



European network against racism

ENAR Shadow Report 2011-2012

ENAR SHADOW REPORT

Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria

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Racism is a reality in the lives of many ethnic and religious minorities in the EU. However, the extent and manifestations of this reality are often unknown and undocumented, especially in official data sources, meaning that it can be difficult to analyse the situation and to establish solutions to it.

The ENAR Shadow Reports are produced to fill the gaps in the official and academic data, to offer an alternative to that data and to offer an NGO perspective on the realities of racism in the EU and its Member States. NGO reports are, by their nature, based on many sources of data - official, unofficial, academic and experiential. This allows access to information which, while sometimes not backed up by the rigours of academic standards, provides the vital perspective of those that either are or work directly with those affected by racism. It is this that gives NGO reports their added value, complementing academic and official reporting.

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1. Executive summary

Political and economic developments in 2011-2012 have facilitated the growth of racism and related discrimination. This report examines the various groups which are victims of discrimination because of their ethnicity, nationality, culture, or religion. Roma, refugees, asylum seekers and Muslims frequently experience discrimination and must be protected.

Manifestations of racism and discrimination take place in every sphere of life on a daily basis. Unfortunately, many politicians and decision-makers ignore, or flatly deny, the problem of discrimination. Some high profile politicians have made racist statements in order to win cheap political points. The problems of hate speech, violence and hostility based on racial or religious grounds are underestimated by the public, the media and at an institutional level. There were many instances of hate crimes in the form of physical attacks and of damage to property due to **religious intolerance**. Many such incidents are related to the activities of 'extreme nationalist' political parties such as the far-right ATAKA (represented in the Bulgarian Parliament) and IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation). In the case of Roma, discrimination is coupled with a background of poverty and social exclusion.

The report examines racism and related discrimination in the following areas: employment, education, housing, health, criminal justice, access to goods and services, political participation, media and criminal justice. The report also provides a civil society assessment and critique of the situation in Bulgaria and an update on significant political and legal developments. Chapter 5 of Shadow Report deals with the particular focus of this edition - Islamophobia and the situation of the **Muslim communities** in Bulgaria. In 2011 Muslims in Bulgaria were victims of unprecedented violence.

High unemployment among ethnic minorities, especially in Roma communities is the most serious obstacle to effective integration.

- **Employment recommendations:** train the municipal authorities to better tackle the problems of integration of asylum seekers or refugees; institutional funding of the labour mediators in the Roma communities and social mediators for refugees and asylum seekers
- **Education recommendations:** segregation in education must end; develop a universal national program for the prevention of early school leaving among Roma children; provide access for children from segregated Roma neighborhoods to quality mainstream education outside of their neighborhoods; train teachers to work in a multiethnic environment.
- **Housing recommendations:** implement innovative projects and new policies in the construction of social housing in the municipalities; revise the Ordinances for access to municipal housing and remove the discriminatory provisions which limit access to such housing for foreign nationals who have been granted refugee and humanitarian status; provide for intensive social work as part of housing policies for homeless

people – those who receive housing should be provided, if necessary, with training to manage rental payments, maintain the property, develop parenting skills etc.

- **Healthcare recommendations:** finance the work of Roma health mediators; include of refugees in the national programmes for health prevention.

In terms of **access to goods and services**, access to places of entertainment, to financial services and to public transport continue to be problematic for some minority groups.

Racism and related discrimination in **political participation** is related to inadequate representation of ethnic minorities in Parliament and local authorities; the use of populist rhetoric by political parties which stimulates negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities; limited political participation of third country nationals.

In the context of **media**, some of the key problems continue to include ‘hate speech’ towards Roma, people of African descent and non-Orthodox Christians; promotion of racism on the internet and in social media; negative representation of Muslims, Roma and refugees.

In terms of **criminal justice**, ethnic and religious profiling in stop and search police practices and counter-terrorism measures continue to be common in Bulgaria. In parallel, racially motivated violence committed by neo-Nazi groups is on the rise. Ethnic and religious minorities are victims of racist violence and crimes of various forms - there have been a number of physical attacks directed against Jews, Muslims and non-Orthodox Christians in Bulgaria. Another concern is underreporting by victims due to lack of trust in the police and fears linked to lack of documents for asylum and further victimization. Immigrants have been especially vulnerable to arbitrary detention by the authorities and attacks by non- state groups.

The hostile attitude of the government and the majority of the Parliament towards the Commission for protection against discrimination (CPD) continues. This is worrying, especially as the adoption of the Law on Protection against Discrimination and the creation of the CPD is considered to be a very significant achievement.

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3. Introduction

The report seeks to provide an alternative perspective on racism and racial/religious discrimination in Bulgaria. The report covers the period between March 2011 and March 2012. The Shadow Report draws from a range of sources including statistics and data from the National Statistical Institute; expert data and analyses; specific data and statistics requests by the authors; data and reports from members of ENAR-Bulgaria; reports from NGOs; project reports; annual reports of national and international human rights organisations and state institutions' media publications; personal investigations by the authors etc.

During the period covered by the report many positive changes took place, including a number of important legislative and institutional reforms. However, many serious violations of human rights occurred involving discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds, violations of freedom of speech and of religious freedom.

The Roma community is the most marginalized and discriminated against minority group in Bulgaria. The Roma population in Bulgaria is one of the highest in Europe. According to the national census¹ there are 329 762 Roma in Bulgaria or 4.42% of the entire population. The Council of Europe estimates that the Roma make up 10.33% of the Bulgarian population.² Other large ethnic groups which are vulnerable to racism and discrimination include the **Turkish** and **Muslim** communities. The Muslim community has become highly visible and politicized, attracting much media attention. **Muslims**, are particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination, for example when the person is also a foreign national. **Undocumented immigrants** in Bulgaria include long-term residents in the country who find themselves in a legal vacuum for decades without being able to exercise their fundamental rights.

In the legal field, Bulgaria is in the process of transposing relevant EU directives.

The special focus of this report is on Islamophobia and the situation of the **Muslim communities** in Bulgaria. This will be discussed in Chapter 5. Extreme nationalist **political parties** (IMRO, ATAKA and BNU) are the driving force for anti-Islamic discourse and sentiment in the country. 20 May 2011 saw an unprecedented **attack against the Banyabashi Mosque in Sofia**. This will be discussed in detail later in the report.

Chapter 4 provides an update on significant political and legal developments from 2011/2012 including acceptance of a new National Roma Integration

¹ National Statistics Institute, 2011 Census (final data), available online at www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Census2011final.pdf accessed 20 September 2012

²² European Commission. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.COM(2011), 173 final, Brussels, 5.4.2011, 15, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

Strategy and changes in migration, asylum and integration policies. Chapter 6 looks at racism and related discrimination in all collective areas of society. It addresses the manifestation of racial discrimination in employment, education, housing, health, access to goods and services, political participation, media and criminal justice. Chapter 7 assesses the situation in Bulgaria from a civil society perspective. Chapter 8 lists examples of good practice by NGOs. Finally, Chapter 9 makes a number of recommendations while Chapter 10 concludes the Shadow Report.

Combating racism and discrimination in Bulgaria is a slow and difficult process. Statistics, data and examples in the Shadow Report reveal higher rates of hate crime than official figures would suggest. On a positive note, anti-racist policies are expanding and NGOs are gaining strength, promoting equality and countering racism.

4. Significant developments in the country during the period under review

Both the presidential and local authority elections took place in October 2011. Rosen Plevneliev was elected as President with Margarita Popova as Vice President, both candidates from the GERB party. GERB was also successful in local authority elections.

The following developments regarding discrimination and equality legislation should be noted:

- Adoption by the Council of Ministers on December 21 2011 of the **National Strategy for Integration of Roma (2012 - 2020)**³. This strategic document has been drafted in accordance with the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (adopted from European Commission on 5 April 2011).⁴ It enhances measures in the four basic areas outlined by the EU: employment, education, healthcare and housing.⁵ The section on 'Supremacy of law and non-discrimination' aims at guaranteeing civic rights to all, particularly women and children, to protect public order, and to counter acts of intolerance and hate speech.⁶
- In March 2012 the new School Education Act was adopted. Unlike previous acts, it specifically provides for educational integration of Roma children. Its principles include equal access, preservation of ethno-cultural education and **protection from discrimination (on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic background, etc.)**⁷
- On April 13 Parliament approved two major amendments to the Criminal Code⁸ regarding hate speech. Art. 162 was amended, introducing a minimum sentence of one year's imprisonment. Art 419a was introduced providing sanctions for those 'who have justified, renounced or rudely belittled crimes against the peace of humanity'.

³ *National council on cooperation on ethnic and integration issues: National Strategy of Bulgaria for Integration of Roma (2012-2020)*, (Original title in Bulgarian: Национален съвет за сътрудничество по етническите и интеграционните въпроси: 'Национална стратегия на Република България за интегриране на ромите 2012-2020') available online at <http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=35> accessed 28 July 2012

⁴ European Commission. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. COM(2011), 173 final, Brussels, 5.4.2011, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

⁵ *National Strategy for integration of Roma (2012-2020)*, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Национална стратегия на Република България за интегриране на ромите 2012-2020') <http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=35&id=1741> accessed 15 August 2012

⁶ Ibid, p.13

⁷ *Concept for the Law on school education and educational integration of Roma children*, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Концепция за Закон за училищното образование и образователната интеграция на ромските деца') <http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=775&lang=1> accessed 5 August 2012

⁸ Criminal code, <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/1589654529>, accessed 20 September 2012

A number of developments should be noted in the fields of migration, asylum and integration:

- By June 2011 Bulgaria had fully transposed the EU Blue Card Directive into national law.⁹ This modified the administrative procedure for obtaining work permits for foreign nationals in Bulgaria. However, a strict 'labour market test' remains in place for all immigrants, with the exception of those whose family members are Bulgarian nationals. It states that access to the Bulgarian labour market is granted to third country nationals, only if their prospective employer proves that no other Bulgarian or EU national or other permanent status holder living in Bulgaria is able to perform the job. This is seen as the reason why in the one-year-period since the transposition of the EU Blue Card Directive (i.e. from June 2011 till June 2012) Bulgaria has issued Blue Cards to a total of only eight third country nationals.
- In February 2012 Bulgaria ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Conventions on the Reduction of Statelessness. These international treaties are now part of the Bulgarian legal order and supersede contradictory national laws. So far however the conventions have not been fully implemented in national law.¹⁰
- On February 23, 2011 the Council of Ministers adopted the National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (2011 - 2020) and The Action Plan for 2011 for implementation of the National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (adopted by CM on July 15, 2011).¹¹ The goal is to successfully control migration and integration and to prevent and counter illegal migration.
- The National Program for Refugee Integration of Bulgaria (2011 – 2013)¹² contains the basic principles and goals for the integration of refugees who have been granted protection.
- In April 2011 a National Council on Migration Policy was established¹³ as a centralised institution for coordination between the structures involved in migration processes. The Minister of Internal Affairs was appointed as chairman.

In recent years, NGOs have played an increasingly important role, participating in commissions and inter-institutional groups, proposing specific amendments to anti-discriminatory texts and national strategies for vulnerable groups. In 2010 17 NGOs lobbied in Parliament for changes in the Law of Foreigners in Bulgaria. In 2011 the Ombudsman convened a meeting of

⁹ Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment

¹⁰ Further legislative action is required by the Bulgarian state in order to transpose and make executable the provisions

¹¹ National strategy on migration, asylum and integration (2011-2020), <http://www.aref.government.bg/>, accessed 20 September 2012

¹² National Strategy for refugee integration in Bulgaria (2011-2013), <http://www.aref.government.bg/>, accessed 20 September 2012

¹³ Ministry of Interior: National Council on migration policy, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Национален съвет по миграционна политика*), http://www.mvr.bg/ns_migracionna_politika/default.htm accessed 25 August 2012

NGOs and ministers where he suggested introducing the term 'status of tolerance' in reference to undocumented migrants. As a result of the project of the Open Society Institute 'Civil Observation in the Special Homes for Temporary Accommodation of Foreigners in Bulgaria'¹⁴ (February 2012) the National Council on Migration Policy adopted the recommendations of the project. The Council advised the inter-institutional group working on the changes to the Law of Foreigners in Bulgaria to propose the adoption of the term 'status of tolerance'.¹⁵ In the beginning of 2012 representatives of BRC participated in a workgroup which was appointed to draft a Bill for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For the first time provisions relating to police violence were included, specifying that the police may only use guns when 'absolutely necessary'. The Bill is expected to be adopted in the second half of 2012.¹⁶

For the second consecutive year members of ENAR-Bulgaria sent a Protest Letter to the Mayor of Sofia and the Prime Minister concerning the **public demonstration of racial and neo-Nazi ideas** in Bulgaria at the so-called 'Lukov march'. Every year since 2004, the Bulgarian National Union organises this march with the support of 'patriotic' organisations and fascist groups in the name of the leader of the 'Alliance of the Bulgarian national legions'– General Hristo Lukov, who is known for his anti-Semitic views. The march exploits patriotic feelings through neo-Nazi propaganda. ENAR supported the efforts of the Bulgarian National Coordination to call off the Lukov march. In spite of their efforts, the Sofia municipality did not prohibit the march; over 1,000 people took part and distributed pamphlets to onlookers.¹⁷

ENAR-Bulgaria also sent a letter to the Prosecutor General and the prosecutor responsible for the investigation of attempted murder of Angel Pertov in Katunitsa on 23 September 2011 (see chapter 6.8 for more details). The resolution of the 'the Katunitsa case' is vital to restore the trust of Bulgarian citizens in the judicial system. ENAR's letter urges the Prosecutor General and the Overseeing Prosecutor 'to grant authorisation to publicise the facts in the investigation of this case due to the substantial public interest, as

¹⁴ Report 'Civil Observation in the Special Homes for Temporary Accommodation of Foreigners in Bulgaria', http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=520, accessed 20 September 2012

¹⁵ Open Society Institute: 'Lost in translation: major problems in special homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners', (Original title in Bulgarian: Институт Отворено общество: Изгубени в превода: основни проблеми в специалните домове за временно настаняване на чужденци), http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=521 accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁶ 'The Ministry of Interior takes responsibility for political violence', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'МВР поема отговорност за полицейското насилие'), <http://www.dnes.bg/obshtestvo/2012/02/13/mvr-poema-otgovornost-za-policeiskoto-nasilie.151243> accessed 25 August 2012

¹⁷ Novinite.bg: '1000 participated in the controversial Lukov March', (Original title in Bulgarian: 1000 учестваха в противоречивия „Луков марш“), <http://novinite.bg/articles/6418/1000-uchastvaha-v-protivorechiviya-Lukov-marsh>, accessed 20 September 2012

the disclosure of such facts would in no way be detrimental to the discovery of the truth and the further course of the case.’ The Secretariat of ENAR supported the Protest letter and ‘calls on the Prosecutor General to conduct a prompt and impartial investigation and to inform society about the progress and results of the investigation.’ The prosecutor neither responded to ENAR nor published any information on the investigation.

While 2010 saw positive media coverage and public support for immigrants and asylum seekers¹⁸ this came to an end in 2011/2012. This decline in public perception was sparked by a crime committed at the beginning of 2012 by an asylum seeker in Sofia that received wide media coverage. In the aftermath of the event, officials claimed that it was necessary to detain asylum seekers while their applications are pending, in the name of national security and public order. Some individual asylum seekers who had been unlawfully detained and held in solitary confinement for prolonged periods of time were publicly described as ‘aggressive’¹⁹ such as in the case of Mr. Said Kadzoev.²⁰

On a positive note, the period covered by this report saw the establishment of an NGO dedicated to the monitoring of immigration detention centres in Bulgaria between January and June 2011. The project was undertaken by the Open Society Institute and implemented as part of the Community Policing Strategy of the Ministry of Interior. Its methodology included visits by civil society volunteers at the centres and unlimited access by the volunteers to the detainees and their files. Following the visits, the volunteers established reports, which became the basis of the final report presented at a public conference and published online²¹.

¹⁸ ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011. *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria*, p.52, <http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/shadow%20report%202010-11/3.%20Bulgaria.pdf>, accessed 20 September 2012

¹⁹ See, e.g., the interview given by the head of the immigration detention centre in Sofia, Mr. Yotko Andreev, to the mass media ‘24 hours’ (a popular daily newspaper in Bulgaria) - the publication is headed ‘A Syrian with false name attacks women in Sofia’ (in Bulgarian: Сириец с фалшиви имена напада жени в София) <http://www.24chasa.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=1225863> (accessed on 24 August 2012)

²⁰ For further information on the case of Mr. Said Kadzoev please refer to ‘Said Kadzoev and immigrants in the EU mark a victory with today’s judgment in Luxembourg’ published by LCRI at <http://lcrien.wordpress.com/2009/12/01/said-kadzoev-and-immigrants-in-the-eu-mark-a-victory-with-todays-judgment-in-luxembourg/> (accessed on 24 September 2012)

²¹ The English language version of the report is available online at http://www.osf.bg/cyeds/downloads/busmanci_ENG.pdf (accessed on 24 August 2012)

5. Special focus: Islamophobia

According to the 2011 Census,²² there are 546 004 Sunni Muslims, 27 407 Shia **Muslims** and 3 728 persons who identify themselves only as Muslims in Bulgaria. Another large ethnic group which is vulnerable to discrimination is the **Turkish**. In last year's Shadow Report we looked at the history and background of the Turkish society in Bulgaria at length.²³ There has been a significant drop in the Turkish population: from 747 000 in 2001 to 588 000 in 2011 i.e. a drop of 21.2%. Their proportion of the total population of the country in 2011 is 9.4% and in 2011 – 8.8%.²⁴

The **Pomaks or Bulgarian Muslims** are particularly vulnerable. As explained in the previous annual Shadow report, the issue of the Pomak identity has been controversial. The prevailing opinion is that Pomaks are of Bulgarian ethnic descent, but belong to the Islamic faith. During the Communist era there were several attempts to convert them to Christianity. Pomaks were forced to change their names and were subjected to other culturally restrictive policies. In recent years, there have been attempts to have Pomak recognised as an autonomous ethnic identity.

The most representative research over past 25 years on the Muslims communities in Bulgaria revealed that family was the highest ranked value among Muslim communities – 95.4% (respect for the family turns out to be more important than respect for religious or state institutions). Work was the second highest ranked value (93.3%). The majority of respondents stated that their primary sources of income were their salary (45.1%), pensions and social help (25.7%). Religion only ranks fourth (48.6%) – 41% do not even visit Mosques. However, 88.2% educate their children and another 96.1% bury their relatives according to the Islamic traditions. 79.6% of the respondents say that wearing headscarves at school is unacceptable. When asked if the girls are faced with the dilemma 'headscarves' or 'education', one Imam, generally noted for his conservative views, replied that he would advise them to choose education.²⁵

²² National Statistics Institute, 2011 Census (final data), available online at www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Census2011final.pdf accessed 20 September 2012

²³ Shadow Report 2010-2011: Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar.eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 28 July 2012.

²⁴ The research project 'Attitudes of the Muslims in Bulgaria, 2011' by New Bulgarian University and Alpha Reserch Agency is focused entirely on Muslim communities in Bulgaria and studies the dynamics and attitudes of the different Muslim communities after the end of the XX c. and following the acceptance of the country in NATO and the EU.

²⁵ Ivanova, Evgenia, *Does radical Islam have grounds in Bulgaria*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Има ли радикалният ислям почва в България*), Bulgarian Helsinki Committee-Obectiv 195, December 2011, <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/prof-evgeniia-ivanova/2011-12/ima-li-radikalniyat-islyam-pochva-v-blgariya/> accessed 25 August 2012

Muslims are vulnerable to discrimination and harassment in Bulgaria. While the overall unemployment rate is around 12%, this ratio is around 35-40% among the Muslim community. Foreign nationals who are also Muslims are particularly vulnerable to multiple discrimination.

In 2011 anti-Islamic crime in Bulgaria continued to pose serious problems for Muslims. 2011 saw unprecedented acts of violence towards Muslims. The State Agency for National Security forcibly entered the homes of Muftis and Imams in October 2010.²⁶ At the end of December 2011 charges were filed against 12 Imams and Muftis on the basis of art. 109 in conjunction with art. 108 of the Criminal Code (membership of a group that spreads Fascist or other anti-nationalist ideology) and on art. 164, par. 1 (spreading of hatred on religious grounds).

There has been a discernible increase in Islamophobic activities in Bulgaria and anti-Muslim demonstrations are becoming more and more pronounced. Muslims are often subject to verbal abuse, harassment and even to acts of aggression.

Extreme nationalist **political parties** (IMRO, ATAKA and BNU) are the driving force for anti-Islamic discourse in the country. On 20 May 2011 **the Banyabashi Mosque in Sofia** was attacked. At about 1pm, minutes before the Friday prayer, a group of 150 supporters of the political party ATAKA organised outside of the mosque.²⁷ They chanted insults and threw eggs, paving stones and other hard objects at the worshippers, who did not respond. Some of the ATAKA supporters attempted to jump over the fence of the mosque and attempted to place their loud-speakers inside. Violence then broke out between the protesters and worshippers. Five worshippers were seriously injured – one with severe head trauma- after being hit by hard objects thrown by protesters. The Prosecutor's Office launched two pre-trial investigations against unknown perpetrators and one prosecution against two people arrested during the incident. There have been no results to date.

The Media also play an important role in forging a negative public opinion of Muslims. On October 6 2010 security and intelligence officers performed simultaneous operations in the villages of Rhodope Mountains purportedly to halt the fundamentalist activities of a radical Islamic organisation. During the operation 14 local clerics were arrested. All media outlets carried sensationalist headlines such as '*The Security Services hit radical Islamists*', '*Sleeping terrorist cells were discovered*', '*A non-registered branch of a terrorist organisation was struck*' and others.²⁸ These titles covered the front

²⁶ Bulgarian Helsinki committee, Annual report 2011, http://www.bghelsinki.org/media/uploads/annual_reports/2011.pdf, accessed 20 September 2012

²⁷ Dnes. Bg: Повдигнати са обвинения на 7 души по случая 'Баня Баши', <http://www.dnes.bg/politika/2012/03/30/povdignati-sa-obvineniia-na-7-dushi-po-sluchaia-bania-bashi.155328>, accessed 20 September 2012

²⁸ Snews.bg: *Ministry of interior and DANS hit islamic fundamentalists in Rhodope Mountains*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *МВР и ДАНС удариха ислямски фундамендалисти в Родопите*), <http://www.snews.bg/bg/statiya/mvr-i-dans-udariha-islyamski-fundamentalisti-v-rodopite:938>, accessed 20 September 2012

pages for weeks. Subsequently, no evidence connecting the arrested people with any terrorist or radical organisation was found and the individuals have been released.

School curricula and organisation also contribute to the intolerance and Islamophobia in the public opinion and bring about prejudices and stereotypes against the Muslims. Throughout the year the question of whether girls should wear headscarves at school was discussed. On October 17, 2011 a Muslim girl, Saide Mehmed was suspended from school for five days after violating an article of the School regulations that states that 'the students must not show through their clothing their ethnic or religious belonging'.²⁹

Throughout the year incidents of vandalism continued to occur in Muslim temples throughout the country. According to the annual report of the Head Mufti 23 such acts occurred.³⁰ Some of the more drastic incidents included:

- On 1 April 2011 during the evening prayer in 'Dzhumaya Mosque' in Plovdiv, a group of youths beat on the windows and urinated on the facade of the shrine.
- On 12th June 2011 a regular worshipper was beaten in the garden of 'Banya Bashi' mosque in Sofia just before the morning prayer. He was left in a pool of blood and was taken, unconscious, to hospital by the other worshippers.
- Around 15th June 2011 (the exact date is not known) a refugee from Iraq was attacked at a bus stop in Sofia by a group of youngsters. Her name is Muna and she was pushed, spat at and her headscarve was forcibly pulled down.
- During the protest over the 'Katunitsa' case, 'Dzhumaya Mosque' in Plovdiv and the mosque in Yambol were attacked on 23rd September 2011. The protesters were chanting 'Gypsies into soap, Turks under the knife'.

²⁹ A school girl was expelled because of headcloth (Original title in Bulgarian: *Изклчиха момиче заради забрадка*), http://islqmrudozem.ovo.bg/news/izkljuchikha_momiche_ot_8_klas_zaradi_zabradka/2012-04-03-59

³⁰ Anti-Muslim incidents in Bulgaria during 2011, <http://www.genmuftibg.net/>

6. Access and full participation in all collective areas of society

The integration of **ethnic minorities and migrants** is one of the most widely discussed public policies. – loaded with high expectations and strong international pressure. The results are often controversial.³¹

6.1 Racism and related discrimination in employment

As in last year's report, **the most pressing issue in the Bulgarian national context is unemployment.**³² According to the National Employment Agency the average annual rate of unemployment in 2011 was 10.1%.³³ The data from the international research EU INCLUSIVE reveal that rates of unemployment among the citizens of Roma descent are almost five times higher – 47.3% (the average rate for the EU-27 is 8.3%).³⁴ The National Employment Agency has registered only 11.4% of the unemployed Roma. 65% of those registered and 61% of those unregistered have been looking for a job for over a year, i.e. 2/3 of the unemployed Romas are long-term unemployed.³⁵ Almost 60% of the registered unemployed are poorly educated and have a long history of unemployment.³⁶ 6.39% of the Bulgarian labour force are permanently unemployed. Among the Roma the rate is 27% and in the EU-27 the rate is 4%. The same research shows that the **poverty line in the Roma communities** is only 75 leva (€ 40) per person in a household. In Bulgaria it is 200 leva (€ 100) and 23.3% of people live below this line. In contrast, among

³¹ Zahariev Boyan, *From Good practices to Good Institutions*, 'Politiki' issue 11/2011 'Discrimination and labour market', Open Society Institute, available online at http://politiki.bg/?cy=231&lang=2&a0i=223855&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=922 accessed 21 July 2012

³² Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar.eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 28 July 2012.

³³ National Employment Agency, *Годишник 2011*, http://www.az.government.bg/Analyses/Anapro/2011/year/Godishnik_2011_bul.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

³⁴ 'EU-INCLUSIVE – Exchange of data and good practices between Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy regarding integration of Roma', Sofia, 26 January 2012, p.40, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'EU-INCLUSIVE – Трансфер на данни и обмен на добри практики между Румъния, България, Испания и Италия, отнасящи се до включването на ромското население'), available online at http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

³⁵ 'EU-INCLUSIVE – Exchange of data and good practices between Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy regarding integration of Roma', Sofia, 26 January 2012, p.40, available online at http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

³⁶ 'Ministry of Labor and Social Policy actively works on the integration of Roma, disabled and children in institutions', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'МТСП работи активно за интеграцията на ромите, хората с увреждания и децата в институциите'), <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/news/news.asp?newsid=1951&catid=1> accessed 21 July 2012

Roma families living in isolated communities in 2011 75.3% of people lived below the national poverty line. This has remained steady over the last 10 years.³⁷ The results of another study in 11 countries of the EU reveal that 90% of Roma people in Bulgaria are living below the national poverty line, whereas the percentage for non-Roma is 50%.³⁸

All citizens who register their unemployment must declare their ethnicity. A number of complaints have been submitted to the Ombudsman.³⁹ While there is a legislative prohibition on processing personal data that refer to the racial or ethnic background of an individual, certain exceptions are provided for.

The employment rate of the Roma in the different regions of Bulgaria in 2011 ranged from 17.4% (in the poorest regions) to 42.4%.⁴⁰ On average the Roma enter the labour market at an earlier age than the majority population and the EU. Often Roma enter the job market as soon as it is lawful to do so. This means that the young Roma attain a much lower standard of education and receive fewer qualifications. This leaves them qualified only for low skilled work, with few labour rights and little job security.

The profile of employment of the Roma population in 2011: 32% of Roma over the age of 16 living in large cities were employed, as were 27% of those living in rural areas. Of these 19.4% worked in agriculture (this share is 3 times higher than the average for the country), 11.2% in construction, 20.6% in the community services and 9.7% in small businesses. Employment in community services is almost entirely reserved for the Romas – almost 15 times higher than the average employment in the same sector for the entire country. The positions in the community services seem to be the major sector for realization of the Roma on the labor market of big cities.⁴¹ The two leading sectors of employment among the Roma – agriculture and community services are among the sectors with the lowest wages.

³⁷ 'EU-INCLUSIE – Трансфер на данни и обмен на добри практики между Румъния, България, Испания и Италия, отнасящи се до включването на ромското население', София, 26 Януари 2012, р.40, http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

³⁸ FRA, 'The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States-Survey results at a glance', 2012, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

³⁹ Ombudsman of Bulgaria, Annual Report 2011 Омбудсман на Република България, Годишен доклад 2011, <http://www.ombudsman.bg/documents/FINAL%20ANNUAL%20REPORT-site.pdf> accessed 12 August 2012

⁴⁰ National Employment Agency, Annual Report 2011, http://www.az.government.bg/Analyses/Anapro/2011/year/Godishnik_2011_bul.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

⁴¹ EU-INCLUSIE – Exchange of data and good practices between Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy regarding integration of Roma, (Original title in English: 'EU-INCLUSIE – Трансфер на данни и обмен на добри практики между Румъния, България, Испания и Италия, отнасящи се до включването на ромското население'), Sofia, 26 January 2012, р.40, available online at http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

In Bulgaria 35% of Roma respondents aged 16 and above looking for work in the past 5 years reported that they experienced discrimination because of their Roma background.⁴²

Immigrants are another vulnerable group. There is little data available. 596 356 new work permits were issued to citizens of non-EU countries in 2011. A further 231 permits were renewed.⁴³ Among these the largest national group was Turkey. 153 work permits were issued to Turkish citizens mainly to those involved in road construction and the construction of the Sofia metro network. 56 permits were issued to Russian citizens in connection with a large-scale public project in the energy and petroleum refining sector and Uzbeks – specialists sent to conduct drilling procedures in the petroleum refining sector. In 2011 changes in the Law to Encourage Employment and in the *Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for granting, denial and revocation of work permits for foreigners in Bulgaria* were adopted. The requirements of Directive 2009/50/EO - regarding the recruitment of foreign nationals in Bulgaria within highly skilled sectors of the workforce- have been met through the issue of Blue Cards.⁴⁴

The language barrier is a major obstacle in accessing the labour market for refugees and those with humanitarian status. The National Program for Integration of Refugees in Bulgaria (2011 - 2013)⁴⁵ includes measures to help refugees to integrate into Bulgarian society in the year after they have been granted refugee status: this includes access to financial aid for accommodation, social support, health insurance, Bulgarian language classes, social orientation and cultural adaptation, professional education, translation services and assistance in exercising their basic rights. However, capacity is limited – the Refugee State Agency can only cater for 60 people annually. In 2011 out of 192 non-nationals who were granted refugee status, only 83 (44%) have been included in the program, 37 (19%) have completed it partially and only 26 (14%) have continued to take advantage of the possibilities it offers in 2012.⁴⁶ **Asylum seekers** also have only very limited access to the jobmarket – they have the right to work a year after their request

⁴² Eleven years after the adoption of the EU's Racial Equality Directive, more than a third of the Roma respondents looking for work said that they have experienced discrimination because they are Roma. FRA, 'The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States-Survey results at a glance', 2012, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

⁴³ National Employment Agency, Annual Report 2011, http://www.az.government.bg/Analyses/Anapro/2011/year/Godishnik_2011_bul.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

⁴⁴ *European Institute: European 'Blue card'*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Европейски институт: Европейска 'Синя карта'*), http://europeaninstitute.bg/upload/docs/blue_card_kniga.pdf, accessed 20 September 2012

⁴⁵ *National programme for integration of refugees in Bulgaria*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Национална програма за интеграция на бежанци в Р.България*), <http://www.strategy.bg/StrategicDocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=667> accessed 28 July 2012

⁴⁶ State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers, <http://www.aref.government.bg/?cat=2> accessed 12 August 2012

for acquiring status has been registered. Some asylum seekers have noted that more professional skills courses and support in finding a job are required.

In 2011 government policies in the area of integration of ethnic minorities and migrants were aimed at helping migrants to obtain qualifications and recognising qualifications from abroad as well as the improvement of employment skills; these also focused on social integration through improvement of social services and inclusion in the labour market by organising labour exchanges. In 2010, 12 000 Roma began work with the support of the National Employment Agency. An additional 15 500 began work in 2011. In 2011 another 50 Roma mediators⁴⁷ were recruited on top of the 70 already employed throughout the country⁴⁸.

6.1.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat employment challenges

There has also been an increase in the number of focused programs and projects of NGOs (individually or in cooperation with the municipalities) aimed at increasing access to the labour market for representatives of poor or marginalized groups.

The internship programme 'Bridges to the Business' was conducted in 3 stages and offered young Roma who have completed their higher education the chance to work as interns in leading private companies. Permanent employment was offered to 6 out of the 13 interns.⁴⁹

Eleven entrepreneurs of Roma descent in the Plovdiv neighborhood of Stolipinovo, completed a two-week course on establishing and running a private business. They were then granted credit by banks to open a barber shop, pharmacy, public bath and build a soccer playground which was badly needed by the community. The municipality is prepared to rent municipal land and property in the neighborhood in order to support such local business projects. Open Society Institute offers financial and legal support to the participants in the programme to establish private companies.⁵⁰

The Amelipe Center in Veliko Turnovo launched a pilot project entitled

⁴⁷ Roma mediators help unemployed Roma people to find a job.

⁴⁸ *Ministry of labour and social policy works for integration of Roma, people with disabilities and children in institutions*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'МТСП работи активно за интеграцията на ромите, хората с увреждания и децата в институциите'), <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/news/news.asp?newsid=1951&catid=1> accessed 21 July 2012

⁴⁹ *Socially responsible business and the integration of Roma*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Социално отговорният бизнес и интеграцията на ромите'), available online at http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=450 accessed 28 July 2012

⁵⁰ *Training for launching private business in Stolipinovo*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Обучение за стартиране на собствен бизнес в Столипиново'), available online at http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=451 accessed 28 July 2012

'Increasing the Efficiency of the Roma Labor Mediators'. The Roma labour mediator plays a major role in finding clients for his organisation by interviewing them on the spot – often in their homes. Joint discussions were held to review the effectiveness of current efforts of the Roma labour mediators, to consider whether their role should be altered, to review the relationship between the mediators and the Roma community.

In 2011, seminars on equality in the labour market were organised in six cities across Bulgaria: Sofia, Yambol, Apriltsi, Velinograd, etc. The **National Action Plan to Promote Gender Equality** in 2011 has several major components including equal economic independence, promoting the equal participation of men and women in decision making processes, dignity, integrity and prevention of violence based on gender, equal healthcare regardless of the gender, elimination of stereotypes based on sex and combating multiple discrimination.⁵¹

⁵¹ 'Ministry of Labor and Social Policy approved the report for implementation of the National Plan for Action and Emboldment of the Gender Equality 2011', , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'МТСП одобри отчета за изпълнението на Националния план за действие за насърчаване на равнопоставеността на жените и мъжете за 2011 г.'), <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/news/news.asp?newsid=2347&catid=1> accessed 21 July 2012

6.2 Racism and related discrimination in education

Ethnic minorities encounter significant difficulties in the education system in Bulgaria. The most serious problems are faced by the Roma. Studies have revealed that more than 20% of adult Roma are illiterate.⁵² 5.6% of the Turkish population and 20.5% of the Roma have had no elementary education, while the proportion of the majority population with no elementary education is almost zero.⁵³

Over the years, overall literacy rates have fallen, particularly amongst women. Literacy is lowest among women of Roma ethnicity or Islamic faith. According to the latest national census (2011) 22% of Bulgarians have only elementary education, compared to 55% of the Turkish community and 46.2% of the Roma. 54% of Bulgarians completed secondary level education compared to 24% of the Turkish and 7.8% of the Roma.⁵⁴

A high proportion of ethnic minority groups in the large cities leave school before they finish their elementary education. In rural areas many children from ethnic minority groups leave school after just a few years. Access to secondary education is extremely limited, especially to those who live outside of major cities. Schools in which the majority of students are Roma tend to be isolated from the rest of the community both in cities and in rural areas. A large number of such schools were recently shut down.⁵⁵ There is a concern that education may be undervalued within the Roma community itself. It has been suggested that some members of the Roma community see education as a threat to their lifestyle and identity. This may be a contributing factor in the high dropout rate of Roma children from education.⁵⁶ However, these issues must be considered in light of the mistrust and discrimination faced by the Roma community in their daily lives.

Research by the Bulgarian Academy of Science shows that 16% of Bulgarians, 2% of the Turkish minority and almost 0% (0.2%) of the Roma have received higher education. Experts suggest that the main causes of high dropout rates in education are the financial difficulties experienced by these two ethnic groups as well as limited access to social services.⁵⁷

⁵² 'Over 20% of the adult Roma – illiterate', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Над 20% от пълнолетните романи – неграмотни'), http://society.actualno.com/news_388164.html accessed 28 July 2012

⁵³ 'Operational program Development of Human Resources', , 2007, p. 27, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Оперативна програма „Развитие на човешките ресурси“), http://ophrd.government.bg/view_file.php/3225 accessed 28 July 2012

⁵⁴ National Statistics Institute, 2011 Census (final data), available online at www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Census2011final.pdf accessed 20 September 2012

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.27

⁵⁶ Pamporov, A., 'The influence of the economic crisis on Roma households', , *Politiki*, 4/2011, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Влиянието на финансовата криза върху ромските домакинства'), available online at http://politiki.bg/?cy=210&lang=1&a0i=223733&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=822 accessed 28 July 2012

⁵⁷ EU-INCLUSIE – Exchange of data and good practices between Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy regarding integration of Roma, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'EU-INCLUSIE – Трансфер на данни и обмен на добри практики между Румъния, България, Испания и Италия,

A FRA survey has indicated that 16 % of Roma children aged 7 to 15 in Bulgaria are not attending school, meaning that they are either still in preschool, not yet in education, skipped the year, stopped school completely or are already working. Among the non-Roma 4.5% of the same age group are not attending school. Completing any type of upper-secondary general or vocational education is a prerequisite for skilled employment and access to higher education. Results for young adults aged 20 to 24, who are entering the labour market, show significant differences between Roma and non-Roma: respectively 19% and 75%.⁵⁸

A high proportion of Roma are employed in **community services**, agriculture and construction due to the fact that employment in these areas does not require a professional qualification. (see 6.1 Racism and related discrimination in employment) Research by the Open Society Institute indicates that individuals with elementary education or lower are an average of 10 times more affected by the economic crisis than those with higher education.⁵⁹ Poverty and low education tend to be repeated from generation to generation. Thus, in order to limit the negative effect of the crisis on minority groups and break the vicious circle of poverty it is important to invest in transparent and intensive public policies to increase the education and qualification level of the population of Roma descent, as well as other migrant and religious minorities.⁶⁰

As noted in the 2010 Shadow Report, direct and indirect discrimination against students from ethnic minorities in Bulgaria remains a problem.⁶¹ A recent study revealed that 11.5% of Bulgarians would marry a Roma and 10.7% would work in a company that hires Roma, but only 4.1% of the Bulgarians would allow their children to study in a 'segregated school' where 2/3 of the children are Roma.⁶² Prejudice regarding education in ethnically mixed classes can lead to *de facto* segregation and discrimination against the Roma and Turkish children.

The school environment is highly discriminatory – the equal right to education is

отнасящи се до включването на ромското население', Sofia, 26 January 2012, p.40, available online at http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

⁵⁸ FRA, 'The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States-Survey results at a glance', 2012, available online at http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

⁵⁹ Pamporov, A., 'The influence of the economic crisis on Roma households', , Politiki, 4/2011, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Влиянието на финансовата криза върху ромските домакинства'), available online at http://politiki.bg/?cy=210&lang=1&a0i=223733&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=822 accessed 28 July 2012

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Shadow Report 2010-2011: Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar-eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 28 July 2012

⁶² Pamporov, Aleksei., 'Social distances and ethnic stereotypes of the minorities in Bulgaria'(Original title in Bulgarian: 'Социални дистанции и етнически стереотипи на малцинствата в България'), available online at <http://ethnos.bg/ethnos.php?q=4&i=105&n=0&t=2&e=10> accessed 28 July 2012

not respected, schools are not safe and many of the school buildings do not meet the safety requirements. Teachers often discriminate against Roma children. Almost half the interviewed teachers (47%) believe the Roma children have a hard time socializing; a quarter of them (25.4%) believe that they should be educated separately from the Bulgarian children and a fifth (19.5%) believe that children of different ethnic background have different abilities.⁶³ 70% of the teachers indirectly acknowledged that there are parts of the school programs and books which **provoke acts of intolerance** towards the different ethnicities and one out of 10 teachers (8%) state that this happens very often. It appears that schools are often passive when it comes to counteracting prejudices among students.⁶⁴ In many schools, the staff and management ignore the issue completely, and in doing so help perpetuate the problem of discrimination in schools.

The new School Education Act (adopted by the government in March 2012) includes principles regarding the educational integration of Roma children. Among the principles of pre-school and school education it includes equality of access, preservation of the ethnic and cultural education and **protection from discrimination (based on race, nationality, ethnic belonging, etc.)**. It also introduces a state educational standard in civic, health and intercultural education. However, the Act does not prohibit segregation of classes based on ethnicity within schools.⁶⁵

A major problem for **refugees and asylum seekers** is learning Bulgarian. In general the language courses in the Integration Center of the State Agency of Refugees have been rated highly by interviewed participants. However, it has been noted that the course is not long enough and does not cater for all levels of education. There is only one book for all ages – children and adults, regardless of how much they have learnt so far. Asylum seekers have highlighted organisational problems regarding access to the courses in Bulgarian.⁶⁶ While they are eager to learn Bulgarian, places are limited and they are obliged to wait. However, because the allowance available is very limited – just €33 per week – many prefer to work illegally while waiting to have their status regularised.

⁶³ 'Stereotypes and prejudice in school books, educational programs and plans in pre-school and primary school', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Стереотипи и предразсъдъци в учебници, учебни помагала и образователни програми и планове в подготвителното и основното образование'), CPD, Sofia, 2011, available online at <http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/index.php/nowini/445-stereotipi-i-predrazsadaci> accessed 28 July 2012

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Concept for the Law of school education and educational integration of Roma children , (Original title in Bulgarian: *Концепция за Закон за училищното образование и образователната интеграция на ромските деца*), <http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=775&lang=1>, accessed 5 August 2012

⁶⁶ Pamporov, Alexei., Zvezda Vankova, Milena Shishkova, *Homelessness and Housing among Asylum seekers and refugees in Bulgaria*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and UNHCR, February 2012

6.2.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat discrimination in education

The following are examples of good practices by the government and NGOs which play a role in limiting discrimination in education:

- Internship programme for young people in the Bulgarian Parliament. Its goal is to increase knowledge among young people of Roma background in the areas of politics, public administration and the legislative process. It is hoped that this will contribute to a shift in public attitudes regarding Roma participation in politics.⁶⁷
- A campaign about the benefits of education of young Roma was conducted by interns in the Program for Medicine Students and Young Doctors of Roma Ethnic Background. By sharing their experiences with students in different cities and rural areas, they emphasised that literacy and education are the key to a dignified and fulfilling life.⁶⁸
- The Program for Medicine Students and Young Doctors of Roma ethnic background has been a successful instrument in improving healthcare by overcoming discrimination in the healthcare system. It is currently being conducted for a third consecutive year and motivates the young Roma to choose a career in healthcare. 23 students participated in 2009, rising to 57 in 2010/2011.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ 'Contest for intern program for young Roma in the Bulgarian Parliament', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Конкурс за стажантска програма за млади роми към Българския Парламент'), http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=446 accessed 28 July 2012

⁶⁸ 'Clarifying program for the advantages of education among the young Roma', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Разяснителна кампания за ползите от образованието сред ромските младежи', http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=478 accessed 28 July 2012

⁶⁹ 'Open Society launched an informational campaign for medical students of Roma background', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Разяснителна кампания за ползите от образованието сред ромските младежи'), http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=426 accessed 28 July 2012

6.3 Racism and related discrimination in housing

The living conditions of the Roma have deteriorated in Bulgaria.⁷⁰ They tend to live in rural areas or at the periphery of large cities in dilapidated areas.⁷¹ The Roma face serious problems regarding spatial segregation of their communities from the rest of the population. The majority of Roma in cities live in overcrowded areas usually outside the city regulations, sometimes with little or no access to water, electricity or proper sewerage. One in five Roma live in houses without water supply and use outside taps or wells, three in five Roma houses are not connected to the sewerage and four in five have no toilets.⁷²

The concentration of Roma in *de facto* segregated communities has increased over the past 15 years in the city as well as in rural areas. This usually leads to social isolation of the inhabitants, to deterioration of the living conditions as well as to problems with the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and sanitation, to transportation problems and obstacles in providing services. These conditions have ripple effects throughout the community as young people encounter increased difficulties in finding employment, thus continuing the cycle of poverty.

Three quarters of those who consider themselves to be Bulgarian live in the cities (77.5%), as do around half (55.4%) of those self-identified as Roma and almost two fifths of those self-identified as Turkish (37.6%) – Table 1.

Table 1: Residence of the large ethnic groups (in %)

Residency	Bulgarians			Turkish			Romans		
	1992	2001	2011	1992	2001	2011	1992	2001	2011
Cities	71.6	73.5	77.5	31.6	37.0	37.6	52.3	53.8	55.4
Rural areas	28.4	26.5	22.5	68.4	63.0	62.4	47.7	46.2	44.6

According to the National Statistical Institute, after the last census of population and residencies in Bulgaria in 2011 the ethnic Bulgarians inhabit an average of 23.2 sq. m. living area per person whereas the Roma have 10.6 sq. m. Almost a quarter of the Roma (23.5%) inhabit less than 5 sq. m. living space per person.⁷³

⁷⁰ FRA, Housing Conditions of Roma and Travellers in the European Union, p. 45

⁷¹ *EU-INCLUSIE – Exchange of data and good practices between Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy regarding integration of Roma*, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'EU-INCLUSIE – Трансфер на данни и обмен на добри практики между Румъния, България, Испания и Италия, отнасящи се до включването на ромското население', Sofia, 26 January 2012, p.40, available online at http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

⁷² *European Network Against Racism, Shadow Report 2010-2011: Racism and Discriminatory Practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011), <http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/shadow%20report%202010-11/3.%20Bulgaria.pdf> accessed 2 August 2012

⁷³ National Statistics Institute, 2011 Census (final data), available online at www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Census2011final.pdf accessed 20 September 2012

As noted in last year's Shadow Report, local authorities in Bulgaria deploy harsh tactics when trying to regulate 'ghetto' areas. There were multiple cases in several municipalities of forced eviction of Roma from their homes.⁷⁴ Early in 2012, in the Roma neighbourhood of Maksude in Varna, it was determined that five residences were illegal. They were demolished by local authorities without making provision for alternative accommodation for the families who had lived there for more than 40 years.⁷⁵ 35 residents were evicted and left homeless.

In the beginning of 2012 the European Human Rights Court declared that eviction practices in Bulgaria through which Roma were rendered homeless are a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. The decision of the Court in Strasbourg was a response to action taken by the Sofia municipality to evict Roma from the neighbourhood of Batalova Vodenitsa where they had been residing illegally on municipal land. They were not offered alternative housing. The decision constitutes a strong statement about the importance of protecting Roma rights. It is hoped that the decision will prevent member states from unscrupulously evicting Roma without providing alternative housing. The Court forced Bulgaria to adopt changes in the law and its practice of issuing orders for eviction.⁷⁶

The lack of proper registration of addresses, leases or any other documentation of ownership cause direct and indirect obstacles to accessing social services. There have been many instances where Roma have been refused support from social services due to a lack of identity documents. In order to have an ID card issued, an applicant must supply documents proving ownership of the property they inhabit, a lease or written agreement from the owner registered at that address. However, more than half of the Roma have no ownership documents because the properties were built without proper planning permission.⁷⁷ The final draft of the Civil Registration Act now provides that registering at a certain address can be proven not only with documents of ownership or leases but also with documents that prove the property's purpose is residential.⁷⁸

The National strategy for Roma Integration (2012-2020) leaves several structural problems unaddressed, including the legalisation of properties in the

⁷⁴ European Network Against Racism, Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and Discriminatory Practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011), <http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/shadow%20report%202010-11/3.%20Bulgaria.pdf> accessed 2 August 2012

⁷⁵ '70 sheds demolished in the Roma ghetto in Varna', (original title in Bulgarian: 'Събарят 70 бараки в циганското гето във Варна'), <http://www.novini.bg/news/44632-събарят-70-бараки-в-циганското-гето-във-варна.html> accessed 5 August 2012

⁷⁶ 'The Court in Strasbourg forbid Bulgaria from moving Roma', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Съдът в Страсбург забрани на България да изселва роми'), <http://novo10.com/novina/sydyt-v-strasburg-zabrani-na-bylgariq-da-izselva-romi/7890> accessed 5 August 2012

⁷⁷ 'The Romas are preparing protests in Dupnitsa and Kustendil', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Ромите готвят протест в Кюстендил и Дупница'), <http://tv7.bg/news/conflicts/4033682.html> accessed 5 August 2012

⁷⁸ *Civil Registration Act*, (Original title in Bulgarian: Закон за гражданската регистрация), <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2134673409> accessed 5 August 2012

Roma communities.⁷⁹ A chapter entitled 'Living Conditions' describes potential steps to legalise existing housing within the Roma community and to improve the living conditions in existing neighbourhoods. Those two actions are the subject of a resolution of the Council of Ministers that states that Bulgaria is in violation of the European Social Charter due to the extremely poor living conditions for the Roma and the lack of legal protection of housing in Roma communities. The Resolution states that 'The legislation on the legalisation of dwellings set conditions too stringent to be useful in redressing the particularly urgent situation of the housing of Roma families and thereby affected them in a disproportionate manner.'⁸⁰ In 2011 the problem with legalisation of housing in Roma communities also fell under the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman who urged the authorities to take action towards achieving integration of the Roma.⁸¹ 'Even though in some cases the eviction of Roma from their only houses is justified, it should be done in accordance to the outlined standards for human rights protection.'

Provision of secure and **adequate housing** conditions is one of the key components of a successful integration policy for **refugees and asylum seekers**.

Access to municipal housing is determined by an Act of the Municipal Council of each town. In large cities, there is only a limited supply of such housing available.

The Acts of the majority of the municipalities of large cities include discriminatory provisions, making it next to impossible for non-nationals with residency permits to access them.⁸² For example, the Varna municipal council⁸³ requires that candidates and their families be Bulgarian citizens. They must not have double citizenship. Asylum seekers and those with refugee or humanitarian status in Bulgaria face considerable risk of becoming homeless.⁸⁴

CASE: A citizen from Varna approached the Ombudsman with a complaint that the acting Ordinance (mentioned above) of Varna Municipality is

⁷⁹ Russinova, Savelina., 'The new strategy for Roma integration 'is blind' for segregation in education and illegal housing', , Bulgarian Helsinki Committee – Obektiv, 195, December 2011, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Новата Стратегия за интеграция на ромите „не вижда“ сегрегацията в образованието и неузаконените жилища*), <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/savelina-rusinova/2011-12/novata-strategiya-za-integraciya-na-romite-ne-vizhda-segregacijata-v-obrazovaniето-i-neuzakonenite-zhilisha/> accessed 12 August 2012

⁸⁰ Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Resolution CM/ResChS(2007)2, <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1180705&Site=CM> accessed 12 August 2012

⁸¹ Ombudsman – Annual report 2011, p.38, <http://www.ombudsman.bg/documents/FINAL%20ANNUAL%20REPORT-site.pdf> accessed 12 August 2012

⁸² *Ordinance on procedures for management and disposition of public housing on the territory of Sofia Municipality and Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for determining housing needs, public housing and sale*

⁸³ *Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for determining housing needs of citizens, accommodation and sale of municipal housing*

⁸⁴ Pamporov, Alexei., Zvezda Vankova, Milena Shishkova, *Homelessness and Housing among Asylum seekers and refugees in Bulgaria*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and UNHCR, February 2012

discriminatory⁸⁵ The appellant is a long-term tenant of municipal housing and is a foreign national with permanent residency status. After requesting a renewal of his rental contract from the municipality, he was informed that he had to leave the property because he and his family did not meet the nationality requirements. Therefore, the Ordinance states that those seeking accommodation whose families are not Bulgarian citizens, are in a less favourable position than those whose family members are all Bulgarian citizens.

Homelessness among immigrants with residence permits is the result of a lack of comprehensive and long-term integration measures. The six-month long language course and professional skills courses which are currently provided do not meet the needs of the labour market. Lack of purposive state policy and the continuing financial crisis are among the major factors contributing to unemployment, poor living conditions and homelessness among refugees. In the first years, refugees tend to accept badly paid, low skill jobs, in the hope that their higher education and professional qualifications (where relevant) can be used at a later stage. Finding a job and integration in the work environment are highly dependent on knowledge of Bulgarian, or at least English.

⁸⁵ Ombudsman – Annual report 2011, p.36, <http://www.ombudsman.bg/documents/FINAL%20ANNUAL%20REPORT-site.pdf> accessed 12 August 2012

6.4 Racism and related discrimination in health

The key problem areas relating to racism and discrimination in healthcare for **Roma people and migrants** in Bulgaria remain the same as those reported in Shadow report 2010-2011.⁸⁶

A study conducted in 11 member states regarding limitations in daily activities (working, shopping or socialising) because of health problems shows that in Bulgaria more Roma than non-Roma considered themselves to be limited in their daily activities.⁸⁷ 22.7% of the Roma suffer from a chronic disease or disability. 5.6% are entirely disabled and 10.8% suffer from an impeding chronic disease.⁸⁸ 54.4% of Roma over 15 years of age have health insurance. In 2007 59.2% of the same group had health insurance. This means that over the past 5 years the proportion of the Roma who have health insurance dropped 5%.⁸⁹ According to the Ministry of Health in 2011 the official number of registered carriers of the HIV virus is 1 486. Since the beginning of 2012 10-13 men and 3 women from the Roma community aged between 24 and 59 have been registered as HIV positive.⁹⁰

Roma have poorer health and more limited access to the health service than the majority population. National data from recent years reveal that Roma are disproportionately unvaccinated, have poorer than average nutrition and experience higher rates of under weight newborns, perinatal mortality, and tuberculosis.⁹¹ Lack of access to health care exacerbates these problems. A number of factors limit Roma access to healthcare; lack of identity cards or other documents required to obtain health insurance, insufficient funds to pay for transport to health facilities or other healthcare related costs, or, because they have experienced or heard about discrimination in healthcare settings. 20% of Roma responding to a European Union Fundamental Rights Agency survey reported that they had experienced discrimination in health services in the past year.⁹²

⁸⁶ Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar.eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 28 July 2012

⁸⁷ FRA, *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States-Survey results at a glance*, 2012, available online at http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf accessed 28 July 2012

⁸⁸ *EU-INCLUSIE – Exchange of data and good practices between Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy regarding integration of Roma*, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'EU-INCLUSIE – Трансфер на данни и обмен на добри практики между Румъния, България, Испания и Италия, относящи се до включването на ромското население', Sofia, 26 January 2012 available online at http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2012/Final%20Report_FNS_26_Jan_2012.pdf accessed 25 July 2012

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ <http://www.mh.government.bg/> accessed 15 October 2012.

⁹¹ *Roma Health Mediators: Successes and Challenges*, Open Society Foundations, October 2011, New York, http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2011_New/roma-health-mediators-20111022.pdf accessed 15 August 2012

⁹² Ibid.

Roma are concentrated among the poorest groups in society. One study found that, among children between 0 and 2 years, the incidence of influenza, ear infections, intestinal infections, and viral diseases was significantly higher among the Roma than among the ethnic majority population of a comparable socioeconomic status. Similarly, another study concluded that the percentage of the population living in excluded Roma settlements was the most significant factor in determining regional mortality rates of children under the age of one, ranking above unemployment rates, average income and educational attainment.

Eighty one percent of the Roma community lack proper sewage systems, 37% lacked water supply, and almost 1/3 of the houses were unregistered, meaning that the households concerned were ineligible for state assistance to improve their living conditions. Many such settlements are on unpaved roads and are not served by public transportation, making access to medical and social services difficult. These factors illustrate the pressing need for health programs focused specifically on Roma. Regarding the healthcare services for refugees and asylum seekers, the law grants them the same rights to health insurance, access to medical help and use of medical services free of charge as Bulgarian citizens as soon as they are registered as such (art. 29, paragraph 1, p. 4 of the Law of Asylum and Refugees). Individuals who have been granted protection enjoy the same rights as Bulgarian citizens (individuals with refugee status) or as foreign nationals with permanent residence status in Bulgaria (individuals with humanitarian status). However, in spite of these legal provisions both groups have great difficulty in securing their basic needs.⁹³ Challenges and problems regarding the access to healthcare and medical services include:

- A delay of between 1 and 2 month between registration of the candidate for protection in the State Agency of Refugees and application to the National Health Insurance Fund. During this time the individual does not have health insurance. This is a serious problem for those who have chronic disease (diabetes, epilepsy, hypertension, etc.).
- After accessing health insurance, another significant problem is finding a physician. The majority of GPs⁹⁴ are reluctant to accept non-nationals as patients for a number of reasons including the language barrier, prejudice and lack of awareness that asylum seekers have the same healthcare rights as Bulgarian citizens. Some doctors ask foreign nationals to pay for their services as private patients. There is a concern that this problem may also arise in hospitals.
- After humanitarian or refugee status are granted it can still take up to a month to change the foreigner's ID number to citizen's ID number in order to issue identity cards.
- There is a lack of information regarding healthcare rights for asylum seekers
- Close cooperation is necessary with the Bulgarian Medical Association

⁹³ State Agency of Refugees: *'Health care and health insurance for asylum seekers in Bulgaria'*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Здравно осигуряване и медицинска помощ за бежанците и търсещите закрила в България'*), <http://www.aref.government.bg/?cat=13&newsid=579> accessed 15 August 2012

⁹⁴ State Agency of refugees, <http://www.aref.government.bg/>, accessed 15 August 2012

and the Association of General Practitioners. The European Refugee Fund is another major resource – through the Fund ten non-Bulgarian nationals who were granted protection were trained and work as social mediators. The annual programme provides for specialized medical care and psychological help.

Undocumented migrants continue to face serious difficulties in the Bulgarian healthcare system.⁹⁵ The main problem is the cost of medical treatment. Because they are not eligible for public health insurance, they must meet the cost privately. For most undocumented migrants this is simply not possible. They can use the legal right to medical treatment only in an emergency situation.⁹⁶

6.3.2 Facilitating factors or protective measures to combat healthcare challenges

Health mediators play an important role in Roma healthcare. These are members of the Roma community who have been trained to help improve connections between the healthcare system and the community. Roma Health Mediators also **provide legal referrals for individual clients who have experienced discrimination or other human rights violations in healthcare settings**. In 2011 there were 105 Roma Health mediators, to be increased to 130 in 2012. In 2011 a project was launched for the first time organising social mediators to support refugees and asylum seekers in the process of finding a job, accessing education, healthcare and social services.

Roma Health Mediation (RHM) began in Bulgaria in 2001 as a pilot project of the NGO Ethnic Minorities Health Problems Foundation (EMHPF). 2007 was an important year in terms of institutionalising the Roma Health Mediator programme in Bulgaria. The government added Roma Health Mediation to the National Classification of Professions. Supervisory responsibility passed from the EMHPF to municipal authorities. A National Network of Health Mediators was also founded in 2007, though the government does not provide funds for this network. The network is comprised of over 80 RHMs, doctors, nurses, RHM trainers, and experts in public health and social exclusion. The Network is increasingly involved in RHM supervision, in cooperation with municipal authorities. In 2011, the government assigned a Ministry of Health focal point to provide national level coordination to Roma health mediation. The Network's work is limited by the need to raise funds for all activities. Since 2007, RHMs have not benefited from any national-level continuing education, with the exception of the Council of Europe mediator training project. In 2011, there were 105 Roma Health Mediators working, with a budget for 130 RHMs to work in 2012. Overall, Bulgaria's Roma Health Mediator program is well established

⁹⁵ Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar.eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 28 July 2012

⁹⁶ Law on Asylum and Refugees, Art.29, <http://www.aref.government.bg/?cat=25> accessed 15 August 2012

compared to programs in many other countries. The program is managed by the government, financially sustainable, and included in the official list of professions. Moreover, the consistent and dedicated involvement of EMHPF, the Bulgarian Family Planning Association, and the Open Society Foundation-Bulgaria has ensured strong advocacy for the program. These agencies were also able to offer different types of expertise.

Roma Health Mediators **provide legal referrals for individual clients who have experienced discrimination or other human rights violations in healthcare settings.** RHMs receive training related to patients' rights. They have also been trained in health and social protection rights and entitlements and monitor whether patients are charged more than they should be for particular services. In these cases, RHMs might refer clients to national anti-discrimination bodies, such as an Ombudsman or the Bulgarian Committee for Protection Against Discrimination, or to NGOs that work on Roma rights. In focus groups, RHMs report encountering at least some cases of discrimination and abusive language in healthcare access or provision.⁹⁷ The Bulgarian Law on Protection Against Discrimination established the specialised Committee for Protection Against Discrimination. This Committee has multiple roles including addressing complaints of discrimination; imposing administrative sanctions; conducting training; and elaborating reports, recommendations, and surveys.

⁹⁷ 'Roma Health Mediators: Successes and Challenges', Open Society Foundations, October 2011, New York, http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2011_New/roma-health-mediators-20111022.pdf accessed 15 August 2012

6.5 Racism and related discrimination in access to goods and services

Vulnerable groups, especially the Roma and visible ethnic minorities, continue to face difficulties accessing public and private goods and services.⁹⁸ They are often denied access to these services or lack of information on how to access them. Roma often live in areas with few amenities. They face additional problems in accessing goods and services due to communication problems and lack of awareness of their rights. Low income is another important factor. In 2011, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) responded to 50 complaints relating to 'ethnic background' and 'race'. The CPD has reached a decision on 29 of these.

Refugees and Asylum seekers encounter difficulties including discrimination, language barriers and the lack of information in English. The necessary information is rarely provided in languages other than Bulgarian. The European law obliges all state servants to provide services in Bulgarian and one of the official EU languages. However, this is often not adhered to in practice and immigrants' access to public services is limited as a result.

Generally, it is difficult to assess the extent of discrimination in access to goods and services in the private and public sector in Bulgaria. Available information and reports concentrate on regional incidents:

CASE 1 – Refused enrollment in kindergarten. In her complaint to CPD E. M. says that after her child turned 3, she was refused enrollment because her husband is a non-national and does not live in Bulgaria. The reason given was that her husband's personal documents - a statement of his income in the city of H. and a statement that he does not owe any taxes in the municipality - were not applicable. E. M. states that the father of the child does not live and work in the country and resides in the country with a visa that does not allow him to work. In this case the requirement of documentation operated as a form of discrimination against the child

When she asked whether, if she were to get a divorce, the child would be allowed to go to the kindergarten, she received a positive response. E.M. believes that this forces her to either get a divorce or leave Bulgaria. Decision № 35 of CPD from March 21, 2011 states that the enrollment procedure of children in public kindergartens in the municipality of V. is a direct act of discrimination towards the complainant on the basis of 'background'.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar.eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 15 August 2012.

⁹⁹ CPD, 'Practices of CPD', "Sofia 2011, (Original title in Bulgarian: Сборник 'Практика на КЗД'), Decision №53/21, March 2011, http://kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/images/stories/materials/sbornik/sbornik_varna_2011.pdf, accessed 15 August 2012

CASE 2 – Muslims. On 11th May 2011 Mrs. Z.Z., accompanied by her two young children, went to a bank office in Sofia where she was stopped by the bank guard. She was informed that she was not allowed to enter the building because she was wearing a headscarve. Mrs. Z. tried enter but the guard prevented her and caused a scene in front of a number of clients and employees. After the investigation of the case by the bank managers the woman received an official apology.¹⁰⁰

CASE 3 – Refused dental services. S. G. filed a complaint to the CPD against a dentist practicing in the same village for breacing the principal of equal treatment on the basis of 'ethnic background'. He claims that when visiting the dentist, he was refused treatment. At the same time the dentist accepted the mother-in-law of the sherif of the village. The complainant claims that he was refused treatment because he is of Roma ethnic background and that this is an act of discrimination.¹⁰¹

CASE 4 – Non-admission to a public swimming pool. I. A. filed a complaint in CPD for a breach of the principal of equal treatment on the basis of 'ethnic background' regarding access to a public swimming pool. He claims that the cashier of the swimming pool had already issued the ticket when she heard the plaintiff's grandchild speak in Turkish. The she requested a member's card. He says that while he was talking to the cashier 10 people entered who freely bought tickets without being asked for a member's card.¹⁰²

Recent years have seen an increase in cases of misuse of personal information of citizens, including information requested from minorities when signing contracts to receive services or purchase goods. Individuals have reported that after signing a contract for the service they begin to receive advertising brochures or messages, third-parties call them and require payments of debts to companies or banks, they learn that they have signed contracts with such as mobile operators or have drawn credits without ever giving their consent.¹⁰³ This type of misuse of personal information often happens to Roma, Turish, migrants, refugees or Muslims. They are less informed about their rights as citizens or do not always understand the legal language of contracts.

¹⁰⁰ Staikova Lidia, 'Cases of abuse of Muslims', , (Original title in Bulgarian: *Случаи на тормоз над мюсюлмани*), <http://lydblog.wordpress.com/2011/07/15/cases/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁰¹ CPD, Decision 145/05.06.2012, <http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁰² CPD, Decision 161/27.06.2012, <http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁰³ Russinova, Polina, 'Protection of personal data as users of goods and services', , Bulgarian Helsinki Commitee – Obektiv, 200, June 2012, (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Защита на личните ни данни като потребители на стоки и услуги'*), <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/polina-rusinova/2012-06/zashitata-na-lichnite-ni-danni-kato-potrebiteli-na-stoki-i-uslugi/> accessed 15 August 2012

6.6 Racism and related discrimination in political participation

The political party 'Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria' (GERB) are currently in government, having been elected on 27 July 2009. The party has 117 representatives in parliament out of a total of 240. There are 57 women in the Parliament. Out of 16 ministers in the government, three of them are women. Women occupy several key positions in Parliament including Chair of Parliament, a deputy speaker and Chairs of seven out of 20 permanent commissions. In Parliament there are 27 representatives of minority groups (27 are ethnic Turkish and 1 Roma). One cabinet minister is of Turkish origin. While the Turkish minority is well-represented, the Roma are under-represented especially when it comes to key positions. Pomaks (ethnic Bulgarians who are Muslims) occupy selected positions at local level.

In October 2011 joint elections took place for both president and local authorities. Rosen Plevneliev was elected President with Margarita Popova as Vice-President. Both candidates are from GERB. The majority of mayors elected in larger cities are also affiliated with the GERB party. Thus, GERB is the governing party on all levels in the country. James Pardew, former American Ambassador in Sofia, said that 'power is concentrating in the hands of the Prime Minister'.¹⁰⁴

By law, campaigns can only be conducted in the Bulgarian language. According to ODHIR this requirement, combined with the lack of official information for voters who do not speak Bulgarian, limits the ability of some of the members of the Roma and Turkish minority groups to understand voting procedures. It is illegal to establish parties on ethnic grounds. This poses an obstacle to the full representation of Turkish and Roma interests.¹⁰⁵

According to international sources the latest presidential and local elections are a step backwards for democracy in Bulgaria: 'Conducting a campaign in this member state of NATO and the EU showed a worrying decline in freedom and independence of print and electronic media and political bullying in extremes, unseen in decades. The political bullying and frightening are progressing in Bulgaria'.¹⁰⁶

From the beginning of its mandate until recently GERB governed in an unofficial but very effective coalition with АТАКА. АТАКА is a nationalist party that not only denies the necessity of all special state programs for the Roma but also

¹⁰⁴ Pardew, James, 'Political bullying in Bulgaria reached unheard levels', , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Политическото сплашване в България стигна невидани нива'), <http://www.mediapool.bg/политическото-сплашване-в-българия-стигна-невиждани-нива-news185810.html> accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁰⁵ 'The US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2011', , (Original title in Bulgarian: Доклад на Държавния департамент на САЩ относно състоянието на правата на човека в България през 2011 г.), http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186338

accessed 25 August 2012

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

claims that Roma privileges are only gained at the expense of the majority.¹⁰⁷ Over the past years the government has never condemned the extreme nationalist position, antisemitic rhetoric or the hatred that ATAKA spreads on religious and ethnic grounds.¹⁰⁸

Nationalists in Bulgaria have still not come to terms with the reforms of 1989. Those reforms allowed Turkish people who had been forced to change their names to restore their original names.¹⁰⁹ The reforms also permitted the Turkish who were allowed to return to Bulgaria to form organisations, to study in their own language and to practice their religion.

Media coverage of problems of the minorities in Bulgaria has been shaped by the negative overall attitude towards the Roma minority. The term '**Media racism**' refers to the presentation by the most popular newspapers of the Roma as criminals: murderers, rapists and muggers, i.e. as a threat to society. The majority of publications use hostile speech towards the Roma, which could be classified as 'hate speech'.¹¹⁰ Political parties exploit this negative attitude towards ethnic minorities by using populist rhetoric to win votes.

6.6.2 Facilitating factor or protective measures to promote equality in political participation

On March 1 2012 Parliament adopted the National Strategy of Bulgaria for Integration of Roma (2012 - 2020) as a response to the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. The National Strategy of Bulgaria includes measures in four of the most important areas defined by the EU Framework: employment, education, healthcare and living conditions.¹¹¹ The chapter 'Supremacy of Law and Non-discrimination' aims 'To guarantee the civil rights with an emphasis on women and children, protection of public order, prevention and counteraction to acts of intolerance and hate speech.'¹¹²

Recently, the participation of NGOs in the drafting of national strategies has increased, as has the lobbying of NGOs in Parliament for alterations of discriminatory laws. In 2010, 17 NGOs lobbied in Parliament for changes in the Law of Foreigners in Bulgaria. In 2011 the Ombudsman organised a meeting of NGOs and ministers where he suggested using the term 'status of tolerance' to refer to undocumented migrants. As a result of the project of the Open Society

¹⁰⁷ Cohen, Emil, 'The strategy on Roma should become a law', , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Стратегията за ромите трябва да стане закон'), <http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=1118505&mid=532> accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁰⁸ Vaisberg, Tatiana, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee-Obektiv, 189-June 2011, 'In the company of quiet democrats' (Original title in Bulgarian: *В компанията на тихи демократи*), <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/tatiana-vaksberg/2011-05/kolonkata-na-tatyana-vaksberg-v-kompaniyata-na-tihi-demokrati/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹⁰⁹ In mid-1980s the Communist government of Bulgaria began coercive change of the names of population of Turkish descent. The Turkish citizens were forced to change their names to Bulgarian ones.

¹¹⁰ The conclusions from the research 'The image of Roma in major print media in Bulgaria'

¹¹¹ National strategy for integration of Roma (2012-2020), , (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Национална стратегия за интегриране на ромите (2012-2020)'), <http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=35&id=1741> accessed 15 August 2012

¹¹² Ibid., p.13

Institute 'Civil Observation in the Special Homes for Temporary Accommodation of Foreigners in Bulgaria' (February 2012) the National Council on Migration Policy adopted the recommendations of the project. The Council advised the inter-institutional group working on the changes of the Law of Foreigners in Bulgaria to introduce a suggestion for the adoption of the term 'status of tolerance'.¹¹³

It is important to create a framework for Roma participation at all levels of the state. Good examples include:

- Internship program for young Roma in the Bulgarian Parliament. This program is an opportunity to expand the knowledge of young Roma with interests in the sphere of politics and public administration in legislation and the decision-making process.¹¹⁴
- Training of 11 independent Roma observers to oversee the elections in 2011. They are aware of the process of drafting the Electoral Code, with the standards of free and fair elections and with the online instruments for the monitoring of elections.¹¹⁵

At a meeting with the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Sofia in February 2012¹¹⁶ the young Roma activists raised the question of necessity of real Roma participation in government through active inclusion of Roma in national, regional and local administration. Clinton stressed that this can only happen through establishing a common policy regarding the Roma minority and stronger cooperation with the Bulgarian government towards encouraging the process of integration.

¹¹³ Open Society Institute: *'Lost in translation: major problems in special homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners'*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Институт Отворено общество- 'Изгубени в превода: основни проблеми в специалните домове за временно настаняване на чужденци'*), http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=521 accessed 15 August 2012

¹¹⁴ *'Contest for intern program for young Roma in the Bulgarian Parliament'*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Конкурс за стажантска програма за млади роми към Българския Парламент'*), available online at http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=446 accessed 28 July 2012

¹¹⁵ *'Training of impartial Roma observers for local elections'*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Обучение на независими ромски наблюдатели за местните избори'*), http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=487 accessed 15 August 2012

¹¹⁶ *'Hillary Clinton: The integration of Roma is not finalized in Bulgaria'*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Хилъри Клинтън: Интеграция на ромите е незавършеното дело на България'*), http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/2011_New/Letter_of_Concern.pdf accessed 25 August 2012

6.7 Racism and related discrimination in media

The Bulgarian media is currently regulated by the Law for Radio and Television, adopted in 1998. It obliges all media service providers to abide by the Ethics Code of Bulgarian Media.¹¹⁷ In early 2011 the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament criticised the media environment and regulations in Bulgaria.¹¹⁸ The European Commission ordered that the actions of the Council of Electronic Media (CEM) be monitored. European experts criticised the procedures for appointing members of CEM. According to the law, CEM should be an 'independent organ that protects the public interest'. 'The members of CEM are directly appointed by government institutions without a special legal requirement for being impartial or professional.'¹¹⁹ The media environment in Bulgaria was scrutinized in the European parliament. They noted issues including limited freedom and pluralism in the press, pressure on journalists, undisclosed ownership of media outlets and ties between journalists and corporate and political stakeholders.

Bulgaria has dropped 10 positions in the ratings of the organisation 'Reporters Without Borders' for media freedom. Currently, it occupies the 80th place (its lowest rating ever) and is described as the country with least free media in Europe.

A number of journalists have encountered difficulties in the past year. They report that some topics are taboo in the media. Some have experienced threats. There were some instances where journalists' cars were set on fire,¹²⁰ bombs¹²¹ have been detonated in front of media offices; and individual journalists have experienced attacks and harassment¹²² etc.

Cases of public pressure on the journalists: During the protests in Katunitsa, the protesters claimed that the journalists did not accurately cover the events and distorted the facts. Groups on Facebook and other online forums started a campaign for threats and antisemitic attacks against the bTV reporter Miroluba Benatova.

¹¹⁷ Margarita Pesheva, Maria Popova, Milko Petrov, *'Words of media transition'*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Думите на медийния преход'*, В.Търново, 2010

¹¹⁸ Bozilova, Svetlana, *'The Bulgarian model for media regulation'*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Българският модел за медийна регулация'*), <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/svetlana-bozhilova/2011-03/blgarskiyat-model-na-medijna-regulaciya/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹¹⁹ Margarita Pesheva, Maria Popova, Milko Petrov, *'Words of media transition'*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Думите на медийния преход'*, В.Търново, 2010

¹²⁰ *'Reporters without borders: Bulgaria – hatred and violence before elections'*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: *'Репортери без граници: България – омраза и насилие преди изборите'*), <http://www.bivol.bg/rsf-media-2011.html> accessed 15 August 2012

¹²¹ In October 2011 the car of Sasho Dikov – director of the cable TV station Canal 3, was blown up. The investigation is ongoing.

¹²² In May 2011 *Monitor* daily newspaper fired their correspondent in Kurdjali Vildan Bairiamova for criticizing the political leaders connected to large media groups as well as for refusing to self-censor her articles. Before she was fired, Bairiamova and her family received threats.

Media coverage of problems of the minorities in Bulgaria has been shaped by the negative overall attitude towards the Roma minority. 'Media racism' is a term regarding to the presentation by the most popular newspapers of the Roma as criminals: murderers, rapists, brutal and muggers, i.e. as a threat to society. In the majority of the publications we can observe hostile speech towards the Roma that could even be defined as 'hate speech'. According to the media expert Ivo Indjev,¹²³ the topic of future of Bulgarian Roma outside the country is treated as a subject of national pride, with references to 'our' Roma, who have become victims of 'brutal' actions in Europe, etc.

CASE 1: In 2011 shortly before the presidential elections, the political party ATAKA issued a pamphlet entitled 'The Gypsy Crimes – National Threat' containing speeches by Volen Siderov – member of parliament and leader of ATAKA, as well as other materials on the subject. A number of NGOs and individuals responded by sending a letter to the head prosecutor in Bulgaria requesting that Volen Siderov be prosecuted and calling for the prohibition of the political party ATAKA.

CASE 2: At the beginning of the summer tourist season in 2012 the Minister of Agriculture Miroslav Naidenov stated in front of the media that 'the views of swarthy fellow citizens who sell corn or sunflower seeds on the beach should vanish'. The Chairman of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee stated that while similar racist statements have been made by many people in Bulgaria, when made by a minister they must be considered to have been made officially by the government.¹²⁴

CASE 3: Recently, the 44-year old actor Orlando Jones, African-American from Alabama declared on the news website Huffington Post that it should be explained to the Bulgarians how inappropriate it is to approach a black person and start touching their face. 'You don't let little Bulgarian kids run over, bite my ankle and scream, 'Ooo Chocolaten!' stated the actor during the shooting of the movie *Enemies Closer* in Sofia.¹²⁵ The Bulgarian media replied with articles such as 'Hollywood star destroys Bulgaria's good name', 'We were accused of racism', 'Hollywood calls Bulgarians racists', etc. and the comments varied from the indignant 'some people are trying to make us look like we are acting as the aborigines thousands of years ago' to the evaluation of the 'ugly article by an insignificant publication'. The website Huffington Post has millions of readers from all over the world and this year a correspondent took the Pulitzer Price for

¹²³ 'Media racism?', (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Медиен расизъм?'), , <http://bulgarieland.wordpress.com/2012/04/07/медиен-расизъм-media-racism/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹²⁴ Mediapool.bg: 'Naydenov will personally chase the 'swarthy' maze traders from the beach', ", (original title in Bulgarian: 'Найденев лично ще гони 'мургавите' търговци на царевица от плажа'), <http://www.mediapool.bg/найденев-лично-ще-гони-мургавите-търговци-на-царевица-от-плажа-news195035.html> accessed 15 August 2012

¹²⁵ Huffingtonpost.com: *How To Be Black In Bulgaria And Other Travel Tips From...* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/orlando-jones/black-in-bulgaria-travel-_b_1739450.html Accessed 15 August 2012

a military reportage.¹²⁶

CASE 4: On January 18, 2012 the front page of '7 Days Sports' displayed an article entitled 'The new ones in CSKA: an Italian, a Swedish and two blacks'. As a result of a complaint the Ombudsman Konstantin Penchev said:

I believe that the definition 'blacks' in this article has an offensive character and is an act of discrimination on the basis of racial belonging. Even more worrying is the fact that the editor in chief of the newspaper – Yurii Moskov defended the position that 'I don't find any racism in this article. It (*blacks*) is not a suitable word because it is slang but it is in no way offensive either'.

The Ombudsman suggested that an inquiry be conducted into whether this constituted the crime of 'inciting discrimination and hatred based on race' (art. 162 – 163 of the Criminal Code).¹²⁷

CASE 5: In April 2011 a 'National Protest against the Gypsifying of Bulgaria' was organised on Facebook. It was planned for May 8, 2011. As of April 20 8 700 people had confirmed attendance, 3200 had not decided yet and 4100 said they would not attend. Comments on the wall of the event included: '*Smyrt za ciganite i turcite!! (Death for gypsies and Turkish); da mrat gadnite cigani!!! (The stupid gypsies should die); Happy Birthday Führer!; umrete cigani gadni!!!! (die, stupid gypsies); etc.*'¹²⁸

The Roma are the most marginalized ethnic group in Bulgaria and as a result are most often represented negatively in the media. They are often linked with criminality in media coverage. For example, on February 13 2011, the 'Telegraph' newspaper, published an article entitled 'Roma stripped down a dairy farm'. Notably, the article reports this property crime committed by a Roma in an emotive manner more suited to a report of a crime against a person.¹²⁹

In some cases the titles present 'the Roma threat' as undermining cornerstones of society such as education, healthcare and policing 'Romas with axes attacked a hospital', 'A Roma with a stick attacked students', 'A Roma beat a cop because of a belly dance' (*Telegraph* newspaper, April 27, 2011). Among the leading media characteristics of the Roma is poverty: 'A murderer of two: I owed 200 leva for medicine for the baby' (*Labour* newspaper, February 3, 2011), poor hygiene and living conditions: 'The baby of the millenium lives in misery' (*Telegraph* newspaper, January 8, 2011), primitivism: 'Roma killed himself with stones' (*Telegraoh* newspaper, April 8, 2011). There is tendency to present

¹²⁶ DW: *Look, mamma, negro!*, , (Original title in Bulgarian: *Виж, майче, негър!*), <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,16164667,00.html> Accessed 15 August 2012

¹²⁷ Ombudsman of Bulgaria – Position, <http://www.ombudsman.bg/public-positions/1680> Accessed 15 August 2012

¹²⁸ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee – Yana Burer Tavanie, '*The worm effect*', (Original title in Bulgarian: '*Ефектът на червея*'), <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/iana-biurer-tavanie/2011-04/efektt-na-cherveya/> accessed 15 August 2012

¹²⁹ The example is taken from the research by Integro Association in 2011, the publication '*Vulnerable, more vulnerable, most vulnerable*' (*Media approaches towards inequality*). 2011, [http://politiki.bg/downloads/File/Report_media_monitoring\(1\).pdf](http://politiki.bg/downloads/File/Report_media_monitoring(1).pdf) accessed 15 August 2012

members of minority as an object, not a subject of the action. The analysis of the titles of newspaper articles shows that in only 14% the Romas are described as committing good deeds, whereas for the Turkish minority this share is almost 25%¹³⁰

In 2011 in Bulgaria there were no developments regarding the criminal offences of insult and slander. Instead of reforming the law to reduce restrictions on freedom of speech, in the beginning of 2011 the ruling party announced their intention to adopt a law against slander. By the end of the year the law had not been adopted. According to 'Reporters Without Borders' stricter sanctions for libel can only mean a step backwards when it comes to the freedom of speech of the media in Bulgaria.

¹³⁰ 'Vulnerable, more vulnerable, most vulnerable' (Media approaches towards inequality). , 2011, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Уязвими, по-уязвими, най-уязвими (Медийни подходи към неравенството)', [http://politiki.bg/downloads/File/Report_media_monitoring\(1\).pdf](http://politiki.bg/downloads/File/Report_media_monitoring(1).pdf) accessed 15 August 2012

6.8 Racism and related discrimination in criminal justice

6.8.1. Policing and ethnic profiling¹³¹

The issues raised in the 2010/2011 ENAR national report persist.¹³² The main victims of stop and search practices and ethnic profiling are Roma and immigrants who are visibly foreign.

Last year's report¹³³ described the case of asylum seeker MN, who had been detained and harassed by police officers. His case is being processed slowly. A court hearing at the Supreme Administrative Court has been scheduled for as late as October 2012.

There is no clear record of ethnic profiling by state organs of Muslims in Bulgaria. The exception to that is counter-terrorism measures, which will be addressed in section 6.8.4 below. Discrimination and attacks against Muslims on grounds of their religion are usually carried out by non-state actors. In this regard, 2011 was marked by clashes of supporters of the ATAKA party with Muslims on 20 May 2011 as the ultra-nationalists protested using the loudspeakers of the mosque calling the faithful to prayer at the Banya Bashi mosque in central Sofia. (See more in 6.8.2 Racist violence and crime). ATAKA supporters shouted 'Turks out' and 'janissaries' and threw stones and bottles at the mosque. In an official declaration the Bulgarian Parliament condemned the actions of the ATAKA party stating that '(t)his political party is isolating itself from Bulgarian democratic society. Its behaviour is deeply foreign to the Bulgarian people, who are religiously and ethnically tolerant'. MPs from all parties present in the parliamentary sitting, with the exception of ATAKA MPs who abstained, voted in favour of the declaration condemning ATAKA's actions.¹³⁴ Throughout 2011, however, Muslim temples and mosques all over the country continued to be an object of sporadic vandalism by unknown perpetrators.¹³⁵

The majority of Muslims in Bulgaria are Bulgarian citizens and there has been a Muslim community in Bulgaria for centuries. While their integration is not deliberately obstructed by the State, Muslims are nonetheless vulnerable to a range of discrimination, including multiple discrimination. At local level, the governance of the municipality in villages in which the majority of the population is Muslim is often realised by persons from the same religious and ethnic group.

¹³¹ The Open Society Institute defines 'ethnic profiling' as the 'use of generalisations grounded in ethnicity, race, national origin, or religion - rather than objective evidence or individual behaviour - as the basis for making law enforcement and/or investigative decisions about who has been or may be involved in criminal activity'.

¹³² ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011. *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria.*, pp.33-34

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ The Sofia Echo, *Bulgarian MPs condemn Ataka assault on Sofia mosque*, 27 May 2011

¹³⁵ Details on those attacks are provided in the annual report of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee: *Human Rights in Bulgaria in 2011*, March 2012, pp.16-17, <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/dokladi-na-bhk/godishni-dokladi-za-pravata-na-choveka/> (accessed on 01 September 2012)

6.8.2 Racist violence and crime

Discrimination and social prejudice about Roma and other minority groups continue to be a problem. 2011 saw a deterioration in discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds and a dramatic increase in mass manifestations of hate speech as well as violence against ethnic and religious groups:

Religious discrimination – In April and May 2011 places of worship of **the Jehovah's Witnesses in Bourgas** and **of the Muslims in Sofia** were attacked by adherents of extreme nationalist parties and other groups. On April 17, 2011 in Bourgas a group of followers of IMRO supported by local 'ultras' – fans of Bourgas soccer teams - attacked the place of worship of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They entered, beat worshipers and destroyed property inside. A video recording of the event showed a group of young people waving black and red flags in front of the building with IMRO signs, singing and shouting nationalist slogans. According to media reports, 5 members of the religious group were injured and the police arrested 10 of the attackers. Six of the attackers were sentenced for public order offences. Notably, they were not prosecuted for hate crimes.¹³⁶ This act of religious hatred could also be a result of the long-term propaganda against the non-traditional religious communities in general and against the Jehovah's Witnesses in particular.¹³⁷

This year **the Muslims in Sofia** were victims of systemic attacks by activists from the political party ATAKA. Due to ATAKA's support for the ruling party in Parliament, the Sofia municipality allowed the party to assemble freely, regardless of the fact that they systematically incited hatred, discrimination and violence on religious grounds. On May 20 2011 before the Friday prayer, a group of 150 supporters of ATAKA organised a protest outside the mosque. They shouted offensive words calling the worshipers 'janissaries', 'dogs', 'fezes', 'Islamists'. They yelled 'Get out of Bulgaria!', 'Stop this shameful cry in the centre of Sofia!', 'Let's clean our ancestors' land!'. Minutes later the protestors approached the mosque and began to throw eggs, stones and other hard objects at the worshipers. Five of the worshipers were injured. One suffered a serious head injury. No one was sentenced during the period covered by this report.

Anti-Roma Attitudes: A number of worrying incidents suggest that discrimination, intolerance and stigmatization of the Roma may be getting worse.

¹³⁶ Kostadinova, Daniela, 'The Bourgas court fondled the hooligans', Bulgarian Helsinki Committee-Obektiv, 192, 2011, (Original title in Bulgarian: 'Бургаският къд погали хулиганите'), <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/daniela-kostadinova/2011-09/burgaskiyat-sd-pogali-huliganite/>

¹³⁷ Open letter of Bulgarian Helsinki committee regarding the brutal attack on the worship place of Jehova's witnesses, (Original title in Bulgarian: Отворено писмо на български Хелзински комитет по повод бруталното нападение срещу храм на „Свидетели на Йехова“, <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/obektiv/krasimir-knev/2011-04/otvoreno-pismo-na-bhk-po-povod-brutalnoto-napadenie-sreshu-hram-na-svideteli-na-jehova/> accessed 25 August 2012

CASE 1: ¹³⁸On September 19, 2011 a mini-van driven by relatives of the Roma criminal leader Kiril Rashkov killed a pedestrian in Katunitsa – a small village in Central Bulgaria. The act was believed to be deliberate, sparking a series of demonstrations all over the country which lasted over a week and led to the arrest of hundreds of protesters. The protests escalated into violence and destruction of the personal property of the Roma family. On September 24 angry locals - indignant at the authorities - and groups of soccer fans set Rashkov's house on fire. The police arrested Rashkov on September 28, 2011. Internet forums and social networks helped to spark the riots in September. Although the demonstrations contained anti-Roma and anti-Turkish elements the majority of the protesters were expressing their disappointment in the judicial system. The prosecutor's office initiated 14 trials related to xenophobia; one person was sentenced for creating a website that called for humiliation of the Roma.

CASE 2: The problem of hate speech is seriously underestimated in Bulgaria. In 2011 shortly before the presidential elections, the political party ATAKA issued a brochure 'The Gypsy Crimes – National Threat'. This prompted a group of NGOs and individuals to send a letter to the head prosecutor in Bulgaria requesting that Volen Siderov be prosecuted for this and other declarations. The letter also called for the ban of political party ATAKA. On February 27, 2012 the Sofia City Prosecutor N. Hristov issued a statement refusing to initiate legal proceedings. He said that neither the brochure in question, nor any of Volen Siderov's speeches 'contain words or phrases and also do not share views that are discriminatory in any way or are in any way capable of inciting racial hatred or discrimination'.

Anit-semitism: In 2011 neo-nazi graffiti could be seen in the major cities in Bulgaria. Jewish public buildings and private houses were vandalised in Pleven, Ruse, Shoumen, Bourgas, Sofia, Blagoevgrad and Pazardjik. Anti-semitic groups became popular on social networking sites, especially in the aftermath of the Katunitsa case. Jewish organisations continue to express their concerns about the passiveness of the government's response to hate crimes. The prosecution refused to file charges against the leader of the political party ATAKA Volen Siderov for issuing a second edition of his two antisemitic books *The Boomerang of Evil* and *The Power of Mammon*. In September 2011 the Sofia City Court sentenced Emil Antonov for spreading fascist ideas and religious hatred in his book *Basics of National Socialism* and was forced to pay a fine of 500 leva (€250).

On April 13 2011 the Parliament adopted two very important changes in the Criminal Code regarding 'hate speech'. Art. 162 was modified to provide for a minimum sentence of one year in prison. Art. 419a was also adopted, which sanctions those who 'have justified, renounced or rudely belittled crimes against the peace of humanity'.

¹³⁸ *The conflict in Katunitza*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Конфликтът в Катунца*), http://www.dnevnik.bg/temi/konfliktut_v_katunica/, accessed 20 September 2012

6.8.3. Hate speech

2011 saw the first criminal sentence in Bulgaria for incitement of ethnic and racial hatred. Trial concerned the use of social networks such as Facebook to incite racial and ethnic hatred. The defendant, a 23-year-old man, had set up a Facebook page called 'Slaughter of the Gypsies' after the Katounitsa incident¹³⁹. The web page was illustrated with photographs of knives and mistreatment of Roma people.¹⁴⁰ In October 2011 the perpetrator was sentenced conditionally to ten months deprivation of liberty with a three-year suspension period and public condemnation.

In October 2011 the United Nations Human Rights Commission voiced deep concern about the anti-Roma demonstrations and accompanying hate speech that followed the Katounitsa incident. 'The hate speech that has been fuelling the anti-Roma protests in Bulgaria is of great concern,' Rupert Colville, the OHCHR spokesperson in Geneva, told reporters, adding that it is unacceptable for an entire community to be targeted for an offence allegedly committed by an individual.¹⁴¹

As far as the general public image regarding the Roma is concerned, according to a study by the Sofia-based Institute of Modern Politics, coverage by Bulgarian newspapers of Roma people is overwhelmingly negative; they are generally portrayed as robbers, rapists and murderers. The study tracked five Bulgarian-language daily newspapers from July to November 2011. Of 743 articles studied, only 15 featured a positive portrayal of Roma people.¹⁴²

Three Bulgarian laws sanction hate speech – the Criminal Code, the Law on Protection against Discrimination and the Law on the Radio and Television.¹⁴³ With regard to transposition of the EU Framework decision on racism and xenophobia, legislative amendments in 2009 and 2011 criminalised propaganda and physical assault with racial and xenophobic motives in their own right¹⁴⁴. These provisions have had little impact. Another weakness of the legal regulation is the fact that the punishment envisaged in law for the crime under these terms is less severe than the punishment envisaged for the same action in general terms.

¹³⁹ The Katounitsa incident in September 2011 happened after a 20-year-old was run over and killed by a motorist reportedly linked to controversial Roma businessman Kiril 'Tsar Kiro' Rashkov. The incident was followed by an arson attack on Rashkov's property and a series of anti-Roma marches in several Bulgarian cities.

¹⁴⁰ The Sofia Echo, *Bulgarian in court on charges of inciting racial hatred on Facebook*, 13 October 2011

¹⁴¹ The Sofia Echo, *UN Human Rights Commission speaks out against targeting of Roma in Bulgaria*, 05 October 2011

¹⁴² The Sofia Echo, *Bulgarian press coverage of Roma overwhelmingly negative, study finds*, 04 April 2012

¹⁴³ Each act of law has been examined in detail in the 2010-2011 ENAR national report, pp.46-47

¹⁴⁴ ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011. Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria., p.40

6.8.4. Counter terrorism

Last year's report described a specialized operation carried out by the State Agency on National Security in some Muslim villages in the autumn of 2010. Security agents wearing hoods conducted raids and searches at the homes and offices of Muslim people and religious leaders. The persons searched were suspected of connections with the Islamic foundation Al Uakf Al Islami.¹⁴⁵

In 2012 the Prosecutor's Office formally brought criminal charges against 13 persons for 'preaching the ideology of the salafi movement of Islam and imposing the Sharia state'. The criminal proceedings are in accordance with Article 108 (1) of the Bulgarian Penal Code, which criminalises proliferation of anti-democratic ideology taking the form of opposition to the principles of democracy, separation of powers, liberalism, statehood and rule of law, fundamental human rights such as equality of men and women and religious freedom. There are also charges under Article 109 of the Penal Code for 'leading and membership of a non-registered religious organisation, which preaches anti-democratic ideology'. The prosecution refers to the organisation Al Uakf Al Islami. Some persons were also charged under Article 164 of the Penal Code for preaching hatred on religious grounds.¹⁴⁶

6.8.5. Facilitating factor or protective measures in criminal justice

Amendments to the Bulgarian Criminal Code in April 2011, which aimed at harmonising Bulgarian legislation with the EU Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, have drawn some public attention to the issue of acceptability of the use of hate speech. The changes introduced a minimum sentence for crimes committed because of the race, origin, religion or belief of the victim. They also incriminated the act of publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined in the Statute of the International Criminal Court (Articles 6, 7 and 8) and crimes defined in Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal, when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group. A number of research institutes and human rights organisations used the occasion to publish on the issue and to provoke discussions in society on the topic.

As reported above, application of these criminal law provisions has been limited in practice. Following the Katounitsa incident of September 2011 the Chief Prosecutor of the Republic of Bulgaria announced that every signal for instigation of ethnic or religious hatred should be a ground for initiation of criminal proceedings under the respective provisions (Article 162 and 163) of the Penal Code and that those proceedings should be carried out swiftly. According to data provided by the Prosecution Service to the Bulgarian Helsinki

¹⁴⁵ ENAR Shadow Report 2010-2011. Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria., p.39

¹⁴⁶ Dnevnik, *The prosecutor in Pazardjik indicted 13 people for preaching Islam*, (Original title in Bulgarian: *Прокуратурата в Пазарджик повдигна обвинение срещу 13 души за проповядване на ислямизъм*, 18 June 2012, available online at http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2012/06/18/1848994_prokuraturata_v_pazardjik_povdigna_obvinienie_sreshtu/ (accessed on 01 September 2012)

Committee in February 2012¹⁴⁷, to date 16 such criminal investigations were initiated, out of which one case resulted in a sentence (reported in section 6.8.3. above) and two cases were still being heard by the court.

¹⁴⁷ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, *Human Rights in Bulgaria in 2011*, March 2012, pp.33-34, <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/publikacii/dokladi-na-bhk/godishni-dokladi-za-pravata-na-choveka/> (accessed on 01 September 2012)

7. Civil society assessment and critique in ensuring protection of fundamental rights

Although 2011 saw many positive legislative and institutional reforms, there were also some serious violations of human rights¹⁴⁸ such as instances of discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, freedom of speech and religious freedom.

In the field of **migration**, the most significant developments concern highly qualified workers and researchers. Legislative amendments have been made with the aim of transposing relevant EU Directives. With regard to the Blue Card Directive,¹⁴⁹ the preservation of the labour market test¹⁵⁰ for access to the Bulgarian labour market has left many highly qualified immigrants in Bulgaria without the possibility to conclude a labour contract. This has created a breeding ground for 'brain waste' in the country and for failed integration.

With regard to the Researchers' Directive¹⁵¹, legal amendments at the beginning of 2012 have had both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, the right to residence of family members of researchers was introduced. On the other hand, however, the burden of proof on the applicant before the Ministry of the Interior when it comes to the conditions for the issuance of the residence permit was increased. That is contrary to the purpose of the directive to give research and academic institutions (and not the Ministry of the Interior) the main role in deciding on the admission of third country national researchers.

Access to the asylum procedure remains arbitrary. Asylum seekers who have entered the country irregularly are first treated as illegal immigrants and face a risk of refoulement before their asylum application is registered by the asylum authorities within an unspecified time limit. In January 2011 the Legal Clinic for Refugees and Immigrant published an Information Note on case-law in Bulgaria in 2011 that documented some typical unlawful administrative practices in hindering access to the asylum system.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ In the ranking for 2011 Bulgaria is leader in Europe in violating basic human rights when calculated per capita according to the latest statistics of the European Court of Human Rights. In 2011 Bulgaria received an average of 7 verdicts in Strasbourg for a million of its citizens which ranks it first among the 47 country in the Council of Europe that have signed the European Convention for Human Rights.

¹⁴⁹ Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment

¹⁵⁰ The 'labour market test' requires the prospective employer to prove that no other Bulgarian or EU national or permanent status holder in Bulgaria is able to perform the job in question.

¹⁵¹ Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research

¹⁵² The Information Note is uploaded at the following web address: http://lcrien.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/information_note_access.pdf (accessed on 24 August 2012)

Undocumented immigrants continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in the country. No further steps have been taken to regularize this group since last year's report.¹⁵³ At present undocumented immigrants find themselves in a legal vacuum and are denied some of their basic human rights. It is possible that the situation breaches Bulgaria's positive obligations under *inter alia* Article 3 of the European Convention on Human rights.

The six months long Integration programme for refugees who have been granted status is insufficient. Only refugees who have settled in the capital have access to the programme. Only those who are enrolled in the programme have the right to receive financial aid for food and housing – between 300 and 450 leva (€160 – 200). Even this small aid is available to no more than 100 people annually. The professional courses are only for hairdressers, tailors and cosmeticians.

Roma integration. The Roma remain the largest and most disadvantaged minority group in Bulgaria. Funds allocated to Roma integration policies are not invested in an effective manner and the majority of the projects carried out do not follow a long-term strategy. On March 1 2012 Parliament adopted the National Strategy of Bulgaria for Integration of Roma (2012 - 2020) as a response to the EU Framework for Nation Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 which was adopted on April 5, 2011 (IP/11/400, MEMO/11/216) and the support of the EU leaders shortly after that – the Conclusions of the Council of Europe from May 19, 2011 (IP/11/789).

Current measures for tackling Roma exclusion have neglected a number of major structural obstacles. The most important are the de-segregation of Roma education and regularisation of their housing. These problems are well known both to the government and to the international institutions who have made their recommendations to the Bulgarian state. The National Strategy does not draw attention to the current problem of educational segregation. The Committee of the UN concerned with removal of all forms of discrimination stresses on 'the practice of enrollment of Roma children in support schools' and recommends that the state 'should integrate the Roma children in mixed schools in cooperation with NGOs'.¹⁵⁴ In 2011 the problem with legalising the housing in Roma neighbourhoods fell to the the Ombudsman who recommended that the Bulgarian authorities should take all necessary steps to achieve integration of the Roma.

During a meeting with young Roma activists in Sofia in February 2012 the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed her concern at the frequent violations of human rights of the Roma in Bulgaria and the increasing anti-Roma rhetoric. The Secretary of State considered the reluctance of society to ensure equal access to education of all children as well as the fact that many Roma children study in segregated schools to be a 'mistake'.

¹⁵³ Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011) available online at <http://www.enar-eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 15 August 2012.

¹⁵⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Seventy-fourth session 16 February-6 March 2009

The negative institutional attitude towards the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (CPD) continued in 2011.¹⁵⁵ The mandate of CPD ended in 2009 but the authorities have not yet appointed new members. Many legal experts express concern that the law does not explicitly state whether the current members should keep their positions and jurisdiction. The government did not accept CPD's report for 2011. Suggestions were made by members of Parliament to reduce the number of members of CPD but no vote was held on this matter. Regardless, in the 10 months until October 2011 CPD received 685 complaints as compared to 663 in 2010. In 2011, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) responded to 50 complaints relating to 'ethnic background' and 'race'. The CPD has reached a decision on 29 of these.

¹⁵⁵ Shadow Report 2010-2011: *Racism and related discriminatory practices in Bulgaria* (Brussels: ENAR, 2011), p.48, available online at <http://www.enar-eu.org/Page.asp?docid=15814&langue=EN> accessed 20 September 2012.

8. Good practices

Example of NGO Good Practice in Employment

Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe – the number of Roma labor mediators will be increased. The pilot project 'Increasing the efficiency of Roma labour mediators' of Amalipe Centre in Veliko Turnovo demonstrated successful cooperation of an NGO with society, employers, local branches of National Employment Agency and municipalities. Amalipe Centre is a national organisation for coordination in executing a European educational program for Roma mediators ROMED. Joint discussions were held to review the effectiveness of the activities of the current Roma labour mediators, whether there should be changes to their role and whether their links with Roma society help achieve the common goal. The Roma labour mediator plays a key role in finding clients for their institution by interviewing candidates in their homes. The number of Roma labour mediators is 100 and in 2012 another 100 mediators will be hired who would work exclusively with the unemployed Roma. **For more information see:**
<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&lang=2>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Education

Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe – Project 'Reducing Roma drop out from schools'. Amalipe organised four consecutive meetings in March 2012 with school principals in different regions of the country – Southeastern, Southwestern, Northeastern and Northwestern Bulgaria. 90 schools were involved in the program in the school year 2011/2012. The meetings discussed individual students who threatened to drop out, or who had already done so, as well as strategies for combating this situation. The participants also discussed progress on key elements of the Programme for the prevention of school drop-outs in the pilot schools: Student parliament, School board, School mentors, Parents club, extracurricular classes called 'Ethnic folklore – Roma folklore'. During the meetings, cooperation between pilot schools was evaluated and examples of good practices were exchanged. The idea of including teachers and principals in the travelling exhibit 'My dream of Roma and Bulgaria today' was discussed.

For more information see:
<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1104&lang=1>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Housing -

'Social homes – model for social integration'. There are four projects aimed at securing modern social housing for vulnerable, minority and poor citizens in Bourgas, Vidin, Dupnitsa and Devnia. The goal is to not only to provide the Roma with housing (for a total of 1 750 poor citizens)

but also to allow them to learn a profession. The municipalities are obliged to secure jobs for them within a year after they complete the program. Construction is expected to begin in 2013.

For more information see: Ethnos,
<http://etnosi.wordpress.com/2012/04/27/5243/#more-3402>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Health

Refugee-immigrant department of the BRC – project ‘social mediators’ in support of the refugees and asylum seekers.

A scheme – financed by the European Refugee Fund- was launched to train social mediators from the refugee community to provide support for asylum seekers and for vulnerable refugees in the first year after they have been granted protection. Ten foreign nationals have already been trained to work with the institutions and are aware of relevant rights and obligations in healthcare, social services, education, housing, professional qualification and access to the labour market. They are also trained to enable communication by vulnerable immigrants with state services including healthcare, social services, education, branches of the National Employment Agency, etc. **For more information see:**

<http://media.framar.bg/здравни-новини/бежанско-мигрантската-служба-на-бчк-започва-проект-в-подкрепа-на-бежанци-и-търсеци-убежище>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Promoting Political Participation

Program Roma of the Open Society Institute – internship programme for young Roma in the Bulgarian Parliament.

The program is conducted with the support of the National Democratic Institute, USA and the Parliament. Its goal is to expand the knowledge of young Roma who have an interest in the sphere of politics and public administration in the legislative processes and the decision-making process. It is hoped the programme will contribute to a shift in public attitudes regarding the participation of Roma in politics. **For more information see:**

http://www.osf.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=446

Example of NGO Good Practice in Media

Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe – training in working with media and intercession of students from Roma minority.

50 students from Roma background from all over the country took part in a workshop conducted by journalists. The students learned to prepare for interviews, how to initiate discussions, how to defend their thesis in a debate and how to construct their arguments.

For more information see:
<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1114&lang=1>

Example of NGO Good Practice in Criminal Justice

1. 'People Against Racism' – On June 12, 2011 the informal group 'People Against Racism' organised a demonstration in Sofia against Neo-Nazi violence under the motto 'Together for tolerance and peace'. The goal of the demonstration was to draw the attention to neo-Nazi violence and the need for more effective punishment:

- A year after the attack in tram №20 when a group of skin heads attacked youths who were on their way to a demonstration in defence of foreign nationals, none of the attackers have been sentenced;
- Attacks on Roma after a soccer game;
- The attack against the Afghan Javed Noorie because someone thought he was 'a gypsy';
- Two years ago a boy was killed in Borisova Garden because someone thought he was gay;
- The attack on the worship house of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bourgas and thrashing by activists of IMRO;
- The attack on the worshipers in the Sofia mosque by members of ATAKA.

For more information see: <http://stopnazi-bg.org/>

2. Open Society Institute – Project 'Civil monitoring of immigration detention centres in Bulgaria'. With regard to immigrants and asylum seekers, a good practice during the period under review is the realisation of an NGO project on the civil monitoring of immigration detention centres in Bulgaria between January and June 2011. The project was realised by the Open Society Institute and was developed in implementation of the Community Policing Strategy of the Ministry of Interior. Its methodology included visits by civil society volunteers at the centres and unlimited access by the volunteers to the detainees and their files. Following the visits, the volunteers elaborated reports, which became the basis of the final report presented at a public conference and published online.

For more information see:
http://www.osf.bg/cyeds/downloads/busmanci_ENG.pdf

9. National recommendations

Special Focus: Muslim Communities

- Bulgarian authorities should guarantee that public broadcasting services avoid stereotyping of religious and ethnic groups and report fairly on such groups in conformity with the highest professional and ethical standards;
- Ensure that public officials at all levels, including ministers, refrain from making statements that incite violence and discrimination;
- Launch public awareness activities disassociating terrorism and violent extremism from Muslims and Islam;
- Develop codes of conduct for political representatives to condemn unequivocally all manifestations of hate in public discourse and acts of violence based on bias and refrain from making discriminatory statements.

Employment

- Enlargement and strengthening of the network of labour mediators in Roma communities and social mediators for the refugees and asylum seekers;
- Training of the municipalities to increase their awareness on the problems of integration of individuals seeking and receiving asylum;
- Incorporation of good European practices regarding the payment of community service done by individuals who are in the process of gaining refugee or humanitarian status;
- Training representatives of minorities to develop and apply projects for small businesses.

Education

- Developing a universal national program for prevention of school drop-outs among Roma children;
- Ensure adequate integration of the Roma children in mainstream education;
- Train teachers to work in a multi-cultural environment;
- Train teachers in programs for non-discriminatory and incorporated education;
- Giving a real opportunity to asylum seekers to learn Bulgarian by providing language classes specifically tailored to this group in order to better reflect their needs.

Housing

- Innovative projects and new policies for construction of social homes in the municipalities;
- Counter discrimination in municipal housing policy that make it impossible for foreign nationals who have been granted protection to access this housing

- Inclusion of intensive social work to provide better support for the homeless. Provide training, where necessary, for former homeless people on how to pay rent, maintain housing, find a job, develop parenting skills etc.

Health

- Continue the work of the Roma health mediators while strengthening their connections to the healthcare system;
- Expand the network of social mediators as moderators who facilitate access to healthcare for refugees.

Access to goods and services

- Mediators should be introduced to ensure access for refugees and the Roma to public services like employment, education and health services.

Criminal justice

- Enhance the public awareness of the Criminal Code provisions which prohibit crimes motivated by racial or religious hatred as well as hate speech;
- Train officials in the investigation and prosecution services, as well as judges, regarding the proper categorisation of crimes that are committed with racial and discriminatory motives;
- Law enforcement officials should be educated about the concerns associated with ethnic profiling;
- Raise awareness of Neo-Nazi extremism among politicians, law-enforcement officials and society at large.
- Authorities must be held accountable regarding the disproportionate impact of counter-terrorism measures on the lives of immigrants and members of the Muslim community. Measures taken must be proportionate to the risks faced.

Media

- Organise media discussions, debates and sustainable PR campaigns to overcome the negative social attitudes against ethnic, migrant and religious communities;
- Better monitoring of hate speech and racial discrimination in the media.
- The media should be encouraged to report on good practices for the integration of Roma and migrants as well as on cases of successful prosecutions for racially motivated crimes instead of negative reporting of racism, discrimination and hatred;
- Incentivise the media and academics to conduct research on national migration policy. Increase available funding for research in this area.

10. Conclusion

The Roma remain the most disadvantaged minority group in Bulgaria. Funds allocated to the integration of Roma are not invested effectively and the majority of projects carried out do not have a long-term strategy.

While many of the Roma are Bulgarian citizens and therefore are formally recognised as holders of equal rights, the most powerless minority group in Bulgaria is undocumented immigrants. They often fall through the cracks in legal provisions and have limited or no access to the labour market, education, identity cards etc. They are often denied their fundamental rights as human beings.

On January 3, 2012 the UN independent expert on minorities Mrs. Gay McDougall published a report on her visit in Bulgaria in July 2011. There she highlighted the serious problems with the integration of Roma minority. According to her, the Roma 'experience discrimination and exclusion in all areas of life which leaves them extremely marginalized and permanently poor'. She recommends taking drastic measures to further their integration in education, employment and housing. She also expressed concern about increased violence, bullying, vandalism and hate speech directed towards the Muslim minority and other religious minorities. She criticized the authorities for refusing to acknowledge the existence of the Pomak minority.

Mrs. Gay McDougall summarizes the current problems regarding discrimination against minorities in Bulgaria as follows: underestimation of the problem by the government and failure of the legal system to deal with the most serious cases of violence directed at religious communities and ethnic and migrant minorities. This refers to the attack on Muslim in the Banya Bashi Mosque in Sofia (May 2011) by the members of the political party ATAKA; the beating of the members of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bourgas (2011) by members of IMRO; the attack against the Roma poet Hristo Hristov (April 2012) and other cases of ethnic and religious violence in 2011. Relative few of these incidents resulted in prosecutions. When prosecutions were successful they were usually for minor public order offences. Although the Criminal Code contains hate crimes, these are rarely applied in practice. When they are applied, it is often against representatives of ethnic and religious minorities.¹⁵⁶

Racial hatred appears to be on the rise. Public understanding of issues such as social marginalization of minority groups, difficulties faced by refugees and victims of hate speech and crime, remains very limited. The proof is the rising voice of representatives of neo-Nazi groups on Facebook and other internet forums, the organisation of protests and other demonstrations of nationalist

¹⁵⁶ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, *Annual report 2011*, http://www.bghelsinki.org/media/uploads/annual_reports/2011.pdf, accessed 20 September 2012

and neo-Nazi character.

On a positive note, civil society is conducting some excellent work in its efforts to combat racism and related discrimination, as demonstrated through the good practices highlighted in this report.

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Annex 1: List of abbreviations and terminology

BHC – Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

CEM – Council of the Electronic Media

CPD – Commission for Protection against Discrimination

CRC – Communications Regulation Commission

DPC – Movement for Rights and Freedom

EC – European Commission

ECRI – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

EMHPF – Ethnic Minorities Health Problems Foundation

ENAR – European Network against Racism

ERRC – European Roma Rights Centre

EU – European Union

EU-MIDIS – European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

GPs – General Practitioners

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LCRI – Legal Clinic for Refugees and Immigrants

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

NSI – National Statistical Institute

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

ODIHR – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

RHM – Roma Health Mediator

SAR – State Agency for Refuges

IMRO – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation

