

A LONG WAY TO GO

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Overrepresentation of Romani Children in “Special Schools” in Serbia

JANUARY 2014

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION PROMOTING EQUALITY

This report was made possible with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the European Roma Rights Centre. The views expressed in the report do not necessarily represent the views of donors.



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ISBN 978-963-89916-2-1

Design: Anikó Székffy

Layout: Dzavít Berisha

Printed by: Molnár és Faragó Bt., Budapest, Hungary

Cover photo: © Jiří Doležal

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This report is published in English and Serbian

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Address: 1074 Budapest, Madách tér 4, Hungary

Office Tel: +36 1 413 2200

Office Fax: +36 1 413 2201

E-mail: office@errc.org

www.errc.org

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

DILS	Delivery of Improved Local Services
EPD	Education of pupils with disabilities
EPD classes	Classes within mainstream schools for the education of pupils with disabilities (formerly known as “special classes”)
EPD schools	Schools for the education of pupils with disabilities (formerly known as “special schools”)
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ISC	Inter-Sectoral Commission
MoESTD	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
LFES	Law on the Foundations of the Education System
LPE	Law on Primary Education
OSI	formerly Open Society Institute, now Open Society Foundations
PS	Primary School
SPSE	School for Primary and Secondary Education
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank

Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). After attending an ERRC training in field research in the area of education of pupils with disabilities, a team of 16 Romani researchers interviewed Romani families with children in schools for students with disabilities in nine locations throughout Serbia. This team consisted of, in alphabetical order, Aleksandar Dinić, Aleksandar Makić, Aleksandra Demirović, Branislav Jovanović, Damir Alijević, Dalibor Nakić, Danica Jovanović, Goran Hasanović, Ina Karaba, Jašar Ašimović, Jelica Nikolić, Jovan Nikolić, Milica Pavel, Nada Đuričković, Slađana Teodorović and Slavica Rakić. Field data gathered by the researchers were processed by Anđelija Vučurević. Andrea Čolak prepared a legal background analysis which served as a basis of the relevant chapter. Marija Manić undertook the collection of statistical data from schools. Tatjana Perić conducted additional interviews with experts and activists, and also prepared various drafts of this report, with input from Đorđe Jovanović, Stephan Müller, Adam Weiss, Marianne Powell and Andrea Čolak. Dezideriu Gergely approved the final version of the report for publication.

The ERRC would like to thank all of the schools, individuals and organisations who contributed towards the creation of this report, and especially the Romani families in Serbia who kindly agreed to share their views with us on their children’s education in schools for the education of pupils with disabilities.

Executive Summary

For more than a decade the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) has monitored access of Roma to education in the region. Overrepresentation of Romani children in “special schools” has always been an issue in terms of both quality and equality of education. However, ERRC welcomes that in last several years, the Republic of Serbia has undoubtedly taken very important steps in terms of both legislation as well as policy relating to Roma education and especially the segregation of Romani students in schools for the education of students with disabilities. The decrease in the representation of Romani students in such schools, however, does indicate that changes are slowly taking place.

The Republic of Serbia embarked on a significant and much needed change of course in education with the adoption of the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System in 2009, providing grounds for major changes in inclusive education for Roma. The education system in Serbia, according to the new legislation, should be equal and accessible, without discrimination and separation based on a number of grounds, including ethnicity and disability. This was by all means urgently needed, since Romani students in Serbia lag behind their non-Romani peers in terms of school enrolment, attendance and attainment, yet they are also exposed to discrimination and segregation in education, including the segregation of Romani children in the so-called “special schools” for students with disabilities.

Four years since the adoption of the law, the promise of inclusive education remains unfulfilled for the majority of Romani children and youth in specialised institutions for students with disabilities. In order to illustrate the extent of the phenomenon of Roma overrepresentation in such schools, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) embarked on a data collection exercise in 2013, seeking statistical information relating to the representation of Romani students in “special schools” and obtaining relevant information from 31 schools throughout the country.

This research endeavour was complemented by a survey conducted in ten locations across Serbia, in 128 households of Romani students of “special schools.” In the course of the survey, a team of 15 Romani researchers, previously trained by the ERRC, talked to parents and caregivers of Romani students about the processes leading to the placement of their children in “special schools.”

Key Findings

Romani students are still overrepresented in special schools though their absolute number in these schools have decreased

Official data for Vojvodina and the results of the ERRC research indicate a decrease of both the number of Romani students and of the overall number of children attending “special schools.”

Despite this positive development and the promise of inclusive education with the legal and policy reforms Serbia adopted in 2009, the share of Roma in specialised educational institutions remain high. ERRC research data, collected from 31 schools throughout the country, indicates an ongoing and notable degree of overrepresentation of Roma in special schools. Furthermore, a number of individual schools have alarmingly high shares of Romani students, reaching up to 73% in 2012/13.

Number and percentage of Romani and non-Romani students in EPD schools and classes

School year	Romani students (Vojvodina data)	%	All students	Romani students (ERRC research)	%	All students
2010/2011	736	28.26	2604	n/a	n/a	n/a
2011/2012	623	27.29	2300	808	23	3539
2012/2013	557	26.15	2130	690	21	3306

Schools with highest percentage of Romani children in academic year 2012/2013

School	Absolute number	% of Romani students
SPSE Vidovdan in Bor	69	73%
PS Sveti Sava in Prokuplje	23	68%
SPSE Veselin Nikolić in Kruševac	75	63%
PS Novi Beograd in Belgrade	58	40%

Indications of a decrease in new enrolments in EPD education

- The ERRC research data reveal that a total of 41 Romani students enrolled in first grade in 2011/12, amounting to a fifth (20%) of all such students. In 2012/13, both the absolute number of Romani new first graders (24 students) and their share among all such students (11%) became smaller. In particular the latter data indicate a positive trend of a decrease in representation of Romani children, yet they are still above the level of Romani students’ participation in mainstream education.
- Further, according to ERRC research, in 2012/2013 only two Romani children were enrolled in EPD schools without the opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission.

Underlying reasons for attending EPD education

- According to the survey in only one-fifth of the cases (22%), it was the parent or other caregiver who took the initiative that the child should be assessed as to which school type would be appropriate. The first steps in the direction towards “special schools” were evidently taken following the advice of educational and medical professionals.
- Much of the respondents’ apparent consent to “special education” is influenced by the perceived authority of the professionals involved, as well as the socio-economic factors creating obstacles relating to education of Romani students.
- The survey results also testify that, despite the explanations they gave in support of specialised institutions, a majority of respondents (63%) nevertheless stated that they would prefer if their children received education in mainstream schools.

Insufficient assistance to children to stay in mainstream schools

- The practice of transferring students from mainstream schools to EPD still continues. Both the overall number and the number of Romani students even increased from 2011/2012 to 2012/2013.
- In 70% of the cases, the interviewees confirmed that the school did not offer any additional support to their children in order to keep the student enrolled in the mainstream schools, as opposed to transfer.
- In the cases of students transferred to “special schools” after they had spent some time in mainstream education, 41% of their parents and carers were never contacted in relation to the difficulties their children experienced.
- Once students end up in a specialised educational institution, there is hardly any return, and only one in ten respondents attempted to transfer the students to (or back to) mainstream schools.

Limited information for parents - the ability of parents to make informed decision on the educational choices for their children

- A large majority of respondents (75%) to the ERRRC survey says the commission did not inform them on the limitations and negative consequences associated with attending EPD schools.
- 71% were not told by the commission that they have the right to refuse the commission’s opinion.
- Almost half of the respondents stated that they did not receive any information from the members of the assessment commission on what the assessment should actually establish.
- 10% of parents and carers for Romani students of “special schools” did not know the exact nature of the schools the children and youth are attending.
- Commission members asked as much as 41% of parents and carers to sign related documentation without clarifying what the documents were about.
- Practically three-quarters of survey respondents said they were not told that they can be present at the commission’s assessment.
- Following the assessment of the commission, two thirds of respondents were not told about the reasons for the commission’s decision that the child should be referred to a “special school.”

Treatment of Romani children in mainstream education

46% of the interviewees alleged that the treatment in mainstream schools was not good. The most common reasons¹ given were:

- the teachers ignored the student (50%),
- the student had to sit in the back of the class (50%),
- the teachers humiliated the student in front of their peers (39%).

1 The interviewees could provide multiple answers to this question.

The most common reasons why students who additionally experienced bullying in mainstream schools were:

- Romani ethnicity (75%)
- disabilities or low grades (42%)
- poverty (33%).

Recommendations

These key findings lead us to the conclusion that faster and more vigorous action on behalf of the education authorities is necessary, and the ERRC urges the Government of Serbia to eradicate the overrepresentation and segregation of Romani children in “special schools” by adopting the following recommendations:

- Implement inclusive education as required and regulated by the relevant legislation and international human rights standards.
- End the segregation of Romani children into “special schools” and the general practice of segregating pupils based on intellectual ability.
- Implement the National Action Plan on Roma Education 2012-2014, by providing adequate human and financial resources, and especially its measures addressing the overrepresentation of Romani students in “special schools.”
- Ban segregation on ethnic grounds in Serbian schools, especially in schools for students with disabilities.
- In particular, enforce the ban on the enrolment of students who do not have mental disabilities in educational institutions designed for students who have mental disabilities, regardless of parental consent or requests.
- Immediately address the situation of schools for students with disabilities with an extremely high proportion of Romani students, transfer wrongfully placed students to mainstream schools in the area, and fully support the integration of transfer students into mainstream schools.
- Facilitate the transfer of students from “special” to mainstream schools, by providing additional support and incentives, at both the national and local level, to mainstream schools accepting students from “special schools.”
- Provide the parents and carers of children without disabilities who are wrongfully placed in “special schools” with opportunities of taking adequate legal action.
- Inform Romani parents and caregivers in providing inclusive education for their children, and ensure that education professionals provide full information to parents during the course of relevant procedures.
- Provide financial support to non-governmental organisations in order to carry out information campaigns among Romani parents and carers with regards to their rights and responsibilities regarding their children’s education, and the benefits of inclusive education in mainstream institutions.
- Speed up the process of revising the rules and regulations relating to the work of Inter-Sectoral Commissions, to ensure that their work is done effectively, lawfully, and professionally.

- Provide concrete support and assistance to Romani parents wishing to educate their children in inclusive education.
- Increase the number of Romani pedagogical assistants in preschool and primary school institutions, in order to ensure inclusive quality education for Romani children.
- Regularly collect data disaggregated by ethnicity and sex with regards to education and particularly “special education” and make these data publicly available, while at the same time ensuring respect for national and international data protection standards.

The ERRRC hopes that their data collection and field research results will assist the Serbian educational authorities in their work to achieve lasting, positive change and, in particular, to end segregation in the Serbian school system; this includes all forms of segregation, such as segregation of Romani students based on ethnicity and segregation of pupils based on intellectual ability.

1 Introduction

Serbia embarked on a significant and much needed change of course on education with the adoption of a new Law on the Foundations of the Education System (LFES) in 2009.² Among many other innovations, the LFES provided grounds for major changes in inclusive quality education, including the inclusive education of Roma. This was urgently needed, since Romani students in Serbia lag behind their non-Romani peers in terms of school enrolment, attendance and attainment, and they are also exposed to discrimination and segregation in education. In particular, the segregation of Romani children in so-called “special schools” for students with disabilities has been a long-running concern of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), as well as the international treaty monitoring bodies. In 2011 for example, the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its concern over segregation of Roma in education in Serbia.³ Continuing segregation of Romani pupils in “special schools” leaves Serbia open to the kind of litigation that led the European Court of Human Rights to condemn the Czech Republic,⁴ Croatia,⁵ Greece⁶ and Hungary⁷ in recent years for discriminating against Romani children when securing their right to education.

Four years since the adoption of the LFES, the promise of inclusive education remains unfulfilled for the majority of Romani children and youth in specialised institutions for students with disabilities. In order to illustrate the extent of the phenomenon of Roma overrepresentation in such schools, in 2013 the ERRC embarked on a data collection exercise, seeking statistical information relating to the representation of Romani students in “special schools” throughout Serbia. This research endeavour was complemented by a survey conducted in ten locations across Serbia, in 128 households including Romani students of “special schools.” In the course of the survey, a team of 16 Romani researchers, previously trained by the ERRC, talked to parents and caregivers of Romani students about the processes leading to the placement of their children in “special schools.” The results of the ERRC data collection and field research are presented in this report, in the hope that they will lead to meaningful and lasting change, and end the segregation of Romani children and youth in schools for students with mental disabilities.

2 *Law on the Foundations of the Education System (Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja)*, Službeni glasnik RS, No. 72/2009, 52/2011, 55/2013, available in Serbian at: <http://www.mprn.gov.rs/dokumenta-i-propisi/zakoni/obrazovanje-i-vaspitanje?lang=sr-YU>.

3 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Serbia*, 2011, available at: http://www.bayefsky.com/docs.php/area/conclobs/treaty/cerd/opt/0/state/100004/node/3/filename/serbia_t4_cerd_78.

4 *D.H. v Czech Republic*.

5 *Orsus v Croatia*.

6 *Sampanis v Greece* and *Sampani v Greece*.

7 *Horvath and Kiss v Hungary*.

2 Roma and the Education of Students With Disabilities

A series of laws and bylaws recently adopted in Serbia pave the way for the educational inclusion of Romani children. The new umbrella Law on the Foundations of the Education System (LFES), adopted in 2009, introduced major changes to the system of primary education in Serbia. In its follow up, the Government also adopted the Rulebook on Additional Educational, Medical and Social Support to Pupils (2010),⁸ Rulebook on Assessment and Evaluation of the Individual Education Plan (2010),⁹ Rulebook on Grading Pupils in Elementary Education (2011)¹⁰ and the new Law on Primary Education (LPE) (2013).¹¹

The education system in Serbia, according to the new legislation, should be equal and accessible, without discrimination and separation based on a number of grounds, including ethnicity and disability.¹² The law asks schools to adapt themselves around the needs of students,¹³ especially by the means of individual education plans (IEP) prepared for students.¹⁴ According to the LFES, mandatory preschool preparation programme for all children aged five-and-a-half to six-and-a-half has been extended to nine months, to improve the readiness of children for school. It also introduced the positions of pedagogical assistants, providing additional support to students in need.¹⁵ Social protection laws also allow for personal assistants to provide support to such students.¹⁶

School enrolment is now unconditional and inclusive, and in some exceptional cases children in Serbia can now enrol into schools without some personal documents, which is very relevant for Romani children who are “legally invisible” due to a lack of personal documents, mainly birth certificates.¹⁷ According to the LFES, there are now no formal

8 *Pravilnik o dodatnoj obrazovnoj, zdravstvenoj i socijalnoj podršci detetu i učeniku, Službeni glasnik RS*, No. 63/2010.

9 *Pravilnik o bližim uputstvima za utvrđivanje prava na individualni obrazovni plan, njegovu primenu i vrednovanje, Službeni glasnik RS*, No. 76/2010.

10 *Pravilnik o ocenjivanju učenika u osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju, Službeni glasnik RS*, No. 74/2011.

11 *Zakon o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju, Službeni glasnik RS*, No. 55/2013.

12 LFES, Article 3(1)(1).

13 LFES, Article 3(1)(4).

14 Individual education plans are formal documents outlining the institution’s plan for additional support to the education of a particular student, inter alia specifying the objectives of the educational activities in question, detailing the individual support activities, defining special achievement standards, the personnel to be involved in the activities, and the overall IEP implementation time frame (Rulebook on Assessment and Evaluation of the Individual Education Plan, Article 5).

15 Pedagogical assistants provide additional help and support to children and students, depending on their needs, and also assist teachers and other education professionals in improving their work with children and students who need additional educational support (LFES, Article 117).

16 Personal assistants support various categories of disadvantaged individuals in order to improve their quality of life and enable them to lead active and independent lives (Law on Social Protection, *Službeni glasnik RS*, No. 24/2011, Articles 40 and 45).

17 LFES, Article 98; LFES, however, does not specify whether these students will be allowed to graduate from primary school unless they provide the missing documents by the time of the graduation.

limitations for any child to attend a mainstream primary school, along with the mandatory formation of inclusive education teams in schools.¹⁸

Although separate classes for students with disabilities within mainstream schools can no longer be formed,¹⁹ schools for students with disabilities – the so-called “special schools”²⁰ – are still in operation, and previous classes established within mainstream schools continue. Students should attend “special schools” only exceptionally and when in the best interests of the child.²¹ Primary schools for students with disabilities should also provide support to mainstream primary schools, with the aim of promoting inclusive practices.²²

The former Commissions for Categorisation, which had decision-making powers on the type of school a student would attend, are no longer operational. Instead, the LFES introduced Inter-Sectoral Commissions (ISC). Upon a student’s enrolment in mainstream school, and in case that the student requires additional support, the school enables access to the ISC for the purpose of making an assessment of the type of additional support to be provided; furthermore, a student can be enrolled into a “special school” only with both an opinion of the ISC supporting this move, and the consent of the student’s parents.²³ Generally, the purpose of the ISC assessment is to enable social inclusion by providing adequate support to a child or pupil in accessing their rights, services and resources.²⁴

Four years after the adoption of the LFES, the implementation of the law and its bylaws significantly varies from school to school. A number of factors have contributed to this. Primarily, it took some time for the Government to adopt additional laws and bylaws, which made the implementation of LFES practically possible.²⁵ Some of these documents, especially the Rulebook on Additional Support, are in need of serious revision according to education practitioners, and the new draft on the Rulebook has been waiting for formal

18 LFES, Article 3(3)(4).

19 LFES, Article 98(7).

20 In formal parlance, Article 3 of the 2013 Law on Primary Education uses the term “schools for the education of students with difficulties in development and disability.” These schools were formerly known as “special schools” and are colloquially still referred to in the same way. For the sake of simplicity, this report will refer to these schools as “special schools” or schools for the education of pupils with disabilities (EPD schools).

21 LPE, Article 10(2).

22 LPE, Article 18(3).

23 LFES, Article 98(7) and LPE, Article 56. LFES explicitly mentions only parents’ consent in this context, however guardians are entitled to legal representation of children on equal terms as parents, with an exception that guardians’ decisions relating to education also have to be approved by Centres for Social Work (Family Law, *Službeni glasnik RS*, No. 18/2005, Article 138).

24 Rulebook on Additional Support, Article 1(2).

25 For more details, see European Roma Rights Centre and Minority Rights Centre, *Parallel Report by the European Roma Rights Centre and Minority Rights Centre, Concerning Serbia to the Human Rights Council, within its Universal Periodic Review, for consideration at its 15th session (21 January to 1 February 2013)* (Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, 2012), available at: <http://www.errc.org/reports-and-advocacy-submissions/errc-submission-to-un-hrc-on-serbia-july-2012/4037>.

adoption since January 2013.²⁶ On a practical level, there are also concerns regarding the lack of capacity of schools to implement the law, especially its aspects relating to inclusive education. Teaching staff also frequently complain of difficulties in implementing inclusive education, including the design and application of individual education plans.²⁷

2.1 “Special Education” in the Strategic Framework for Roma Education

In addition to legislative changes, the focus on inclusive education is also on the rise in strategic documents relating to the education of Romani students in Serbia. The *Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia until 2020*, adopted by the Serbian Government in 2012, places a strong emphasis on inclusiveness and frequently refers to Romani children as a specific socially vulnerable group of special importance in education.²⁸ There are segments of Serbia’s policy commitments under the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 that suggest decreasing number of Romani children in “special schools.” The country’s National Action Plan (NAP) on Roma education from 2005 proposed the measures of drafting and adopting temporary regulations for the re-assessment of students wrongly assigned to “special schools,” testing or retesting of such students and their transfer to mainstream institutions, and the elaboration of special programmes for work with such students upon their transfer to mainstream education.²⁹ Moreover, the *Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia*, officially adopted as late as 2009, recognised the problem of sending Romani children to “special schools” and attributed it primarily to social and linguistic factors, rather than genuine disability.³⁰ Therefore, one of the Strategy’s aims in the field of education was the provision of quality education for Roma, including the return to mainstream schools for Romani students who do not have disabilities yet who attend “special schools” nevertheless. In a similar vein, the Strategy’s priority of including Romani children in education envisaged the creating of a system for an adequate assessment of readiness for school.

The Action Plan for Implementation of the *Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia* for the period of 2012-2014 builds on the 2009 education reforms, and proposes the drafting and revision of legislation and regulation related to education, especially with regards

26 Rulebook on Additional Educational, Medical and Social Support to Children and Pupils defines the conditions for undertaking assessment of the need for additional educational, medical or social support to a child or pupil, and also defines the membership and modus operandi of the Inter-Sectoral Commissions (Rulebook for Additional Support, Article 1).

27 For more details, see European Roma Rights Centre, *Serbia: Country Profile 2011-2012* (Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, 2013), available at: <http://www.errc.org/article/serbia-country-profile-2011-2012/4166>.

28 Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia until 2020*, available in Serbian at: www.ff.uns.ac.rs/Files/StrategijaObrazovanja.pdf.

29 Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, *Common Action Plan for the Advancement of Roma Education in Serbia, 2005*, available in English at: <http://www.romadecade.org/article/decade-action-plans/9296>.

30 Office for Human and Minority Rights, *Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, 2009*, available in Serbian at: <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/index.php/nacionalne-manjine/propisi-i-strategije>.

to transfers from “special” to mainstream schools.³¹ Furthermore, the revised NAP also plans support for the inclusion of Romani students transferring from “special” to mainstream schools, by the means of creating mechanisms and procedures for such transfers, designing support programmes for all such students, and work with parents with regards to their children’s enrolment in mainstream schools. The NAP’s planned indicators also include the number of students enrolled in “special schools” without the opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission.

Unfortunately, the Government did not earmark any funds for this activity, scheduled for completion by the end of 2014 according to the NAP, and the funding is likely to be provided only through donations. The NAP lists just one donation with regards to the “special education” of Romani children: the Delivery of Improved Local Services (DILS) project of the World Bank.³² The objective of DILS was the capacity-building of institutional actors and beneficiaries in improving access to, and quality of, local delivery of services in the areas of health, education and social protection. Since March 2008 DILS was implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 55 municipalities in Serbia, through a wide partnership network including 140 primary schools and 55 Roma non-governmental organisations. The project’s Component IV: Improving Capacity of LSGs and Other Local Public Institutions as Service Providers, *inter alia* dealt with the issues of Roma education, by the means of grants for quality improvements in schools. Nevertheless, DILS funded only project-specific activities and only for a limited period of time. It was slated to end in December 2013, and there are already concerns on the sustainability of its results, primarily relating to the ability of local self-governments to finance and implement local action plans on Roma education.³³

In general, however, it is not possible to find any systematic reporting or analysis of the implementation and impact of institutional measures relating to Roma in “special education” in Serbia. The Serbian Government’s own progress report on Roma Decade activities in 2012 claims that all Roma children enrolled in “special schools” without the decision of the Inter-Sectoral Commission are now included in mainstream schools, and that additional support programmes developed for these students, are regularly monitored.³⁴ Furthermore, “special schools” have reportedly been required by the MoESTD to prepare support programmes for Romani students in higher grades to assist them in preparation for final exams and enrolment in mainstream secondary schools. As is sadly often the case, the degree of implementation of these commitments remains unclear, especially in light of the data collected in the ERRC research, which will be presented in the following chapters, and which demonstrates the continued presence of large numbers of Romani students in schools for students with disabilities.

31 Kancelarija za ljudska i manjinska prava, *Akcionni plan za sprovođenje Strategije za unapređenje položaja Roma u Republici Srbiji za period 2012-2014*, 2013, available in Serbian at: <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/index.php/ynacionalne-manjine-l/propisi-i-strategije>.

32 More information on the project is available at the websites of the World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P096823/delivery-improved-local-services-project?lang=en&tab=overview>, and the Serbian MoESTD: <http://www.dils.gov.rs/mp/>.

33 Email correspondence with Zdenka Milivojevic, MoESTD: 16 September 2013.

34 Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Progress Report 2012*, 2013, available in English at: <http://www.romadecade.org/news/decade-progress-reports-for-2012/9276>.

3 Overrepresentation of Romani Children in “Special Schools”

3.1 Official Data on Romani Children in Schools for Students with Disabilities

Official statistical data on Romani students who receive primary education in schools for the education of pupils with disabilities (EPD) in Serbia are not sufficiently detailed and not regularly provided. The only recent official data available, for the academic year 2010/2011, place the number of Romani students of “special schools” at 1,199, which amounted to 28% of a total number of 4,248 students of such schools.³⁵ Apart from that, researchers could only rely on a study previously conducted by the then Open Society Institute (OSI) and the Fund for an Open Society Serbia, before the enactment of new legislation on inclusive education. Based on data received from 88% of Serbian “special schools” at the time, the OSI research established the shares of Roma among pupils in EPD schools at 30% in the academic year 2007/08, and 32% in 2008/09.³⁶

The Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (hereinafter: Provincial Secretariat) is an exception in this regard, as it collects data disaggregated by ethnicity for all major ethnic groups living in the Vojvodina province, including Roma. Since 2011, the data have been publicly available on the website of the Secretariat and are updated on an annual basis.³⁷ According to the Provincial Secretariat’s data reports, the number of Romani students attending primary school level education for pupils with disabilities is gradually declining in Vojvodina.³⁸

From the academic year 2010/2011 to the year 2012/2013, the number of Romani students in both EPD schools and EPD classes decreased from 736 to 557 students; a process which reflects the overall decrease of students in EPD schools and classes (2,604 to 2,130).³⁹ Therefore,

35 Zavod za unapređivanje obrazovanja i vaspitanja, *Obrazovno-vaspitne ustanove za decu i učenike sa smetnjama u razvoju u Republici Srbiji* (Belgrade: Zavod za unapređivanje obrazovanja i vaspitanja, 2012), 38.

36 Open Society Institute, *Roma Children in “Special” Education in Serbia: Overrepresentation, Underachievement and Impact on Life* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2010), 61.

37 The documents are available in Serbian at: <http://www.puma.vojvodina.gov.rs/documents.php>.

38 The number of students in mainstream primary schools is also diminishing to a certain extent, yet in 2012/2013 it was only a 1.25% decline compared to the number of students in the previous academic year; evidently, and positively, the drop in the overall number of students in EPD developed at a faster pace (7.4% from 2011/12 to 2012/13) and in the case of Romani students in EPD reached 10.58% for the same period.

39 See the annual reports of the Provincial Secretariat: Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, *Informacija o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju učenika sa posebnim osvrtnom na obrazovanje pripadnika nacionalnih manjina u AP Vojvodini u školskoj 2010/11. godini* (Novi Sad: Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, May 2011); Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, *Informacija o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju učenika sa posebnim osvrtnom na obrazovanje pripadnika nacionalnih manjina u AP Vojvodini u školskoj 2011/12. godini* (Novi Sad:

when it comes to the share of Romani children as part of the entire student population in EPD education, there are still reasons for concern. In 2010/2011, 28.26% of these students were of Romani origin which decreased only to 26.15% in 2012/2013.⁴⁰ Their education takes place in 13 EPD schools (three primary schools and ten schools for primary and secondary education) or EPD classes within 54 mainstream primary schools in 28 local self-governments.⁴¹

Romani and non-Romani students in EPD schools and classes (Vojvodina)⁴²

School year	Overall no. of EPD students	No. of Romani students	Roma among all EPD students	Annual decrease of Romani EPD students
2010/2011	2604	736	28.26%	N/A
2011/2012	2300	623	27.29%	15.35%
2012/2013	2130	557	26.15%	10.58%

The downward trend is commendable, yet this is by no means representative of the Roma presence within the Vojvodina demographic. Illustratively, according to the official data from the most recent population census, conducted in Serbia in 2011, there were 42,391 Roma living in the Vojvodina province, as 2.19% of its total population of 1,931,809.⁴³ Additionally, Roma students represented only 5.43% of students in mainstream primary schools in Vojvodina in 2012/2013.⁴⁴

Furthermore, in 2012/13, 107,692 students of Serbian ethnicity attended mainstream primary schools, compared to 934 Serbian students in EPD, a ratio of 115:1. In the case of Roma, the ratio was only 14:1, with 557 students in EPD and 8,272 students in mainstream primary education – thus for every 14 Romani students in mainstream primary schools, there was one student in EPD.⁴⁵ Evidently, there is still a considerable degree of overrepresentation of Roma in the education for students with disabilities in Vojvodina.

In August 2013, the ERRC also asked the Provincial Secretariat to provide data on Romani students attending primary education in EPD schools only (excluding those attending EPD classes in mainstream primary classes, as is the case in the data quoted above).⁴⁶ According to this source, the totals of 356 Romani students in 2011/2012 and 306 students

Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, May 2012); Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, *Informacija o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju učenika, s posebnim osvrtom na obrazovanje pripadnika manjinskih nacionalnih zajednica u Autonomnoj Pokrajini Vojvodini u školskoj 2012/13. godini* (Novi Sad: Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, May 2013).

40 Provincial Secretariat, *Informacija* (2011); Provincial Secretariat, *Informacija* (2013).

41 Provincial Secretariat, *Informacija* (2012), 2 and Provincial Secretariat, *Informacija* (2013), 3.

42 Official data of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina; see footnote 39 for specific references.

43 Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, available in Serbian at: <http://webzrs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Public/ReportResultView.aspx?rptId=1210>.

44 Provincial Secretariat, *Informacija* (2013), 25.

45 Provincial Secretariat, *Informacija* (2013), 9, 12 and 25.

46 The Provincial Secretariat responded promptly and the data was received in hard copy on 27 August 2013.

in 2012/2013 attended primary EPD schools in Vojvodina. Out of these numbers, only nine students (2.5%) in 2011/12 and seven students (2.3%) in 2012/13 were students newly enrolled in their first grades. Notably, six out of 13 schools did not enrol any Romani students in their first grades in 2011/12, and this number grew to eight schools in 2012/13. The Secretariat also provided data on Romani students per each EPD primary school in Vojvodina, but in absolute numbers only, and without data on the overall student population of these schools, so it is not possible to accurately calculate the proportion of Romani students and make any conclusions on possible overrepresentation of Romani children, based on these data alone.

3.2 The ERRC Research on Roma Representation in EPD Schools

Notwithstanding the positive example of the Vojvodina province, detailed data on Romani students in EPD schools is otherwise not readily available when it comes to the rest of Serbia, as mentioned earlier. In response to the dearth of information on this matter for the whole country, the ERRC decided to collect relevant data directly from schools. In early April 2013, the ERRC sent written data requests to 41 EPD primary schools throughout Serbia, requesting data relating to Romani children attending these schools in the current and the previous academic year. On the basis of the 2004 Serbian *Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance*,⁴⁷ the ERRC asked the schools to provide precise data within two weeks of receiving the request. Alternatively, the schools were asked to provide at least some reasonable estimates or explanations why data are unavailable. The ERRC sought data for the academic years 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, for all students, as well as disaggregated data for Romani students specifically, for the following types of information:

- The total number of pupils attending school;
- The number of pupils newly enrolled in the first grade in the relevant academic year;
- The number of pupils transferred from mainstream primary schools to the EPD school in question in the relevant academic year;
- The number of pupils transferred from the EPD school in question to mainstream primary schools in the relevant academic year;
- The number of new students enrolled without the approval of the ISC;
- The number of students with mild intellectual disabilities; and
- The number of girls attending school.

Out of the 41 schools contacted, 25 schools provided their data by 7 May 2013.⁴⁸ Additionally, four more schools responded with explanations of why the data requested was not available or

47 Serbia, *Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance*, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia* 120/04, 54/07, 104/09 and 36/10, Article 15/1.

48 Please see Annex 1 for a list of all schools.

not relevant in their case.⁴⁹ In late May 2013, the ERRC filed appeals with the office of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Collection regarding the pending cases of twelve schools which did not respond by that point.⁵⁰ Within two weeks from the date the appeals were submitted six schools provided the requested data.⁵¹ The requests are pending with six schools as of October 2013.⁵²

The total of 31 schools which provided statistical data requested by the ERRC comprised 13 primary EPD schools and 18 EPD schools working at both primary and secondary level (i.e. schools for primary and secondary education – SPSE). Five of these schools – one primary school and four SPSEs – are schools specialising mainly in educating children with visual, speech and/or hearing impairments.⁵³ The manner of identification of students as “Roma” was not specified, and in their response one school noted that, for instance, some students declared themselves as both ethnically Albanian and Roma, and another school explained that their data are not reliable because parents were not requested to declare the ethnicity of their children.

3.2.1 THE (OVER)REPRESENTATION OF ROMA AMONG STUDENTS OF “SPECIAL SCHOOLS”

Similar to the trends found in the official statistics from Vojvodina, the data the ERRC received from 31 schools across Serbia (including Vojvodina) also indicate a reduction in the numbers of students of all ethnicities, as well as the numbers of Romani students in EPD schools, from the academic year 2011/12 to 2012/13.⁵⁴

Romani and non-Romani students in EPD schools and classes⁵⁵

School year	Overall no. of EPD students	No. of Romani EPD students	Roma among all EPD students	Annual decrease of Romani EPD students
2011/2012	3539	808	23%	N/A
2012/2013	3306	690	21%	14.6%

49 The schools in question were PS Dr Dragan Hercog in Belgrade, PS Ljubomir Aćimović in Belgrade, SPSE Sveti Sava in Belgrade and PS Mladost in Knjaževac. PS Mladost, for example, is a school specialising in the education of youth with behavioural issues, and cannot provide information on their pupils unless requested by the MoESTD and with the permission of parents and guardians (email correspondence with an unnamed representative, PS Mladost: 17 April 2013). PS Dr Dragan Hercog is a school temporarily educating hospitalised children and youth, as well as those staying at home for health-related reasons; these pupils return to their previous educational institutions after their medical conditions improve (email correspondence with Ljiljana Milović, PS Dr Dragan Hercog: 16 April 2013).

50 Serbia, *Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia* 120/04, 54/07, 104/09 and 36/10, Article 22.

51 The schools in question were SPSE Anton Skala in Stara Pazova, SPSE Bujanj in Niš, PS Dragan Kovačević in Belgrade, PS Jovan Jovanović Zmaj in Šid, SPSE Milan Petrović in Novi Sad, and SPSE Veselin Nikolić in Kruševac.

52 The schools in question were SPSE 1. novembar in Čačak, SPSE 11. oktobar in Leskovac, PS Miodrag Matić in Belgrade, PS Miodrag Matić in Užice, SPSE Mladost in Pirot and SPSE Sveti Sava in Umka (Belgrade).

53 PS Dragan Kovačević and SPSE Veljko Ramadanović, both in Belgrade, educate students with visual impairments. SPSE Bujanj in Niš, SPSE School Centre for the Education of Students with Hearing Impairments in Subotica and SPSE 11. maj in Jagodina specialise in educating students with hearing and speech impairments.

54 Unless stated explicitly otherwise, the sources of all data presented in this section are the reports from schools received by the ERRC in the course of the spring and summer 2013.

55 The source of all data presented in tables in section 3.2. is the ERRC, on the basis of data received directly from schools. For a full review of all data received from schools, see Annex 2.

It is evident that despite the decline in absolute numbers, still over a fifth of the students in these schools are of Romani ethnicity. Illustratively, according to the 2011 census, Roma represent only 2.05% of the population of Serbia. Unofficial estimates consider the proportion of Roma in Serbia to be higher, at around 6%. Roma population demographics are typically young, so Romani children of primary school age could amount to 10% of the total population in this age category.⁵⁶ This is still considerably below the share of Romani pupils in EPD schools.

Additionally, according to the data received for both years, nearly two-thirds of the Romani EPD students are boys though the proportion of Romani girls varies considerably from one school to another; in the SPSE Vukašin Marković in Kragujevac and the PS Miloje Pavlović in Belgrade, girls actually constituted a majority of all Romani students in the given academic year (67% and 65%, respectively).

Two schools have an extremely high share of Romani students: SPSE Vidovdan in Bor tops the list with the large majority of its entire student population being of Romani ethnicity – 95 Romani students (81%) out of the total of 118 in 2011/2012, with a slight decrease to 69 Romani students (73%) out of the total of 95 in 2012/13. PS Sveti Sava in Prokuplje follows, with 75% of its students being Romani (39 out of 52) in 2011/12, decreasing to 68% of its students being Romani (23 out of 34) in 2012/13. Furthermore, more than a half of all students of SPSE Veselin Nikolić in Kruševac are Romani: 56% (76 out of 136) in 2011/2012, which, surprisingly, grew to 63% (75 out of 119) in 2012/13.

Romani students as a share of entire student population in individual EPD schools

Name of school	School year 2011/2012	School year 2012/2013
SPSE Vidovdan, Bor	81%	73%
PS Sveti Sava, Prokuplje	75%	68%
SPSE Veselin Nikolić, Kruševac	56%	63%
PS Novi Beograd, Belgrade	48%	40%
SPSE Bubanj	41%	37%

In ten schools, the proportion of Romani students stayed at the same level in the given period, and in 16 schools, the proportion of Romani students decreased, according to the data the schools provided, most notably in the case of PS 12. septembar in Negotin, with a 17 percentage point drop, and the SPSE Jelena Varjaški in Vrbas, with a 12 percentage point drop in the share of Romani students.

The aforementioned SPSE Veselin Nikolić in Kruševac is one of only five schools from the ERRC research recording an increase in the share of Romani students among its overall population. The highest increase of this type from 2011/12 to 2012/13 was noted in SPSE Vukašin Marković in Kragujevac (8%), followed by SPSE Veselin Nikolić, and the Subotica-based SPSE Žarko Zrenjanin.

56 Open Society Institute, *Roma Children in “Special” Education in Serbia: Overrepresentation, Underachievement and Impact on Life* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2010), 63.

Furthermore, if we leave out the five EPD schools focusing primarily on sensory impairments,⁵⁷ the overall share of Romani students for all the remaining 26 schools slightly increased (25% in 2011/2012; 23% in 2012/13). On the other hand, among the EPD schools focusing on sensory impairments, the shares of Romani students were comparatively low, ranging from 3% to 12% in 2012/13, with the exception of the outlying value of the Niš-based SPSE Bubanj, where over a third of students (37%) in 2012/13 were Romani.

3.2.2 THE PROPORTION OF ROMA AMONG STUDENTS WITH MILD MENTAL DISABILITIES

All schools were also asked to report on the numbers of their students categorised as those with mild mental disabilities, and the share of Romani students among them. Notably, the proportion of Romani students in this category is higher than their proportion among the total student population – 30% in 2011/12, decreasing to 28% in 2012/13. The schools with a very high proportion of Roma among all students, also stand out regarding the proportion of Romani children with mild disabilities: PS Sveti Sava in Prokuplje with 82% of Roma among all students with mild mental disabilities in 2012/13, SPSE Vidovdan in Bor with 79% of Roma in this category, and SPSE Veselin Nikolić in Kruševac with 63%.

Romani students as a share of all students with mild mental disabilities

	School year 2011/2012	School year 2012/2013
All schools	30%	28%
PS Sveti Sava, Prokuplje	81%	82%
SPSE Vidovdan, Bor	86%	79%
SPSE Veselin Nikolić, Kruševac	56%	63%

3.2.3 NEW ENROLMENTS IN ACADEMIC YEARS 2011/2012 AND 2012/2013

When it comes to new enrolment into first grade, in both 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 there were two schools which did not enrol any new students at all (and one school did not answer this question). Out of the remaining 28 schools, 13 enrolled new Romani students in both these academic years. A total of 41 Romani students enrolled first grades of all surveyed schools in 2011/12, amounting to a fifth (20%) of all such students (209) regardless of ethnicity, whereas in 2012/13, both the absolute number of Romani new first graders and their share among all such students (223) became smaller (24 students and 11%, respectively).

In particular the latter data indicate a positive trend of decreased representation of Romani children, yet they are still above the level of Romani students’ participation in mainstream education, as delineated above.

⁵⁷ Sensory impairments are obstacles in the functioning of senses, such as sight, hearing, spatial awareness, etc.

3.2.4 ENROLMENT OF ROMANI STUDENTS INTO “SPECIAL SCHOOLS” WITHOUT THE OPINION OF THE INTER-SECTORAL COMMISSION

The current legislation in Serbia stipulates that both the request of parents and the opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission must be secured before a student is placed in an EPD school. The results of the ERRC research reveal that a small number of students are enrolled in EPD education without the required opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission (31 in 2011/2012; 5 in 2012/2013). PS Dragan Kovačević from Belgrade, a school for students with visual impairments, stands out starkly in this respect, since it enrolled 26 students in 2011/12 (one of whom was Romani) and three students in 2012/13 (one of whom was Romani) in this way. In 2011/12, only two more schools enrolled in total five students without the opinion of the ISC, none of whom were Romani. In 2012/13, only one more school enrolled two students, one of whom was Romani, in this manner.

Enrolment without opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission

School year	No. of all new EPD students	Enrolled without ISC opinion	No. of new Romani EPD students	Roma enrolled without ISC opinion
2011/2012	209	31	41	1
2012/2013	223	5	24	2

The data show that instances of enrolment without the opinion of the ISC were still taking place in practice, which is in direct conflict with relevant legal provisions, stipulating that both parental consent and the ISC opinion must be secured before enrolment.

3.2.5 TRANSFER OF ROMANI STUDENTS FROM MAINSTREAM TO “SPECIAL SCHOOLS” AND VICE VERSA

According to data received by the ERRC, the practice of transferring students from mainstream schools to EPD still continues and both their overall absolute number and the absolute number of Romani students even increased from 2011/2012 to 2012/2013. Overall, less than one third of the student population transferred from mainstream to EPD schools were Romani students.

Transfer from mainstream to EPD schools

School year	No. of all transferred students	No. of transferred Romani students	Percentage of Romani students
2011/2012	71	20	28.17%
2012/2013	83	24	28.92%

In any case, the fact that the share of Romani students amounts to almost one third of all transfer students indicates that Romani students are at a higher risk of being transferred from mainstream, inclusive education to specialised institutions.

On the other hand, the data illustrate that the possibilities of transfer from EPD schools to mainstream schools appears to be used considerably less, and especially so for Romani students. In 2011/12, only 21 students from six EPD schools transferred to mainstream schools,

including nine Romani students from only two EPD schools. Seven of these Romani students were transferred from SPSE Vidovdan in Bor and two from PS Novi Beograd in Belgrade; both schools which have a very high proportion of Romani students. In the following academic year 2012/13, a total of 19 students, including six Romani students from five schools, were transferred from EPD schools to mainstream schools.

Transfer from EPD schools to mainstream schools

School year	No. of all transferred students	No. of transferred Romani students	Percentage of Romani students
2011/2012	21	9	42.86%
2012/2013	19	6	31.58%

Overall, the statistical data the ERRC received from schools indicate a positive trend of a decline in the absolute numbers of students of specialised educational institutions in Serbia (irrespective of their ethnicity), showing that the reform of education in Serbia in this respect is yielding some concrete results. The persistent overrepresentation of Roma in such schools, nevertheless remains alarming and sends a serious warning that much work still remains to be done in this respect, and that the reasons for the placement of Romani students in such schools must be investigated and addressed. Especially in the light of cases where Roma constitute up to three quarters of the entire student population and negative role models could be formed, further investigations are necessary.

4 How and Why Romani Pupils End Up in Schools for Students With Disabilities

In order to establish how and why Romani students still end up in schools for pupils with disabilities, the ERRC trained a team of 16 Romani activists and researchers in skills relevant for interviewing parents and caregivers of Romani students attending “special schools.”⁵⁸ The research team embarked on a survey in July 2013, in ten locations throughout Serbia: Bečej, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kikinda, Kruševac, Leskovac, Niš, Prokuplje, Sremska Mitrovica and Vranje.⁵⁹

The survey included 128 interviewees, most of whom were parents (93%) of students attending EPD schools, followed by the students’ guardians (3%) and other adults (such as other family members, foster parents, etc.). The interviews were given by 56 men (44%) and 72 women (56%), where the numerical majority of women is attributed to both higher unemployment rates among women and their consequent higher availability for interviews, as well as the gendered societal norms, positioning women as primary caregivers of children in this region. The average age of the interviewees was 38, within the range of 20 to 68 years. The adult interviewees lived in an equal number of households with a total of 227 students of primary school age, i.e. six to 15 years.⁶⁰ A very slight majority of students (52%) in these households were male.

4.1 General Educational Background of Students

The students from the households the ERRC team visited appear to be missing out on formal education in their early years. Six months of preschool education was the legal minimum in Serbia since the academic year 2006/07, extended to nine months with the 2009 LFES, and currently all children aged five-and-a-half to six-and-a-half should be attending preparatory preschool programmes before they start with primary education. Although preparatory preschool education is obligatory in Serbia, as many as 42% of Romani children and youth in the surveyed families did not attend it, and slightly over half of the students who missed it were male (53%). Among those who nevertheless attended preschool, a majority of 70% did so in the period of six to 12 months, and 14% did so for less than half a year.

Additionally, previous preschool attendance of six to 12 months was higher among the students of mainstream schools (84%) compared to “special school” students (63%).⁶¹ Evidently,

58 The survey questionnaire used the term “special schools” as this is how the schools for the education of students with disabilities are commonly known, even though this term is no longer officially used.

59 Research results from Bečej were taken into account for qualitative analysis only.

60 Because of the different ages, it should be noted that some students enrolled in “special schools” before the 2009 reforms, and some afterwards, so the students in the research households were subjected to different procedures before different bodies, depending on the year their enrolment took place. It could, however, be assumed safely that students in grades 1-3 at the time of the survey should have been enrolled under a new set of rules.

61 This part of the survey collected data on all students in a household aged six to 15, regardless of the type of educational institution they attended, or whether they were formally students at all.

students who had completed preparatory preschool programmes had a higher likelihood of continuing their education in mainstream schools.

The school enrolment rate of children and youth in the surveyed households was 95%, with a remaining 5% of children completely out of school, in a country where primary school enrolment is practically universal among non-Romani children. There are also evident variations according to sex, as in the case of girls out of school the proportion rose to 8%, compared to less than 3% of boys out of school.

Out of the children and youth attending school, less than a quarter attended mainstream schools (24%), and three quarters attended “special schools” (76%). On a positive note, none of the students placed in mainstream schools attended so-called “special classes,” classes formed within mainstream schools to educate exclusively students with disabilities, which could no longer be formed after the formal introduction of inclusive education in 2009.

4.2 Knowledge About “Special Schools”

The survey established that a majority of interviewees believed they know what “special schools” were: this was the case with 90% of the interviewees. Still, a worrying 10% of carers for students of such schools did not know the exact nature of the schools the children and youth were attending.⁶²

Furthermore, when probed further to clarify the difference between “special” and mainstream schools, 11% of the interviewees did not know the answer. The interviewees who responded that they knew the difference mainly related “special schools” to the education of children affected by illness and disabilities (40%).

With regards to the quality of learning, 15% of the responses stated that mainstream schools provide better educational outcomes, and an identical share of responses considered “special schools” easier than mainstream ones. Further, 7% of interviewees were not aware of any concrete difference between these types of schools, even though they had just claimed to know what the different school types represented. Evidently, a significant proportion of Romani parents are not in possession of full knowledge on what kind of institutions their children are attending.

Knowledge about “special schools”

	Yes	No
Do you know what a “special school” is?	90%	10%
Do you know the difference between a “special” and a mainstream school?	89%	11%

⁶² There was also some variation across the sexes: the share of women who did not know what “special schools” were was two percentage points higher than the relevant proportion of men (11% and 9%, respectively).

4.3 Educational Background of Parents

The ERRC research team also wanted to establish whether “special education” could be a part of family heritage, or whether parents and carers who had been educated in specialised institutions were more likely to send their children to such institutions as well. For this reason, the interviewees were also asked whether they or their partner had attended “special schools.” This was indeed the case for 42% of all interviewees, and especially so in Sremska Mitrovica (86%) and Kruševac (58%).

Educational background of parents

Have you or your partner attended “special education”?	Yes	No
All schools	42%	58%
Sremska Mitrovica	86%	14%
Kruševac	58%	42%

The analysis of ERRC data also shows that parents or caregivers who themselves received “special education” took care of a higher number of pupils who also attended “special schools” – there was an average of 1.45 pupils in each such family, compared to 1.15 pupils per family of those parents and caregivers who did not attend such schools. Previous OSI research on this topic in Serbia also elaborated on this phenomenon, both in terms of adults having a tendency to send pupils to the same kind of education they had, as well as having more siblings from one family all attending “special education.” For instance, the OSI study from 2010 recorded that in 74% of surveyed “special” primary schools in Serbia there were instances of two or more Romani pupils from the same family.⁶³

4.4 The Process Leading to Romani Children’s Placement in “Special Schools”

The ERRC survey also tried to investigate the processes resulting in the overrepresentation of Romani students in “special schools.” Among 164 students of “special schools” in the households visited within the ERRC survey, 95 students (60%) were enrolled directly into such schools, and the remaining 64 (40%) attended mainstream primary schools before the transfer.⁶⁴

For most of the students who enrolled in EPD schools directly it was various officials and professionals who made the recommendation that the students be “tested”, as is still the common colloquial term for the assessment of their educational needs required for the purpose of placement in EPD schools, a remnant of the times before the education reform when such students were indeed subjected to tests. According to the ERRC survey data, the person suggesting the “testing” was most commonly a school psychologist (25%), a doctor (23%) or a preschool staff

63 Open Society Institute, *Roma Children in “Special” Education in Serbia* (2010), 101.

64 Responses such as “I do not know” or refusals to answer were not taken into account in data processing and analysis, unless specified otherwise.

member (14%). In only one fifth of the cases (22%), it was the interviewee – the parent or other caregiver – who took the initiative in this respect. The initial steps in the direction towards “special schools” were evidently taken following the advice of educational and medical professionals.

Persons suggesting that the student is assessed for placement in “special schools”

School psychologist or pedagogue	25%
Doctor	23%
Parent/carer	22%
Preschool staff member	14%
Somebody else	17%

4.5 The Transfer of Romani Students from Mainstream to “Special Schools”

In the case of the 64 students who were first enrolled in mainstream primary schools, the ERRC data indicates that most commonly the students’ difficulties, eventually leading to the transfer, took place immediately during the first grade (68%, for both boys and girls). In only one quarter of registered cases (27%), difficulties occurred in later grades, from second to fifth grade; there were no instances of students transferred after the fifth grade.

Importantly, the proportion of those whose difficulties emerged in first grade is much higher for the students who entered the education system after the 2009 reforms, i.e. who had just completed the first, second or third grade at the time of the survey: 92% of them, 12 out of 13 students transferred from mainstream to “special schools,” had experienced difficulties already as first graders.

When asked about the exact nature of “difficulties,” most interviewees provided responses such as difficulty to concentrate (42%), low grades (24%), difficulties in reading and writing (21%) or even just restlessness (16%).⁶⁵ In only four instances did the interviewees actually list a speech or hearing impairment, or another medical issue, as a reason. On the other hand, five interviewees also mentioned the bullying of their children at school as one of the main reasons for initiating the transfer, illustrating both safety concerns of Romani parents, as well as the perception of a “special school” as a safer environment for Romani students.

Types of difficulties encountered before transfer from mainstream to “special school”

Difficulty to concentrate	42%
Low grades	24%
Difficulties in reading and writing	21%
Restlessness	16%
Absenteeism	11%
Bullying	8%

⁶⁵ The data refers to the answers of those interviewees whose children were transferred from mainstream to “special” schools, whether pre- or post-2009 reform. The interviewees could provide multiple answers to this question.

4.6 Support to Remain in Mainstream Schools

The schools do not appear to have provided Romani students facing difficulties with adequate support. When asked whether they were ever contacted in relation to the difficulties their children experienced, a notable proportion of 41% answered negatively; within the interviews relating to students in grades one to three, enrolled after 2009, the proportion decreases to 23% of those who were not contacted.⁶⁶ Among the interviewees who answered positively, one-third (34%) stated, nevertheless, that they were contacted only rarely, e.g. several times a year, whereas just one-fifth (26%) said they were contacted frequently, almost on a daily basis.⁶⁷

Furthermore, 59% of the interviewees stated that they were invited for meetings at the school, to discuss their children’s difficulties. The same percentage of interviewees (59%) also attended such meetings and met primarily with teachers (97%) and school psychologists (46%).⁶⁸ The content of these meetings related, in most cases, to ways of transferring the student to a “special school” (57%), followed by ways of improving the situation (49%); in the interviews relating to children in grades one to three, the situation changes in a positive direction, with 60% of meetings on the issue of improvement, and 30% of discussions on the issue of transfer.⁶⁹

In less than a third of cases (30%), the interviewees confirmed that the school offered additional support in order to keep the student enrolled in the mainstream school, as opposed to transfer, whereas a notable 70% of interviewees did not receive any offers of this type; in the subgroup in grades one to three, the proportion is 62%. For the former, the support offered was most commonly in the form of assistance by the school psychologist or pedagogue (39%), additional classes (33%), or the individual educational plan (17%), where it should be noted that the individual education plans were formally introduced only with the 2009 education reform.

The interviewees were also asked whether at that time the mainstream school had a Roma teaching assistant, or any other type of assistant, who could support the student in keeping pace with their peers; according to their responses, less than a half of the primary schools in question did have an assistant (44%). When the emphasis is placed only on the interviews relating to children in grades one to three, the proportion of such students who benefited from the presence of an assistant rises to 67%, as opposed to older students who benefited from the support of assistants in 39% of the cases.

A number of other factors also negatively influenced the decision making relating to “special education.” For instance, interviewees were also asked about the manner in which the teaching staff treated their child in mainstream schools. Almost half of the interviewees alleged mistreatment: as many as 46% thought the treatment was not good. The latter were asked to state

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ The data refers to the answers of those interviewees whose children were transferred from mainstream to “special” schools, whether pre- or post-2009 reform. The interviewees could provide multiple answers to this question.

⁶⁹ The interviewees could provide multiple answers to this question.

the reason for their dissatisfaction, and the most common responses were that the teachers ignored the student (50%), that the student had to sit in the back of the class (50%), and that the teachers had humiliated the student in front of their peers (39%).⁷⁰ For those students who additionally experienced bullying in mainstream schools, the reason why the student was treated in this way for a notable majority of three quarters of interviewees (75%) was perceived as being due to Romani ethnicity, followed by disabilities or low grades (42%) and poverty (33%).

Negative treatment of children prior to transfer to “special schools”

	Overall	Children in grades 1-3	Children in grades 4-8
Child was ignored	50%	71%	43%
Child was placed to sit in the back of the classroom	50%	57%	48%
Teachers humiliating children in front of peers/others	39%	29%	43%
Teachers’ reluctance to report bullying	11%	14%	10%
Physical abuse	4%	0%	5%

The timing of the transfers is mainly early in the education process. The transfer to a “special school” that eventually followed most commonly took place in the second grade (45%), followed by first grade (27%), and third grade (16%). Essentially, a vast majority of students (89%) in the households visited were transferred within the first three years of education, and only a small minority (11%) moved to another school during a later grade. When it comes to the subsample of students in grades one to three enrolled after the education reforms were introduced, the situation is different: all of them (100%) were transferred during first grade.

Both teachers (39%) and parents/caregivers (36%) suggested the transfer in similar proportions. Furthermore, there are some differences with regards to students in grades one to three: their transfer was more frequently suggested by teachers (46%), and took place at the initiative of parents in less than one quarter of cases (23%).

4.7 Enrolment in Schools for Students with Disabilities

The respondents of the ERRC survey were also asked about the actual process preceding the enrolment into schools for students with disabilities. After the suggestion that the child in their care should be assessed for the purpose of enrolment in “special schools,” in 6% of cases the parents and caregivers disagreed and the assessment did not take place, and another 6% disagreed with this idea yet the assessment eventually took place nonetheless.⁷¹ On the other hand, a large majority of interviewees in fact agreed with the proposal – 88% stated so, with a difference between the interviewees with students who enrolled in EPD schools directly (91%) and those whose children were transferred from a mainstream school to a specialised institution (83%), who were less in favour of taking this step.

70 The interviewees could provide multiple answers to this question.

71 All interviewees were asked: “Have you agreed that your child is ‘tested?’”

The key question, however, is what kind of issues influenced them in making this kind of decision. When probed to provide reasons for their agreement, only one-fifth (19%) of interviewees actually agreed to the “testing” because the child was physically or mentally disabled, had a sensory impairment or was affected by illness. The rest of the interviewees who agreed with the “testing” most frequently stated that they were told that it must happen and/or that they did not have another choice (23% of the overall cases, yet 28% the caregivers whose children went straight to “special schools” and 14% of those whose children were transferred).⁷² The second most commonly cited reason was the wish of the parents to see which school would be appropriate for their child (10%), followed by the concerns about the financial aspect of education (8%), due to the perceived higher cost of education in mainstream schools. Another 7% of the interviewees believed that children get better education and more attention from teachers in schools for students with disabilities, and in 6% of cases the parents answered that the assessment was what they or the child wanted. Furthermore, in 4% of cases, the interviewees listed the child’s siblings or friends already attending “special school” as the reason they agreed to the “testing.”

Reasons for agreeing to testing

	Overall	Directly enrolled	Later transferred
Told testing has to happen/ no other choice	23%	28%	14%
Child had a physical or mental disability	19%	21%	16%
Wanting to see which type of school would be appropriate	10%	7%	14%
Financial aspect	8%	9%	4%
Child would get better education and more teacher attention in “special schools”	7%	4%	12%
The parents or the child wanted it	6%	6%	6%
Siblings or friends already attend EPD schools	4%	2%	6%

Importantly, it is highly doubtful that parents were in a position to make a full and informed choice on this matter. During the “testing” itself, a considerable share of interviewees, almost a half (44%), did not receive any information from the members of the commission on what the “testing” should establish.⁷³ Among those who were given this kind of information, most commonly (66%) the caregivers were told that the purpose of the “testing” was to determine the type of school the child should attend, and to establish whether a child is disabled (11%). Practically three quarters (75%) of survey respondents said they were not told that they can be present at the “testing,” whereas the proportion was higher (78%) among the caregivers of students transferred to EPD schools. In 5% of the cases the “testing” was attended by a teaching assistant, and more often so (8%) in the case of students transferred to EPD schools.

The most worrying aspect, however, is the level of information the commissions provided to parents and caregivers in the course of the assessment about the most crucial aspects of the

72 The interviewees who agreed to the testing were asked: “Why did you agree to the ‘testing?’”

73 All interviewees were asked: “Did any members of the commission inform you about what the ‘testing’ should establish?”

assessment and its consequences. A large majority of respondents (75%) said the commission did not inform them on the limitations and negative consequences affiliated with attending EPD schools.⁷⁴ Furthermore, a similar number (71%) were not told by the commission that they have the right to refuse the commission’s opinion.⁷⁵ This is likely to have left a number of parents with an impression that there were no alternative paths.

Information received with regards to the assessment

	Overall	Directly enrolled	Later transferred
The Commission did not inform us on what the assessment should establish.	44%	49%	38%
Nobody told us we have the right to be present at the assessment.	75%	72%	78%
The Commission did not inform us on the limitations and consequences of “special education”.	75%	76%	73%
We were not told about the right to refuse the opinion of the Commission.	71%	71%	72%

Once they discovered that the final opinion of the commission was to send their child to a “special school,” only 7% of parents and caregivers disagreed with the commission’s final findings.⁷⁶ When asked why they disagreed, they explained that they were not asked for an opinion, and that they were not given a choice. Even less, a tiny fraction (2%) of the parents and carers complained about the decision, and three-quarters of them did so only verbally.

On the other hand, 93% of respondents agreed with the commission’s recommendation, and those who enrolled their children into “special schools” directly agreed with the opinion of the commission in 97% of cases. These parents and carers’ explanations as to why they agreed were very diverse, yet only one quarter (25%) of the listed reasons related to the child’s inability to receive education in mainstream institutions due to having mental disabilities, illnesses or sensory impairments.⁷⁷

Reasons for accepting the decision of the Commission

	Overall	Directly enrolled	Later transferred
Child inability to receive mainstream education	25%	25%	24%
No other choice	9%	12%	4%
Education is better in “special schools.”	9%	6%	14%
Special school is free.	8%	10%	4%
Child should get an education.	7%	10%	0%

74 All interviewees were asked: “Did the commission inform you on the limitations and consequences of attending special education?”

75 All interviewees were asked: “Did the commission explain to you that you have the right to refuse the opinion of the commission that your child should be referred to special education?”

76 All interviewees were asked: “Have you agreed with the outcome of the testing and the commission’s opinion that your child should be educated in a ‘special’ school?”

77 The interviewees who agreed with the commission’s opinion were asked why they agreed.

It was what the Commission wanted.	7%	8%	4%
Child or parents preferred special school	6%	5%	8%
Child learnt nothing in the mainstream school.	-	16%	6%
Special school less demanding	5%	3%	8%
Child would have friends.	4%	3%	6%
We trusted the Commission.	3%	2%	4%

Roughly two-thirds of respondents (66%) were not told by the commission about the reasons for the decision that the child should be sent to a “special school,” and in the case of transfer students the share rose to 73%.⁷⁸ In the cases where the commission did provide an explanation, most commonly it was mental disability (48% of all, and 54% among the caregivers of students directly enrolled in EPD schools), problems in emotional or social development (23%) and difficulties with speech and language (23%).⁷⁹ Additionally, one quarter of respondents (24%) did not receive the commission’s opinion in writing.⁸⁰

Furthermore, many of the respondents then signed documents they had not been familiarised with. The commission members asked as much as 41% of parents and carers to sign related documentation without clarifying what the documents were about.⁸¹ Among the remaining respondents (59%) who said they were told about the nature of the papers signed, three-quarters understood that they were agreeing for the child to be sent to a “special school.”⁸² Surprisingly, in two cases the respondents understood that attending “special school” as being connected to receiving social assistance, one respondent complained of being told something they did not understand at all, and in one case the respondent was told that the child was not really a case for “special education” yet it could be considered so if the parents wanted it that way.

Answers to one of the survey questions indicate that, despite agreement with the commission’s opinions, the true wishes of many respondents, nevertheless, aim in a different direction. Despite the explanations they gave in support of specialised institutions, a majority of respondents (63%) stated that they would prefer if their children received education in mainstream schools.⁸³ These respondents also stated that their children would learn more in mainstream schools (23% among all, 37% among respondents with transfer students), that such schools are better for children (22%), that this would allow students to later enrol in better high schools (15%) and get better jobs (15%). Some parents and caregivers, indeed, understood that mainstream schools offer better future prospects to their children, yet an array of issues forces them to make decisions in a different way.

78 All interviewees were asked: “Did the commission provide reasons for referring the child to special education?”

79 The interviewees could provide multiple answers to this question.

80 All interviewees were asked: “Have you received the decision of the commission in writing?”

81 All interviewees were asked: “Did the commission explain to you what it is that you are signing?”

82 The interviewees who answered positively to the previous question were asked: “What did they say to you?”

83 All interviewees were asked: “Would you prefer that your child attends mainstream school?”

Preference for mainstream education

	Overall	Directly enrolled	Later transferred
Prefer for the child to attend a mainstream school.	63%	65%	61%
Mainstream schools are better for children.	22%	21%	23%
The child can enrol in a better school after completing mainstream school.	15%	20%	9%
The child could get a better job.	15%	16%	14%
Students study more in mainstream schools.	23%	14%	37%

Another 7% of these parents also stated that mainstream schools would be a better option, since their children should not be in “special schools” in the first place. For this reason, all respondents were also asked if they knew where to seek assistance if they think their child was discriminated on grounds of ethnicity – more than half (53%) did not know whom to address.⁸⁴ Among those who answered positively (53%) a majority of 70% would complain to a school staff member, followed by municipal coordinators for Roma issues (10%) and Roma associations (4%). Notably, none of them mentioned institutions offering protection from discrimination or supporting the rights of national minorities. A lack of trust in institutions was also evident with 6% of respondents expressing the belief that no institution would react to injustice in any case.

Despite the regulations allowing for the opposite, it appears that once students are placed in specialised educational institutions, the way back is virtually impossible. ERRC researchers asked the respondents whether they had ever attempted to transfer the students to mainstream schools, or back to mainstream schools in case of those students who were transferred already in the opposite direction. Only one in ten respondents (10%) had done so, yet what happened in most of these cases (83%) was that they were told that it could not happen, that it was not recommended and/or that the child would not manage in a mainstream school. In a similar vein, in only 12% of cases (15% among transfer students) the children were re-assessed, primarily by school psychologists (92%). In all such cases, the testing confirmed the initial findings. Among the respondents whose children were not re-assessed, most did not know why this did not happen (62%), and some were never told this could take place (15%). Still, issues related to the social position of Roma, such as racial discrimination and lack of access to health care, also presented obstacles: in three of the visited households the respondents claimed the children were never re-assessed because they were Roma, and in two families the reason this did not take place was because the children did not have valid health cards.

All in all, the data collected clearly indicates that a number of Romani parents and caregivers do not have sufficient information to allow them to give informed consent on the placement of their children in “special education.” They are influenced both by the authority of institutions as well as social and economic difficulties the families are facing on daily basis. There is insufficient awareness of the limitations of education provided by specialised institutions and inadequate provision of information and clarification by the relevant professionals, rendering the “choice” of Romani parents and caregivers to a practical cul-de-sac for their children.

⁸⁴ All interviewees were asked: “Do you know to whom you can complain if you think that your child was discriminated, i.e. treated less favourably than other children because s/he is Romani?” The interviewees who answered positively to the previous question were asked to specify: “To whom?”

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite the promise of inclusive education with the legal and policy reforms Serbia adopted in 2009, the data ERRC collected from 31 schools throughout the country indicates a notable degree of overrepresentation of Roma in schools for the education of students with disabilities, with 21% of Romani students in “special schools” as of the academic year 2012/2013. Furthermore, a number of individual schools have an alarmingly high proportion of Romani students. Evidently, it is also still practically possible for students to enrol in “special schools” without the mandatory opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission.

The ERRC’s survey illustrates serious gaps in the processes placing Romani students in such institutions. Not all parents and carers for Romani students of such schools know the exact nature of the schools their children and youth are attending. It is mainly various officials and professionals who made the recommendation that the students be assessed for the placement in “special schools,” often without explaining what the assessment should establish, and without informing the parents that they could be present at the assessment. Commissions reportedly also commonly did not inform parents about the reasons for the decision that the child should be sent to a “special school,” and often asked them to sign related documentation without clarifying what the documents were about.

Much of the apparent consent to “special education” appears to be influenced by the perceived authority of the professionals involved, and significant socio-economic factors creating obstacles relating to the education of Romani students. Despite their common agreement to education in specialised institutions, many parents and carers would prefer if their children received education in mainstream schools. Still, it seems that once students end up in a specialised educational institution, there is no return, and only a few attempt to transfer the students to (or back to) mainstream schools.

The Republic of Serbia has undoubtedly taken very important steps in terms of both legislation and policy relating to Roma education and especially the segregation of Romani students in schools for the education of students with disabilities. The slight decrease in the representation of Romani students in such schools does indicate that changes are slowly taking place. Nevertheless, there are still considerable reasons for concern, as illustrated by the data above, which call for faster and more vigorous action on behalf of the education authorities, and the ERRC urges the Government of Serbia to take the following steps to eradicate the overrepresentation and segregation of Romani children in “special schools”:

- Implement inclusive education as required and regulated by the relevant legislation and international human rights standards.
- End the segregation of Romani children into “special schools” and the general practice of segregating pupils based on intellectual ability.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement the National Action Plan on Roma Education 2012-2014, by providing adequate human and financial resources, and especially its measures addressing the over-representation of Romani students in “special schools.”
- Ban segregation on ethnic grounds in Serbian schools, especially the schools for students with disabilities.
- In particular, enforce the ban on the enrolment of students who do not have mental disabilities in educational institutions designed for students who have mental disabilities, regardless of parental consent or requests.
- Immediately address the situation of schools for students with disabilities with an extremely high proportion of Romani students, transfer wrongfully placed students to mainstream schools in the area, and fully support the integration of transfer students into mainstream schools.
- Facilitate the transfer of students from “special” to mainstream schools, by providing additional support and incentives, on both national and local level, to mainstream schools accepting students from “special schools.”
- Provide the parents and carers of children without disabilities who are wrongfully placed in “special schools” with opportunities of taking adequate legal action.
- Inform Romani parents and caregivers in providing inclusive education for their children, and ensure that education professionals provide full information to parents in the course of relevant procedures.
- Provide financial support to non-governmental organisations in order to carry out information campaigns among Romani parents and carers with regards to their rights and responsibilities regarding their children’s education, and the benefits of inclusive education in mainstream institutions.
- Speed up the process of revising the rules and regulations relating to the work of Inter-Sectoral Commissions, to ensure that their work is done effectively, lawfully, and professionally.
- Provide concrete support and assistance to Romani parents wishing to educate their children in inclusive education.
- Increase the number of Romani pedagogical assistants in preschool and primary school institutions, in order to ensure inclusive quality education for Romani children.
- Regularly collect data disaggregated by ethnicity and sex with regards to education and “special education” in particular and make this data publicly available, while at the same time ensuring respect for national and international data protection standards.

The ERRC hopes that their data collection and field research results will assist the Serbian educational authorities in their work to achieve lasting, positive change and, in particular, to end segregation in the Serbian school system; this includes all forms of segregation, such as segregation of Romani students based on ethnicity and segregation of pupils based on intellectual ability.

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Annex 1: Names of Schools Which Provided Data to the ERRC

Primary School:

- 6. oktobar, Kikinda
- 12. septembar, Negotin
- Anton Skala, Belgrade
- Boško Buha, Belgrade
- Dragan Kovačević, Belgrade
- Dušan Dugalić, Belgrade
- Heroj Pinki, Bačka Palanka
- Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Šid
- Miloje Pavlović, Belgrade
- Novi Beograd, Belgrade
- Sava Jovanović Sirogojno, Belgrade
- Sveti Sava, Prokuplje
- Sveti Sava, Šabac

School for Primary and Secondary Education:

- 9. maj, Zrenjanin
- 11. maj, Jagodina
- 14. oktobar, Niš
- Anton Skala, Stara Pazova
- Bratstvo, Bečej
- Bujanj, Niš
- Jelena Majstorović, Zaječar
- Jelena Varjaški, Vršac
- Mara Mandić, Pančevo
- Milan Petrović, Novi Sad
- Radivoj Popović, Sremska Mitrovica
- Školski centar za vaspitanje i obrazovanje slušno oštećenih lica, Subotica
- Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade
- Veselin Nikolić, Kruševac
- Vidovdan, Bor
- Vuk Karadžić, Sombor
- Vukašin Marković, Kragujevac
- Žarko Zrenjanin, Subotica

Annex 2: Data Tables on the Participation of Romani Children in the Schools for the Education of Students With Disabilities

Table 1: Total numbers of students at schools

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All	Roma	All	Roma
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	93	9	82	7
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	155	13	117	14
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	102	0	99	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	119	32	104	24
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	157	6	163	4
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	90	4	80	1
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	124	18	118	17
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	143	69	145	58
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	150	0	128	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	134	10	129	10
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	118	95	95	69
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	101	12	116	14
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	95	35	92	29
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	34	0	38	3
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	136	76	119	75
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	39	13	37	6
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	162	28	152	31
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	56	23	62	23
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	360	84	315	66
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	103	13	102	13
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	52	39	34	23
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	152	9	140	8
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	100	38	105	31
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	100	16	88	12
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	36	5	37	4
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	121	12	133	20
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	60	10	62	10
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	27	3	26	3
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	94	31	98	21
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	107	32	102	31
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	219	73	188	63
			3539	808	3306	690

ANNEX 2: DATA TABLES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMANI CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOLS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Table 2: Number of students enrolled in first grade

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All	Roma	All	Roma
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	2	0	4	1
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	8	0	2	1
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	1	0	0	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	7	0	8	1
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	20	0	13	0
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	15	2	9	0
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	9	0	20	0
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	9	1	20	0
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	4	0	10	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	23	0	26	1
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	15	13	1	0
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	3	0	2	0
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	1	1	1	0
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	0	0	1	1
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	14	8	19	6
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	3	0	9	0
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	6	0	10	3
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	9	4	9	1
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	10	0	3	0
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	3	3	2	0
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	4	0	1	0
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	11	1	5	3
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	4	2	6	1
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	6	0	4	0
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	10	2	18	2
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	1	1	2	0
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	0	0	0	0
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	4	0	5	0
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	2	2	4	1
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	5	1	9	2
			209	41	223	24

Table 3: Number of students transferred from mainstream to “special schools”

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All	Roma	All	Roma
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	0	0	2	1
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	0	0	1	0
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	0	0	0	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	0	0	1	0
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	9	1	5	0
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	4	0	2	0
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	6	1	1	1
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	0	0	2	0
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	2	0	0	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	2	0	1	0
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	7	3	2	0
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	0	0	0	0
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	0	0	7	1
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	0	0	2	0
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	4	3	5	4
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	0	0	2	0
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	0	0	1	1
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	0	0	5	3
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	9	4	13	1
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	0	0	0	0
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	4	0	2	0
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	0	0	1	1
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	0	0	0	0
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	1	0	1	0
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	9	1	12	5
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	0	0	2	0
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	0	0	0	0
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	0	0	1	0
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	6	5	2	1
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	8	2	10	5
			71	20	83	24

ANNEX 2: DATA TABLES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMANI CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOLS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Table 4: Number of students transferred from “special” to mainstream schools

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All	Roma	All	Roma
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	0	0	0	0
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	0	0	0	0
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	0	0	0	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	0	0	0	0
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	6	0	9	1
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	0	0	1	0
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	1	0	0	0
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	2	2	2	2
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	0	0	0	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	7	7	0	0
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	0	0	0	0
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	0	0	0	0
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	0	0	1	1
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	0	0	0	0
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	0	0	0	0
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	0	0	0	0
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	0	0	0	0
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	0	0	1	0
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	1	0	2	1
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	0	0	0	0
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	0	0	0	0
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	0	0	0	0
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	0	0	0	0
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	0	0	0	0
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	0	0	0	0
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	0	0	0	0
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	4	0	3	1
			21	9	19	6

Table 5: Number of newly enrolled students without the prior opinion of the Inter-Sectoral Commission

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All	Roma	All	Roma
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	0	0	0	0
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	0	0	0	0
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	0	0	0	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	0	0	0	0
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	26	1	3	1
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	0	0	0	0
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	0	0	0	0
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	0	0	0	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	0	0	0	0
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	0	0	0	0
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	0	0	0	0
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	0	0	0	0
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	0	0	0	0
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	0	0	0	0
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	0	0	2	1
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	0	0	0	0
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	0	0	0	0
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	3	0	0	0
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	0	0	0	0
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	0	0	0	0
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	0	0	0	0
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	0	0	0	0
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	0	0	0	0
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	0	0	0	0
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	0	0	0	0
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	0	0	0	0
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	2	0	0	0
			31	1	5	2

ANNEX 2: DATA TABLES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMANI CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOLS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Table 6: Number of students with mild mental disabilities

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All	Roma	All	Roma
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	136	13	98	14
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	21	0	14	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	51	18	41	11
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	16	0	24	0
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	16	4	11	1
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	85	17	73	16
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	63	35	49	22
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	96	0	78	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	38	2	33	2
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	111	95	87	69
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	51	1	85	5
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	53	27	48	23
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	6	0	6	2
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	136	76	119	75
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	32	13	20	6
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	86	11	67	13
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	16	4	17	4
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	196	84	176	66
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	90	n/a	98	n/a
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	48	39	28	23
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	44	3	37	1
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	79	18	89	16
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	100	16	88	12
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	19	3	19	2
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	47	8	36	7
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	37	8	39	8
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	61	16	65	18
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	107	32	102	31
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	219	73	188	63
			2060	616	1835	510

Table 7: Number of girl students

No.	Town	School	2011/2012		2012/2013	
			All girls	Romani girls	All girls	Romani girls
1	BAČKA PALANKA	PS HEROJ PINKI	35	6	30	3
2	BEČEJ	SPSE BRATSTVO	63	8	41	9
3	BELGRADE	PS ANTON SKALA	39	0	37	0
4	BELGRADE	PS BOŠKO BUHA	53	15	47	11
5	BELGRADE	PS DRAGAN KOVAČEVIĆ	61	5	66	2
6	BELGRADE	PS NH DUŠAN DUGALIĆ	25	2	25	1
7	BELGRADE	PS MILOJE PAVLOVIĆ	55	11	50	11
8	BELGRADE	PS NOVI BEOGRAD	38	9	42	8
9	BELGRADE	PS SAVA JOVANOVIĆ SIROGOJNO	58	0	54	0
10	BELGRADE	SPSE VELJKO RAMADANOVIĆ	66	1	64	1
11	BOR	SPSE VIDOVDAN	46	34	43	31
12	JAGODINA	SPSE 11. MAJ	55	0	42	0
13	KIKINDA	PS 6. OKTOBAR	38	15	36	13
14	KRAGUJEVAC	SPSE VUKAŠIN MARKOVIĆ	11	0	14	2
15	KRUŠEVAC	SPSE VESELIN NIKOLIĆ	54	33	48	33
16	NEGOTIN	PS 12. SEPTEMBAR	13	5	8	1
17	NIŠ	SPSE 14. OKTOBAR	39	12	39	13
18	NIŠ	SPSE BUBANJ	26	13	26	14
19	NOVI SAD	SPSE MILAN PETROVIĆ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	PANČEVO	SPSE MARA MANDIĆ	37	3	41	5
21	PROKUPLJE	PS SVETI SAVA	23	20	14	11
22	SOMBOR	SPSE VUK KARADŽIĆ	53	4	46	3
23	SREMSKA MITROVICA	SPSE RADIVOJ POPOVIĆ	40	14	38	14
24	STARA PAZOVA	SPSE ANTON SKALA	40	9	29	5
25	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŠKOLSKI CENTAR	20	2	19	2
26	SUBOTICA	SPSE ŽARKO ZRENJANIN	56	6	55	9
27	ŠABAC	PS SVETI SAVA	23	3	25	3
28	ŠID	PS JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ	11	1	9	1
29	VRŠAC	SPSE JELENA VARJAŠKI	44	15	37	9
30	ZAJEČAR	SPSE JELENA MAJSTOROVIĆ	43	13	39	13
31	ZRENJANIN	SPSE 9. MAJ	69	30	61	30
			1234	289	1125	258