

SECURITY ASPECTS OF FLAWED SETTLEMENTS OF THE ROMA POPULATION IN THE AREA OF THE AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF VOJVODINA

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Abstract: *The Roma community, a multiple vulnerable and stigmatized community in Serbia, as well as in the member states of the European Union and globally, is rarely the focus of research on their relationship to their security. The attitudes of the majority population, which often recognizes the Roma community as potential perpetrators of criminal acts and other forms of misdemeanour rules and norms, whether they are legal or social, are more visible to the general public.*

The question is whether it is possible to change the inherited attitudes that Roma are "born thieves, lazy, neglected, prone to crime and other illegal activities"? Can the repulsion towards the Roma community be changed in the spirit of tolerance, understanding and acceptance of centuries-old diversity?

The paper aims to indicate the living conditions of the Roma community in the settlements in Vojvodina, their demographic structure and characteristics, layout and properties, environmental conditions in those settlements, security aspects of illegal settlements and proposed measures for improvement of living conditions.

Key words: *Roma, discrimination, marginalization, informal settlements, environment*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Roma community in Serbia, the member countries of the European Union and the whole world is marginalized and placed in an unequal position with the rest of the population. On its way to European integration, Serbia made all-out efforts by adopting the National Strategy on Roma Inclusion from 2016 to 2025. Thus, Serbia took the first steps in project implementation aiming to improve the quality of life in many areas. The most important ones are education, health, demystifying stereotypes and prejudices, creating a safe environment and building settlements that meet all housing quality standards under domestic and European legislation.

The situation in the Roma communities in Vojvodina until some time ago was reduced to workshops on discrimination or education programs implemented by various non-governmental organizations. By adopting a new strategy for the period from 2016 to 2025, at the Session of the Government of the Republic of Serbia on January 27, 2022., the main goal was defined as a priority "improving the quality of life of members of the Roma national

minority in Serbia, while respecting human and minority rights, eliminating discrimination and any form of racism, as well as achieving greater social inclusion in all segments of society". Furthermore, the EU adopted the Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, their inclusion and participation in social life for the period up to 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda are expected to mobilize all resources to eradicate poverty, implement a strategy to fight inequality and find an answer to issues related to climate change.

The Sustainable Development Goals address many societal needs, including food, health, education, equality, clean water and sanitation, availability of renewable energy sources, decent work and economic growth, and sustainable cities and communities.

2. ROMA POPULATION IN VOJVODINA

Roma, as a minority people living in the Republic of Serbia, encounter a series of obstacles and problems crucial for the analysis of the quality of life of Serbian citizens in their daily life: from discrimination, threats to human rights related to employment and the educational process; through the impossibility of adequate accommodation and solving the housing issue.

On the other hand, for the first time, after a long series of years of neglecting the needs of the Roma community, important steps were taken on the way to solving the problem by adopting strategies that offer solutions with clearly defined deadlines and subjects responsible for implementing the planned projects. International organizations are also involved in their implementation through non-governmental organizations, and official institutions. The support they provide has several aspects of expression: advisory, financial and legal assistance.

2.1. Settlement of Roma in Vojvodina

The Roma belonged to India until the end of the 12th century, and after the exodus and wandering that lasted for centuries, the Roma settled in Serbia during the reign of Emperor Dusan in the 16th century (1308-1355). At that time, Roma lived in almost all parts of Serbia.

The history of Roma settlement in Vojvodina is linked to the group of Roma, the so-called Vlach Gypsies, who originate from the territory of today's Romania. They began to permanently settle the area of Vojvodina during the 40s of the 19th century (1825), and the story they passed on relates to the arrival of horse hounds to pull Danube boats. In 1890, they formed a larger and ethnically compact settlement on the outskirts of south-eastern Apatin.

They were engaged in various jobs: making baskets from willow wicker, and music (following their natural talents). Numerous musicians of "Gypsy origin" so-called "Gypsy gangs" have become an indispensable source of interest in rural and urban settlements in taverns and chards. They also performed at festivals and other events. One of the jobs they traditionally engaged in was the so-called "dzambas", who resold horses and plastering, i.e. repairing the walls of residential buildings with wheat mud. Although an unskilled workforce that performed simple tasks, it is still a famous brick made by the Roma, and the "pepper" tile is still often used in Roma settlements. Also, the Roma of that time were engaged in buying and selling goose feathers, while the women of the Roma population begged in wealthier houses (collecting food) or did fortune-telling (so-called divination, looking at the palm or cards, and similar).

The famous romologist Heinrich von Vlislocki (Djuric, 2010) studied the Roma who lived in Backi Breg, Bezdan, Kula, Backi Monostor and Prigrevica. He published research related to the way of life, customs, beliefs, traditions, music and jobs, as a contribution to the Palas lexicon, the best and most unsurpassed lexicographic work in Hungary.

Table 1: The number and share of Roma in the total population of Serbia and AP Vojvodina from 1948 to 2011 (*Source: Census data of the Republic Institute of Statistics, 2014.*)

		1948.	1953.	1961.	1971.	1981.	1991.	2002.	2011.
Serbia	Total	6.527.966	6.979.154	7.642.227	8.446.591	9.313.676	9.778.991	7.498.001	7.186.862
	Roma	52.181	58.800	9.826	49.894	110.959	140.237	108.193	147.604
	%	0,8	0,8	0,1	0,7	1,2	1,4	1,44	2,05
Vojvodina	Total	1.663.212	1.712.619	1.854.965	1.952.533	2.034.772	2.013.889	2.031.992	1.931.809
	Roma	7.585	11.525	3.312	7.760	19.693	24.336	29.057	42.391
	%	0,5	0,7	0,2	0,4	1,0	1,2	1,43	2,19

According to the population census from 2002, shown in Table 1, a total of 29,057 persons in AP Vojvodina declared themselves as members of the Roma national community, which is 1.43% of the total population, while according to the population census from 2011, that number was significantly increased - a total of 42,391 persons declared themselves as members of the Roma national community, which makes up 2.19% of the total population of AP Vojvodina.

After the last population census from 2011 (Table 1), it is observed that the number of Roma in Vojvodina increased with deviations in 1961, when the number of Roma drastically decreased, which can be attributed to migration movements during that period (going to work abroad).

This trend was also present in Serbia, not only in Vojvodina. From 1981 until 2011, the number of Roma in Vojvodina increased in percentage and number.

Table 2 shows the number of members of the Roma national community and the percentage of the total population in the municipalities of AP Vojvodina according to the 2002 and 2011 census. Based on these data, the largest number of Roma in 2011 lived in the municipalities of Alibunar, Backa Palanka, Beocin, Vrsac, Zabalj, Zitiste, Zrenjanin, Kikinda, Kovin, Nova Crnja, Novi Becej, Odzaci, Pancevo, Pecinci, Ruma, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Stara Pazova and Subotica. Table 2 shows that members of the Roma national community are present in all municipalities, i.e. cities, in greater or lesser numbers. The smallest number of Roma lives in Sremski Karlovci (14, i.e. 0.16% of the total population). They are most numerous in Novi Sad (3,576) and Subotica (2,959), and in the total population, they are most present in the municipalities of Nova Crnja (9.89%), Beocin (9.04%) and Novi Knezevac (8.19%). According to the 2011 census, the number of Roma has significantly increased compared to the previous census in every city, i.e. municipality of AP Vojvodina, and in some, it has even doubled (Bac, Becej, Vrbas, Irig, Mali Idjos, Novi Sad, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica, Temerin, Sid).

Table 2: The number of members of the Roma national community and the percentage of the total population in the municipalities of AP Vojvodina according to the 2002 and 2011 census (Source: Census data of the Republic Institute of Statistics, 2014.)

No	Municipality	2002		2011		No	Municipality	2002		2011	
		No of Roma	%	No of Roma	%			No of Roma	%	No of Roma	%
1	Ada	277	1,46	323	1,90	24	Nova Crnja	869	6,84	1016	9,89
2	Alibunar	657	2,86	833	4,13	25	Novi Bečej	868	3,22	1295	5,45
3	Apatin	524	1,60	654	2,26	26	Novi Knjaževac	655	5,05	923	8,19
4	Bač	318	1,95	764	5,30	27	Novi Sad	1740	0,58	3576	1,05
5	Bačka Palanka	841	1,38	1064	1,92	28	Opovo	187	1,70	312	2,99
6	Bačka Topola	88	0,23	100	0,30	29	Odžaci	839	2,36	1035	3,43
7	Bački Petrovac	85	0,58	108	0,80	30	Pančevo	1392	1,09	2118	1,72
8	Bela Crkva	619	3,04	791	4,55	31	Pečinci	699	3,25	1008	5,11
9	Beočin	1048	6,51	1422	9,04	32	Plandište	269	2,01	281	2,48
10	Bečej	479	1,17	842	2,25	33	Ruma	757	1,26	1297	2,39
11	Vrbas	136	0,30	355	0,84	34	Senta	581	2,27	595	2,55
12	Vršac	1186	2,18	1368	2,63	35	Sečanj	609	3,72	714	5,38
13	Žabalj	768	2,79	1031	3,95	36	Sombor	415	0,43	1015	1,18
14	Žitište	765	3,75	832	4,94	37	Srbobran	361	2,02	629	3,85
15	Zrenjanin	2471	1,87	3410	2,76	38	Sremska Mitrovica	564	0,66	1194	1,49
16	Indija	263	0,56	426	0,90	39	Sremski Karlovci	10	0,11	14	0,16
17	Ing	58	0,47	166	1,53	40	Stara Pazova	1085	1,61	1193	1,81
18	Kanjiža	530	1,93	596	2,35	41	Subotica	1454	0,98	2959	2,09
19	Kikinda	1564	2,33	1981	3,33	42	Temerin	38	0,13	83	0,29
20	Kovačica	815	2,92	806	3,19	43	Titel	229	1,34	264	1,68
21	Kovin	1143	3,11	1516	4,50	44	Čoka	337	2,44	351	3,08
22	Kula	163	0,34	314	0,73	45	Sid	93	0,24	204	0,60
23	Mali Iđoš	138	1,02	283	2,35						

2.2. Demographic structure of the Roma population in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

When it comes to the demographic and social characteristics of the Roma community based on the number and share in the total population of members of the Roma national community in Serbia, the Roma “represent a relevant community, and their social, economic and cultural position has an impact on the demographic characteristics and their position in society”. The data speak of different numbers of Roma from census to census that cannot be explained by demographic data (Raduski: 2009, Popovic, Stankovic, 2013).

"It is stated in the demographic literature that the frequent change of nationality is the result of a more or less pronounced process of assimilation or "ethnic mimicry" of the Roma due to the ever-present hidden or open discrimination, which is why, during the census, they are most often declared as members of the majority nationality in the area where they live, or cross into some other national body, thus losing or concealing their ethnic identity. That is why the statistical records on Roma are incomplete and unreliable i.e. their number is significantly higher than the official population censuses show" (Raduski, 2009).

"Research shows that most Roma who are educated and who have left the typical Roma environment and who have integrated into the wider social community hide their ethnic origin" (Mitrovic, 1996).

Non-governmental organizations and the state assume that the number of Roma in Serbia is at least twice as large as that shown in official statistical documents. Estimates of the number of Roma differ significantly from official data. The estimate that is considered the most adequate is the estimate that about 450,000 Roma live in Serbia, and this number is also used in official documents" (Popovic, Stankovic: 2013). From the 1970s to the present, census data show a constant increase in the number of members of the Roma national community and their share in the total population in Serbia (Raduski: 2009) and a particularly large increase in the number of Roma in Vojvodina in the last population census compared to the previous census.

2.3. Characteristics of the Roma population in the autonomous province of Vojvodina

Roma generally adapt to a different culture, confession and acceptance of the language of the environment in which they live. The mother tongue is one of the most recognizable signs of national identity that can be used to research the composition of the population. Among the members of the Roma national community in Serbia, nationality generally does not coincide with the mother tongue since there is a smaller number of those who speak the Roma language than the total number of Roma shown in the 2002 census (Jovanovic, 2014).

When it comes to the religion of the Roma national community, it is related to numerous factors, one of which is the religion of the majority nation in the environment where the Roma live. Data from 2002 show that almost all religions are represented among Roma: most of them belong to the Orthodox faith (54.4%), followed by Islam 16.7%, Protestants 3.1%, and 2.7% are members of the Roma national communities of the Catholic faith. There are 13% of those who did not declare themselves, and approximately 9% belong to the "unknown" category, while those who declared themselves atheists are very few (0.2%; Raduski: 2009).

The Roma are the youngest ethnic community in Serbia, which results in a high birth rate. The largest number of Roma women give birth before the age of twenty, while in a lesser number of cases, they give birth after the age of twenty-five. According to the 2011 census, there are substantial differences in birth and mortality rates, where the birth rate among Roma is increasing both in Serbia and in Europe, while on the other hand, data from the 2002 census show that the birth rate among Roma is two times higher than the birth rate of Serbs, while mortality is at the same time twice as low (Raduski: 2009). The probable reason for this is the age limit of the Roma population. The explanation why Roma women give birth to more children comes from the fact that they live in ghettoized settlements, respect culture and tradition, have a low level of education and social status

The educational and working structure of the Roma is primarily influenced by socio-economic relations, the educational system and work status, which are also related to the age and gender of the Roma.

3. FLAWED SETTLEMENTS IN THE AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF VOJVODINA

The Republic of Serbia recognizes the problem of Roma housing and legally foresees solving their housing issue. On the other hand, the existing social housing system still does not have a solution for housing Roma living in informal settlements in Serbia, and a substantial number of Roma still live in inhumane conditions.

3.1. Distribution of non-conditional settlements on the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

On the territory of AP Vojvodina, there are numerous non-conditional Roma settlements, and the necessity of working to solve the problem is in line with the generally known data that a large number of Roma, regardless of their place of residence (town/village), live in underprivileged housing conditions. More precisely, the settlements where they live primarily do not have a regulated legal status (without the necessary documentation, illegally built buildings, lack of documentation on the land and buildings ownership). Most settlements do not have the needed infrastructure solutions (water, sewerage, electricity). A small number of residential units have a poor and overpopulated environment. Furthermore, there is a long distance from basic social facilities and service institutions (for instance, schools and health facilities).

Roma in the municipalities of Vojvodina live in Roma settlements (a row of at least 10 houses/apartments) or among the rest of the population. According to research conducted in Roma settlements, it was observed that Roma live in very poor ecological and communal conditions that do not comply with prescribed standards. "Dilapidated houses, i.e. slums in slums prone to collapse without sanitary facilities, are a common sight in settlements outside the city, while houses made of solid material are more firm if the Roma have integrated into a rural or urban settlement, which is characteristic of Roma from AP Vojvodina." Roma from Vojvodina who integrated among the rest of the population, the so-called "housed Roma" most often do not have housing problems, since their houses are identical to the houses of other national communities, although there are always exceptions when talking about Roma who live in larger cities, in hidden yards and behind residential buildings" (Marjanovic, 2008).

Roma live in separate Roma settlements, of which there are a total of 156 in AP Vojvodina. In other municipalities/cities, they live integrated with the rest of the population. That means there are no classic Roma settlements as separate quarters in those cities. There are no Roma settlements in the municipalities where the communities used to exist, since they have been displaced. The only area in AP Vojvodina where Roma have always lived mixed with the rest of the inhabitants is Coka. Roma settlements were mainly allocated in a manner that the Roma themselves bought houses in the municipality. Only Kula institutionally resolved the displacement of the Roma settlement. With the cooperation of the Government of AP Vojvodina and a Dutch foundation, The Kula Municipal Assembly bought rural households on the territory of the municipality to all Roma families from the settlement (Jovanovic: 2008; Jovanovic: 2014).

Part of the Roma population lives in other people's buildings or on other people's land that used to be social property and is often the subject of purchase by large investors who then forcefully evict them from their homes. Unconditional settlements are located throughout AP Vojvodina and are ranked from 1 to 5 according to quality of life standards.

Table 3: The number of Roma settlements in the municipalities of AP Vojvodina in 2008
(Source: Jovanovic, 2008.. I [www. ombdusmanapv.org](http://www.ombdusmanapv.org) (area of protection of the rights of national minorities))

Number of settlement	Municipality of AP Vojvodina
1.	InDjija, Kovacica, Kovin, Mali Idjos (1) and Plandiste (1)
2.	Ada (4), Irig, Nova Crnja, Odzaci (4), Srbobran (2), Subotica (2) and Secanj.
3.	Apatin (2), Beocin (3), Opovo (1), Senta and Titel
4.	Bac (3)
5.	Alibunar (1), Backa Palanka (3), Becej (4), Novi Becej, Pancevo (14), Sombor (1) and Stara Pazova (2)
6.	Bela Crkva and Vrsac (1)
7.	Novi Sad (4)
8.	Kikinda (7)
9.	Zabalj (4), Kanjiza (7), Sremska Mitrovica (4) and Pecinci
10.	Zrenjanin (3) and Ruma (1)

Table 3, which was made on the basis of research from 2008, shows that for some places, there is no data on the number of Roma colonies in AP Vojvodina, and to this table can be added the results of the research of the provincial ombudsman from 2010, where Roma settlements were included in municipalities of Irig (2), Senta (4), Sremski Karlovci (2) and Vrbas (7), which gave a total of 93 of the total number of Roma settlements in AP Vojvodina. As many as 28 local governments have at least one Roma settlement on their territory (62%). The number of Roma settlements ranges from at least one (Ruma, Plandiste, Opovo, Vrsac, Alibunar and Mali Idjos) to a maximum of fourteen in the territory of the Pancevo local government.



Figure 1: Photographs of the conducted field research of Roma communities in the AP Vojvodina - Settlements graded with number 1 - Roma quarter in Backa Palanka and Roma settlement Mali Idjos and settlements graded with number 5 such as the Roma settlement Jamura in Srbobran and Beli breg, Stari Banovci (photographed in 2008)

Source: (Jovanovic, 2014)

The results of the research of the provincial ombudsman show that the largest number of Roma settlements is located in the broader territory of the town (47 settlements - 51.1%); a slightly smaller number is located in the narrower area of the settlement (34 settlements - 37%) and the smallest number is placed outside the municipality boundaries (11 settlements - 12%).

Picture 1 shows the settlements in the Roma village in Backa Palanka, the Roma settlement of Mali Idjos, which are graded with number 1 according to quality, i.e. with number 1 are marked colonies that are in exceedingly poor condition and without infrastructure (no water, electricity, roads), the houses are dilapidated, and the entire settlement is tremendously unsanitary. Settlements with partial infrastructure (no water and roads or no electricity and roads), houses are shabby, and the complete colony is unhygienic are marked with the number 2. Such settlements are Haladas in Cantavir, Subotica and Vojvode Stepas, as well as Vrsac. Number 3 indicates settlements with water and electricity but no road infrastructure, the houses are dilapidated, and the entire settlement is unsanitary. Group 3 includes Roma settlements in Crepaja, Kovacica, Titelski red and Zrenjanin. Number 5 indicates colonies with all the infrastructure and houses in relatively good condition; the settlement is orderly, such as Jamura in Srbobran and Beli breg, Stari Banovci.

3.2. Basic properties of non-conditional settlements

Marjanovic [3] found that Roma settlements in AP Vojvodina can be classified into two types. The first type represents the isolated, ghettoized slums (meaning the part of the city that is inhabited by the poor population; backwaters and dirt, as well as streets with a bad reputation). The other type of settlement is the Roma communities at the end of the street, i.e. the settlement. According to the structure of the buildings, typical informal settlements where Roma families live consisted of buildings built from materials that were available to them (shacks and the like); temporary "mobile" housing facilities (containers); poorly built, old houses (extreme poverty); conditional one-story houses. The situation in the settlements in Vojvodina was more than worrisome as it was observed that even 38% of Roma settlements did not have a water connection, and more than 70% did not have sewage.

Furthermore, it was found that settlements are located next to canals and ponds, garbage dumps and landfills. The houses are on underwater land, full of moisture, with waste in the yards. Asphalt very often goes only to the first Roma houses, and the same is true when talking about sewage, that is, the availability of electricity and water. Streets in Roma settlements are particularly problematic in the autumn and winter period, given that due to the unpaved road, children going to school pass through mud and water, and in the "summer months, the main problem is that the canals are full of wastewater that spreads an unpleasant smell" [1].

According to the research of the Provincial Ombudsman of Roma settlements in Vojvodina from 2011, "out of a total of 41 settlements, 45.1% are located on risky, bad, unhealthy or otherwise dangerous terrains, while 50 settlements, or 54.9%, are not located on such terrains." In those settlements located on dangerous terrain, the following conditions are stated:

- near the landfill (Bac - Selenca - Siroka Bara; Sremski Karlovci - Cerat/Doka, Ruma - Rupace; S. Mitrovica - Jalija; Vrsac - Mali Rit; S. Karlovci - Little Italy; Pancevo - Ciglana Gornja;)
- location near the river, where wastewater is retained and there is a possibility of infection (Kikinda - Novi Kozarci; Odzaci - Bogojevo)
- potential landslide (Sremski Karlovci - Cerat/Doka; S. Karlovci - Little Italy)
- near the pond (Vrbas - Zmajevu - Jamuraca)
- groundwater problem (Irig - Rivnica; Vrbas - Kucura; Opovo - Naselje; Pancevo - Mali Rit; Pancevo - Krznara; Ada - Mol)

- the vicinity of the livestock cemetery (Odzaci - Deronje - Cerga I)
- near factories (Pancevo - Vojlovica; Pancevo - Topola).

The data show that insignificant number of settlements have a sewage network (13 settlements or 14.1%); only 16 (17.4%) have stormwater drainage systems; the same number of communities has implemented some way of heating; only 20 settlements or 21.7% have access to technical water, while in 6 colonies (6.7%) there is none of the above.

3.3. Living space and environment

The ecological analysis carried out in Roma settlements is directly related to the state of the environment in which the residents of Roma settlements live and work and includes monitoring data on the state of air, water, soil, elements of biodiversity and the relationship to natural resources that make up the living environment of the Roma community and similarly. Life in Roma settlements has its strengths, such as low housing costs, togetherness, good mutual knowledge, environmental awareness, connection with compatriots in other settlements and mobility within the state, even between states, and the collection of secondary raw materials as an additional source of employment.

The living environment is mostly polluted since most of the settlements are located near landfills and waste, noting that the Roma who have acquired ownership of the purchased buildings do not have these problems. All the necessary infrastructure is available to them: water, electricity, sewerage, and their homes are decorated and worthy of living.

Although Roma men and women themselves are not satisfied with the progress achieved, given that in the surveys they indicated that living conditions have improved for 14.2%, for 25.3% the improvement is minimal, around 54.8% of them did not feel any improvement, there is room for improving the environment and living space.

3.4. Measures to improve living conditions

Measures to solve the problems of Roma in general and Roma settlements must refer to arrangement or resettlement of settlements that have the following segments: urban, construction, property - legal, environmental protection, as well as the protection of socially vulnerable families in settlements at all levels, economic empowerment of families, higher level of education of children and adults and other aspects of the quality of life, whether they are of an objective or subjective nature. Bearing in mind that a society that respects the principles of sustainable development tends to protect and improve the environment, respects social needs and promotes economic success, the definition of the mission of Roma settlements in accordance with the Strategy, i.e. the reason for their existence, could be as follows: "Roma settlements are neighbourhoods in an economically healthy society where Roma families, whose social needs are respected, live in an ecologically safe environment and a protected environment, in community and mutual support".

Following the strategies for improving the position of Roma and mapping substandard Roma settlements, through the general goals of sustainable development of Roma settlements, the aim is for: Roma settlements to be part of the local environment in which responsible long-term economic progress is encouraged, the environment in the local community is protected and continuously improved, as well as to respect the social needs of all residents in each municipality of AP Vojvodina. The project activities of non-governmental organizations operating in the territory of the Republic of Serbia (Opre Roma, Alliance of Roma non-governmental organizations of the Zapadno-Backi District, Association of Citizens Impuls, etc.) also contribute to this.

4. CONCLUSION

The paper pays special attention to Roma settlements as an important segment of the quality of life of citizens of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and members of national and minority nations from the security aspect. The Roma are a very "old" people with their language, culture, traditions, customs and aspirations, and the state of Serbia is on its way to at least partially enacting legal and other solutions to improve the position of the Roma concerning education, employment and housing policy.

That is a very perplexing but achievable task that can be completed with proper economic and social policy and with the strategies to the general satisfaction of the Roma as a minority people and their majority neighbours - the citizens of Serbia. By recognizing the Roma community as a national minority, the possibility was opened for the creation of the National Council of Roma and institutional dealing with Roma problems. In the period behind us and ahead of us it has been shown that the first steps on the way to include Roma in all currents and activities of society are both possible and desirable.

The European Union is Serbia's largest donor for Roma inclusion, and the ongoing projects relate specifically to housing, improved living conditions for around 6,000 Roma, and their safety. Concerning the security aspect, the paper pointed out the danger of illegal settlements in terms of the proximity of waste dumps that threaten the health of the Roma population, the non-standard residential buildings prone to demolition and fires, which can cause danger not only for the Roma population but also on a broader scale that endangers both lives and a healthy environment. Further, the research identifies houses on underwater terrain, full of moisture, with waste in the yards, location near the river, where wastewater is retained with a possibility of infection, potential landslides, landfills, and similar. The main obstacle to obtaining a better living space is unemployment and insufficient education, which is one of the conditions that every person wants more and better for himself and his family.

The main security problem in the area of housing in informal settlements is related to the fact that, on the one hand, self-owned housing provides economic security, and, on the other hand, there is a whole series of challenges related to the improvement of communal services, whereby puts the necessity of waste management in the foreground. The area related to waste management is neglected in Serbia compared to the countries of the European Union, although it is realistic to say that Serbia has great potential for solving these security issues. The collection of waste at the level of local communities is about 80%, and for 20% of the litter, it is not known where it ends up, which indicates that this level of proportion is not satisfactory and that "unknown" landfills do not comply with the regulations of the European Union. The fact that the majority of the Roma population are engaged in collecting waste to feed their families with the funds obtained is also worrying. Unemployment and insufficient education of the Roma pose a threat to security since the crime rate is increasing, where children and women of the Roma population are particularly vulnerable in the form of human trafficking, begging, theft, fraud and other types of crime. For the project of the security aspect of living in settlements that are not non-conditional, support documentation has already been prepared, and in the coming period a housing solution will be implemented for over 4000 members of the Roma population. This project has the symbolic name "Roma Housing" and is financed by the European Union in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

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