterate, with writing neither very present nor greatly esteemed, they are conscious of the need for young people to learn how to read and write, and to be provided with an education in order to acquire certain essential skills. Arithmetic and mathematics in a broader sense are somewhat scorned by the Roma, in particular because their children learn how to count outside school and very early on in their life have strong ties with money, some being able to use money without really knowing how to count.

The first years of schooling for Roma children are difficult because of poverty, exclusion and discrimination, and it is their home and community environment which enables them to feel protected and to develop their personality. In many European countries, the school system still does not encourage opening up to cultural diversity, while teachers do not view Roma culture positively. Discriminated against in this way, Roma children find it difficult to develop feelings of self-esteem as far as their culture and their identity are concerned (UNICEF, 2007, p. 45-46). If certain Roma families are reticent about sending their children to school, it is because of the fear that their cultural identity might disappear, in particular when this is not recognized and when the aim of the educational establishment is to assimilate the pupils into another culture (FSG, 2006, p. 76-77).

The strategies developed by the Roma to adapt to the various social and political environments appear less and less effective, which makes their survival as a minority cultural group difficult. Illiteracy, as a means of protection against the hegemony of other cultures conveyed by the educational establishment, is becoming outmoded but also a handicap in an environment where the ability to write is a commonplace. In addition, at a time when public services are trying to cut costs, it turns out that the costs of proper schooling are lower than those of social assistance. Schooling provides a means of being independent for the Roma who, sometimes out of pride, refuse to depend on social welfare. It can also enable them to acquire the tools to adapt to a changing environment and a means defence against assimilationism. The changing conditions of their existence and professional activities stimulate the Roma's determination to provide education for their children, but in a special school that will encourage them to integrate and not to be assimilated, marginalised or rejected.

Measures pertaining to intercultural education and the practices which result from this make it possible to adapt schooling to Roma children based on their skills and their experiences, while developing aspects of the various cultures involved. These measures tend to help get over the negative and stereotyped image that other socio-cultural groups have of the Roma community. They are also a step towards fighting against intolerance, rejection, stigmatization and, on occasion, xenophobia of which they are the first to be victims (Liégeois, 1997, p. 18-19).

In addition, most Roma people do not want school to encroach on the educational prerogatives of their community. Contrary to the majority of societies around them, they do not accept that school should go beyond academic learning, i.e. that it should deal with social and cultural education. The Roma community makes a point of providing and taking responsibility for education in the sense of upbringing, but accepts that the school should deal with academic learning. In this way, the community totally refutes the concept of "parents of pupils" in favour of that of "parents of children".

The educational situation of the Roma in Europe

The Roma are a European population totalling an estimated 8 to 10 million people. They are the largest ethnic and cultural minority that also features great diversity. They live mainly in Central and Eastern European countries: 2 million in Romania; 1 million in Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia; 800.000 in Hungary; 500.000 in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Russia, Turkey; 1.5 million are divided unequally over Western Europe, including 600.000 in Spain and 450.000 in France. 95 % of them have settled (Reyniers, 2003, p. 2).

European legislation dealing with their schooling was begun in the nineteen-eighties, in particular with the resolution concerning the education of children whose parents do not have a fixed abode (EU, 1984) ; that concerning illiteracy and teaching children whose parents do not have a fixed abode (EU, 1989a) ; and that on the education of Tsiganes and travellers (EU, 1989b). A recommendation (EU, 2000) specifies measures relating to the education of Roma children to be set up throughout the Member States.

The Roma continue to have poor access to education: two Roma children out of five do not attend primary school (1 out of 20 for majority groups), 2 out of 3 do not complete primary education (1 out of 7 in the majority population). 1 Roma out of 4 is still illiterate. Girls are more at a disadvantage: 3 out of 4 do not finish their primary schooling and 1 out of 3 is illiterate (1 out of 20 in the majority population). 38 % of Roma do not finish primary school education (4 % for the majority group) and 33 %, elementary schooling. Only 8 % of them complete secondary education (64 % for the majority group). Roma children spend half as much time at school as the others (4.5 and 10 years respectively) (UNDP, 2006, p. 29-30).

Roma pupils undergo wholesale discrimination and different forms of exclusion in schools, but over the last few years they have begun, in certain states, to take advantage of intercultural approaches to education in favour of minorities and immigrants (EUMC, 2006a, p. 5-6). But the educational level of the Roma population in Europe remains lower than that of any other socio-cultural group. The adults are predominantly illiterate, especially the women, which poses serious problems concerning access to professional training and, later on, to employment. Although their schooling has gradually become more widespread and has improved, problems of absenteeism remain, as well as difficulties in following certain "routines" and in obtaining school diplomas. Features on Roma history and culture in school textbooks, in the curricula and in teaching practices remain limited and sometimes non-existent. Relations between Roma families and the school are often difficult or do not take place. It appears that it is at the end of compulsory schooling, around 12-16, that the majority of Roma children still in education leave school for good. Without qualifications or educational alternatives enabling them to prepare access to the job market, they then find themselves in a critical situation (FSG, 2006, p. 5-6).

In addition, impoverishment and deteriorating health conditions affect the schooling of Roma children. These are partly related to the administrative and political authorities putting pressure on them to settle, to assimilate them and make them give up economic activities which enabled them to remain dynamic and flexible to cope with fluctuating circumstances. The difficulties which they encounter as regards parking (for nomads) or housing (for settled populations) tend to increase health issues and have negative effects on children's schooling. The contradiction between making them to go to school while not allowing them to park fully bears witness to this. School seems part of an overall environment that is perceived in terms of coercion by the Roma: one more obligation, an instrument forcing them to assimilate with its attendant danger of deculturation, even though it may teach them something. While school makes it possible to provide them with the resources and the means to become more autonomous in a way that family education alone cannot, the nobility of its objectives tends to mask the underhand work of getting them to conform through assimilation, to which it contributes (Liégois, 2007, p. 173-174).

A certain number of states started to react by adopting measures to encourage equal opportunity, such as awarding grants to Roma pupils in secondary education and in university. This is the case in Portugal where Roma cultural mediators have been trained to be present in schools receiving Roma children and to encourage relationship between families and school by reinforcing intercultural discussions. "Diversification" lessons were also organized to allow Roma pupils to finish primary school education or to complete their studies. These measures have resulted in a reduction in the drop-out rate and an improvement in school results (FSG, 2006, p. 36-37).

Segregationist practices

In the context of assimilation policies, integration through handicap was - and continuous to be, though less so – a strong educational trend as far as the Roma are concerned, to an extent that varies according to country, in particular for those pupils whose native language is not that of the school, whose behaviour is regarded as atypical for an ordinary class, and whose ages do not correspond to those of the other children. These children, considered as "socially handicapped" are given the same kind of guidance as the mentally or physically "retarded", based on the results of tests that are completely unsuited to these pupils. It happens that Roma parents accept the arbitrariness of these decisions, believing that their children will be better protected within these structures. However, their progress in these classes is in fact limited and the level or diploma which they can sometimes obtain does not make it possible for them to obtain an apprenticeship, and still less, employment. In many European states - in both east and west - the proportions of Roma children sent to these classes are much higher than those of other children: sometimes up to 80 % of Roma children in school. Unlike specialized classes which are adapted to these pupils, the schooling of Roma pupils in special classes over a period of several decades has encouraged the lack of school results, stigmatization, parent guilt, and the negative image held of them by teachers, other pupils and their parents. Mistaken and abusive integration of these children into the standard courses of specialized education is a major perverse effect of common school structures (Liégeois, 2007, p. 180-181).

Since the year 2000, systematic segregation of Roma pupils in the educational policies of the countries of the European Union has tended to disappear. Segregationist practices persist, nevertheless, usually in an indirect way, resulting from the local policies of school principals, teaching practices and residential segregation. Roma children may be placed together in part of the class, or have to follow a simpler curriculum in another room set aside for them. If they perceive that these pupils have

different needs or consider that they have learning difficulties or behavioural problems, the educational authorities or schools can decide to segregate them, even going as far as to place them in "special schools" for mentally handicapped persons. This is true of certain states like Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. However, measures are starting to be taken to examine test and placement procedures by taking better account of the standards, practices and cultural values of Roma children (EUMC, 2006a, p. 7-8). Following evidence collected by humanitarian organizations on these "special schools", the European Union has encouraged the countries concerned to make their legislation comply with the international laws relating to human rights and to implement special measures to obtain measurable results as regards desegregation (ERRC, 2007, p. 8-9). However, when measurements of desegregation are applied as a means to make classes heterogeneous, they can involve negative reactions from non-Roma parents who will seek to have their children educated in establishments far away from the Roma communities, or with demanding enrolment criteria, or large school fees. These practices have been observed in several countries: Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus and Spain (EUMC, 2006a, p. 9).

Relations with the educational establishment

The relations of travellers with school are part of the overall issue of how they are received by political institutions and their representatives. Each time they park, the families must look for a school, register their children and get them taken in, solve questions of travelling and canteen costs, which sets a lot of problems to do with time and space (regular times, organization of time on a daily and a weekly basis), generally not very compatible with the social and professional activities of the adults. Once the children are at school, they continue, during school holidays, to share the life of the adults who keep control of what their children do and when, teach them about "real life", by providing the necessary minimum, by taking advantage of whatever opportunity arises, by sealing partnerships or by dealing with emergency situations. In secondary school, at around age 12-13 it becomes difficult for these children to continue to accept teaching that is sometimes considered as tedious or futile in comparison with what they experience with their parents (Chartier & Cotonnec, 1989, p. 264-265).

Quite often, the Roma appear reserved with regard to school and believe that it is not essential for social and economic success, for finding new work, or for training. They regard it as a *gadjé* institution, and while primary school is accepted since it makes it possible to learn to write and thereby open up the world of administration and questions of citizenship, this is still far from being the case for secondary schooling. For a long time, illiteracy was considered by Roma as a means of protection and of independence.

The values and the political leanings of school, teachers, institutions and those of the Roma families, in particular nomads, are different. When the latter accept schooling, they often subscribe only very partially to its values, while family and social activities and the fact that they are not settled make it unstable and precarious. In addition, the parents do not traditionally move away from their children to carry out their activities and prefer them to be with them so that they can learn empirically, which will enable them to live or at least to survive. Other factors can also be responsible for choosing to refuse school: how close it is to the parking area, how Roma children are accepted by the teacher (depending whether they know who he is), the other pupils (sometimes their parents) and the administration.

The vast majority of settled families have accepted schooling for their children, especially in view of their stable housing conditions, their professions and quite often their own school experience (Chartier & Cotonnec, 1989, p. 264). However, as with wandering families, whether they subscribe to an educational project depends on the history of the family group and the local political context of the moment. As long as conflicts or animosity remain between Roma and non-Roma, the relations with school that Roma parents or children have are likely to be dictated by these negative relations. The assurance of good conditions of schooling for Roma children appears as an essential precondition for the quality of the latter. So when it is not experienced as coercion, more children are sent to school and on a more long-term basis. In countries with social and political difficulties or at times of economic difficulty, Roma quite regularly become scapegoats, which reinforces their exclusion and their situation of permanent insecurity. School practices emanate from this, ranging from relegation to exclusion, via discrimination and xenophobia. They involve the administration when it regards them as mentally handicapped, refuses them in certain schools or does not agree to let them come to school on the school bus, but also teachers when they dissociate them from the other pupils by placing them at the back of the class, and their classmates when the latter reproduce the racist or xenophobic attitudes of their entourage (Liégeois, 2007, p. 172).

The transformations in the conditions of existence of wandering Roma in particular at the social and economic level, now require more lasting attendance at school, were it only to obtain certain levels or qualifications to carry out their trades legally, whether they be fairground people, salesmen or craftsmen. Mastering writing has become necessary, even for traditional trades, if only to have a written record of their professional activity. In certain countries of Eastern Europe which have been marked by Communism, Roma have had a hard time preserving their ability to adapt quickly in the field of professional activities, while the absence of schooling and training has excluded them more and more, including economically: they are still the last to be employed and the first to be laid off. The question which now arises with the acceptance of schooling so as to adapt better to the social, political, and especially economic environment, is that of the loss of Roma roots and culture without being able to become attached to something else (Liégeois, 2007, p. 176).

The remoteness of school culture from that of the Roma tends to cause concern, if not opposition. So while school needs time to organize its educational projects, wandering Roma do not stay long enough in the same place. With different ways of working from one school to another and in particular with national targets implemented differently depending on the school project (in certain European countries), it would seem to be difficult for the young travellers to follow a logical learning curve in the various schools they attend (Maccario, 2002, p. 6).

❑ Teaching approaches

For the Roma child who goes to school, the superposition of cultural and education codes and registers creates antagonism or differences which require educational approaches founded on recognition, understanding, respect, and a flexible way of working. Whatever their origins, the cultural characteristics of the pupils can become one of the components of school dynamics if used as a basis for learning.

In the majority of European countries, Roma children are bilingual (they speak their mother tongue and the official language of the country) and often trilingual or quadrilingual (speaking the languages of adjoining countries). However, this openness and these linguistic skills are generally regarded as handicaps in the educational establishment. The status of the Romani

language remains very low in most countries. Historically, the fact of speaking Romani was condemned by many states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and led to expulsion or torture, as was the case in Hungary, where queen Maria Theresa forced them to change names, in Spain or in Finland, where their tongue would be cut if they were caught speaking Romani. During the twentieth century, in a certain number of countries under Soviet domination, such as Bulgaria, the use of this language in public was prohibited. Roma names (but also those with a Moslem connotation) were changed and condemnation - even inside school – led to feelings of shame at belonging to a minority and using their native tongue (Kyuchukov, 2000, p. 273-274). In the nineteen-nineties, problems were not solved and got worse as unemployment arrived, bringing further impoverishment in its wake. Roma pupils seldom meet with the disciplinary and socio-cultural expectations of teachers because of their traditional education, and are often relegated to the back of the class, or sent to specialized schools for physically or mentally handicapped children. As Roma families have even less revenue than before fall of the communist regime (when everyone had work), their children do not attend preschool education (which is generally fee-paying) and go to school without books, often with worn-out clothing and a level of hygiene that is regarded as insufficient. This leads to further discrimination, starting with their classmates who, following the example set by teachers, avoid speaking to them. For Roma children, school life often appears tedious and the proposed activities uninteresting. Teachers are generally unaware that these children have a more highly developed knowledge of life than the other pupils and that their interests are above all related to daily life (Kyuchukov, 2000, p. 274-275).

At the end of the nineteen-nineties and at the start of the new millennium, Romani and Roma culture began to be taught in the curricula of certain schools in Europe, often as a result of initiatives by NGOs, human rights defence organizations and European institutions (first among which was the Council of Europe). In addition, the majority of the countries concerned ratified the 1989 United Nations convention which stipulates the right of each child to receive teaching in his or her native tongue, the state concerned being obliged to provide help in order to make this possible. Textbooks in Romani and courses for teachers have been designed to help Roma children to integrate in schools. However, it turns out that these lessons are given in isolated schools and classes, encouraging an even more evident ghettoization of these children, while most other pupils continue to be unaware of Roma language, culture or history, as these do not feature in the curricula or in textbooks. Research into various countries of Eastern Europe including Bulgaria (Kyuchukov, 2000, p. 276-278) has shown that it is lack of knowledge about how to organize the bilingual teaching of Roma children which has produced negative results (the official reasons given were that the children did not want to learn Romani and Roma culture). It was the official language and not the mother tongue which was used as starting point for this bilingual education, whereas scientific results have shown that mastery of a second language depends on the level of development of the mother tongue. Certain teachers and parents of pupils (for example in Bulgaria) protested against the presence of Romani in the curricula, asking for each pupil to follow the same curricula. It would nevertheless appear that interactive methods combining art, language games, music and theatre are more effective for teaching Roma children. According to Kyuchukov (2000, p. 277-278), it is preferable to integrate Roma children into conventional schools and to close the special schools or the separate classes, to use interactive methods, with Romani being used as a first language followed by the official language, with bilingual teachers who have undergone sociological training to get over their prejudices and their negative representations of the Roma. The idea is also to bring teaching closer to Roma Community values, by asking Roma parents to take part and by encouraging the recruitment of bilingual Roma teachers. The absence of Roma staff and teachers in the education systems contributes to the marginalization of Roma pupils and to an increase in conflicts. The presence of Roma mediators or school assistants in disaggregated classes encourages the academic success of Roma children, in particular when there is a will to include Roma community qualifications and values, in cooperation with that community. This work carried out by the school for the benefit of Roma families also makes it possible to increase their awareness and to reassure them as to the safety of their children at school, and the good intentions of school staff towards them. By helping both parties to get to know each other better, it also encourages a fight against prejudice, stereotypes and racist or xenophobic attitudes and practices within the school (Kalwant Bhopal, 2004, p. 60-62).

❑ Teacher training

Training in the Roma language, culture and history for teachers who have Roma children in their class would appear to be essential to give them the means, not to teach Roma values, but to become familiar with Roma culture in order to make use of it for teaching. In using these historical and cultural data in a multicultural class, the idea is to encourage a different representation aiming at enriching cultures and at bringing each pupil to re-appropriate aspects of his or her identity while seeing this in relation to others. As the Romani language does not belong to a particular territory, its recognition and its use in school are often refused. Certain states have started to produce textbooks and teaching resources founded on Roma culture, history and language, and this is also true of European institutions which are a driving force for getting member states to accept that their schools can accept and be open to the use of Roma culture (the Roma being regarded as a national minority). However, the question of the standardization of Romani because of dialectization always arises, since it would concern only certain linguistically homogeneous groups coming from different countries, and other measures would have to be imagined for regional or more localized groups. In addition, remote teaching of Roma history, culture and language is particularly suited to dispersed communities. This is also true of the training courses aimed at enabling Roma school teachers and mediators to specialise, the idea being to offer them training modules that can be accumulated by means of a credit system in different training institutions, including remote teaching. In certain countries, remote training is also used to train Roma assistant staff providing teaching in Romani or to help pre-school teachers to gain a better understanding of Roma children and to reassure them. It is also used for leaders and trainers helping towards integration into the world of school. This type of personnel is already trained and employed in several states, while European programmes have made it into a priority. The recommended teaching approach is to bring teachers to be able to accommodate pupils' diversity by trying to match their educational practices and teaching materials to the behaviour of the children. Beyond the aim of getting the child to acquire fundamental knowledge that will be useful in adapting to the environment and for his or her own development, the educational content remains open-ended and can be used according to its appropriateness to the child's behaviour. Teacher training must therefore prepare teachers to cope with two forms of bias: ethnocentrism, arising from ignorance, and folklorism which may, through superficial knowledge, lead them to brand the Roma as socio-cultural stereotypes without taking into account their diversity and the internal dynamics (Liégeois, 2007, p. 192-194).

❑ Towards intercultural education?

While school takes part in the acculturation of children by influencing their overall educational process, in particular when they come from a minority, it also gives them the means of adapting to the society(ies) in which they live. Nevertheless this

acculturation process quite often develops into deculturation by opposing – instead of completing– family or community education. When these two types of education develop simultaneously, this leads to a juxtaposition of experiences and knowledge that is difficult for the child to handle, as well as contradictions encouraging the family to reject school or that lead to deculturation of the child (when he or she loses his or her cultural roots). The identity of the child then becomes a source of conflict at school. To deal with this ethnocentric categorization, the recommended solutions call on multiple teaching strategies, on allowing Roma parents to take part in school, on taking the whole of the situation into account instead of restricting consideration to structural or didactic aspects, and thereby developing an overall intercultural policy with the relevant teaching strategies (Liégeois, 2007, p. 194). These aim at the enrichment of pupils through mutual understanding by means of learning based on the cultural backgrounds of everyone. This intercultural education, developed for a trans-national community without a reference state or origin but present in all European States, has become a source of thinking for the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Roma are in fact the largest minority in quantitative terms (8 to 10 million) in Europe (Fourcher, 1994), have been discriminated against within the various states and are the last minority to be taken into account. Europe features a multicultural population, minorities, and a growing mobility, requiring new legal, socio-cultural and migratory frameworks in which the process of European integration exceeds that of national integration. It would seem that the Roma are the pioneers in the Europe that is taking shape.

Specialised classes and ordinary classes: a step towards complementary support facilities?

There have been many experiments concerning the schooling of Roma children. These differ according to the support facilities and the teaching methods used. Quite often, specialized classes (taking only Roma children, as opposed to special classes for the handicapped) and ordinary classes (where there are pupils from mixed backgrounds) are set into opposition, the latter being considered as generally better from the standpoint of equality of education for all children. However, desegregation policies and actions can encourage standardization of the facilities involved, and also of too general and one-shot projects whose idealism runs up against difficulties of implementation.

One of the strong points of specialized classes is to encourage close contact with the families, but when this co-operation is limited or non-existent, it promotes the opposite effect to the one intended: rejection of school by the parents. When administrations set up specialized facilities suited to the context, this is not always the case from the functional standpoint since they ask teachers to work as they would in an ordinary class, thereby making their work difficult and inappropriate. Faced with this lack of institutional flexibility, it is more the motivation and the commitment of the teachers that make these classes attractive and encouraging to the pupils' success, than the existence of these structures itself. The irreplaceable experience of teachers could be used to advantage in the context of other facilities. The existence of these classes has enabled many Roma children to access education and their parents to become familiar with the institution. But because of their specialized nature, they have been subject to criticism, being accused of encouraging ghettoization or the promotion of an illusory culture, and also of being places where nothing gets done.

In ordinary classes, it appeared necessary to set up means of support, to create special teaching materials, to provide teachers with additional training, to employ Roma school assistants or mediators, and to encourage contacts with the families. These classes function in a less isolated way than specialized classes and are better integrated into the national school systems (Liégeois, 2007, p. 176-179).

Specialized classes operate in three different ways in various European countries: the "ghetto" class , the "waystage" class, in which the pupil spends some time before joining an ordinary class, and the part-time class where certain lesson are taken with non-Roma pupils. The ghetto "class" or "Roma class" is of questionable value, owing to the fact that it does not prepare Rom children for exchanges with other children, thus deferring conflicts, often violent ones, outside school. It appears that the teachers who work in these are marginalized by their own colleagues. It is the other two types of class, and sometimes a mixture of both, which are currently promoted in the move to integrate Roma children.

The diversity of support facilities for Roma pupils makes it possible to answer the various wishes of parents, but remains insufficient in terms of versatility in adapting to this variety. It is more by virtue of the fact that they are complementary (moving from one facility to another or using several of them simultaneously) and flexible that they become of value. This makes it possible to avoid excessive specialization, which tends to stigmatize the children in the specialized classes, but also segregation, starting with rejection, and standardization through refusing to acknowledge differences, and inflexibility in the ordinary classes (Liégeois, 2007, p. 179-184).

Roma schooling in France

In France, the Roma population ("Roma" is here used as generic term) is estimated at 450 000 people of which one third is nomadic, one third semi-nomadic and one third settled. Contemporary Roma settlement derives from the post-revolutionary period (before the French Revolution, the Tsiganes were generally subjected to measurements of forced assimilation) during which they were able to set out again on the road. After hiding in the Vosges, the Manouches spread throughout the country. This was also the case for Gypsies who had taken refuge in the Pyrenees. The Yenishes, impoverished peasants originating in Switzerland, the Rhineland and Alsace-Lorraine, were to migrate *en masse* throughout the region and were to become travellers, while marrying into the other Tsigane communities. The first Roma migrants from Central and Eastern Europe arrived in France a little before the 1st world war (Williams, 2001). This movement grew in importance as of the nineteen-sixties, and was boosted in the nineties following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe (Reyniers, 2003, p. 2-3). Even if Roma or Tsiganes are to be found throughout the country, a large number of them remain near cities and in border regions. During the summer period, the Travellers move into the more rural and tourist areas, where they find a part of their clientele. The majority of Roma live precariously and are generally uneducated, in particular those who have lived in France for a long time. Roma who have come from Eastern European countries since 1960 are generally better educated (Reyniers, 2003, p. 19).

Segregation in school continues to be a problem in France, in particular with regard to children of Roma who have not settled, since it happens that the authorities refuse to register them because of the illegal situation their parents, generally because of parking issues (EUMC, 2006b, p. 28-29). Two circulars (MEN, 2002a & b) organize support facilities and schooling for traveller children. The aim is always to provide schooling in ordinary classes, even though transitional measures can be arranged:

"Direct integration into ordinary classes at the nursery school, local primary school or collège*, near to the parking place is becoming more widespread. This is always what is aimed at, even when schooling temporarily requires special facilities. In certain cases, it may be relevant to set up an individualized educational project in the context of special educational arrangements, sometimes in partnership with associations, but this should be negotiated with pupils, parents, teachers and the educational team. These methods of schooling can only be transitional measures; they must aim to support the move to a normal school programme as soon as possible"* (MEN, 2001).

Teaching policies and practices

Teaching practices differ appreciably from one establishment to another and from one class to another. Some will recommend specialized teaching, adapted to each child, based on the pupil's experiences and a valorisation of what he is. The idea is to get the pupils to speak, to share their experiences with the others, for them to enjoy self-esteem and recognition, so that they want to come back to school and cope with the difficulties that are inherent any learning (Cannizzo, 1996, p. 32). For the Roma, school generally represents only a secondary aspect of education, especially as mastery of reading and writing is not regarded as a criterion of social success in their community. The world in which they live is mainly an oral one – this is how culture and knowledge are passed on - while writing is not used in day-to-day life. Schooling is often difficult because of the Roma lifestyle, the fact that they travel a lot, their lifestyle as part of a community and their economic activity. The number of Roma pupils still at school at *collège* level is very low, while there are virtually no students in higher education. In France, 66.7% of Roma children are registered in the nursery school, 81.8% in primary school and 78.8% in the *collège*, but absenteeism and dropping-out are frequent, in particular in the *collège* (FSG, 2006, p. 18-19).

❑ Nursery school

It is difficult for Roma children to go to nursery school because it involves separating them from the family environment and breaking up the circle of siblings when the children are divided up into different classes. This immersion in the "outside world", unknown until now, is still avoided by many Roma families, who consider that their children are still too fragile to face it and that it is preferable not to entrust children under seven to *gadjé* (FSG, 2006, p. 19).

To answer these concerns, certain nursery schools whose intake specifically includes Roma children offer them flexible, part-time schooling including specialized courses, the long term aim being for them to come full time and regularly. This makes it possible to prepare Roma mothers for being gradually separated from their children. Other open-ended structures exist, such as the "play-stop" lorries which travel round to the parking areas where the families are, the teachers aiming to make parents and children more aware of school. Certain schools can be set up on the parking areas: the teacher also tries to make families aware of the value of school, to gradually gain their trust, to clarify the role of the school and how it works, its staff and the various services available such as the canteen or transport (MEN, 2001). These awareness campaigns and the variety of schools, crossover facilities and educational workshops have brought about an increase in the number of Roma children in nursery school (Chalumeau & Gualdaroni, 1995).

❑ Primary school

Elementary schooling for the Roma answers a keen demand, in particular with regard to initial training, such as reading and writing, which are of functional help in meeting the needs of the community. Nevertheless, it happens that children refuse to be educated, or do not see the point of it, a point of view which is still quite often approved by the parents. Most Roma children are accommodated according to age in the ordinary classes of local schools. They can benefit temporarily from weekly remedial courses in French or mathematics, given by a teacher trained for this purpose. There are also special classes for traveller children that are organized in local schools, with the aim of bringing them up to level so that they can quickly be integrated into the class corresponding to their age group. This is also the case of special schools in the vicinity or on the travellers' parking area which aim at integrating them into ordinary classes, via school projects and educational and cultural actions to encourage exchanges with pupils from the other schools. This is true of schools for travellers in Avignon, Dijon, Orleans, Pau and Strasbourg. The national centre for remote education (CNED) in Toulouse also provides distance learning for families who are often on the move. It offers elementary education identical to that given in ordinary classes, as well as courses adapted for pupils who are behind at elementary school. Others can be dealt with by thirty or so "lorry schools" which travel around the French territory. These are financed by local government agencies or associations and are another means of transition towards ordinary schools. The teachers who work there are on secondment from State education, supervised by inspectors and advised by academy centres for the schooling of newcomers and children of travellers (MEN, 2001). In addition to these different structures are other intermediate types in which certain lessons are given in ordinary classes as well as in back-up units which make it possible to lighten regular staff requirements while having enough capacity for when the Roma families come back regularly at certain periods. The nomination of specialized, peripatetic teachers and a mobile staff aims, to a certain extent, to provide initial support for traveller children. Finally, special beginner classes make it possible to accommodate Roma from non-French-speaking countries (Chalumeau& Gualdaroni, 1995).

❑ The *collège*

Adolescence for the Roma is a key period in family education because children begin to contribute more directly to their social and cultural roles: girls will take their mothers' advice about daily tasks; boy will receive advice from their fathers about professional know-how. It is also at this time that marriages begin to be contracted. With improved education for the Roma in primary school, secondary education is improving too, to the extent that 15 to 20% of Roma children attend *collège*. Transition classes between primary education and the *collège* have been set up to provide remedial education. These support facilities make it possible to modify their timetable, with some lessons corresponding to their level of attainment, and others being shared with other pupils of the same age. Quite often, on their arrival at the *collège*, Roma families and children, whether nomadic or settled, request schooling in special classes providing mainstream and professional education (SEGPA) and special-needs classes (SES) which reconcile mainstream education with preparation for professional training (MEN, 2001). A certain number of Roma pupils finish the mainstream education course, however, or join classes in vocational and technological schools. The mobile school units also concern teenagers since they can accommodate children aged from 3 to 15. Distance learning is also relevant to secondary education: the Rouen CNED offers normal teaching or remedial classes (in the first two years at *collège*). Within the framework of a project subsidized by the European Union, the Rouen centre offers a two-year

training course that takes Roma language and culture into account, as well as support and remedial actions (Chalumeau & Gualdaroni, 1995).

Following an investigation carried out in the Haute-Garonne (FSG, 2006, p. 19-20), it appears that the majority of Roma registered at *collège* do not follow schooling in ordinary classes: 53.8% are in the SEGPA, 23.1% in reorientation or assistance and support classes, and only 19.1% in mainstream classes. Apart from the latter, enrolments at *collège* are delayed: admission to the SEGPA occurs on average at age 12.7 for Roma children, whereas this happens at 12 for the other pupils. This gap widens when they reach the fourth year of *collège*, where the average age of Roma children is 16 instead of 15. Out of a sample of Roma fourteen year-olds, 15.2% cannot read properly, 21.2% have difficulties in writing and only 15.2% can do sums reasonably well. Half of them consider that school is the place to learn how to read, write and count, but very few of them relate school learning to the possibility of exerting a professional activity in the future. Concerning attendance at *collège*, 44.4% of them go because their parents make them and 70% claim they go regularly.

Problems encountered

❑ Problems related to support for travellers

Before presenting the cultural problems involved in the education of travellers, those relating to support for them should first be presented, since the former very often depend on the latter. Precarity, marginalisation and segregation are all features that characterize the Roma population in France, the authorities being partly responsible for this. State determination to settle the populations present on French territory has not generally been accompanied by aid to help them set up or palliative measures for travellers who have gradually given up their wandering lifestyle and the economic activities related to this. These policies have encouraged discrimination against, and marginalisation of, most of the Roma, in particular as regards space segregation (Rothéa, 2003, p. 116). After the Besson Law, which did make a break with the past, it turns out that the number of accommodation areas is still insufficient, that these are mainly located on the outskirts of cities and have many inconveniencies for their users. Parking capacity is insufficient and the infrastructures, particular sanitation, do not meet the needs of the Roma families. There are still many municipalities which refuse, in spite of the law, to accommodate travellers. A perverse effect of the Roma settlement policy is the occupation of these plots of land by settled or semi-settled families, which helps to reduce the number sites for travellers still further. Municipalities which provide an accommodation area for travellers can legally prohibit them from parking anywhere else, which implies that part of the country is now closed to wandering Roma (Rothéa, 2003, p. 117-118).

❑ Cultural problems related to schooling

In France, Roma have a legal status that authorizes and organizes discontinuous and unpredictable school attendance, together with a number of absences that do not have to be justified by parents. This status takes the form of an exception to the law relating to the education of children on French territory. Between 1966 and 1981, an administrative control measure was appended to this status by the use of attendance books (or "blue cards") made available to teachers. This ineffective and awkward measure led teachers either to comply with the law and enter into conflict with the parents, or to promote illegal practices by turning a blind eye. Since then, this means of control has been done away with and teachers can request reasons for absence from the parents, be satisfied with unconvincing answers or run the risk of a conflict with the families (Chartier & Cotonnec, 1989, p. 261-262).

Generally, Roma children from Central European and Eastern countries do not speak French and it is difficult for them to be immediately integrated into an ordinary class. But this is also quite often the case for those whose families have been on French territory for several generations, as they arrive at school speaking the Romani language and/or the dialect of their community and have only a few French words with which to communicate. They have more difficulty learning the structures of French than foreigners who learn French. While they feel lost in the classroom because they do not understand what is said, they often pretend to understand in order not to feel humiliated by having to make the teacher repeat or acknowledging that they do not understand. In addition, as they already have some notions of slang and speak a dialect ("traveller slang") used for relations with *gadjé*, certain words or expressions which they think belong to French are in fact deformed. This tends to foster a "dialogue of the deaf" between them and the teachers, reinforces their inability to follow the lesson correctly and to do the exercises required. It appears that the words or the expressions of traveller slang are regarded by most teachers as mistakes or deformed versions of French. However, these remain constant whatever the age group and provide travellers with a language identity which has social validity and serves as a means of distinguishing them from the *gadjé* (Cannizzo, 1996, p. 23, 31).

The rules of the classroom are hard to accept because they are far removed from the Roma lifestyle. The school is an enclosed space, whereas they live in the open: its singular architecture (closed rooms, stairs, etc.) implies appropriate behaviour (remaining seated during lessons, not running or shouting) which has no reason to exist in the Roma community. Timetables, curricula and the authority of the teacher all imply blind obedience and are in opposition to Roma flexibility, negotiation with adults, and the complete freedom they enjoy within their community. These handicaps, for which nothing is proposed in exchange, are considered all the more arbitrary as they are imposed by a *gadjo* using coercive methods, whereas children are called on to contribute in a different way in their families, with adults making greater use of persuasion. In addition, as they seldom perceive the value of writing as a means of communication and its usefulness for professional success, being able to read remains of secondary importance for them, which makes exercises such as homework even more difficult (FSG, 2006, p. 20-21).

It would seem that time is not perceived linearly by traveller children, but rather as a succession of moments, in which the present moment take precedence and masks the previous ones. Memories of the past and visions of the future are therefore less well perceived. Space is organized around places created by family references and not in a permanent way around fixed points. This lack of continuity causes difficulties as regards the perception of finer rhythms such as algorithm exercises, the concepts of lateralization, orientation or body scheme. This problem of orientation seems to have repercussions on learning to reading and write which organize, and are organized by, space and time (Cannizzo, 1996, p. 23-24).

When the Roma child enters school he encounters the written language, without ever having been a pre-reader impregnated by writing which would facilitate subsequent acquisitions when learning to read. As the latter is not part of his environment, with no emotional or relational value, its use, far from being naturally easy for him, is limited to the context of the school.

The continuous effort which schooling requires means that one must be able to project oneself into the future, for example, to think about the professional utility of writing for anything more than taking a highway code test. In his/her daily life, the Roma child notes that his/her parents do not need to be able to read to hunt around for antiques or deal in scrap metal: it is therefore difficult for him or her to accept to make this effort (Cannizzo, 1996, p. 24-28).

Other European countries

Spain

In 1990, the ministry for social affairs estimated the number of Gypsies at 600 000, including 70% of under 25s, with an infant population rate (aged 0-14) of more than double the national average, and a birth rate three times higher, with an average of five children per family. Only 5% of Gypsies are nomadic and move around mainly from province to province. Children's education is significant between ages 6 and 11, but then falls off sharply, in particular for girls, even before the end of compulsory schooling (Soria Gutiérez, 1995). In 2006, the Roma of Spain were estimated at 750 000 people, of which half live in the province of Andalusia. Since 2002, to the 600 000 – 650 000 Gypsies have been added nearly 150 000 Roma originating from Eastern Europe (Romania, Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia), mainly *Ursàri* from Romania. Educational achievement of Roma children in primary schools remains lower than that of the other pupils, but an improvement has been noted over the last twenty years or so.

74% are in pre-school education (the national average is 93%). 50% of them regularly attend primary school, 35% are regularly absent and 10% are almost always so. In terms of educational performance, between 60 and 70% of them experience learning difficulties. 30% drop out before the age of 14 and 5% never went to school. In secondary school, absenteeism and expulsions are recurrent, while 56% of Roma children who leave primary education do not undergo secondary schooling (EUMC, 2006b, p. 27-28).

The segregation of Roma children in schools is significant, in particular in areas where they are present in large numbers (50% of the population): there are nearly 80 to 90% of them in certain, generally public schools, while the other pupils of the same areas attend private schools. To limit their learning difficulties, some autonomous communities, including that of Madrid, have tried to encourage their integration in certain public schools for underprivileged children (remedial classes), giving them textbooks, and providing them with meals, and hygiene and vaccination programmes. These steps were questioned, since they contributed to segregation and limited their access to schooling in normal classes (EUMC, 2006b, p. 27-28). Roma children are the first to drop out of schooling (as of age 8, then in larger numbers between ages 11 and 15), to be absent (40%) and not to have acquired basic skills (80 %), two years behind the other pupils (Montserrat Santos, 1999, p. 444).

A number of compensatory actions (such as grants) aiming at helping pupils with insufficient resources, low social status or difficult living conditions have been set up, following the Real Decreto 1174/83. Since the end of the nineteen-eighties, the schooling of the Roma is a priority, both for the ministry of state education, which plans compensatory teaching policy, and for the ministries of education of the autonomous communities, which are responsible for certain aspects relating to teaching (Soria Gutiérez, 1995).

For example, in the Basque region, compensatory measures were set up as of 1991 (LOGSE) to attempt to better meet with the diverse publics involved, taking into consideration their cultural, linguistic (bilingual) and socio-economic backgrounds, but without any real prospects for minority groups such as the Roma or immigrants. Under Franco, the Roma were not provided with education, educational and social exclusion being the norm. During the nineteen-seventies, Roma associations started to develop their own school programmes. The Spanish association "Teachers with Gypsies" has worked with the Roma community with a view to improving the duration of schooling for Roma children. For more than 20 years, this association organized regular meetings and debates aiming at sharing experiences and at implementing new strategies to improve the educational situation of Roma. This groundwork made it possible to make Roma families more aware of the importance of sending their children to school more frequently and permanently. It gave much better results than the special classes in which only Roma children were educated for a period, while mixing them with other children helps them to integrate (Etxberria, 2002, p. 293-294).

Over the last few years, the results have improved as a result of an active collaboration between the educational administrations, the schools and the families. Nevertheless, this recent phenomenon concerns only the latest generations of Roma, those whose educational attainment is higher than that of their parents. In 2006, nearly 250 continued studies at university.

Portugal

Roma in Portugal are estimated at between 40 000 and 100 000. The Sinti, Calé and Manouche groups are represented. Few of them are to be found in pre-school education, while 91.6% of Roma children attend primary school for the first four years of compulsory schooling, but only 55.4% finish it (the national average is 87.7%) (EUMC, 2006b, p. 39).

In Portugal, the question of Roma education is a recent one because educational problems initially concerned the whole of society. In the nineteen-seventies, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, there were ten times fewer children educated than in France and six times fewer than in Spain. In 1990, 3002 Roma pupils (0.27% of all pupils) attended primary school (93.3%) and secondary school. In 1991, they accounted for 0.58% of pupils in primary education with a success rate of 38.3% (the national average being 75.6%). The changes took place as a result of the educational reform of 1986 (Fundamental law of the education system) aiming at integrating cultural and/or linguistic diversity and at consolidating the principles and the attitudes that lead to multicultural conviviality and intercultural relations that are a source of enrichment for the educational community, and society in general. The basic principles of the right to be different and of equal opportunity provided the basis for promoting awareness among primary teachers whose classes are attended by Roma children. During the years 1988-1989 and 1989-1990, 540 teachers were thus trained in Roma cultural awareness, in adapting their knowledge and attitudes to the social and cultural reality of the education system, and in improving their skills and knowledge of intercultural teaching. This project lies within the scope of work carried out by the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe.

Following on from this, various projects have been organized, based on the idea that the educational difficulties of minorities are not the result of backwardness or a socio-cultural handicap, but are to do with educational strategies. The objective was

then to develop positive discrimination in favour of continuity between school and families, encouraging pupils to make use of their oral and written communication abilities and to encourage their prejudices to disappear by opposing the ethnocentrism of school culture. These projects have made it possible to demonstrate the effectiveness of strategies that aim to enhance differences as a means of enrichment and not as an obstacle to schooling (Machado, 1992).

Various measures were set up during the nineteen-nineties. These included training programmes for teachers, relating specifically to the various aspects of Roma culture, aiming at improving relations between the various communities and encouraging educational projects with cultural agents (family support policies). The peripatetic schools will sign a contract with the families so that their children follow at least minimum schooling, but are committed to providing the necessary books and teaching equipment. Various actions have taken place to make Roma parents aware of the importance sending their children to nursery school. Roma cultural agents have been named to work with the schools attended by a majority of Roma children, while remote teaching programmes are being developed and literature on Roma culture published (Franqueira & Leitão, 2000).

Great Britain

In Great Britain, the term "Traveller" is used to indicate all the identifiable groups which are or were traditionally associated with a wandering lifestyle. It therefore includes Travellers, Tsiganes, fairground people, entertainers and circus people, boatmen and families who live on boats, as well as *New Travellers* (hippies, New Age) (Department for Education and Employment, 1998). Travellers are recognized as an ethnic minority in Northern Ireland, which is not the case for the other Roma or Travellers who represent between 120.000 and 300.000 people, depending on the source.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the 1908 act relating to elementary schooling for children stipulated that children of Travellers shall have 200 half-days of compulsory education instead of the 400 imposed on other children, but this was seldom applied. The 1944 education law later decreed that children whose parents are travellers are not subject to compulsory education.

The Plowden Report of 1967 bears witness to the socio-economic and learning difficulties of nomadic children. A document from the secondary education department in 1983 indicated that less than half of traveller children benefit from primary education and that only a small proportion regularly attend school. In the Swann report of 1985, it is stated that Travellers are victims of stereotypes, discrimination and racism, but also of the inflexibility and the inappropriateness of the education system.

At the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, it appeared that 40% to 90% of travellers in Great Britain did not have special sites to park their caravans. Travellers started to organize themselves into associations as of 1968, with the creation of the Gypsy Council for education (NGEC) chaired by Mrs. Plowden, including teachers and militants. The NGEC and other associations in this way brought the government to assume its responsibilities so that all Roma children could benefit from education, independently of whether their caravan was located on an authorized site. The 198O education law enabled each parent to choose a school for their children's education. In the mid 1990s, there were more than 500 specialized teachers teaching Roma children, not including all the other teachers who work with them in the ordinary schools (Kruczek-Steiger & Simmons, 2001, p. 287-289).

A report by the *Office for Standards in Education* (OFSTED) in 1996 stated that, while since 1986 the number of traveller children in education has been on the increase, a significant proportion still do not attend school regularly. In 1999, in a report entitled *Raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils*, OFSTED stated that Roma pupils remain under-educated. In 2003, it pointed out that there were between 70 000 and 80 000 Roma children of school age in England and in Wales, but that only 84% actually went to school during *Key Stage 2* (the four years of schooling between ages 7 and 11) and 47% during *Key Stage 4* (the two years, between ages 14 and 16). In Northern Ireland, most traveller children do not attend secondary education. A study carried out in 2004 reveals the two main reasons for this: fears of racist attacks and lack of interest in the curriculum (in particular for boys). Primary education curricula meet with more approval because they provide basic qualifications (reading, writing, counting) (EUMC, 2006b, p. 42-44).

Since 2002, measures have been set up in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland in order to fight against racial discrimination and to encourage equal opportunity at school.

In England and Wales, the local education authorities (LEAs), with backing from central government, set up the *Traveller Education Service (TES)* in the nineteen-seventies, aimed at encouraging schooling for them by various measures, from awareness campaigns to remote teaching. These were reworked in 2004, and placed under the supervision of the *School Improvement Team of Local Education Authorities* and funded by the *Vulnerable Children's Grant* (VCG), in order to make sure that Roma children enjoy full right of access to education.

In England during the 1970s and 1980s, a number of local and regional initiatives made it possible to improve the conditions of schooling for Roma children (especially Travellers) through support measures for ordinary schools and the creation of special classes within a school. These were then reorganized in 1988 by section 210 of the educational reform law which authorized the Secretary of State for education to award grants to LEAs to facilitate the schooling of travellers (Farthing & Ivatts, 1992). Article 488 of the education law of 1996 makes provision for a special programme to meet the needs of teaching traveller and Roma children TESs are mobilized to provide a network of local teams specialized in this kind of teaching. As they travel around, the Roma parents contact a local TES service which will indicate a school in which their children can continue to be educated. The TESs also have the role of making school heads and class teachers aware of the issue so that they can take an interest in the Roma culture and in the special needs of Roma pupils. For this purpose, the TESs provide in-service training for class teachers and design teaching materials that take Roma culture into account.

In order for schools to be able to track schooling and pass on the files of Traveller children, a registration card (green card) is issued to them (England and Wales). This replaces the school records which monitor the assessment of the majority of the children educated in Great Britain. Certain documents, such as the *Target Card* completed progressively as the child attends school, provide information that can be used for assessment purposes, such as an initial evaluation supplemented by educational objectives (Halliday, 2000, p. 96-97).

Since the TESs were set up, school attendance of Roma pupils in primary education has clearly improved. They are now trying to make it easier for pupils to transfer to secondary education, while reassuring the parents as to the safety of their children (Department for Education and Employment, 1998).

The Northern Ireland minister for education of considers that the schooling of Traveller children depends above all on non-discriminatory conditions being guaranteed in schools, starting with respect for Roma lifestyle and culture. He gives preference to schooling in culturally and socially heterogeneous classes, where the pupils are led to share their experiences for the benefit of all. This multicultural opening policy is in place throughout the territory. For historical reasons, an exception remains in one primary school in Belfast which takes only Traveller children aged between 4 and 11, but they are then sent to ordinary secondary schools where they have the same lesson as their settled classmates. Their attendance is poorer in secondary schools than in primary schools, where they benefit from the support of liaison teachers who help to make the Roma families aware of the benefits of education (Department for Education and Employment, 1998). The reasons for their school failure in secondary school are varied: difficulty adapting because of a lack of basic reading, writing and arithmetical skills, cultural differences, with premature marriages for girls and an early introduction to the world of work for boys. It appears that the school attendance is more regular when support centres are provided and when Roma associations are involved (Farthing & Ivatts, 1992). Certain Roma families are not very inclined to provide education for their children beyond primary education because they fear that their culture would be diluted and disappear if they are kept at school for too long. Only when school agrees to broaden its approach by inclusion, i.e. by going beyond the implicit prospect of equal opportunity, that tensions or hesitations can be overcome. Certain arrangements make it possible for Roma pupils to avoid having to choose between the requirements of periodic nomadism and that of compulsory education, but this generally implies support from politicians and staff training (Reynolds & al., 2003, p. 413-414).

Although there exists a certain consensus as regards teaching practices throughout the United Kingdom, in particular in primary school education, the contents, methodology and sequences may vary, which leads to difficulties for the children of Travellers who have to change school several times in the year. This phenomenon is even more in evidence in secondary school, since the Traveller children cannot count on finding a place in the class of their choice. These disparities tend to slow down Traveller children as compared with the others, quite often involve problems of self-confidence and lead to progressive abandonment of school work. The longer their absences are, the more their motivation decreases, and the likelier they are to experience learning difficulties (Department for Education and Employment, 1998).

Romania

The Roma of Romania are said to number between 2 and 2.5 million people (this figure being an underestimation owing to the fact that some Roma prefer to hide their origins to avoid being stigmatized), or one tenth of the population. Roma are one of the oldest and largest minority groups in the country.

After undergoing obligatory assimilation during the communist period, their language and culture are starting to be taken into account in Romanian schools. The 1989 census shows an attendance rate for Roma children in primary education of 40%, while half the adults (59% of women and 44% of men) are illiterate. The average number of births per woman is 5.1 (1.9 for the whole of the population). Two children out of five do not attend pre-school education; half of the 7-10 year group benefits from primary education; 7%, secondary education, and only 4.5% obtain a secondary education qualification (Cozma & al., 2000, p. 281-282).

Following the 1989 Revolution, a certain number of Roma children stopped going to school, which led to an increase in the illiteracy rate. Poverty and precarious living conditions are correlated to school attendance. This leads to further difficulties in finding employment (lack of qualifications), reinforced by discrimination, of which the Roma are still victims in the country.

The Romanian Constitution declares that national minorities have the right to receive education in their native language and that, depending on local needs, groups, classes, sections or schools dispensing such education can be organized. Since 1999, Roma language and the history have been included in the curricula. In 2005-2006, 0.18% of teachers were Roma (490 out of 280.000). It would appear that the educational level of Roma teachers is insufficient as compared with that of the other teachers. Gaps have been noted in their knowledge of Romani literature. A significant number of Roma children follow courses taught in the Romani language with lessons on Roma history, but they do not yet have access to written documents in Romani (FNASAT, 2007).

There are 220 000 Roma pupils between primary and secondary school. Only 20% attend pre-school education, particularly because it is only partially subsidized (parents must pay part of the registration fee) and because of the limited intake possible (priority is given to children whose parents have a stable job). 20% of Roma children are not given primary education, because of their family's poverty, the lack of road infrastructures or public transport (which, when it exists is not free), but also of the Roma lifestyle where children are expected to work for their family. This can also be explained by the fact that the language barrier of some Roma children is not taken into account at school and that the absence of bilingual education (except for a project set up by the Roma NGO Amare Romentza) is also a factor leading to rejection of schooling or learning difficulties (ref., 2007e, p 38-39).

In order to improve schooling for the Roma in Romania, the European Community finances various projects, which makes it possible to take more account of cultural backgrounds, both of the Roma and of other minorities, in the school system. Certain heads have authorized modifications in the curricula so that they are more in keeping with the needs of Roma: those pupils who have to help their parents in the fields can now finish their semester after work in the fields is finished. Grants have started to be awarded to Roma pupils from underprivileged environments and/or to deserving cases from the educational standpoint. Alternative programmes of education for pupils who have dropped out of school or for adults have also been set up and are arousing great interest. Teams of teachers and school heads have taken steps to give a helping hand to their colleagues in the rural world to obtain funding, but especially to help them, particularly in the field of educational management. Considerable differences have been noted between schools (in terms of means), teachers (training) and pupils (education) from the rural world as compared to those in the cities.

However, certain secondary schools continue to discriminate against Roma pupils by separating them from the other pupils, considering that they do not have the same aptitudes as the others to make normal progress in their studies. In addition, special schools for Roma children still exist; these increase segregation with other pupils still further. Generally, the majority of Roma families are unappreciative of these schools which reinforce ghettoization (already a fact because of where they live)

for their children, and still less do they appreciate the schools for retarded or maladjusted children in which their offspring are often placed (Cozma & Al, 2000, p. 282).

As far as training is concerned, there are still many teachers who are not prepared to have Roma children in their classes, having little or no information on Roma culture, history and language. This situation becomes even more difficult when they have to deal with Roma pupils from different groups (FSG, 2006, p. 30-31).

In 2005, Romania began decentralizing its education system with pilot projects in three counties, which should be completed by 2010. In order to better integrate Roma children into school, support measures are starting to be set up, such as Roma mediators in the classrooms. The teaching of Romani in classes is being promoted by training teachers, by reviewing curricula and textbooks to take into account Roma culture, history and language. However, the decentralization of educational funding does not allow poorer municipalities to provide satisfactory working conditions in their schools (through lack of teachers and equipment, and classes that are too big), which tends to further disadvantage isolated or marginalized groups (ref., 2007e, p. 10).

A recent study (Duminica, 2006, p.27-33) shows that in underprivileged Roma environments in the rural world, it is the education allowance and the offer of meals during the first four years of compulsory schooling which encourage families to send their children to school. However, faced with the absence of stable material conditions, attendance of Roma pupils is often random, the latter being more preoccupied by the survival of the family group, which gets in the way of academic success for them. These children have to work outside school time, but also during the first winter months, when their parents can no longer find work as farm labourers in the neighbouring farms, leading to a significant drop in their financial resources. After the village primary school, children must quite often go to secondary school in another village several kilometres away, which becomes very difficult and generally ends by the pupil dropping out of school for good.

In order to encourage access to quality education for underprivileged children, including the Roma, the Romanian ministry of education and research (MEC) and Roma organizations initiated the PHARE project funded by the European Union with technical assistance from national and international experts. In the PHARE2000 programme, there was discussion about improving equal opportunity at school, respect for the basic rights of the child, the quality of education at nursery school, preventing dropping-out, the possibility of obtaining a second chance for pupils who did not finish basic education, and of stimulating school attendance of handicapped groups. PHARE2002 aimed at disaggregating the Roma at school, encouraging schooling of handicapped children in ordinary schools, and at creating a Resource centre for inclusive education to provide help for schools in the area of intercultural education. PHARE 2004 took up certain parts of the 2000 and 2002 programmes, targeting the improvement of the conditions of pre-school education and finalization of compulsory education, limiting dropping-out, and creating a departmental support committee to draw up and implement the strategy, as well as a local support group to carry out the school development plan.

These programmes have therefore made it possible to work on the questions of desegregation, interaction between communities and school, a second chance and more generally of quality in the school environment. The results have shown that it was necessary to encourage pupil heterogeneity in the classes, to develop differences both in and out of school and to improve quality in the schools whose intake consists mainly of Roma children. Strategic measurements have been recommended: encourage the inclusion of all children, whatever their origin, create partnerships and collaborations with Roma NGOs, make use of school mediators to improve relations between communities and school, set up in-service training for teachers on Roma history and culture as well as initial training on the Romani language, and Roma culture and history, so that the Roma identity is perceived by both Roma and non-Roma in a positive way, while being aware that the hoped-for changes in mentality will take some time (Danciu, 2007).

In Romania, various pilot experiments have come to fruition in institutional terms, such as the use of Roma mediators in schools. The SOROS Foundation was often behind these initiatives in several Central and Eastern European countries. It is often the European commission which then takes over by bringing together various experts and organizations to draw up strategies at national level and then implement the projects via consultancies. In similar situations, other measures have been proposed, such as calling upon Roma assistants, which has posed some problems since, as they become teachers' assistants, this reinforces the unequal relationship between Roma and non-Roma, whereas this is no longer the case with the mediators, since they have a separate status Other solutions have been recommended such as of mixed classes with two teachers, one of whom is a Roma.

The SOROS Foundation also took part in drafting a handbook on Roma history and traditions published by the ministry of state education and research, as well as other books on the Romani language. Regionally, it has been recommended that local history be highlighted in textbooks, taking all the communities into consideration (in order to encourage desegregation).

Whereas the other minorities have lessons in their language that deal with their culture, the Roma have benefited from this approach for only a few years (a hundred primary schools and one nursery school are concerned). The conclusions of research work recommend that Roma history be integrated into national history and that the Romani language, following the example of minority languages, be no longer reserved for the Roma minority alone (Rus & Nestian, 2007).

The Intercultural Institute of Timisoara has carried out research into schools with a large number of Roma children. The need was observed for working simultaneously on education in democratic citizenship and intercultural education in teacher training, so that the social and cultural differences of the real world (inside and outside the classroom) are taken into account. These questions, which go beyond school, can be worked on at the level of school management and the relations between this and the various communities, by including intercultural perspectives in the various subjects taught. It appears that the new programmes relating to decentralization, desegregation and cultural diversity have little real impact on schooling because contradictory information circulates within the middle echelons of the ministry of education and this can skew teacher training in intercultural education. Similar research (dealing with the integration of the democratic dimension in school life), carried out at the university of Ljubljana, in collaboration with the British Council and the Council of Europe, gives the same results. It is recommended that use be made of school mediators from the minorities in order to limit the scope of these perverse effects and to integrate an intercultural democratic perspective into school at its various levels, accepting that everyone participates: teachers, pupils, outside specialists, parents, the management and school inspectors.

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the Roma account for 9% (750 000) of the total population of the country. The majority are from underprivileged backgrounds and have problems relating to health, education, employment and access to welfare rights. In most of these families, the parents prefer their children to work with them and do not really encourage them to attend school. In the better-off social environments, Roma parents consider that it is important for their children to be schooled. In 2006, there were still 120 000 that had never been to school (especially girls), while 40 000 drop out each year. It would seem that first year drop-outs are directly related to an insufficient knowledge of Bulgarian. It was only in 1991 that minority language teaching began to be introduced in Bulgaria.

Over the last ten years, the Bulgarian education system has been undergoing reform. Roma pupils are starting to have text-books and grants are awarded to them. More and more of those who have completed their studies are finding employment in the civil service, which means that they can play a role as mediator between the communities and the State. While access to primary education for Roma children is widespread, this is not yet the case for the pre-school education, even during the compulsory year. Pre-school establishments are fee-paying, are located in poor municipalities that are not able to offer social assistance, have limited intake capacities and encourage children whose parents have a stable job (generally civil servants). This discrimination has a negative effect on Roma children's access to primary school education, these being particularly in need of the benefits of progressive adaptation to the classroom.

Segregation in primary education continues and contributes to Roma pupils' being expelled and to their low levels of enrolment in secondary and higher education, where access remains competitive and elitist, being based on average marks and entrance examinations. Roma students who sit the entrance examinations to the colleges and university generally do not have the grants or the means to follow their courses through to the end. The majority finish their studies in the least prestigious schools and leave with qualifications that are worth little.

There are still many "isolated" schools which accommodate only Roma children and these have significant deficiencies over and above the segregation processes which they fuel. Since 1992, the status of these schools has become the same as that of regular schools, but the educational environment has not changed. These classes are generally overloaded and the educational level is often too low to allow the pupils to move on to secondary education. These establishments tend to remain because of the fact that desegregation measures sometimes lead parents of non-Roma children to be opposed to this heterogeneity, thereby worsening existing social divisions. Roma children are still in the majority in these schools. It happens that their parents register them not for reasons of physical or mental handicap but so that their children can benefit from free meals and clothes that the families themselves are not able to provide. Some leave them for several years in these schools, as the precariousness of their living conditions means that they are not able to look after them. For all these reasons, the children seldom follow the legal admission procedure (ref., 2007a, p. 10-11; p. 39-40).

Slovak republic

15% of the population of the Slovak Republic represents 11 minorities, identifiable by their language of communication, the main ones being Hungarian, Roma, Czech, Ruthene, Ukrainian and German. Out of 5.5 million inhabitants, the Roma are estimated (depending on sources) at between 300 000 and 500 000 people, located in certain areas of the east and south-east. A proportion of them refuse to declare themselves as being Roma for fear of discrimination. Slovak Roma are settled. Some live in ghetto districts in the cities, but the majority are in localities one or two kilometres away from Slovak villages. This isolation and their social independence have enabled them to keep Romani as the language of communication for most situations, as well as their oral traditions. During the communist period, pressure was put on the Roma to be assimilated, but when the Republic was declared, they were recognized as a national minority in 1991. Countrywide, only a quarter of Roma children complete primary school education. The Constitution guarantees to them the right to schooling in their native tongue, as with all minorities. However, Roma do not receive special education as a minority, but benefit from measures aiming at integrating their children with other Slovak children and providing them with primary education. As a result of pressure from the European Commission, Slovakia has begun a reform of its school system and has developed programmes to help Roma integrate into society and to improve their educational level, which does not exempt them from discrimination and segregation (FNASAT, 2007).

Generally, the schools do not take into account the socio-cultural and linguistic differences of the Roma children that go there. Hungarian children have schools which provide teaching in their native tongue, except for Slovak language and literature. They can also attend other schools, following the example of Ukrainians, Germans and Ruthenes, where, apart from mother language classes, all the other subjects are taught in Slovak (FSG, 2006, p. 22).

Following the education reform in 1989, the educational situation of the Roma got significantly worse. Where pre-school education was formerly compulsory, it now became optional (and partly fee-paying), the impact of which was a great reduction in the numbers of Roma children in pre-school education (less than 1% in 2003). 50% of them finish primary school, less than 20 % continue into secondary education and 3.5% obtain a diploma. (EUMC, 2006b, p. 40-41).

It turns out, however, that most Roma children continue to be schooled in special schools or classes, being regarded as slightly mentally deficient or mentally retarded. More than 24 000 mainly Roma children, are dealt with in these schools: there are 230 special primary schools. The curricula of these schools have been lightened and do not allow access to secondary studies. As these schools, are funded according to the number of pupils and as they receive twice as much as that of normal schools, directors are encouraged to attract as many pupils as possible. In addition, a whole section of the Slovak education system is based on these schools and aspires to continue, such as special teaching centres, educational and psychological advisory centres, the child psychology and pathology research institute (VUDPAP), as well as the school's regional offices – in charge of opening or closing these special establishments - and the university courses which train special psychologists. Each child enrolled in these schools is registered and supervised by the municipality and the social service concerned. This also makes it possible for parents to take advantage of welfare benefits, grants and free meals for their children.

It was to limit the perverse effects of these services that the social reform of 2004 granted underprivileged children free school meals and grants to follow normal schooling in primary and secondary schools. Special classes in conventional establishments are tending to replace these structures, but even though they make use of special teaching ideas aiming at integrating these pupils later on into the ordinary curriculum, they do not enable them to function in a standardized world. The state minister for education has created jobs for Roma assistants (amendment 408/2002) so that they can encourage rela-

tions between teachers and Roma children. During the year 2006-2007, 900 assistants were employed in primary and pre-school education. Preparatory classes were set up (Act 408/2002) to encourage the transition between the family circle and that of the school, with a personalized follow-up for each child. Nearly 91% of the pupils from the experimental class of 1992-1993 are currently in secondary schools or vocational schools. Out of the 2000 children who attend these preparatory classes each year, the majority are Roma. These assistants, often recruited on the job, must follow successive training courses at the Presov teaching Institute by 2010 in order to obtain a permanent appointment (ref. 2007g, p. 9-10, 35-37).

Czech Republic

There are an estimated 200 000 to 300 00 Roma in the Czech Republic. During the communist period, educational measures aim at assimilating them. Although the rhetoric of the single regime proclaimed that schools were accessible to each citizen in identical conditions, no matter what their nationality, gender or social origin, this did not in practice apply to Roma children who were placed in huge numbers in special schools or classes for the physically or mentally handicapped. These measures actually got more stringent during the years 1970-1980 (Laubeova, 2000, p. 16-17). After the independence, a significant percentage of Roma children (aged between 3 and 19) continues to be educated in special schools: in 1989, this applied to 46.4% of Roma children, whereas the national average was 3.2%. Certain sources (the review *Socioklub*) give 80% of Roma children as being educated in these schools (REF, 2007b, p. 31).

The resolution of April 7th, 1999 relating to the Czech government's policy towards members of the Roma community aimed at changing this situation of discrimination by promoting measures for Roma children to make a success of their schooling just as much as others do. This involved getting beyond the language barrier, using Romani as an auxiliary teaching method, creating preparatory classes, employing Roma assistants in the various classes with Roma children, giving preference to differentiated education, replacing special classes by temporary and flexible structures in conventional schools with smaller numbers of children than in the other classes (ERRC, 1999, p. 114-117). During the school year 2000-2001, 110 preparatory classes with 214 assistants were opened for 1 364 pupils, which made it possible to decrease the number of Roma pupils in special schools by 25%.

However, in 2005, a large percentage of Roma children were still being placed in special schools/classes, while during the same year the validity of personality admission tests was regarded as a factor of racial discrimination by the European human rights court (EUMC, 2006b, p. 48-49). According to the UNDP, in 2005, only 25% of Roma children aged 12 and above had completed primary school education, whereas 73% of the children of the majority group had. The language question was behind difficulties during the first years of compulsory schooling: many Roma children do not speak Romani, but understand it; they use a dialect somewhere between Czech and Romani in the family setting, but this is considered by teachers as a misuse of Czech which requires correction. In addition, teachers are not often disposed to recognize and take into account the cultural and social differences of Roma children, based on traditions and a lifestyle which they are not familiar with and/or of which they disapprove. It is thus simpler for them to recommend that these Roma children be sent to special schools/classes (Laubeova, 2000, p. 18).

With the creation of preparatory classes (begun in 1994), however, Roma children were integrated into educational projects which are officially part of an institutionalized intercultural education project. In primary school, preparatory classes for Czech children as well as Roma are organized. They are designed to avoid both stigmatization and withdrawal. Roma educational assistants work to develop and improve coeducational relations with Roma families and to support their children when they encounter difficulties at school. But the objective is still access to fundamental training in order to integrate these pupils into the ordinary curriculum, with pluralist regulation within the educational establishment. During the school year 2006-2007, 146 preparatory classes were listed with 383 educational assistants. Nevertheless, a dichotomy is appearing between the teachers, who are with some exceptions non-Roma, and the large majority of the assistants who are Roma and are at the service of the teachers, especially as the majority of the latter are not trained in Romani or in Roma culture and history.

As pre-school education is fee-paying, few Roma parents have either the financial ability or the motivation (because of the lack of information about the advantages of a pre-school education) to send their children to it. It appears that preparatory classes and the supply of pre-school teaching materials are not enough to compensate for the cultural, social and linguistic differences of their children. Nevertheless, exemption from payment of the final year of nursery school for the children from underprivileged backgrounds allows Roma children better access to pre-school education.

Entrance to secondary education is competitive, based on examinations to obtain the right to enrol. As the establishments are often far away from where the Roma communities live, many of them do not have sufficient economic resources to allow their children to continue their studies far from home. In addition, they are in part convinced that even if they are educated, their children will have to face unemployment and discrimination. Some, concerned that their children should contribute as soon as possible to the family budget, prefer them to quickly make their request for unemployment benefit. But the number of grants awarded for secondary education has increased substantially: 1 800 in 2006 (REF., 2007b, p. 33). In addition, it is planned to set up bilingual teaching for the Roma in secondary school, lessons being given in Romani and Czech, with the aim of taking a bilingual *baccalauréat*. The teachers appointed for this purpose must have followed training in Roma language and culture and already have taken part in social work with Roma communities within the framework of the programme to help families with children in difficulty at school.

These new political, scientific and teaching initiatives aim at both educational integration for Roma children and a process of pluralist acceptance. Nevertheless, while these measures and these partial results (alternative education programme and pilot bilingual teaching institutions for the Roma) make it possible to meet the criticisms of European institutions and Roma representatives, they are still limited. Social work reinforces coeducation between school and the Roma families, but it is not carried out within a coherent institutional framework. This poses a question about the initial training of future teachers, especially as they do not always appear greatly disposed to include cultural and linguistic differences in their teaching (Dittmar, 2006, p. 22; p. 152).

Hungary

In Hungary, there are an estimated 500 000 to 600 000 Roma In 2004, the national institute of public education indicated that 77 % of Roma pupils completed primary school and that only 15 % of them did not continue their studies into secondary education (the national average being 3.2 %). After the period of transition to democracy, the number of Roma in secondary

education increased mainly as a result of the reform of financial aids for schools, based on the number of pupils, which has meant that school seek out pupils in order to continue to exist. However, secondary schooling of the Roma mainly involves vocational training. It appears that half of them do not finish their training because they are expelled and that after completing their studies only one third have the qualifications necessary to obtain employment (EUMC, 2006b, p. 34-36).

In the nineteen-nineties, the social changes which accompanied the transition to a market economy led some Roma families to move near to villages in the poorest areas of the country and in the most dilapidated districts of cities. These moves led to an increase in residential, and therefore educational, segregation of the Roma: 35% of Roma children were educated in primary schools where there are a majority of Roma pupils.

Faced with pressure from non-Roma parents, certain school officials have set up classes for Roma children only, in order to increase the amount of government aid, while maintaining classes with few or no Roma children to satisfy the parents of the other pupils. The national institute of public education states that this segregation within the school is achieved by creating remedial classes in which the Roma are over-represented (81.8% in 2005) with less ambitious curricula than in normal classes (where they have fallen from 45% to 28%). In the same schools, classes offering high added-value extra-curricular options (such as languages or advanced mathematics) have been created for non-Roma pupils.

The rise of private schools between 1989 and 2005 supports segregation of Roma pupils still further: while some take in between 50 and 80%, others limit the intake to 20%. In addition, the percentage of Roma in special schools increased from 25% in 1974 to 42% in 1992 and was stable around the 40% mark in the early 2000s. In 2001, nearly 25% of Roma children were "diagnosed" as mentally handicapped. The educational level of these special classes does not make it possible for pupils to make up for lost time or to be educated afterwards in conventional schools (EUMC, 2006b, p. 55-56).

Teacher training, in particular initial training, does not prepare student teachers to work in multicultural and heterogeneous classes, especially as it is they themselves who choose from a range of available courses: they generally opt for courses in English communication or information technology and not towards intercultural teaching (ref., 2007c, p. 10-11).

Certain schools, generally private ones, try to meet the educational needs of Roma populations more directly, concerning access to secondary education. This is the case for the Gándhi de Pécs school which recruits talented Roma pupils who live in poor social conditions; the Jag Kaly national vocational school which offers professional pre-training; the Martineum de Mánfa school (close to Pécs), backed by the Catholic church, which offers programmes to prepare pupils for entering college or university. Other schools are developing courses based on the intercultural paradigm, such as the András Hegedüs de Szolnok school whose curriculum – drawn up by the Roma organization Lungo Drom and the national local Roma government - encourages combining Roma culture (Roma language and culture are part of the programme) with the surrounding culture for Roma and non-Roma pupils living in underprivileged social conditions. The vocational high-school Don Bosco, founded with backing from the Catholic church, operates with the same principles and additionally proposes in-service professional training leading to higher education diplomas.

In 1999, the PHARE programme set up by the European Union made it possible to offer significant material resources to improve the educational situation of young Roma people living in adverse conditions: kindergartens developed in the rural environment, schools and professional training, including ethnology and Roma culture in initial training centres and in in-service training centres for teachers. The study programmes have been revised to include awareness of Roma history and culture.

While certain universities like that of Eötvös Loránd, or civil organizations such as the Soros, Romaversitas Foundation, the Kurt Lewin Foundation, and the Amrita association, have for years been preparing Roma pupils for access to higher education, the number of Roma students has been starting to grow appreciably since the end of the nineteen-nineties, higher education establishments accepting their enrolment more and more (Forray, 2002, p. 82-86). Some of these Roma graduates have for some years been finding work in the various ministries and have been taking part, alongside NGOs and civil organizations, in the improvement of schooling for Roma children and, more generally, of all children from underprivileged backgrounds. Thanks to funding from the European Union, measures encouraging the loan of textbooks, the awarding of grants or social security benefits are thus helping to educate the most destitute.

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