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POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
2010



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List of Abbreviations

MAPP	Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform (MAPP)
BIM	FV Skopje Institute for Human Rights Ludvig Bolltzma – Research Association Skopje
EU	European Union
EAPN	European Anti Poverty Network
GHI	Grosse Home Income
GDP	Grosse Domestic Product
NAPE	National Action Plan for Employment
NES	National Employment Strategy
LQ	Low Qualified
SQ	Semi Qualified
OHE	Oriented High-school Education
Q	Qualified
HQ	Highly Qualified
NSO	Guided higher education
WHO	World Health Organisation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

HIF	Health Insurance Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
PLWHIV	People Living With HIV
NCM	National Coordinative Mechanism
MSM	Man having Sex with Man
SW	Sexual Workers
PID	People Injecting Drugs
ART	Anti Retro-Virus Treatment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
AP	Action Plan
CULS	Community of Units of Local Self Government
SSO	State Statistic Office

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Introduction

In all its forms, poverty represents gross violation of human rights that in a very direct and realistic manner excludes the ones lacking assets and income from public and social life. Social exclusion and poverty create a cycle that constantly perpetuates itself, closing within and fencing off exactly the most vulnerable members of the society. This exclusion affects the dignity, well-being and lives of the people. In fact, this is a situation where these people are prevented from enjoying and implementing their guaranteed rights in the field of education, employment, access to quality health protection, etc.

Eighty per cent of the people in the world live with less than \$10 a day; 25,000 children die every day on the account of poverty; 12.3 million people are the victims of unfree labour; 186 million are unemployed. These trends are commensurately represented in Macedonia, and, according to UN data, 50% of the population in Macedonia lives in some form of poverty; in addition to this devastating figure, it is considered that certain social groups are particularly exposed to poverty compared to others.

Exactly because of these reasons, and above all due to the fact that social exclusion is not an individual and isolated phenomenon, rather a situation concerning us all, the Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform was instituted and began to operate.

Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform (MAPP) is a federation of civil associations that joins the voluntary membership of 40 civil associations and individual researchers, whose objective is to reduce poverty by way of promotion of social justice, participative democracy, human rights protection, equality, non-discrimination and the rule of law. MAPP is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organisation, and the process of its establishment and operation was supported by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM-FV Skopje) through the Austrian Development Cooperation.

The objectives that MAPP has committed itself to entail an active dedication to poverty reduction and social exclusion elimination by way of developing a strong network to fight poverty. A special focus is placed on work with the poor communities, their strengthening and the inclusion of the poor, marginalised,

vulnerable and discriminated communities in all the decision-making processes and levels that concern them.

In the period from its foundation till now MAPP has implemented the National Campaign against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010, thus joining the European Year for Combating Poverty 2010. This campaign was implemented in the period from October to December 2010 and covered the organisation of public discussions – direct meetings with citizens from the towns of Štip, Kičevo and Prilep, where they were given the opportunity to voice the problems they were facing and express their needs. At the same time, the attending representatives from the institutions informed the citizens about the possibilities and mechanisms for their protection. The conclusions and recommendations from these meetings were translated into a single document and should be considered in the course of elaboration of the National Action Plans for implementation of the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020. Apart from these direct meetings with the citizens, the campaign also included airing of TV and radio spots, dissemination of promotion materials, as well as organisation of a fundraising event – telethon, and the final conference on the campaign.

One of the activities by MAPP that was, along with others, adopted in the 2011 Work Programme, is the compilation of the annual report on poverty and social exclusion in Macedonia. This report, in fact, is an analysis of secondary information with the objective to present the state of affairs with regard to poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia, and to give recommendations for improvement of the situation of the citizens whom MAPP represents.

The research into poverty and social exclusion, and the undertaking of active measures to fight them, are activities of a more recent date in our country. One of the first documents in this area that bears greater importance is the Poverty Reduction Strategy¹. In 2004 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy adopted the Programme to Manage the Problems of the Socially Excluded Persons, which covers four groups of socially excluded citizens: drug users and members of their families; children on the street/ street children and their parents; victims of family violence; and the homeless.

Another key document for the forthcoming period on the national level is the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020 adopted in October 2010.

1 Ministry of Finance (20020: National Strategy for Decreasing of Poverty in Republic of Macedonia, Skopje

”

The EU 2020 Strategy for the forthcoming decade stresses the efforts by the EU to become intelligent, self-sustainable and inclusive economy, one that can enable, exactly by the implementation of these three priorities, a society with a high level of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Republic of Macedonia, being a candidate country and a country in transition, still suffers many a problems of social exclusion that have only worsened from the effects of the global crisis. Many of the people live in poverty, and one third of the respondents have said that they are not satisfied from their living standard. It is obvious that social policies have serious weaknesses that results from the constantly high level of relative poverty across all sectors of the society, and there are also high levels of absolute poverty with the Roma. Most of the people consider the quality of their lives to have worsened, and only one tenth of the respondents claim to have noticed a positive trend in the quality of their lives. Minorities have the lowest subjective well-being, which is particularly visible with the Roma population. Most of the income is spent on satisfying the elementary needs, such as food, shelter and clothing. There is a great level of uncertainty in the population as a whole, and half of the population is concerned not to lose their jobs. One of the priorities of the Government should therefore be to intensify the fight against social exclusion. The quality of social services is also considered a factor for reduction of quality of life in the country.

The validity of these documents remains yet to be proved through their application and implementation within the given context. One should not forget that this is a dynamic and living matter that has to be re-examined constantly, so as to deepen those practices and efforts that are effective in the field, whereas what seems to be inadequate for the needs within a particular environment or for particular target group should be reassessed and adapted.

Measuring poverty in our country is a practice of a more recent date. The first experimental calculations of the poverty rate date from 1996 with the introduction of the relative method of measuring poverty. The poverty line in this country has been set to the level of 70% of the median equivalised consumption, i.e. it represents the percentage of the persons whose expenditures are below 70% of the median equivalised consumption. Thus collected data are not comparable to the measure of poverty line in the EU countries where it has been set to 60% of the median equivalised income. However, in 2010 Macedonia im-

plemented the EUSILC research that will provide comparable indicators for the poverty status and social exclusion².

Though the research has been intensified lately, especially as part of the preparations to draw up the Joint Memorandum of Inclusion, the data relating to the situation with the socially excluded categories remain imprecise, and one of the limiting factors here lies with the fact that the number of poor persons in Macedonia has not been sufficiently analysed according to the individual criteria, such as: gender, ethnicity, region, etc.

MAPP has drawn up the Report on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Macedonia in cooperation with 13 organisations – members of MAPP: Hera, Čekor Plus, Humanost, SOS Detsko Selo, Podaj Raka, Women's Organisation of the City of Skopje, Polio Minus, Skorpion, Federation of Balkan Egyptians, Ženska Akcija, Association of Social Workers, Sinergija and Artizanati. These organisations, through their representatives, actively participated in the preparation of this report. For this purpose, training was organised for preparation of the report on poverty and social exclusion, whereby four work groups were formed: education and child protection; equal opportunities for men and women; health and long-term care; and social protection. Each of these work groups in the course of the training, and in the follow-up period, have actively worked on preparation of the report in their own field. The information collected by the work groups, and the recommendations deriving from the direct communication with the poor and the vulnerable groups of citizens as part of the 2010 campaign, are incorporated in this report.

These work groups collected the information in the period from February to May 2011. These are the methods they have used when collecting this information:

- analysis of the legal framework (national strategies, programmes, laws and by-laws);
- analysis of the official information from relevant institutions; and
- collection of secondary information (existing research, analysis).

2 EU SILK, according to the information that can be found at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/eu_silc, is an instrument that has the objective to regularly collect comparable inter-sectorial and longitudinal multidimensional data on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions, and the whole system is founded within the European Statistical System (ESS).

MAPP activities

The foundation of the Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform – MAPP was imposed exactly by the need to intensify the efforts in the field of poverty reduction and social exclusion elimination and to mobilise all the relevant factors.

Along with the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion and the national institutions that are obliged to work in this field, and for the purpose of a clearer consideration of the situation in the context of the methods Macedonia employs to combat poverty and social exclusion, we should here mention the activities that MAPP undertakes.

Although this is a new platform that has yet to be built and adequately positioned in our society, its presence in the public discourse and in the field over the past year is not to be neglected. Of course, social exclusion and poverty are not phenomena that can disappear overnight; rather, they are a constant challenge and motive for continuous work, that MAPP has stipulated in its mission as a platform and in its action plans. These are the priority fields under the work programme of MAPP for the period 2010-2012:

1. Strengthening of the internal structure and work methods of MAPP (institutional development)

Support to the members of MAPP and their activities aiming at: greater impact on the national policies and support to the state in the process of EU accession; significant contribution to the development of civil dialogue and promotion of issues of common interest to the MAPP members; facilitation of communication with the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and other national networks and platforms that work in the same or similar fields; facilitation of exchange of experiences and practices; and setting up a democratic, transparent and accountable system of work. Thus, over the past year, MAPP has organised workshops for the members of the platform with the objective to strengthen their capacities to monitor the statistical data relating to poverty and social inclusion and to analyse them. A direct result from these workshops is this 2010 report.

2. Impact on policies

A share of this effort has already been achieved with the analysis and the information placed in this report, as the valid analysis of situations contributes directly for undertaking adequate actions with regards to policy development and implementation. When it comes to impact on policies, MAPP has the objective to broadly promote the role, values and activities of MAPP; to improve the knowledge that MAPP members have about policy development at the EU level; to raise the awareness of the consequences from poverty and social exclusion, both on the local and on the national level; to impact the public policies; and to promote dialogue on various topics in the field of employment, social protection, housing, health and education. In addition to the regular monitoring of situations by way of such reports, MAPP plans to regularly monitor the media and to actively lobby and advocate, which is to commence in the course of 2011. In fact, the activities undertaken as part of the campaign, i.e. the direct discussions with the citizens, were aiming at identification of existing problems and negative practices, so as to prepare specific recommendations and measures for their surpassing and elimination.

In the context of the set priorities MAPP members have made an overview of the current state of affairs with regard to poverty and social exclusion, along with conclusions and recommendations for the purpose of its improvement. What follows next is the result of the current analyses of the given state of affairs, as made for the year 2010.

1.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR POVERTY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

1.1. National Strategy for Poverty Reduction

National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia that was adopted in 2010 is one of the key strategic documents referring to creation of policies that contribute to reduction of poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia.

Poverty reduction and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia by way of an improved utilization of the available human and material resources; improvement of the living conditions, work conditions and social conditions for all citizens; systemic and institutional interaction for the purpose of a speedier development, higher standard and a better quality living are the main strategic objectives of this strategy³. The strategy covers the following areas: **employment and labour market, poverty and social discrimination, health protection, long-term care, education, social protection, transport, communication and housing**. A special accent is placed on child protection and equal opportunities for men and women.

The design of this strategy has incorporated a number of existing documents, laws, strategies, plans, analyses, information and other sources that provide the image of current processes and solutions in this area. Possible solutions have been considered and reviewed, such that may improve the status and social inclusion of persons who have on various grounds been deprived of the opportunities that are otherwise systemically provided.

When preparing the strategy, a special attention was paid to the involvement (participation) of the central and local authorities, public institutions, business communities and relevant non-governmental organisations in identification of topics and development of specific policies, programmes and projects.

3 National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia, 2010

However, in this context it is important to mention that the participation by the non-governmental organisations with regards to expression of particular interests of individuals and groups who are in the risk zone or are facing cases of social exclusion was especially underlined in the course of preparation of the Strategy, but only declaratively. Their involvement was accepted also in the stage of shaping the Strategy through numerous consultative meetings with expert groups, and during the writing of the national action plans where suggestion by the non-governmental organisations were not taken into account in the final documents.

A special accent in the document is placed on enhancing the sensitivity of the public over the areas listed therein, whereby it raises the responsibility of institutions that are competent to undertake activities and measures. At the same time it looks into adapting them to the demands and needs of the population and initiating systemic changes towards the accomplishment of the objectives of the strategy.

Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform sees its contribution in poverty reduction in all areas covered by the national strategy, in compliance with the knowledge and expertise that each of the member organisations have. What is essential in MAPP actions in this context is that it takes into account the needs of all the poor and vulnerable groups of citizens that this platform represents. In line with this, according to the official data by the National Statistical Office, which show that the percentage of the poor households with children is significantly higher than the average, MAPP shall direct its efforts towards improvement of child protection and poverty reduction in children.

The strategy, being the future strategic determination of this country with regards to the situation with poverty in children, provides the following definition: "Children living in poverty are exposed to greater risk from social exclusion as the lack of resources frequently limits their educational and developmental opportunities, and consequently prevents them from participation in the economic, social and cultural life in their society."

However, this strategy as a document is too complex and difficult to implement, and this should be considered. This conclusion is supported by the fact that even 6 months after the adoption of the strategy by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, the action plans have not yet been adopted, nor have funds been allocated from the budget of the Republic of Macedonia for the purpose of implementation of the strategy. It is in common interest for all stakehold-

ers not only to have such significant documents, but to also keep them clear and easily applicable, which is why it is important to make this document simpler, and, in the future, to also take into account the beneficiaries and implementers of these policies/documents, and in that sense, keep them as accessible and easy to implement as possible.

1.2. Legal Framework In The Field Of Social Protection

The Law on Social Protection⁴ regulates the system and organisation of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia and the manner of implementation of citizens' rights in the field of social protection.

What is important for the civil sector is that this law regulates the conditions, manners and procedures with regards to operations in the field of social protection by the civil organisations that have been entered into the register kept for this purpose by the MLSP, and also by the physical persons who have been granted a work licence by the Minister for Labour and Social Policy.

An important step towards the improvement of the formal reaction by the country in the social protection system was made in 2010 with the adoption of the National Programme for Social Protection Development 2010-2020.

The primary objective of the National Programme for Social Protection Development is to set up an integrated, transparent and sustainable social protection system that will provide accessible, efficient and quality measures and services tailored to the specific needs of the beneficiaries.

Specific objectives:

- To restructure the institutional set-up of the social protection system for the purpose of separation of administration of the rights to monetary aid from social services.
- To internally reorganise the social protection institutions for the purpose of optimal utilisation of the available capacities and improvement of professional work.
- To improve the work with beneficiaries for the purpose of their enhanced participation, inclusion in decision making and planning, and their strengthening and utilisation of their potentials.

⁴ The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 79/09

- To redefine the monetary aid system for the purpose of: improved targeting, more efficient administration and linking to other systems, above all to the employment system.
- To develop the social prevention as an organised, continuous and coordinated activity on the local level.
- To strengthen the non-institutional protection by way of developing the existing and introduction of new forms of social services in accordance with the needs of the citizens, and to improve the methods for their provision and delivery.
- To increase the quality of services and to create conditions for reduction of dependence on institutional protection by way of developing alternative forms of protection.
- To continue the already initiated processes of decentralisation, pluralisation and deinstitutionalisation in the field of social protection.
- To improve the modalities for implementation of the public-private partnership in social protection.
- To set up an organised human resources management system and to strengthen their capacities”⁵.

From the aspect of the rights of the poor and the vulnerable, i.e. the rights of the categories of citizens who are exposed to social risks and are therefore represented by MAPP, it is important that in the forthcoming period a greater attention will be paid to provision of social services by the state for the different categories of vulnerability of citizens, which is generally non-existing in our country at the moment. In line with this, a more substantial reorganisation of the work by the Social Work Centres has been envisaged, whereby the scope of their work shall only include social services, i.e. professional work with the vulnerable categories of citizens.

The entire procedure regarding the social monetary reimbursements, which is at the moment competence of the SWC, shall now be administered by the newly formed for this purpose Agency for Social Monetary Reimbursements (ASMR).

5 National Programme for Social Protection Development 2010-2020 of the Republic of Macedonia, taken from www.mtsp.gov.mk

This will make it possible for the Centres for Social Services⁶ to be dedicated only to the provision of professional assistance and support, i.e. to the implementation of the various measures for protection of the different vulnerable groups of citizens.

1.3. Legal Framework In The Field Of Employment

Following the example of other European countries, Republic of Macedonia has established two main programmes for employment:

1. (passive) program for reimbursement/compensation for unemployed which provides temporary financial aid to the unemployed and
2. (active) program that offers employment services and other active programs on the labour market (APLM)⁷

The main challenges that Republic of Macedonia is facing when the situation with the employment is concerned are:

- ▶ low level of creation of working positions as a direct result of the slow economic development and lack of investments,
- ▶ widely spread grey economy
- ▶ regional differences
- ▶ social problems
- ▶ extremely high level of unemployment among the young
- ▶ very high level of unemployment among long term unemployed and unemployment among the vulnerable groups
- ▶ gender inequality
- ▶ discrepancy between the needs of the educational system and the labour market⁸

The National Strategy for Decreasing of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020 notes the need of conducting a full scale/blanket package of policies which is to be consisted of reforms to be undertaken on micro level, combined

6 The reorganisation of the SWC as envisaged in the National Programme for Social Protection Development 2010-2020, stipulates their renaming into Centres for Social Services, thus emphasising their primary competence which is the provision of certain types of social services according to the needs of the different vulnerable and poor groups of citizens.

7 World Bank Document, Active Programs on the Labour Market in Republic of Macedonia, Report no. 45258-MK, September, 2008

8 Government of Republic of Macedonia, National Strategy for Employment 2010, Skopje, December 2006.

and coordinated adequately with macro economic policies, as well as with employment policies on all levels. The envisaged reforms should improve the business climate aiming to facilitate the administrative procedures needed for commencement and the growth of the reforms. These interventions along side with the decreasing of the costs needed for the working force, should initiate creation of new working places and the new demand for the working force.⁹

The normative frame of the labour and employment market, the policies and the strategy for employment of the Government of Republic of Macedonia and the activities planned for employment and decreasing of unemployment, are already been established in several documents:

- Programme of the Government of Republic of Macedonia 2008-2012;
- National Strategy for Employment 2010;
- National Strategy for Decreasing of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020;
- National Action Plans for Employment 2009-2010 (NAPE);
- National Strategy for the Youth of the Republic of Macedonia;
- Operational Plan of the Government for Active Programmes and Measures for Employment for 2010; and
- Strategy for Demographic Development of the Republic of Macedonia 2008-2015, and Multi-Annual Operational Programme for Development of Human Resources 2007-2013.

One of the most important documents in this period is the National Strategy for Employment for the period 2006-2010 which includes the major macro-economic and micro-economic policies on the labour market for the period until 2010, and also policies in the field of social insurance and social protection.

Based on this strategy, the National Action Plan for Employment (NAPE), the National Programme for Employment, and other operational documents were elaborated so as to secure the implementation of the National Strategy for Employment (NSE).

In order to implement the envisaged employment programmes and measures, each year Operational Plans for Active Policies and Measures for Employment are prepared.

9 National Strategy for Decreasing the Poverty and Social Exclusion in RM

The 2010 Operational Plan for Active Policies and Measures for Employment¹⁰ with regards to the possibilities offered within the Self-Employment Programme identifies the following vulnerable groups who can become its beneficiaries: registered unemployed persons; young unemployed persons for over 3 months (aged under 27); the Roma; and unemployed women for over 6 months, whereby priority is given to the women of ethnic communities. The Operational Plan also envisages a special support for new employments by the companies that have in 2007 and 2008 been founded by way of Self-Employment Programmes.

Unemployed persons for over 3 months who are involved in an informal business and the registered unemployed persons for over 6 months who are involved in the field of energetics are identified as vulnerable in the Programme to Support the Formalisation of the Existing Businesses.

The Operational Plan for Active Programmes and Measures for Employment includes programmes to support entrepreneurship and programmes to prepare for employment, namely training and requalification. This program also envisages the provision of assistance by way of subsidising the employment of particular vulnerable groups such as children without parents, the disabled persons, single parents and other, as well as special programs for economic strengthening of victims of family violence and for the Roma community.

1.4. Legal Framework In The Field Of Education

With regards to the legal framework regulating the education, significant steps were taken in 2007 with the amendment of the Law on Secondary Education and its introduction as free and compulsory¹¹. The state provides free transport and accommodation for students enrolled in public schools.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia has taken a positive step forward with the adoption of the Programme for Conditional Monetary Reimbursement for Secondary Education, the objective of which is “to improve the access to and the quality of education for secondary school students for households who are beneficiaries of the right to social monetary aid”¹². This increases the access to education for those children whose families are beneficiaries of the right to monetary aid as part of social protection, and also for those who are

¹⁰ <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk>

¹¹ The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 49/07

¹² Government of R Macedonia, National Strategy for Employment 2010, Skopje, December 2006

temporarily hired to execute public operations (e.g. cleaning, afforestation, etc.). Their status of beneficiaries in the social protection system is temporarily inactive.

Another important reform in the education process was the dispersing of higher education on the local level.

These efforts made by the state are in compliance with the approach that MAPP promotes in its operation, and this is increasing the level of solidarity and undertaking of special measures to help and include the most vulnerable individuals and groups in all areas of societal living.

Adult education in the Republic of Macedonia is an integral part in the education system that “provides education, qualification, capacity building and learning for adult persons”¹³, whereby two forms of education are discerned: formal and informal.

The Roma population has been identified as the most vulnerable group with regards to access to the education process. As part of the Roma Decade 2005-2015¹⁴ National Action Plans were prepared, and also Operational Plans for their implementation in the different fields of priority, including the education of this vulnerable group.

The National Action Plan for Improvement of the Social Position of the Roma Women in Macedonia 2011-2013¹⁵ envisages special activities to increase the number of Roma women with completed primary and secondary education. It has been projected to determine the exact number of illiterate Roma women and to design a special curriculum of shortened lessons so as to include female students aged 8 to 15 in the education process.

As the result of the undertaken activities within the Decade for Roma Inclusion, more than three-fourths of the Roma population think that the enrolment rate of the Roma has increased in all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education¹⁶.

13 Law on Adult Education, The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 07/2008

14 The Roma Decade 2015-2015 is a political initiative on the European level that works on the improvement of the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the Roma

15 Ministry of Labour and Social policy of the Republic of Macedonia www.mtsp.gov.mk

16 MK Decade Guardians 2010: Roma activists monitor the progress of the Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015

For the purpose of provision of information about and access to EU education programmes¹⁷, the National Agency for European Education Programmes and Mobility has been formed in the Republic of Macedonia. However, the call for 2010 Lifelong Learning Programme has been inactivated “until further instructions by the European Commission”¹⁸.

1.5. Legal Framework In The Field Of Health Protection And Long-Term Care

The draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011 by the Ministry of Health contains redefined, verified and new development methods/parameters to be employed for the purpose of implementation of the already set mid-term priorities and programmes as stipulated in the Strategic Plan 2008-2010.

This is how the strategic priorities for 2010 have been defined: increased economic growth and competitiveness on permanent grounds; higher employment rate; increase in the living standard and quality of life; NATO and EU integration; continuation of fighting crime and corruption; more efficient law enforcement; maintenance of good interethnic relations and cohabitation on the principles of mutual tolerance and respect; equal law enforcement; complete implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement; and investment in education as the most certain way to creating strong individuals and a strong society.

Even so, a comprehensive action plan for health improvement has not yet been produced.

The on-going National Strategy for HIV/AIDS has the objective to maintain low prevalence of HIV infection in the Republic of Macedonia by way of provision of a long-term sustainability of activities, focusing on five strategic fields of intervention: prevention in groups at the highest risk; preventive activities of a broader scope; treatment, care and support for the persons living with HIV; collection and utilization of strategic information; and coordination and capacity development. The process of revision of the accomplished results as envisaged by this strategy was carried out in 2010.¹⁹

¹⁷ The lifelong learning programme includes the following sub-programmes and activities: Leonardo da Vinci Mobility; Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig Partnerships; Comenius and Grundtvig workplace training; Grundtvig visits and exchanges; Comenius, Grundtvig and Leonardo preparation visits; Erasmus mobility and study visits)

¹⁸ National Agency for European educational Programmes and Mobility, www.na.org.mk

¹⁹ National Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2007-2011, Ministry of Health

As of 2004 onwards, thanks to the grant for HIV by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a number of effective programmes have been developed for the prevention, care and treatment of HIV. Majority of these activities relate to HIV prevention among the vulnerable and hard to access groups (men who have sex with men MSM, sexual workers SW, people who inject drugs PID, prisoners), including both field and stationary work with these target groups, voluntary and confidential counselling and HIV testing, peer education among the young, and sensitivisation to HIV of health workers and social workers.

The national consultative process for a universal approach for prevention, treatment, care and support was carried out at the beginning of 2006 by way of involving all the national partners from governmental and civil organisations, at which point key challenges were defined. Conclusions from this consultative process and the achievements by the National Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2003-2006 were used as a framework for production of the current National Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2007-2011.²⁰

A major problem in creating and implementing the policies for improvement of the situation with the Roma in Macedonia is the lack of segregated data per ethnicity, particularly for the Roma. The available data are non-representative and partial. The Hungarian presidency with the Roma Decade formed a professional work group that should give advice for data collection and monitoring of results from the Decade. However, targeting the Decade towards realistic results requires re-exertion of pressure on the Governments to make sure national statistics collect information about the ethnicity of the surveyed households. This shall, of course, be of great importance not only for the Roma, but also for the entire ethnic image within the given contexts. The issue of introduction of monitoring and evaluation of the effect of the Roma inclusion policies may be assisted with the support by the European Commission and by Eurostat. This should represent a central element in any EU policy on the Roma.

The concept of long-term care can be defined as a cross-cutting policy comprising of several common services for persons who are dependent on assistance in their daily activities over a longer period of time. Long-term care covers services of the type: rehabilitation, basic medical services, house calls, social

20 National Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2007-2011, Ministry of Health

care, housing; and services of the type: transport, meals delivery, or strengthening.²¹

In the field of health services, long-term care is regulated by the Law on Health Protection and the Law on Health Insurance. Health protection system provides some medical care and hospital nursing in institutions or hospitals, geriatric homes, home nursing services and house calls. The main source of funding for these services is the compulsory health insurance.

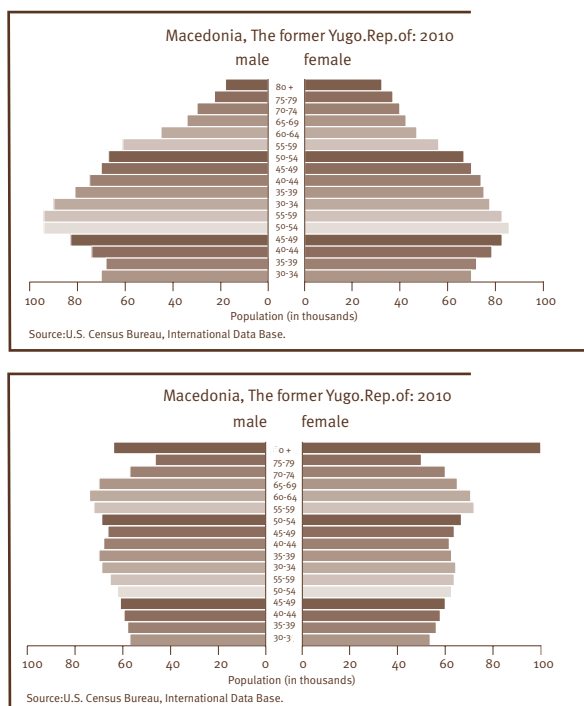
The Law on Social Protection lays down the right to non-institutional protection for the elderly and the disabled persons in several forms, including: day-time and temporary stay and shelter as assistance to an individual or a family; placement in a caregiver family; placement in a small-sized group home; home care and assistance to an individual and to his family; and supported independent living.

The long-term care service beneficiaries include: the elderly and bed-ridden persons over the age of 65; chronic disease persons; disabled persons; persons with terminal or rare diseases; and persons who need support in their daily activities.

The elderly, as a particularly important category of the long-term care service beneficiaries, receive health insurance on the grounds of their pension (retirement pension, disablement pension, family pension, or farmer's pension) and under the Law on Social Protection they can enjoy the following rights: permanent monetary aid; placement in a social protection institution or a caregiver family; monetary reimbursement for assistance and care by a third person if the beneficiary cannot be insured on other grounds; and supported independent living.

The population in the Republic of Macedonia is aging. In the period between 1999 and 2009 the share of the young population (aged 0-14) in the total population has decreased from 22.8% to 17.7%, whereas the share of the elderly population (aged above 65) has increased from 9.8% to 11.6% (Macedonia in Figures, 2010, p. 10). Considering the constant trend of population aging, it is believed that by 2050 the elderly population will be the most represented.

21 National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia, 2010-2020

Figure 2: Demographic structure of the population in the Republic of Macedonia

Source: *The USA Statistical Office*

1.6. Legal Framework In The Field Of Child Protection

The normative status²² tells us that in the Republic of Macedonia it is the Law on Child Protection that regulates the system, organisation and manners of provision of child protection.

Child protection can be achieved by way of providing the following defined rights and forms of child protection:

- Child allowance;
- Child allowance as a form of monetary reimbursement is intended to partially cover the childrearing and child development costs.
- Special allowance;

22 Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy www.mtsp.gov.mk

Special allowance as a form of monetary reimbursement is intended for children with specific needs who are impaired in their physical or intellectual development or in their combined development up to 26 years of age.

- Aid to outfit a new-born; and

The aid to outfit a new-born is a form of monetary reimbursement that is given to families as a one-time assistance to outfit their first newly born child.

- Participation.

Depending on the material status of the family, participation is provided for the childrearing and childcare costs, and also for vacations and recreations in public children institutions.

Kindergartens:

1. Childcare and childrearing at a preschool age: preschool age childcare and childrearing is a form of child protection organised in public or private children institutions.
2. Vacation and recreation for children: vacation and recreation for children is a form of child protection that is organised for the purpose of stay, active rest and socialisation of children; comprising of rearing, educational, cultural, entertaining, sporting, recreational and other activities; aiming at the psycho-motor development of children and the development of their capacity for agreement, respect of the differences and cooperation in groups; the capacity to accept oneself and the others, and the capacity for spatial orientation.
3. Other forms of protection: for the purpose of development of child's personality, its talent, mental, physical, creative and other capacities; for the purpose of its preparation for an independent and responsible life; other forms of child protection are provided as programmed activities in the field of culture, publishing, childcare and childrearing, ecology, arts and sports.
4. Children's camps: children's camps provide vacation and recreation for the children.

5. Children's camps programmes: vacation and recreation in children's camps is implemented in compliance with the plans and programmes for this activity.

The existing legal regulations²³, strategies, initiatives, and programmes are envisaged to raise the level of protection and the quality of living conditions for both the children and their families by way of:

- introduction of new monetary benefits i.e. conditional monetary transfers intended for the social monetary aid beneficiaries that these categories of citizens can use if they meet certain criteria (to provide schooling for their children);
- social packages for the poor families – measures to subsidise the energy consumption;
- active employment policies;
- family support – defined as a strategic priority of the Republic of Macedonia (with the introduction of the right to parenting allowance and the right to monetary aid to a mother of a fourth living born child);
- the right to social housing;
- elaborated standards/mechanisms for referrals, strategies and action plans for protection of the different categories of children and families exposed to social risks: children on the street; children who are victims of human trafficking, sexual abuse and paedophilia, and family violence; disabled children;
- National Programme for Social Protection Development 2011-2021;
- Strategy for the Demographic Development of the Republic of Macedonia 2008-2015;
- National Programme for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015;
- Standards for early learning and development for children aged 0-6; and
- Programmes for health protection of mothers and children.

On the other hand, the data from the State Statistical Office²⁴ for 2010 tell us that the total number of children in childcare and childrearing public institutions – kindergartens – is 23,157, which represents an increase by 4.2% as compared to 2009.

²³ Source: State Statistical Office www.stat.gov.mk

²⁴ Source: State Statistical Office www.stat.gov.mk

1.7. Legal Framework From The Aspect Of Gender Perspective

In general, we can draw a baseline conclusion that Macedonian legislation, from its formal and legal aspects, safeguards the protection of women's rights in accordance with the international documents regulating this matter. The laws in the field of education, health, social protection, and employment do not discriminate – on the contrary, these laws consider the gender as a possible ground for discrimination, and therefore explicitly forbid it. The new Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination²⁵ also considers the gender as a ground for discrimination.

However, what has to be underlined here is the problem with the enforcement of these laws that have already been adopted; from the aspect of women's rights in the Republic of Macedonia the factual situation of women is most concerning.

The basic strategic document that regulates the improvement of the position of women in our society and sets the strategic priorities, along with the measures for their accomplishment, is the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007/2012, and also the annual operational plans for its implementation. The NAPGE has envisaged the following priority areas for the improvement of the position of women in our society: women's and human rights; the decision-making process; health protection; social protection; education; employment; violence against women; mediation; and environmental protection.

The National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020 in the chapter on equal opportunities for men and women, has envisaged a series of measures the implementation of which should contribute for an improved position of the women in our society. However, the fact that operational plans have not yet been developed is quite concerning, all the more that these are necessary for the implementation of the national strategy itself.

Employment, i.e. improvement of the economic position of women is regulated in the National Strategy for Employment 2010 in the part discussing the *equal opportunities of genders* whereby preparation of education and training programmes has been envisaged so as to include the women in sectors where they are underrepresented, to instigate women's entrepreneurship, and to strengthen the network of public and private institutions that care for the chil-

²⁵ The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 50/10

dren until school age. Also, the Operational Plan for Active Programmes and Measures for Employment 2010, within its Self-Employment Programme, considers the women who have been unemployed for more than 3 months as a special target group, whereby priority is given to women of the ethnic communities. The self-employment programme supports the development of family businesses, in so much that it envisages the organisation of trainings on business plan development and business management, support for establishment of trade companies, and allocation of funds to support their operation.

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of 2006 stipulates the undertaking of general and special measures to achieve equality, regulates the functioning of such gender machinery, and lays down the procedure to identify the unequal treatment of women and men. It would have been nice to comment on the number of reported cases to the Advocate, but as this information was not received by the closing of this report, our recommendation would be to always consider this information when drawing up such reports.

If we consider the implementation of the established legal framework in the field of gender equality, we can conclude that the situation is unfavourable. In 2010 the civil association “Akcija Združenska”, carried out a monitoring process of the gender equality policies development and implementation process in our country. Resulting from there, the Monitoring Report of Gender Equality Policies in the Republic of Macedonia was produced. This report identifies the following state of affairs: implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012 is inefficient; the gender machinery is not yet clearly defined and formalised; the Law on Prevention of Discrimination and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women should be mutually harmonised, as both these laws lay down a procedure to identify a gender-based discrimination; the position of women on the labour market is unfavourable; the gender perspective is inadequately incorporated in the process of analysis and development of the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion; the National Strategy for Protection against Family Violence is not being implemented, etc.]

2.

INSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS FOR POVERTY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Poverty is a composite and complex phenomenon that must not be considered or treated in isolation. Poverty is something that happens in a society and therein it should be resolved. Social exclusion and the burdens it imposes are by no means an isolated phenomenon that should be lamented or just identified as a fact. These problems can be resolved, and should be resolved in the framework of social institutions or by way of their full involvement. This requires a specific, efficient and long-term cooperation on horizontal level between governmental institutions and non-governmental sector; but also between several different governmental institutions operating in different fields with the focus on vulnerable groups.

2.1. Institutional Competences In The Field Of Social Protection

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy plays the major role in defining the policies, management and control of enforcement of the legal framework in the field of social protection.

The social protection system is implemented through the Social Work Centres and other social institutions for institutional and non-institutional protection. SWC have the competence to allocate and administer the social monetary reimbursements and to provide social services, which entails professional work with the vulnerable citizens and those at social risk.

The public institution Social Work Institute is an institution that controls the professional work of the national institutions, but also of other physical and legal persons that are in any way actors in the social protection system. This institution also has the competence to research the social phenomena and problems and to improve the social actions in the country.

“Civil associations entered into the register kept by MLSP and the physical person who has a work license issued by the Minister for Labour and Social Policy can operate in the field of social protection under conditions and in a manner and procedure laid down in the Law on Social Protection. Religious communities and religious groups and their associations registered in the Republic of Macedonia can aid the persons who are in need of particular types of social protection. For the purpose of implementation of the social protection system, in addition to the public, private social protection institutions can be founded as well.”²⁶

2.2. Institutional Competences In The Field Of Employment

There are two national institutions that continuously monitor the events on the labour market: State Statistical Office and the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia.

The Workforce Survey represents a study of the economic activity of the population and provides data on the size, structure and characteristics of the active population.

According to the most recent Workforce Survey by the State Statistical Office, in the fourth quarter of 2010 the active population in the Republic of Macedonia totalled to 954,928 persons, out of whom 659,557 persons or 69.1% were employed, and 295,371 persons or 30.9% were unemployed.²⁷

According to data from the **Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia, as of 31 January 2011, a total of 322,053 unemployed persons have been registered.**

By the level of education, out of the total number of unemployed (322,053): 156,835 are non-qualified; 11,147 are semi-qualified or have completed primary education; 49,830 are qualified and highly qualified; 78,220 have completed secondary education; 4,938 have completed post-secondary education; 20,765 are university graduates; 300 have a master's degree, and 18 have a PhD. By ethnicity, there are: 203,932 unemployed Macedonian; 78,641 Albanians; 13,112 Turks; 15,457 Roma; 2,501 Serbs; 321 Vlachs; 513 Bosniaks; and 7,576 others.

²⁶ National Programme for Social Protection Development 2010-2020

²⁷ <http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2011/2.1.11.03.pdf>

Here it is worth mentioning that these two institutions, and in particular the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia, have a relatively passive or passivized role when it comes to relating the labour market to the registered unemployed persons. The data available in these institutions seem to only contribute to stating the factual situation, without taking an active part in its resolution. This leaves a space for much work and provides opportunities for serious advancements and improvements in the operation of these two institutions, especially due to the fact that they are in direct contact with the unemployed, and by way of expansion of their activities, can function as a bridge between the business sector and the unemployed, and also as a place for their training and requalification, and their active re-involvement on the labour market and in the society.

2.3. Institutional Competences In The Field Of Education²⁸

Education is the crucial factor contributing to poverty reduction, especially with regards to the vulnerable groups and persons living in poverty. Also, this factor directly contributes for the social exclusion or inclusion.

When it comes to adult education system, i.e. to the manners in which this issue is addressed, the following state of affairs can be observed.

On the one hand, this issue is addressed in the Active Employment Measures by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia which identifies and stipulates a series of objectives and activities that are intended to respond to the burning issue of unemployment in the Republic of Macedonia. These measures, inter alia, stipulate the manners in which to manage the unemployment of the vulnerable groups, thereby including: the elderly persons above 55 years of age; the long-term unemployed persons; persons with special needs; all ethnic groups; etc. This plan has envisaged to train, re-qualify or with other employment measures to cover 15% of the long-term unemployed by 2010, which certainly pertains in the field of lifelong education.

Part 2.7 of this document that regulates education and training also stipulates measures to increase the lifelong learning (with projection of an average increase of the involvement of the adult population in the lifelong learning by

²⁸ World Health Report 2008

8-10% in 2010 for persons aged 25-55). For this purpose a network of institutions for lifelong learning will be developed.

Finally, such measures and programmes have been envisaged that promote and raise the awareness of the young and the elderly population about the importance of education; programmes have been planned for active inclusion in both the formal and informal sector for actions relating to raising the level of education and competences of the population; financial alleviations have been offered to anyone involved in such actions. Some of the measures stipulate subsidizing the Roma population so as to increase the level of education of this group.

Considering the aforesaid, we can conclude that there is, at least on the institutional level, an efficient programme that offers specific steps for poverty management through a wide range of options for education, training, re-qualification or lifelong learning.

On the other hand, when discussing the adult education system, it is also important to say that despite the declarative efforts taken by the law, in practice there are no institutions that could implement such an education, nor funds are being allocated for this purpose, though the law says that these funds are to be provided from the national budget and by the local self-government units. Finally, this law fails to envisage special education programmes for women, even though it has been recognized that women are in less favourable position in the field of employment and on the labour market.

2.4. Institutional Competences In The Field Of Health Protection And Long-Term Care

According to WHO (World Health Organisation) health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not a mere absence of disease.

The health protection environment is best felt by the patients who are found in a dead-end situation. The inadequate health protection system in the times of transition also covers the health sector, so that it cannot remain immune to all the negative impacts typical of the general context and under such conditions.

Health is an important factor for the overall human well-being. It knows no age limits, nor ethnicity, level of education, marital status or any other socio-economic or socio-political feature. Health is part of every human; it requires care, but also treatment.

In 2010 Macedonia saw an unprecedented collapse of the public health protection system. Despite all the strategies, documents and proposals for reforms, none of the health managers succeeded in raising the level of public health protection. The qualified staff is draining into the private sector; they are working without employment contracts i.e. they are spending years in internship; the equipment is out-dated; outpatient, hospital, and even clinical facilities are out-dated, too; this is but a fragment of the health protection image in our country. The inadequate work conditions for the doctors involved in the public health protection system burdens the doctors with additional responsibilities they should assume for proper health protection of their patients.

Here, too, and perhaps, in this sphere of the public living the most, poverty and social exclusion exert a great impact on the health status of the population and on the access to health services. In certain segments of health, Macedonian citizens can be said to be less healthy than the average EU citizen. It is hard to compare the differences between countries in relation to their general affectedness by diseases, except for particular diseases. Most of the differences between Macedonia and other EU countries can be explained with the higher prevalence of cardiovascular diseases, partly resulting from the excessive use of tobacco and from the uncontrolled hypertension and hypercholesterolemia. The healthy life expectancy in Macedonia averages to 63.4 years, and for the purpose of comparison we provide the data for the neighbouring countries: Greece 71.0, Bulgaria 64.6, Serbia and Montenegro 63.8 and Albania 61.4.²⁹ Injuries and poisoning are the third most common cause for death. Respiratory diseases hold the fourth position, whereby bronchitis, emphysema and asthma account for more than 60% of these death outcomes. Diseases of the endocrinal system represent the fifth most common cause of death. The standardized death rates for cardiovascular diseases in the Republic of Macedonia are higher than that in Albania, Greece and EU15. The standardized death rate for malignant tumours is within the average.

Health protection institutions are not sufficiently equipped and modernised so as to be able to better implement the planning and analysing activities, to improve the health situation, to control contagious and non-contagious diseases, to assess the risks, to consider health ecology, and to prepare for emergency situations. Most of the financial income is generated in the health protection

²⁹ World Health Report 2003

institutes from the delivered laboratory services. Public health is responsibility of the state, and yet the smaller portion of its funding is allocated from the national budget. The allocation of funds from the Health Insurance Fund for the needs of the public health amounts to hardly 1€ per citizen and is extremely low compared to the situation on the international level. On the other hand, the income generated by the Ministry of Health and from other governmental sources for public health activities is negligible. Many of the public health activities are characterized by inter-sectorial cooperation for protection of the public health which is not yet well developed, as the result of which much of the work is done on a far less than optimal level.

Greater portion of the population (92%) are covered by the social and health insurance, and in 2009 a step was taken towards the provision of free health services for all, even for the persons who are not permanent residents in the country. However, in reality and in practice, people are facing many problems in their access to health services. The UNDP Study/Report³⁰ detects particular problems in health protection that citizens are facing, above all: they have to buy the medications themselves (29%); prices of the services (18%); waiting, in spite of scheduled appointments (12%); and distance (10%). The adverse financial conditions are a serious problem in health protection system, as people find it difficult to have to buy their own medications, and they frequently object the price of the health services. One should also consider the fact that in Macedonia there are some 4,000 citizens who have not been entered into the birth records and therefore possess no legal status in Macedonia, so that they cannot enjoy any rights and benefits, and thus even this model of health insurance for everybody is not accessible to them. Logically, people who live in poor households are particularly vulnerable in this respect.

The time spent waiting for the scheduled appointment and the relative distance of the health institutions are also problems that need to be resolved: first, by increasing the number of doctors, and, second, by increasing the number of health protection institutions in the more remote areas.

The north-eastern and eastern part of the country, and also rural areas, are most severely stricken with the problem of distance from health protection institutions where citizens are forced to travel to them. Slightly above half of the respondents (58%) said they were provided with sufficient information about

30 People Centred Analyzes (UNDP)

their health status or course of treatment, and only three-fourths reported that they were given proper care in the hospital.

Complaints are numerous, especially in relation to the quality of the public health protection services, and it is obvious that people trust the private health protection institutions more, so the conclusion is self-imposing that it is necessary to implement substantial reforms in the public health protection system in order to improve the quality of services delivered. This is particularly true in the context of poverty and social exclusion, since the poor in most cases cannot afford the services provided by the private health protection institutions.

Finally, it should be underlined that it is time now for the policy-makers to shift the focus of the national social policies away from the ethnic dimension, and to start to deal more directly with the real social problems, in order to improve the living standard, to advance the well-being and happiness of people, and to achieve social cohesion in the society, as part of the efforts to join the EU, but above all from the desire to improve the well-being of the citizens through an all-inclusive social reform.

Persons with impairments

Persons with impairments in the Republic of Macedonia seem to belong to the group of the socially excluded persons who are most frequently placed on the very margins of the society. This is more or less typical of the poor societies that constantly face specific challenges in providing a decent life to their citizens; however, this should not be used as an excuse for negligence and exclusion of this group of citizens from the public life.

Now that we have mentioned how grave the situation is with the state of health protection system in Macedonia, it will not be surprising to hear the fact that health protection institutions in this country are not fully or sufficiently adapted to the needs of the disabled persons; just few of these institutions have undergone certain adaptations in relation to the entrance/exit of the facilities. Hospital rooms, and beds, and bathrooms, and even hospital vehicles are not adapted to this specific target group.

The situation is not satisfying when it comes to adaptedness of the health protection institutions to the health needs of the hearing-impaired persons. Not a single health protection institution has an employed staff member, not even at reception desks, who can use the sign language so as to communicate with the

deaf persons. In such a way these persons face problems in relation to enjoying their rights in the field of health protection.

In a similar way the situation is unfavourable for the sight-impaired persons, especially considering that the medical staffs is not sufficiently educated to communicate with persons with reduced sensory capacities.

The home nursing services and physiotherapy is not available in the homes for the disabled persons. In the Republic of Macedonia there are no gynaecologist offices specific to the needs of the disabled women. There is lack of multi-disciplinary teams in health protection institutions in this country who can provide psycho-social support to the disabled persons and their family members and who can refer them to other institutions for the purpose of accomplishment of their lawful rights.

Mentally impaired persons

Health protection of persons who have problems with their mental health is carried out on three levels – primary, secondary and tertiary health protection. Mental health protection in the Republic of Macedonia is by large provided in the three special psychiatric hospitals with a total capacity of 1,307 beds where patients are placed according to region where they live.

As a way of support to the reforms in the mental health protection, with the support by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO), Skopje Office, in 2000 additional four centres for mental health were opened, thus increasing the number of mental health centres in the country to a total of seven.

In all the seven mental health centres the provision of health services is organized in several forms: day-care hospitals (with different rehabilitation and therapeutic activities), shelter as a temporary residence, social clubs, work rehabilitation and a mobile team for home treatments.

However, this is far from enough to satisfy the needs for social inclusion of this group of citizens, who, along with the previous two groups of persons with special needs, are placed on the very margins of the society. Their social inclusion is a long and complex process requiring a serious and organized involvement. When the health protection system is in the state of crisis, where ordinary citizens find it difficult to obtain certain health services, it is clear to see and easy to conclude that this group of citizens, due to the specificity of their health

status, and the social stigma frequently attached to them, are found in a very uncomfortable, if not totally difficult position with regards to social inclusion. Hence, in consideration of the more complex needs this group of citizens have, they must not be left on their own nor on the margins of the society in spite of the serious crisis that the health protection system is currently in.

Persons living with HIV

As part of its preventive programmes, every year Ministry of Health allocates funds for the National Programme for Prevention against HIV/AIDS, which is implemented in the form of: epidemiological research and control; laboratory research; education of health workers; and education of the general population in the Republic of Macedonia. In 2009 civil organisations were for the first time recognised as implementers of preventive activities between the young population, above all due to the fact that preventive activities for the young are covered with the second round of the Global Fund project (2009-2013). In 2011 in the framework of this programme funds have been allocated to strengthen the capacities of PLHIV and to procure condoms and lubricants for persons who belong to the vulnerable and hard to access groups. The challenge still remains to find out adequate mechanisms for the civil associations to get involved in the implementation of preventive activities (accreditation of civil organisations).³¹

The National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) plays the central role in the dedication of the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** and also in the decision-making in a participative process. The Secretariat of the national Coordination Mechanism as a separate entity was constituted in the course of 2010 and is administered by the association HERA, and chaired by the President of the NCM and his role is to technically support and organize the work of this body, and also of its work groups. In the course of 2010 the Secretariat initiated the implementation of activities to strengthen the capacities of this body with the purpose to improve the role of NCM in all processes relating to HIV on the national level, and this strengthening process of NCM is planned to continue in the course of 2011 through an expert organisation for technical assistance to the NCM with the purpose of creating an efficient national multi-sectorial body for successful management with HIV and tuberculosis.

³¹ Programme for Protection of the Population against HIV/AIDS 2011, The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 7

At the end of 2009 a work group *Stronger Together* was formed for support and self-help to persons living with HIV, which represents the first form of self-organisation of this community in the Republic of Macedonia. This group operates autonomously within HERA, with the intention to grow into an independent civil association in the future. From 10 members at the moment of foundation the number has increased to 14 by the beginning of 2011. Some of the members communicate individually and with other members of the community for the purpose of providing mutual support. The major objective of *Stronger Together* is to provide an improved, better quality and more dignified life for all persons living with HIV in Macedonia. In that sense, the group lobbies for continuous access to antiretroviral therapy and quality health protection, provision of mutual support, self-help and socialization of PLHIV, and also protection of their civil and human rights.³²

Republic of Macedonia is a country with low HIV prevalence, with the lowest number of registered positive HIV cases among the countries in the south-eastern region.

According to data from the Public Health Institute, in the period from 1987, when the first HIV case was registered, until the end of 2010 a total of 134 persons living with HIV (PLHIV) have been registered in the Republic of Macedonia. More than half of the total number of PLHIV have been registered over the past 6 years, above all due to the increased accessibility to services for voluntary and reliable counselling and HIV testing in the country, which have been established and strengthened through the grant by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.³³

In 2005 **the first centre for treatment, care and psycho-social support to PLHIV was opened** at the initiative of the association HERA and the Clinic for Infectious Diseases and Febrile States. Since 2005 the antiretroviral therapy has been provided in the Republic of Macedonia with the support from the grant by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; as of 2010 the obligation for procurement of ART was assumed by the Ministry of Health by way of allocating funds to procure ART in the framework of the HIV prevention programme.³⁴

32 Annual Report 2009, HERA Association for Health Education and Research

33 Report on the Epidemiological Status of HIV, Public Health Institute, 2010

34 National Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2007-2011, Ministry of Health

Situation with the Roma in the health protection system of the Republic of Macedonia

Similar to the last two years, in the past period no special activities have been implemented relating to the Roma in the field of access to health services, although the Roma are beneficiaries of the general programmes developed by the Ministry of Health. There is an improvement in the mobilization of the health workers to implement the Action Plan of the Decade. Following the instructions by the Ministry of Health, health workers from several towns in the country have sought contacts and cooperation with the Roma NGOs with the purpose to out-reach to the Roma community.

In its efforts to implement health protection, Ministry of Health, through its Public Health Programme, is obliged to improve and standardize the quality of health protection by way of modernizing the public health protection and creating conditions and policies for equal access to health protection, especially for the vulnerable groups. However, as in many other cases, this governmental policy is not being enforced, and the same counts for the other policies adopted for the improvement of the situation of the Roma. In addition to this, the Roma remain excessively underrepresented as medical staff in health protection institutions.

Finally, in relation to the challenges the Roma are facing in receiving quality health services, it is important to say that for over 3 years now Šuto Orizari, the largest Roma municipality in Macedonia, lacks a functional gynaecological office. The Health Education and Research Association HERA is the only one providing gynaecological services twice a week through the Youth Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Health “I Want to Know”.

2.5. Institutional Competences In The Field Of Protection Of The Elderly Persons

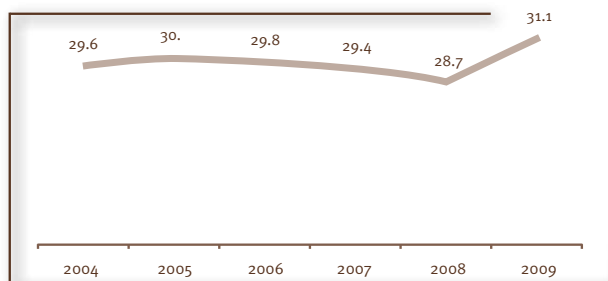
The institutional protection for long-term care for the elderly persons is regulated by the Law on Social Protection. The elderly persons have the right to be placed in social protection institutions in competence of the local self-government in 4 public and several private homes for elderly persons. Out of the total number of the elderly persons in the country, merely 0.3% of the elderly persons aged above 65 have been placed in these facilities. According to EU standards, the institutional placement capacities of a country should cover 3-5% of the elderly population, which imposes the need to open new homes for the elderly persons (Social Work Institute). Institutional protection of the impaired persons has a long tradition here and is organised in 3 institutions.

The non-institutional protection for long-term care is operational within the systems of social and health protection in several forms of services. The part of the Law on Health Protection that speaks about implementation of primary and preventive health protection has envisaged two types of protection outside the institutions on the primary level: home nursing services, and house calls. Home nursing services pay visits to patients in their own homes, mainly to provide advisory services for women in childbed and babies, for the elderly persons, and for the chronic disease persons; but the number of such visits is very small due to the biggest of all obstacles that such services are facing with: insufficient field vehicles. The home nursing service is available in only 36 municipalities out of the total of 85 on the national level (Social Policy Review, No. 5, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2010).

3. VULNERABLE (AT-RISK) GROUPS IN RELATION TO POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

For a longer period of time now the state of affairs with regard to poverty in the Republic of Macedonia has been showing high quotients. The data show that around one-third of the citizens in Macedonia live under the poverty line.

Figure 1: Percentage of the poor persons in the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2004-2009



Source: State Statistical Office

These data are quite concerning, especially if we consider that this is a rather continuous trend in this country. In such conditions it seems to be particularly important to accentuate the widely accepted thesis that economic development is a precondition for a sustainable and long-term poverty reduction. Before the economic crisis the Republic of Macedonia in a period of 5 years noted a solid economic growth. In the period from 2004 to 2008 the average economic growth of the GDP was 4.6%. Despite such economic growth, the level of poverty could not be improved; in fact, it decreased by just 0.9% (from 29.6 to 28.7). However, the impact of the economic growth is smaller if there is a high level of inequality in income and such economic growth can be negligible in societies where structural constraints prevent the poor from participation and enjoyment of the fruits of the economic development³⁵.

35 Hodges, A. et al, "Child Benefits and Poverty Reduction: Evidence from Mongolia's Child Money Programme", UNICEF Working Paper, May 2007, p. 2

As one would expect, in 2009, as a consequence from the economic crisis, poverty in Macedonia raised again to 31.1%, which is the highest level recorded ever in the Republic of Macedonia. According to the reports by the State Statistical Office the most vulnerable categories are: families who have 3 or more children; other households with children; the unemployed; families where the head of the family has no education, or has a low – primary education. It is evident that the largest share of people living in poverty reside in the rural or other urban areas. Another trend that can be noticed is reduction in the poor persons living in Skopje from 2007 (23.5%) to 2009 (12.8%), but on the expense of this the percentage of the poor persons in rural and in other urban areas keeps growing.

3.1. Poor And Socially Excluded Groups According To Their Living Standard (Incomes And Expenses) And Access To Material And Non-Material Goods

From the data analysed in this report, we can conclude that the poverty profile in our country in most cases is typified by a family that has several children, where the head of the family is uneducated or with a low level of education, and where there is no employed family member.

As shown in the table below, the highest levels of poverty are found in households with children. In 2009, the percentage of the poor persons in households with children was 36.8% as compared to 31.1% on the general level.

Table 1: Relative poverty by type of household

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total	29,6	30,0	29,8	29,4	28,7	31,1
Elderly households	18,2	22,2	24,5	26,7	22,8	24,5
Married couple with children	28,2	24,8	23,8	27,1	25,5	27,1
Other households with children	35,1	33,6	33,6	33,4	33,7	36,8
Households without children	25,2	27,1	26,9	26,3	25,8	28,5

Source: State Statistical Office

According to the data by the Statistical Office the most vulnerable groups are the multi-member households. In 2009, the share of the poor in households

with 5 members was 36.9%, whereas in households with 6 or more members it was 42.8%.

Table 2: Relative poverty by the number of members in the household

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total	29,6	30,0	29,8	29,4	28,7	31,1
1 member	20,2	19,6	24,3	26,9	25,3	22,8
2 members	16,5	20,8	23,9	24,2	21,2	24,6
3 members	22,5	21,6	17,4	18,8	19	22,3
4 members	23,5	22,1	21,4	25,6	24,4	26,1
5 members	29,5	31	29,9	30,6	33,2	36,9
6+ members	42,5	37,5	38,8	37,5	37,6	42,8

Source: State Statistical Office

The level of education of the head of the household also exerts influence on poverty.

In 2009, more than half of the households (54.2%) whose head of the family had no education lived under the poverty line.

Table 3: Poverty by education of the head of the household

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total	29,6	30,0	29,8	29,4	28,7	31,1
No education	57,9	46,8	53,9	53,7	53,2	54,2
Incomplete primary education	32,8	39,9	37,6	37,7	39,1	43,4
Primary education	38,4	38,2	39,8	37,4	35,4	42,6
Secondary education	22,9	23,4	22,8	23,6	23,4	25,7
Post-secondary education	17,4	17,6	17,4	17,4	21,5	13,0
Higher education	9,1	7,3	8,9	11	13,8	11,7

Source: State Statistical Office

Finally, unemployment is directly connected with poverty. The poverty rate is significantly higher in households where there is not a single employed member (40.5%), unlike households with 2 or more employed (21%). Nevertheless, the information that even one-fifth of the households having 2 or more employed members live under the poverty line indicates to the fact that the employment

status alone is not sufficient in particular cases; rather, the incomes high enough to satisfy the basic needs are also a necessary condition to come out of poverty.

Table 4: Relative poverty by economic status of the members in the household

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total	29,6	30,0	29,8	29,4	28,7	31,1
Unemployed	39	41,5	40,9	39,1	38,4	40,5
1 employed	27,8	28,2	28,1	30,7	30,6	32,5
2 or more employed	18,1	16,8	18,5	17,2	17,9	21,0

Source: State Statistical Office

3.2. Vulnerable (At-Risk) Categories In The Field Of Employment

In relation to vulnerable groups, there are two large groups of persons who seek jobs, and who are in particular vulnerable on the Macedonian labour market: the long-term unemployed, and the young.³⁶

It is very difficult to manage the long-term unemployment, but combination of the training with active counselling and information about job opportunities appears to be relatively effective in a number of EU countries.

In transition countries, where the demand for labour force is smaller, these measures are frequently inefficient.

The Republic of Macedonia, following the example of other European countries, has adopted two major employment programmes:

1. (passive) programmes for allowances for the unemployed, whereby the unemployed are given temporary monetary aid; and
2. employment services and other active programmes on the labour market (APLM).³⁷

These are the main challenges of the current state of affairs with regard to employment in the Republic of Macedonia:

³⁶ Document by the World Bank, Active Programmes in the Labour Market in the Republic of Macedonia, Report No. 45258-MK, September 2008

³⁷ Document by the World Bank, Active Programmes in the Labour Market in the Republic of Macedonia, Report No. 45258-MK, September 2008

- low level of creation of jobs as the result of slow economic development and lack of investments;
- widely spread grey economy;
- regional differences;
- social problems;
- extremely high unemployment among the young;
- very high unemployment rate of the long-term unemployed and unemployment of the vulnerable groups;
- gender inequality; and
- discrepancies between the education system and the demands of the labour market.³⁸

The National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020 considers the need for implementation of a comprehensive package of policies consisting of: reforms at micro-level; adequately combined and coordinated macroeconomic policies; and employment policies at all levels.

The envisaged reforms should improve the business environment, with the purpose to simplify the administration procedures to found and develop trade companies. These efforts, along with the measures to reduce the workforce expenses, should as a rule instigate the creation of new jobs and increase the demand for workforce.³⁹

However, here, too, it is important to mention that it is not sufficient to adopt national strategies and action plans, if these are not enforced. Unemployment is a complex phenomenon not unique only to the Republic of Macedonia. However, it does appear that this problem is assuming an image of mythologem or a problem that has no resolution, but can only be identified as a fact. This trend of obsessive repetition or identification of the unemployment problem seems to have been taking place for several decades now, and there are no indications that this problem is really dealt with, as results are apparently missing.

³⁸ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, National Strategy for Employment 2010, Skopje, December 2006

³⁹ National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020

3.3. Vulnerable (At-Risk) Categories In The Field Of Education

Considering the fact that education influences the risk from poverty, it is important to conclude that it is necessary to undertake significant measures to increase the inclusion of the population in the education process, in order for it to acquire higher or more adequate qualifications that would take them out of poverty. What is missing out is the link between the education process and the demands on the labour market, i.e. there is a need to provide adequate education and qualifications that will correspond to the real demands on the labour market. It is therefore inevitable to conclude that a greater attention should be paid to the field of education that people acquire, and also to its quality, so that it will not become redundant or low-priced on the labour market, and in such a way lead again to an increasing the number of persons living in poverty.

Also, great attention should be paid to the inclusion of women of different ethnic communities in the education process, so that they can achieve independence and an opportunity for an equal competition on the labour market, thus avoiding the risk from poverty to this specific group.

The data in relation to literacy have been collected in the censuses carried out between 1994 and 2002 and as such are out-dated. One must consider the fact that determination of literacy has not been made by way of verification, rather based on personal statements by the respondents. Literacy, being an important factor on the labour market that directly influences poverty, must be treated more seriously and adequate official methods will have to be introduced for its identification, so as to later be able to consider those data as valid indicators of how or to what extent it contributes to poverty.

When revising the National Action Plans of the Decade for Roma Inclusion⁴⁰, the education part therein identified the following problems: poor socio-economic status; high rate of children not enrolled in schools; unregistered children; lack of proper documents; child labour abuse; poor coordination between record keeping services and schools; lack of programmes for completion of education by children who had dropped out of schools; discriminations and stereotyping of the Roma, etc.

⁴⁰ The revision of the National Action Plans of the Decade for Roma Inclusion was carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia, supported by the OSCE mission and in cooperation with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights

3.4. Vulnerable (At-Risk) Groups In The Field Of Health Protection And Long-Term Care

What makes the Roma particularly vulnerable in relation to health protection, in most of the cases, is the distance of the health protection institutions from the place of their residence. These persons, who are otherwise found in a difficult economic situation, are forced to seek family doctors in other parts of the town, which is challenging for most of those who live at or below the poverty line, and who face economic weakness, discrimination, and insufficient and reduced in quality health services by the health protection institutions.

The specific needs and problems that the Roma women are facing impose certain measures, such as: free gynaecological examinations; financial support to plan the families; education in the field of sexual and reproductive health, etc., and this is a realistic need that should be considered when creating and implementing the policies that relate to this specific social group.

The Republic of Macedonia does not have a unified system for long-term care for the elderly persons, the bed-ridden, chronic disease persons, persons with impaired development and persons who need full assistance in organizing their daily activities. The real image of the situation with the elderly persons and the persons with special needs in relation to the long-term care services indicates to a series of shortcomings, such as: insufficient development of the aforesaid forms of non-institutional protection; lack of information of citizens about the rights they can accomplish and services they can use; inaccessibility of the institutions; insufficient education of the responsible persons in the institutions; lack of placement capacities in the institutions for the elderly persons and the persons with special needs; lack of service for home care and assistance and day-care centres for these beneficiaries.

3.5. Vulnerable (At-Risk) Categories Of Children

Most of the children in Macedonia (92%) live in traditional families with two parents and a total of 3 to 4 members in average for the families of Macedonian ethnic community, or 5 to 6 members in families of Albanian and Roma ethnic community⁴¹. In most of the families only one of the parents has a job. This is

41 Source: A study on child protection [www.unicef.org/tfyrmacedonia/.../Child-Poverty-Study-MKDs1\(3\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/tfyrmacedonia/.../Child-Poverty-Study-MKDs1(3).pdf)

in particular true for the average Albanian family, which is partly resulting from their traditional view of women and work – even 85% of mothers stay and work at home. When it comes to occupation, parents in the average Macedonian family have jobs, usually as physical/manual workers (qualified, semi-qualified or non-qualified).

Fathers in the average family of the Albanian ethnic community, are also manual/physical workers, whereas mothers are usually not employed. According to ZOUD measures of low abundance in families, 20% of the children who go to school in Macedonia live in poor families. A great share of ethnic Macedonian children (22%), as compared to the ethnic Albanian children (15%), live in poor families, whereas nearly half the Roma children live in poor families. On the other hand, the percentage of families where both parents have jobs is significantly lower (14%) and the share of categories of the lowest occupation of parents is much higher in families of ethnic Albanians (78%), as compared to Macedonian families (49% and 59% respectively). This contradictory situation in which the children of the Albanian ethnic community (according to SIS) rank their families as richer than those of Macedonian children, in spite of the lower SES, indicates the complexity of the concept of poverty from the perspective of children and the inherent variability of the measure of poverty by ZOUD, when applied to different cultures, even when they cohabitate in the same region.

A study carried out in 2010 (Feasibility Study for the City of Skopje and the Rural Areas 2010)⁴² finds that one-third of the children without parents and parental care in the Republic of Macedonia, and also those who are at risk of losing their parental care, live in the area of the City of Skopje. Over the last three years the number of children without parental care has increased, especially because their parents abandon them, or are prevented from implementing their parenting right.

The number of families having conflicts or problems has increased, which makes them dysfunctional in implementing the parenting right; also increasing is the number of abused children and children victims of family violence.

42 Source: Feasibility study for city of Skopje+rural areas_2010_SOS Detsko Selo, Macedonia

3.6. Vulnerable (At-Risk) Categories From The Aspect Of Gender Equality

Representation of women in the economic active population is 38.6% in comparison to men whose share is 61.4% in this structure. Consequently, women dominate in the inactive population with 65%, whereas men participate in the structure of the inactive population with only 35%. Even in relation to employment the situation with the women is less favourable. In fact, in the structure of employed persons in our country men are represented by just 61.8% as compared to women with 38.2%.⁴³

The number of men employers totals to 25,193; women employers are just 7,275; this means that there are 3.5% men employers more than women. Self-employed are 69,100 men and 10,953 women or, in other words, the number of self-employed men is more than 6 times higher than the number of self-employed women.

Elaboration of special programmes for economic strengthening of women, which are non-existent in our country at the moment, would contribute to raising the employment rate in women, and to improving their position on the labour market. This is especially so because women with a higher level of education participate more in the economic active population on the labour market.

Some research and studies made into the labour market of the Republic of Macedonia have identified “the major factors that influence the low extent of activity of women on the labour market: tradition, culture, low level of education and acquired skills, ethnic background in combination with education, accessibility and the price of services for childcare and care for the elderl family members, discrimination on the labour market etc.”⁴⁴

In relation to primary education, the data from the State Statistical Office show that in the school year 2010/2011 out of the total enrolled 204,439 students 48.4% are female. The data for the same school year for secondary education show that the share of women is 48.1% out of the total enrolled 94,155 students. Out of the total 57,894 enrolled students in the school year 2009/2010, 30,408 or 52.5% were women.

⁴³ Work Force Survey, 2009, State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia

⁴⁴ Labour Market in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, A Study For The European Commission Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG, October 2009

It is also characteristic that women are more represented in the structure of the teaching staff in primary and secondary education. Namely, in primary education, 65.25% of the teaching staff are women, whereas their representation in the teaching staff in secondary education is 58.5%. However, this percentage is lower in relation to the share of women in teachers and associates in the higher education institutions, where they account for 47.2%.⁴⁵

It is important to mention that there is no significant difference in relation to the structure of the persons in 2010 who have acquired the scientific degree of Master or the title of Doctor of Sciences.⁴⁶ In 2010, out of the total number of persons who have acquired the scientific degree of Master, 58.2% were women; and 51% of the persons who have acquired the title of Doctor of Sciences.⁴⁷

3.7. Vulnerable (At-Risk) Categories From The Aspect Of Ethnic Background

From what has been said above it can be concluded that in consideration of the ethnic background, the Roma belong to the group of the most vulnerable, who also seem to be the most socially excluded. To a certain extent and by certain parameters, follow the Albanians, and then the others. This report outlines in most detail the exclusion of the Roma in the field of health protection and education, which does not mean that the exclusion of this ethnic community is smaller in other social spheres. On the other hand, and for the purpose of a more unified overview of the situation that will provide a clearer image in the field, it is important to expand the focus and cross-cut the data with the other ethnic groups, by all the parameters given above, so as to see the specificity of their particular social exclusion, i.e. to see whether and in what way a particular ethnic group is excluded.

The data provided above also lead to the conclusion that, according to the profile of poverty, the most excluded are again the Roma, then the Albanians, and then the others; among those, the most vulnerable are women and children.

⁴⁵ Information – Primary and Secondary Schools at the Beginning of the School Year 2010/2011, State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia

⁴⁶ Information – Masters of Sciences and Specialists; Doctors of Science 2010, State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia

⁴⁷ Information – PhDs, 2010, State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia

4.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and recommendations are the last part of this analysis and they derive from the discussions that were conducted as part of the campaign launched by the MAPP – One in Three Persons in Macedonia Leads a Patched Life, and also in direct communication that MAPP has had with the vulnerable groups and the poor categories of people. Of course, in the preparation of this report additional valid data were used from the research and analyses made in this specific area, that are listed below in the annex to this report. The conclusions and recommendations are divided by the specific topics treated above in this analysis and provide specific steps to manage and successfully resolve or improve the identified state of affairs.

4.1. Conclusions By The Different Fields (Institutions, Legislation, Social Protection, Employment, Education, Health Protection And Long-Term Care, Gender Issues, Ethnic Issues)

Health protection

- ▶ To improve the health status of the Roma population a multi-sectorial approach is required, that will include institutions for social and health protection and also the Ministry of Transport and Communications which is directly competent for the implementation of the action plans for housing. In living conditions that are far below the minimum standard for quality of life we cannot speak of health.
- ▶ Care for the mental health of children and the young is below the level of care for physical health. Programmes for promotion and prevention of mental health of this target group are not sufficiently represented, nor have a comprehensive character. Aside from Skopje, other towns do not have services intended for care of the mental health of this vulnerable category of citizens.

- ▶ The actual situation in the system of mental health in the Republic of Macedonia is very serious and concerning. The number of patients in the system for institutional protection of persons with problems in mental health is increasing, and the conditions for provision of this kind of protection are worsening.
- ▶ The existing methadone centres for substitution therapy for admission of patients with narcotic addictions have insufficient capacities, especially in the capital of Skopje.
- ▶ There is shortage of human resources (doctors and psychiatrists) in the existing methadone therapy centres and there are no additional options for treatment of narcotic addictions apart from the treatment with methadone and buprenorphine.
- ▶ In institutions for long-term care the need to develop palliative care is all the more imposing. The implementation of palliative care is closely linked to the foundation of the Sue Ryder Care hospices in Skopje and Bitola with accommodation capacity of 150 beds, 100% utilisation, and an average treatment time of 25-30 days. The hospices in fact are specialised institutions intended for the chronic disease persons and bed-ridden persons (carcinoma patients, cardiovascular disease patients, the elderly persons, persons with HIV/AIDS, etc.) whose stage of disease requires interdisciplinary and multi-professional approach in the treatment, temporarily or until their death. The existing homes for the elderly do not have programmes and units for palliative care.
- ▶ In order to improve and increase the quality of health protection for this category of persons it is necessary to reconstruct and adapt the health protection institutions in the country in accordance with the existing normative standards for persons with disabilities, and in the larger health protection institutions it is necessary to employ persons who can interpret sign language.
- ▶ The current model of financing the long-term care services in a home environment and in institutions is not sufficiently developed and does not satisfy the basic needs of the persons who are in need of long-term care.
- ▶ There is a weak coordination in the sense of financial sustainability of the long-term care services in a home environment and in institutions

(the weak coordination of care as part of the financial sustainability is a significant segment that should provide long-term care). For a good and enduring implementation of the long-term care system it is necessary to promote the model of public-private partnership in cooperation with the non-governmental sector and the local self-government units.

- ▶ The most evident form of the long-term care service is the institutional protection of the elderly and the chronic disease patients, but due the long waiting lists in the institutions, the long-term care cannot be provided adequately and timely. On the other hand, the existing forms of non-institutional protection are not sufficiently developed in the system of social protection, they are intended for just a small number of beneficiaries and are not accessible to socially excluded groups. Only about 1% of the total number of disabled persons placed in institutions have been deinstitutionalised and placed in the community based support services.
- ▶ The elderly are one of the most marginalised categories in the Republic of Macedonia and although there is a series of documents speaking for them and cover all sorts of measures for their protection, the problem remains of their enforcement. A very small portion of the envisaged measures have been realised, and the state continues to fail to allocate funds for the care for the elderly persons.
- ▶ The need for long-term care is most evident in the elderly persons who are exposed to a greatest risk of long-term states of chronic diseases causing additional physical or mental impairments. The impaired persons, being one of the vulnerable categories of the social system, are another group of beneficiaries of the social and health protection services. In the conditions of serious economic crisis where larger percentage of the population lives in any form of poverty or on the verge of poverty, and especially if it is considered that the population of this country is growing old, in conditions of an increasing unemployment where particularly vulnerable are the ones who lost their jobs or their right to pension, and are not in the situation to re-qualify, it is logical to assume that an increasing number of persons will have the need for this kind of protection and services and this should be taken into account.

- ▶ There is no financial framework for adequate support for implementation of the national strategy for HIV/AIDS and there are no mechanisms for significant funding of the activities relating to HIV by the local self-government and civil organisations.
- ▶ There are no preventive activities to stop the spreading of the virus and to inform the young population about HIV.
- ▶ There are no specific provisions in the Law on Non-Discrimination or other forms of legal regulations that protect PLHIV and those who are particularly vulnerable to HIV (MSM, PID, and SW) against discrimination.
- ▶ There is no assessment of the quality of services that are provided within the public health institutions, but also by the civil organisations that are involved in the provision of services for prevention, care and support to PLHIV and the groups who are at particular risk from HIV (MSM, SW and PID).

Children

Based on the information found in the Feasibility Study for the City of Skopje and the Rural Areas 2010⁴⁸, it has been identified that the protection of children without parents and parental care and those at risk of losing their parental care, the following conclusions were made:

- ▶ In spite of all the measures and activities undertaken on the national levels, the number of the children and families who live in poverty and social exclusion is still rather high, which itself represents a great risk for the children to be deprived of adequate parental care. Different forms of protection are applied for protection of children without parents and parental care, with a special accent on the non-institutional forms of protection, that are not represented in sufficient number and form to satisfy the needs of all children.
- ▶ The Government of the Republic of Macedonia in relation to social protection places the accent on policies for deinstitutionalisation and decentralisation; to measures for poverty and social exclusion management in the context of the capacities of families; and to promotion of forms of child protection based on family care.

⁴⁸ Source: Feasibility Study for the City of Skopje and the Rural Areas 2010, SOS Detsko Selo, Macedonia

- ▶ Research carried out for the purpose of this report show that majority of municipalities covered by the analysis actively work on the implementation of the National Programme for Social Protection of the Republic of Macedonia, through own programmes for the needs of citizens in their municipality. These are also open for cooperation and support initiatives from different social service providers (NGOs, private and public institutions, etc.) for the development and improvement of child protection in their municipalities.
- ▶ With the amendments of the Law on Protection of Children⁴⁹ published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 156/09, its transitional provisions lay down that as of 1 January 2010 the threshold amount of the average monthly income per family member for the accomplishment of the right to child allowance shall be 2,490 denars and, as of 2010, this will be harmonised with the increase in the costs of living for the previous year as published by the State Statistical Office, in January of the current year (the costs of living index in 2010 compared to that of 2009 has increased by 1.6% - Information by the SSO No. 4.1.11.01 of 3.01.2011).
- Research made for the purpose of preparation of this report shows differences in the development of the resources on the local level, but also initiatives by the local self-government to bring the services closer to the citizens.
- The local administration targets different groups of citizens and within their capacities develops programmes to support these citizens. Since the child and his family enjoy special protection by the state, and consequently by municipalities, in the forthcoming period it is necessary to undertake activities for improvement of the well-being of families and children for the purpose of achievement of the standards for quality living.
- To achieve these standards, the need has been identified to develop preventive programmes for preserving and strengthening the capacities of families and to develop programmes for access to quality education in the municipalities of the City of Skopje, with special accent on the rural areas of the municipalities.

⁴⁹ Source: <http://www.uslugi.gov.mk/zauslugi.aspx>

Gender equality

- ▶ Position of women in Macedonia is still based on traditional and patriarchal norms and values. Although lately the traditional roles of men and women in the home and in the family have changed, the exceptions from these roles in the rural areas are minimal.
- ▶ Although lately women are increasingly more represented and can be found on some key positions, unfortunately, due to the specific social and societal circumstances, they are still marginalised in the political and public life on the local level.
- ▶ Women face economic dependence, direct or indirect discrimination on the workplace, unequal opportunities, and a high level of unemployment.⁵⁰
- ▶ The number of employed men is higher than the number of employed women.
- ▶ The increase in the level of education is the reason for growth of the activity rate of the population, whereby the highest activity rate is noticed in the population with higher education.
- ▶ The employment growth rate is larger in men than that in women.
- ▶ With regards to unemployment, there is no larger difference between the genders, but this should be additionally analysed from different aspects.

Unemployment

- ▶ Resulting from the complex processes going on in the countries with a long-lasting transition (as is the case with our country), the long-term unemployment management may require creation of temporary jobs by way of public works or subsidised employment, in combination with workplace coaching and current job seeking assistance.

⁵⁰ On the Path to EU: A Contribution of the Civil Society Sector in the Creation of the Policy of Social Inclusion in the Republic Of Macedonia, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, 2007

4.2. Recommendations By Fields (Social Protection, Employment, Education, Health Protection And Long-Term Care, Gender Issues, Ethnic Issues)

Health protection

- ▶ One of the recommendations imposing itself after everything that has been said above is that a grave accent should be placed on the preventive health protection, as the most efficient and economically most justifiable way to preserve the health of the Roma population. For this purpose, the Health Education and Research Association HERA initiated the introduction of a new form of health work professionals – Roma Health Mediators⁵¹ who should facilitate the access to the accomplishment of the right to health and social protection for the Roma population. In that sense it is also recommended to involve a greater number of medical staff of the Roma ethnicity who will work on this issue.
- ▶ Establishment of a network of developmental counselling units where interdisciplinary teams will work so as to provide support and assistance to children with developmental impairments and to their families, with the task to refer these beneficiaries to the adequate health protection institutions and to other existing community-based services.
- ▶ To reconstruct and adapt the health protection institutions in the country in accordance with the existing normative standards for persons with disabilities, and in the larger health protection institutions to employ a staff member who can interpret sign language.
- ▶ To design education programmes for the health workers and associates on the levels of primary, secondary and tertiary protection so as to train them about the specific diseases relating to the disabled persons.
- ▶ There is more than evident need to open services for mental health for children and the young in the communities, to form centres for prevention and treatment of trauma and centres to work with children victims

51 http://hera.org.mk/webcontent/file_library/materijali_mkd/Voveduvanje%20na%20RZM%20vo%20Makedonija.pdf.

of abuse, especially considering that this negative trend is getting all the more current.

- ▶ It is necessary to implement preventive and promotional programmes in the field of mental health of children and the young, especially in the primary health protection.
- ▶ The actual situation in the system of mental health in the Republic of Macedonia is very serious and concerning. The number of patients in the system for institutional protection of persons with problems in mental health is increasing, and the conditions for provision of this protection are worsening.
- ▶ It is necessary to make an assessment of the real situation (in the context of the existing international standards – as basic indicators) and to identify the needs for establishment of a network of institutions for protection of persons with problems in their mental health for the purpose of implementation of the principles of accessibility (physical, geographic, financial), sustainability and quality of health protection.
- ▶ Provision of a continuous and sustainable system of procurement of antiretroviral therapy by the state (to place all the required medications on the positive list and to register them with the pharmaceutical companies).
- ▶ The absence of a strategy for resistance to antiretroviral therapy, meaning that such a strategy must be developed.
- ▶ Strengthening of the capacities of the PLHIV community and their proper and adequate inclusion in the creation, implementation and monitoring of the policies, programmes and services relating to HIV.
- ▶ Sustainability of the already established preventive programmes and services for the vulnerable and hard to access groups who are at a particular risk from HIV.
- ▶ It is necessary to develop the long-term care services within the capacities of the existing systems and structures. In accordance with the trend of the demographic ageing of the population, the increased number of chronic disease patients and the number of persons with impairment, the provision of long-term care services at the moment cannot provide quality care for all persons, especially not to the socially excluded groups.

- ▶ In order to have several home care centres for the elderly and bed-ridden persons and persons with special needs, it is necessary to make a needs assessment for the home care in each municipality separately.
- ▶ Provision of a quality education for the staff involved in the long-term care services, both in a home environment and in institutions. Majority of the staff is not sufficiently educated so as to give all-inclusive services to persons in need of long-term care. Education of an adequate staff is a great challenge, especially when the services need to be provided in a home environment.
- ▶ For a good and durable implementation of the long-term care system it is necessary to promote the model of public-private partnership in cooperation with the non-governmental sector and the local self-government units.
- ▶ In the Republic of Macedonia there are citizens who have no income, are above 65 years of age, and have accomplished no rights to pension. The number of the elderly who live in the rural areas and who are not in the position to use the services of the soup kitchens and to accomplish their right to social protection is very high. These persons, too, need home care and assistance.
- ▶ After all this, it becomes obvious that the need of introduction of the model of long-term care is increasingly more evident in the Republic of Macedonia. This model is intended for service beneficiaries who are provided with access to quality social and health protection in institutions and outside.

Gender equality

- ▶ The rate of activity in women, in the sense of employment and employability, is stagnating, and this situation needs to be studied further so as to locate the essential reasons contributing to it, and to successfully amend it.
- ▶ It is necessary to integrate (mainstreaming) the gender perspective in all national and local public policies, so as to provide a comprehensive treatment of gender equality contrary to the separation approach that

has yielded no results so far in the improvement of gender equality in Macedonia.

- ▶ Special programmes for the economic strengthening of women need to be introduced.
- ▶ It is necessary to strengthen the capacities and to fully define the role of the gender machinery.

Unemployment

- ▶ It is important to say that it is not sufficient just to write and adopt the national strategies and action plans, if they are not to be enforced. Unemployment is by all means a complex phenomenon that is not unique only to the Republic of Macedonia. However, it seems that this problem assumes the image of a kind of mythologem or a problem that has no solution or can just be identified as such. This trend of obsessive repetition i.e. mere identification of the problem with the unemployment, seems to be taking several decades, and there are still no serious indications that it is really being dealt with, as the results are evidently absent.

5. CONTACTS

Useful links and contacts

- <http://hrbaportal.org/>
- <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=221>
- <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=531>
- <http://www.unescobkk.org/en/education/appeal/programme-themes/lessons-learned-project/hrba-links/hrba-links/introduction/>
- <http://www.unescobkk.org/en/education/appeal/programme-themes/lessons-learned-project/hrba-links/hrba-links/general-documents/>
- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx>
- <http://www.unicef.org/rightsresults/index.html>
- <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/approaches.htm>
- <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/>
- <http://www.amnesty.ie/>

Additional links

I. Council of Europe

Statute of the organisation, relevant conventions, recommendations and political documentation, and the legal practice of the Court of Human Rights; all available at www.coe.int

The official and research documentation in the field of human rights; available at www.coe.int

Other publications: *Courts and the Legal Enforcement of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Comparative Experiences of Justiciability*, Geneva, International Court of Justice – ICJ, 2008

II. European Union

EU Treaties, relevant legal and political documents; available at europa.eu; <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Official reports and other publications in the field of social rights; available at www.ec.europa.eu/social

Judicial practice of the European Court of Justice; available at www.uria.europa.eu
Mental Health in the National Strategic Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010: Analysis of the National Reports by MHE members; www.mhe-sme.org

How to Promote Ageing Well in Europe: Instruments and Tools Available to Local and Regional Actors, October 2009

Developing Indicators for the Protection, Respect and Promotion of the Rights of the Child in the European Union, March 2009; available at www.fra.europa.eu

European Financial Inclusion Network – EFIN; www.fininc.eu

European Anti-Poverty Network; www.eapn.org

Eurofound web page; www.eurofound.europa.eu

Undocumented Migrants' Right to Health and Education in Europe: Protection Needs vs. Immigration Control by Eve Geddie, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants – PICUM, published in the European Social Watch Report 2009

EU Policy on Labour Migration: Implications for Migrants' Rights by Nicola Flaminio and Rene Plaetevoet, published in the European Social Watch Report 2009

Eurochild, www.eurochild.org

Research Note No. 1: Housing and Social Inclusion by Erhan Özdemir and Terry Ward, produced for the European Commission by the Network on Income Distribution and Living Conditions of the European Observatory on the Social Situation and Demography, November 2009

2010 Report by the First ENAR Ad Hoc Expert Group on Promoting Equality in Employment; www.enar-eu.org

The Social and Employment Dimensions of the EU's Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs by Mary-Anne Kate of the Migration Policy Group, 2009

Migration and Diversity: A Rights-Based Approach to Migration (ENAR), December 2009

Poverty in Europe: Invisible borders – A Barrier to Inclusion, Caritas Europa Poverty Papers 2010, www.zeropoverty.org

III. Republic of Macedonia

Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and specific laws; available at the web page of the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia: www.sluzben-vesnik.org.mk

National Strategies and Action Plans, and other documents in the field of labour and social policy; available at www.mtsp.gov.mk

National Programmes and other strategic documents on relations between Macedonia and EU; available at www.sei.gov.mk

National Programmes and other documents in the field of health; available at www.moh.gov.mk

National Strategy for Housing and other documents under the competence of the Ministry of Transport and Communications; available at www.mtc.gov.mk

On the Path to EU: A Contribution of the Civil Society Sector in the Creation of the Policy of Social Inclusion in the Republic Of Macedonia; available at www.mtsp.gov.mk

Child Poverty Report, published by the UNICEF Skopje Office

Reports on the Progress of the Republic of Macedonia towards the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals; available at www.undp.org.mk

Reports on the Decade for Roma Inclusion, available at http://www.romadecade.org/mk_decade_watch_2008_2010

Employment Policy Review: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, International Labour Office and the Council of Europe, 2006; available at www.ilo.org

World Bank Document on Poverty Assessment in the Republic of Macedonia, 2007

Monitoring Reports on the different Council of Europe Conventions, available at www.coe.int

EU Progress Reports on the Republic of Macedonia, available at www.sei.gov.mk

Monitoring Reports on the different UN Conventions; available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc>

CIP – Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

316. 344. 233:316. 614 (497.7) "2010" (047)

364. 662:316. 614 (497.7) "2010" (047)

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