

# Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: Identity, Social Distance and the Experience of Discrimination

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# ROMA INCLUSION IN THE CROATIAN SOCIETY

identity, social distance  
and the experience of  
discrimination

Nikola Rašić - Danijela Lucić - Branka Galić - Nenad Karajić



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# **ROMA INCLUSION IN THE CROATIAN SOCIETY**

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the experience of discrimination**

Nikola Rašić - Danijela Lucić - Branka Galić - Nenad Karajić

Zagreb, 2020

DISCLAIMER: The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the institutions in which the authors are employed nor the views of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

NOTE: All linguistic forms having a gender form in this study shall apply equally to both males and females, regardless of the form used.

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# List of abbreviations

<b>[G]OHRNM</b>	Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia
<b>AP NRIS</b>	Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy
<b>CPS</b>	Center for Peace Studies
<b>CRNM</b>	Councils and representatives of national minorities
<b>ECHR</b>	European Court for Human Rights
<b>ECRI</b>	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
<b>EU MIDIS</b>	European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FLA</b>	Free legal aid
<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>KNF</b>	Key non-Roma figure
<b>CAS</b>	Culture and arts society
<b>LRSKU</b>	Local and regional self-government units
<b>MOI</b>	Ministry of the Interior
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>NRIS</b>	National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020
<b>NRP</b>	National Roma Programme
<b>OM</b>	Ombudswoman
<b>RNM</b>	Roma national minority
<b>RoC</b>	Republic of Croatia
<b>TEU</b>	Treaty on European Union
<b>TFEU</b>	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# 1 Introduction: The disadvantaged position of the Roma



# 1. Introduction: The disadvantaged position of the Roma<sup>1</sup>

*“You live in a neighborhood where they don’t give you water and electricity... you’re dirty and you sleep on a mattress that absorbs moisture from the floor... they don’t let you go to school because you stink... they complain that you don’t know the language of people who never let you anywhere near them... even if you are resistant to beatings and insults and you finish school, the circle is not broken... they don’t give you any work, hunger makes you beg and steal... and then you have children, who again don’t have water or electricity... they don’t let them go to school because... And so it goes round and round.”*

*[Nebojša Lujanović, Skin Colour Cloud, 2015]*

Even though generalizations are never entirely accurate because they ignore differences between individuals that are usually greater than those when we simply want to describe them as members of a particular group of people, the above quotation from a literary work unquestionably evokes in many of us a generally accepted image of a socially and economically grim reality characteristic of socially and economically excluded people who are unemployed and live in deep poverty. In addition, reality is like a vicious circle to them: one does not get out of it, generations live through the same cycles. Even if they are given the opportunity to overcome social marginalization, they are again marked, only this time also by those with whom they lived in poverty. They simply wanted to live like everyone else they are surrounded by, so that they would not constantly be separated from the rest of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the 2010 Decision of the Croatian Parliament on the Promulgation of the Amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia [OG 76/10], in Title I of the Historical Foundations in paragraph 2 it is stated as follows: “...the Republic of Croatia is hereby established as the nation state of the Croatian nation and the state of the members of its national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Rusyns, Bosniaks, Slovenians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Turks, Vlachs, Albanians and others who are its citizens and who are guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian nationality and the exercise of their national rights in accordance with the democratic norms of the United Nations and the countries of the free world.”

This image of a life almost destined for relative poverty is very often the reality and everyday life of Roma.<sup>2</sup> It is addressed in literature, as suitably reflected at the start of this introduction, and it is confirmed in a number of international and national strategic and programmatic documents and scientific research which report in detail on the deep roots of inequality and poverty as living conditions of the Roma national minority.<sup>3</sup>

Given their way of life, the Roma are often described as a subclass,<sup>4</sup> that is, as a socially isolated and marginalized group with little chance of breaking out of the vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion [Šućur 2000]. According to a kind of “exclusion” from the system of economic and social stratification, the Roma community can also be associated with a culture of poverty. The basic idea is that the poor develop their own value system and a culture of poverty characterized by low expectations and various forms of socially unacceptable behavior. Once the culture of poverty is established, it is transferred from parents to children and thus becomes an accepted value pattern of poor communities [UNDP 2006].

Since it cannot be said that all Roma are only passive prisoners of such a process, nor that they are entirely responsible for the difficult entry into the world around them, it is worth pointing out some other historically, structurally and socially produced inequalities. There is a deep imprint of discrimination linked to racism and the ideology of racial superiority, which have strongly influenced stereotypes and prejudices about the Roma, both in the past and present. Historically, across Europe, Jews and Roma were two highly discriminated minorities, precisely because of their presumed ethnic [national] inferiority. Both groups experienced persecution and mass extermination during World War II, and suffered under almost all other regimes before and after it. However, while anti-Semitism is today condemned at all levels of society and politics, anti-Gypsyism is generally unrecognized or recognized as a socially conditioned phenomenon and way of [co] operating in creating and spreading deep-rooted prejudices and distance from the Roma communities. Therefore, as a rule, it is not condemned.

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2 The complexity of the Roma situation is not specific to Croatian society alone, but the Roma are “compared to other groups of the population, in a more vulnerable position in all Central European countries” [UNDP 2006: 49].

3 These are: *the National Roma Programme* [2003–2012], *Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plans* [2005–2015], *EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020* [2011], *NRIS – National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020* [2012], *AP NRIS – Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2015* [2013], *Evaluation of the NRIS* [2015], *To Live Equality – Project of the National Roma Platform* [2016–2017], *Operational Programme for National Minorities from 2017 to 2020* [2017], *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: A Baseline Data Study* [2018].

4 In the notion of subclass, there is a strong correlation of the concepts of poverty, urban segregation and ethnic [racial] discrimination. Given their economic status, the Roma are not only marginalized but also “excluded” from the system of social stratification [Šućur 2000: 219].



Romophobia or anti-Gypsyism<sup>5</sup> is a complex social phenomenon that manifests itself in different ways: through hate speech, violence, exploitation and discrimination. One definition considers anti-Gypsyism to be a particular type of racism, an ideology of racial superiority, and a form of dehumanization and institutional racism fuelled by historical discrimination and the struggle to maintain power relations that favor majority groups. It is based, on the one hand, on imagined fears, negative stereotypes, and myths and, on the other, on denial or erasure from the public conscience of a long history of discrimination against Roma [Nicolae 2006]. It is therefore not unusual to witness that even those who have never had a personal encounter with the Roma will nevertheless be able to describe in detail how they live, look and behave because they use the most obvious stereotypes and prejudices of the majority social group.

The unfavorable position of the Roma is largely the result of the lack of familiarity of the rest of the population with them. Insufficient knowledge of their culture, tradition, language and art has often caused and is still causing distrust, aversion, various types of discriminatory attitudes and suffering, primarily as a result of negative stereotyping, and not as a reflection of Roma objectionability, their traditional way of life or their mentality [Hrvatić 2004]. Another important characteristic of the Roma community, and often of other minority groups, is their spatial isolation and segregation from the majority population. Since their arrival in Croatia, the Roma have mainly settled in the peripheral parts of settlements, partly due to economic deprivation and partly due to legal provisions.<sup>6</sup> Such a way of life leads to very little or no contact between the Roma population and members of the majority group [Šućur 2000].

Furthermore, some of the indicators of social ills and the characteristic exclusion of the Roma from many institutions of wider society are also found in theories based on social development and human rights. Due to their theoretical and experiential significance, here we highlight concepts based on discrimination, social exclusion, segregation, stereotyping, prejudices and intolerance. Given that negative attitudes and prejudices are most often expressed towards the Roma, the Roma population can be conceptually and empirically described in the categories of extreme deviation and multiple deprivation in almost all areas of life compared to the rest of the population.

A comparatively worse position of the Roma was observed in a number of studies that examined Roma everyday life. Therefore, in November 2012, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the *National Roma Inclusion Strategy from*

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5 As the term *Gypsy* is considered a derogatory term for members of the Roma national minority, some scholars prefer to use terms such as Romophobia or anti-Romaism. Nevertheless, the aforementioned terms do not differ in their content, but in their use and connotative meaning.

6 Certain examples of such legal provisions and initiatives for “resolving the Roma issue” can be found in: Vojak, D. [2005, 2009 and 2012].

2013 to 2020 [hereinafter: NRIS].<sup>7</sup> This *Strategy* announced as its basic task the improvement of the position of the Roma national minority in the Republic of Croatia [RoC] by reducing the gap in relation to the rest of the population and its full inclusion in all social segments. In order to achieve this goal, the NRIS included the following four specific objectives: [1] to create and develop human capital in the Roma community by raising the level of education and encouraging lifelong learning; [2] to improve the economic status of the Roma by facilitating access to the labor market, increasing employment and self-employment opportunities and encouraging equal hiring opportunities; [3] to improve the health and social status of members of the Roma community by ensuring access to quality health care and social welfare and improving housing conditions; [4] to improve the social position of the Roma by creating preconditions for the exercise of fundamental human and minority rights by eliminating all forms of discrimination and encouraging active participation in society and decision-making processes.

The overall elaboration of the NRIS also takes into account the *European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020* and the 2003 *National Roma Programme* [NRP], which the NRIS builds on. In order to define the manner of implementation of the NRIS, the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2015* [hereinafter: AP NRIS]<sup>8</sup> was adopted in April 2013, and the AP NSIR from 2019 to 2020. Accordingly, an evaluation was conducted in 2015 with the overall goal of “assessing the extent to which the *National Roma Inclusion Strategy from 2013 to 2020* [NRIS] and the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy* [AP NRIS] from 2013 to 2015 contributed to the inclusion of the Roma national minority in the Republic of Croatia and/or to what extent they could contribute to this inclusion in the future” [Friedman and Horvat 2015: 7].

The evaluation findings showed, among other things, that “despite the attention paid to monitoring and evaluation issues in the NRIS and AP NRIS, there is no comprehensive system for collecting data on the implementation of planned measures and achievement of strategic objectives” [Friedman and Horvat 2015: 13]. The authors found that, of a total of 111 indicators defined in the AP NRIS, only 11 of them have baseline values. The lack of baseline values therefore makes it impossible to draw conclusions on any progress that may have been made, as well as on the final impact of the implemented NRIS measures.

7 The first national document that specifically deals with the Roma national minority is the 2003 *National Roma Programme*. Two years later, a key international initiative adopted by eight countries from Central and Southeast Europe, including Croatia, and launched by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, was the *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015*. At that time, the national *Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan from 2005 to 2015* was drafted, the adoption and reporting on the implementation of which was coordinated by the [G]OHRNM.

8 The abbreviation AP NRIS is used for all action plans regardless of the period in question.

The undoubtedly most important problem in achieving this goal – the (in)ability to monitor the effectiveness of measures – has been largely overcome by conducting empirical research on the basis of which in 2018 a comprehensive study was done, titled *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian society: a Baseline Data Study* [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018], which made it possible to determine the baselines. In each of the identified key areas, there was a major gap between the Roma minority and the rest of the population: [1] education; [2] employment and inclusion in economic life; [3] health care; [4] social welfare; [5] physical planning, housing and environmental protection; [6] inclusion in social and cultural life; [7] status resolution, combating discrimination and assistance in exercising the rights of the Roma minority; and [8] institutional framework and intersectoral cooperation on Roma inclusion.

Although it was clear prior to the research that the Roma minority lagged behind the rest of the Croatian population in each of the segments addressed in the NRIS, the existing gap was empirically measured after the baseline study. This has highlighted the elements that need to be worked on, but it is not entirely clear how the existing gap can be reduced or which means would be most effective.

Therefore, at the initiative of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia [(G)OHRNM], the project was designed to continue and produce several scientifically based publications.<sup>9</sup> Their objective was to upgrade existing knowledge and use new analytical insights into the existing data to enable the conceptualization of measures that would effectively contribute to reducing the gap between the Roma minority and the rest of the Croatian population. The following chapters present the research objectives and methodology, followed by research findings in four chapters: Roma Identity in the Republic of Croatia, Social Distance and Inclusion in Social Life, Experience of Discrimination Against RNM Members and Position of RNM Members in the Judiciary. Each chapter is followed by a summary, and at the end of the publication there is a conclusion with proposals for specific public policy recommendations for the inclusion of RNM members in Croatian society.

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<sup>9</sup> This is a (G)OHRNM project titled *Fulfilling the Preconditions for Effective Implementation of Policies Aimed at National Minorities – PHASE I*, within which the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb produced five cross-sectoral and scientifically based publications for the (G)OHRNM in 2019 and 2020.

# 2

## Research objectives and methodology



## 2. Research objectives and methodology

### 2.1. Objectives of the study on identity, social distance and experience of discrimination

The purpose of this study is to expand the factual basis necessary for the preparation of a new national document for the integration of members of the Roma national minority into Croatian society, which addresses the issue of Roma identity, social distance from RNM members and discrimination. The main objective of the study is to identify and determine the basic components of Roma identity with an emphasis on language and religion. The characteristics of Roma culture and customs are also presented, as well as the norms and values which the Roma in Croatia nurture and consider acceptable and important. In addition, the idealistic and realistic perception of the recognizability of the Roma culture is presented. The study also includes questions that describe the relationship and quality of the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma populations, the interrelationship of the Roma community, but also the perception of the Roma view of their own community in the eyes of the majority population. The study answers questions about the activities of RNM members, i.e. their participation in social life and the infrastructural and institutional framework that is important for the inclusion of the Roma community in social life. It also presents the level of Roma participation in the work of various cultural, sports and other associations, political activities, i.e. participation in electoral processes, as well as participation in the work of various bodies at the local level aimed at influencing the position of the Roma in society. The study also provides an overview of the Roma perception of the media portrayal of their community. Part of the results presented in the study addresses social distance issues, while the final chapter deals with various aspects of discrimination against RNM members. Therefore, in this study we sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What are the key determinants of Roma identity?
- How important are certain determinants to RNM members and is there a connection between the importance of the determinants of identity and certain sociodemographic characteristics?
- What norms and values do Roma consider the most important and is there a

connection with sociodemographic characteristics?

- What is the relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma population and what is their perception of their own community among the majority population?
- What are the trends of Roma population in the last four years, i.e. is there horizontal social mobility?
- What is the level of Roma political participation in Croatia and are there differences in the level of political participation with regard to sociodemographic characteristics?
- How much do the Roma participate in social life and is the level of activity related to some sociodemographic characteristics?
- What are the infrastructural preconditions for participation in social life and are regional differences and/or the types of settlements in which the Roma live important predictors for participation in social life?
- How often do RNM members experience discrimination, in which area does it occur most often, and are some sociodemographic characteristics important predictors of discrimination?
- How do RNM members perceive discrimination against their own group?
- How are the status issues of RNM members resolved, i.e. are there persons who do not have a regulated status and how long have they been in such a status?

Interpretations of the findings include a comparative approach and show regional differences among RNM members in Croatia, differences between RNM members and the majority population, and, where possible, a comparative overview of data on Roma in Croatia and data on Roma from other EU countries.

## 2.2. Data sources

The data presented in this study were collected as part of the project titled *Collection and Monitoring of Baseline Data for the Effective Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy* carried out by Ecorys Hrvatska d.o.o. and the Center for Peace Studies for the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities as the beneficiary in 2017 and 2018. As part of this project, comprehensive empirical research was conducted in 2017, aiming to define the baseline values for measuring the effects of the NRIS from 2013 to 2020 and the AP NRIS at the national, regional and local levels, as well as to define the needs of Roma communities and obstacles to the inclusion of the Roma national minority at the

local/regional and national levels. Part of the results of this research related to key baseline data was published in the book *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study* [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić, 2018].

Given the importance of creating and expanding the factual basis for the development of an effective strategic framework for the inclusion of RNM members in Croatian society and targeted consideration of the state of Roma identity, social distance from RNM members and discrimination against the Roma population, this book presents the results of new analyses of data collected in 2017 which relate to this topic.

### **Data collection methods**

This empirical research from 2017 was conducted using the so-called mixed methodology and it included three main research sections: 1) Mapping of Roma communities in the Republic of Croatia, 2) Interviews and focus groups with representatives of the Roma national minority, key persons in Roma communities and representatives of relevant institutions at the level of local self-government units, and 3) Surveys of the Roma population on a representative sample of Roma households. This publication analyzes relevant data on identity, social distance and discrimination from all three research sections. A detailed description of the research methodology and each research section was published in Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić [2018], while this provides a brief description of the implementation of individual sections, which is crucial for understanding the data presented in this book.

#### **1) Mapping of Roma communities**

The mapping of Roma communities was carried out with the primary goal of determining the Roma population as a prerequisite for quantitative sampling of the Roma population, but also to collect data on the specifics of individual localities inhabited by members of the RNM. The mapping of Roma communities was conducted during May and June 2017 using the methods of structured interviews and observations at a total of 134 localities in 15 counties of the Republic of Croatia. Informants [persons who provided information about localities] were members of the RNM, i.e. persons who live in these localities and are well informed about them, so they were selected to provide educated mappers with the necessary information according to questions in templates for population and community description. Three structured interviews were planned per each locality, i.e. an interview with three informants where at least one of them was supposed to be female. A total of 371 structured interviews were conducted [with 196 men and 175 women], so there were on average 2.8 informants per locality.

## 2) Qualitative methodology – interview and focus group methods

The second research section was related to the application of qualitative methodology. Semi-structured expert interviews were conducted with representatives of relevant institutions at the level of local self-government units [141 in total] and semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives of the Roma national minority and key persons in Roma communities [67 in total]. In addition, seven focus groups were conducted with representatives of relevant institutions at the county level [a total of 73 people participated]. In the interviews and focus groups, questions were asked about education, employment, health care, social welfare, children, space, housing and environmental protection, social and cultural life, status and rights, institutional environment, and needs and priorities for change.

## 3) Quantitative methodology – survey method

The third and key research unit referred to quantitative research using the survey method [face-to-face technique] with members of the RNM in 12 counties of the Republic of Croatia. The survey was conducted during October and November 2017 at a total of 109 localities inhabited by members of the RNM. 1550 Roma households were included, collecting data on 4758 members of these households. Data on 38% of all Roma households registered in the mapping process were collected and on 21% of the total estimated Roma population in these counties.<sup>10</sup>

The survey questionnaire contained questions about infrastructural, environmental and housing living conditions in Roma settlements, different economic and social characteristics of Roma households, different sociodemographic, socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics of all household members, about the personal employment status, education, health and housing, on integration, discrimination, awareness of rights and citizenship issues, and questions on personal experiences and attitudes related to different areas of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy. Due to the extremely large number of topics and questions that the survey was supposed to cover, two versions of the survey questionnaire were used [the so-called A and B versions]. Therefore, not all questions were posed to all respondents. As a result, in technical terms, different questions were answered by somewhat different subsamples.

The sample of Roma population in the survey was constructed according to data on the survey population collected by mapping Roma communities and it is considered representative by age and gender for members of the Roma national minority in 12 counties of the Republic of Croatia for localities inhabited by at least 30 RNM members.

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<sup>10</sup> Detailed information on sampling and the conduct of research can be found in Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić [2018].



## 2.3. Methodology of the study on identity, social distance and experience of discrimination

### 2.3.1. Regional division and population size estimation

For the purpose of statistical processing and analyses, the results of which are presented in the following chapters, data from the county level<sup>11</sup> are grouped into six regions, taking into account their geographical proximity and certain sociodemographic specifics. Given that this publication discusses the shares of members of the Roma national minority in individual regions, in Table 1 estimates of the total number of RNM members in individual regions are presented, according to data collected by mapping Roma communities.<sup>12</sup>

**TABLE 1. Regional division and population size estimation**

Region	Counties	Number of localities in which mapping and the survey were conducted	Number of Roma households in which the survey was conducted	Estimation of population size, i.e. number of RNM members from mapping
Međimurje	Međimurje County	14	566	6368
Northern Croatia	Koprivnica-Križevci County and Varaždin County	17	156	2460
Zagreb and its surrounding area	City of Zagreb and Zagreb County	17	214	3539
Central Croatia	Bjelovar-Bilogora County and Sisak-Moslavina County	21	194	3655
Slavonia	Osijek-Baranja County, Brod-Posavina County and Vukovar-Srijem County	25	296	4142
Istria and Primorje	Primorje-Gorski kotar County and Istria County	15	124	2322

Given that the type of settlement is one of the important variables for comparison, but also for the interpretation of the study results, the share of the population according to the type of settlement in which RNM members live is presented at the regional level. In the research, settlements were grouped into four types: three concentrated settlements, i.e. those where only the Roma live [1 – settlement separated

11 Counties of research interest were determined by applying a combination of external and [expert] internal identification of localities inhabited by at least 30 Roma. For more details see: Kunac, Klasnić i Lalić (2018: 53–55). Such an approach did not identify any locality where at least 30 Roma live in any county in the Dalmatia region.

12 It should be emphasized that this is the sum of the mean values of the estimates of individual informants in each locality.

from a town or village, in a separate location, 2 – settlement on the outskirts of a town or village and 3 – settlement within a town or village] and one dispersed settlement where the Roma live together with the majority population [4 – settlement where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village].

**TABLE 2.** Regional presentation of the share of the population according to the type of settlement

Region	Type of settlement			
	A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	A settlement within a town or village	The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village
Međimurje	95.2%	0.0%	1.2%	3.6%
Northern Croatia	45.6%	26.4%	1.3%	26.7%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	0.0%	5.5%	1.6%	92.9%
Central Croatia	15.1%	25.1%	12.0%	47.8%
Slavonia	3.5%	58.4%	16.0%	22.1%
Istria and Primorje	14.0%	5.7%	49.9%	30.4%
TOTAL	45.7%	16.5%	9.1%	28.7%

### 2.3.2. Processing and analysis of quantitative data

For the purposes of this study, data from mapping and the survey were combined into a common database, which allowed the simultaneous analysis of three types of characteristics necessary to obtain a comprehensive picture of the Roma population in individual areas:

- characteristics of localities (settlements) in which RNM members live
- characteristics of Roma households
- characteristics of RNM members [personal characteristics, experiences and attitudes].

In four central chapters [Roma Identity in the Republic of Croatia, Social Distance and Inclusion in Social Life, Experience of Discrimination Against RNM Members and Position of RNM Members in the Judiciary], the data were analyzed at several levels using data collected at the individual and household level [from the survey questionnaire] as well as data collected through mapping. In these chapters, the variables were mostly analyzed at the regional level [according to the division into six regions outlined above] and appropriate statistical tests were performed to verify the existence of statistically significant differences with respect to the region. For nominal variables, Pearson's chi-square test of the contingency table was used, along which, as a standardized measure of association [strength of the relationship], Cramer's V was listed. Parametric [ANOVA – analysis of variance] or

non-parametric tests [Kruskal-Wallis test] were used for quantitative variables and testing of regional differences. For the variables that are crucial for a particular topic, predictor sets were analyzed, taking into account the content and the theoretical concept. For this purpose, multivariate analysis, i.e. binary logistic regression was used. In some cases, the dependent variables have been modified to be suitable for individual processing. Some categories were recoded and merged in order to obtain a smaller number of categories, but the meaning and suitability of such recodings for the interpretation of data were taken into account. The level of statistical significance of all statistical tests was determined at  $p < 0.05$  [i.e. 5% risk of inference from the sample to the population] and the obtained statistical indicators were presented only in tests that resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis, which indicated the existence of statistically significant effect. Data processing was performed in the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

### 2.3.3. Processing and analysis of qualitative data

By applying the method of thematic analysis, this study uses qualitative data collected in 2017 by conducting semi-structured interviews with representatives of relevant institutions at the level of local self-government units and with representatives of the Roma national minority and key persons in Roma communities, as well as focus groups with representatives of relevant institutions at the county level. This is a general qualitative method which has no specific epistemological basis, and which some refer to as the “fundamental method of qualitative analysis” [Braun and Clarke 2006: 4]. Its main advantage is flexibility.

As stated by Braun and Clarke [2006: 6], it is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting on patterns [themes] within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in detail. Thematic analysis involves the categorization of data into a number of topics or descriptive categories that can be identified in two ways – inductive [bottom-up] or theoretical, or deductive [top-down]. Given the structure of the study itself, i.e. the topics it covers, the thematic analysis is used here in a specific way. More precisely, the data collected through the research did not generate the topics of the study in question, but the specificity of the topics determined the selection of qualitative material. The qualitative elements in the study represent a selection of representative attitudes and opinions of members of the Roma national minority and key non-Roma figures.<sup>13</sup> The uneven representation of qualitative material in some chapters is due to the fact that not all issues addressed in this study were included in the qualitative part of the research. The materials were selected according to thematic keys [codes] from the entire qualitative material that was processed in the MAXQDA 2018 computer program.

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<sup>13</sup> As the abbreviations KNF [key non-Roma figure] and RNM [Roma national minority] were used in the qualitative research, these abbreviations are also used in parts of the qualitative material [quotes from interviews] obtained from representatives of relevant institutions at the level of local self-government units and representatives of the Roma national minority.

# 3.

## Roma identity in the Republic of Croatia



# 3. Roma identity in the Republic of Croatia

## 3.1. Roma origins: linguistic, genetic, anthropological and sociocultural arguments

An indispensable part of most texts on the Roma are claims about the Indian origin of the Roma. We have several types of evidence here. In addition to linguistic ones – which were the first and quite accurate – today we have the findings of genetic research, which removed even the slightest suspicion that the ancestral homeland of the Roma was India.<sup>14</sup> After all, it is not necessary to go all the way to the genetic records<sup>15</sup> to find out that Roma look like Indians [Uhlik 1956b; Cech and Heinschink 2001a, 2001b]. In the period from the 14th to the 18th century, it was not yet known what the inhabitants of India or Egypt looked like, so that the origin of the Roma was a mystery – even to the Roma themselves. Today, this is bluntly obvious.

Initially, it was assumed that the Roma were refugees from Egypt, therefore they were called so in different languages:<sup>16</sup> in English they were called Gypsy, while the Dubrovnik poet Mikša Pelegrinović referred to them as Jeđupi. The Roma-Ši-jaks of Lika have preserved the name Gopti.<sup>17</sup>

14 One of the best books on this topic was written in Croatian [Martinović Klarić 2009]. It also contains a good list of increasingly important literature on the subject, not only genetic, but also linguistic and sociological and anthropological, in which the author excels. It can be considered a small textbook of Romology.

15 The Roma biological heritage was particularly dealt with by Nazi racial biologists, to whom the Roma posed an unfortunate challenge. It is bizarre that the Nazis had to realize that the despised “Gypsies” were in fact the only true Aryans among Europeans, and that they spoke an unquestionably [Indo-] Aryan language. This, as we know, did not help the Roma much. On the contrary, they were one of the biggest victims of the Holocaust, which is often overlooked. They were also thoroughly exterminated in Croatia during the Ustaše regime on the basis of Aryan racial theory, i.e. measures of “racial hygiene.”

16 Greek Κυπτι / Κίπτι or Jifti / Γιφτιοι /, Turkish Kiptî, Croatian Jeđupi, Gopti, Albanian Magjupë, Macedonian Gјupci, Edјupi [Гупци, Еђупи], English Gypsies, Spanish Gitanos, French Gitan, etc., and from the Egyptian theory were derived names like Farauni, Firauni, and so on, which are obviously erudite derivatives formed by writers, not folk names. More details on Roma onomastics can be found in three publications by Rade Uhlik [1955, 1956a and 1957]. The literature on Roma ethnonyms is very extensive.

17 Some authors, e.g. Rušidovski [2011], associate the name Gopti, Gјupci and similar “Egyptian names” with the name of the Indian dynasty and empire Gupta. However, it existed from the 3rd to the 5th century in the eastern part of India, while the first Indian ancestral homeland of the Roma was more in the west and the second one in the northwest, much later after the collapse of the Gupta government. It seems to be only a matter of the phonetic coincidence of this otherwise (mostly) Bengali name with the Greek name of Egypt. It is certainly not clear why the Roma were considered Egyptians, and we do not know how the Roma presented themselves to the Europeans at the time, nor how the Europeans understood and translated this. It is also possible that there was a misunderstanding and that the name of Egypt was confused with some Indian name. Rušidovski also postulates a different source for the Macedonian ethnonyms Gјupci [Cigani, Roma] and Eђјupi [Egyptians, a pseudo-Roma, i.e. non-Roma ethnic group], according to which one refers to Egypt and the other to the Indian Gupta. That is hard to defend: these are obviously two Slavic realizations of the same Greek word.

The names of the Roma often leave questions unanswered or mislead us, in this case towards Egypt, although the ancient Roma probably never resided in Egypt.<sup>18</sup>

The first name under which the Roma appear is Gypsies. They appear in Georgian and Byzantine sources from the middle of the 11th century under the name Athin-gani [Ἀθίγγανοι] – “untouchables”.<sup>19</sup> According to another interpretation, through Hebrew, the name Gypsy would also mean “Egyptian”.<sup>20</sup> It is not clear how the Egyptian name happened to be applied to the Roma when they entered Byzantium, just as many other things in the earliest history of the Roma are unclear. Written sources are more than scarce. It is not even certain that it was always referred to the Roma when the Egyptians and the Athingans were mentioned.<sup>21</sup> The concept of untouchability seems to point towards India and its caste system, where the untouchables are Pariahs at the very bottom of the social ladder, but it may be an internal rule of some sect.<sup>22</sup> In India, the Brahmins reject food from lower castes, while the latter usually eat everything and from everyone.

In any case, there was not a single word about India. It should also be borne in mind that at that time there was no concept of India as we know it today. Knowledge of geography was poor, not only among the Roma but also among Europeans. The name India is derived from the Greek name for the Indus River [Ἰνδός], and Herodotus took it from the Persian Hindush, which referred to the area of the southern flow of the Indus, i.e. today’s Sindh in Pakistan. The name India was not used in India itself, and in Europe it was known only to scholars. In any case, the Roma do not come from the Sindh province, but from the much more northern regions, where this geographical name was certainly not used, as it is not used today.

18 Today, the assumption is rejected that the Spanish Gitanos – and the name is derived from the word Egyptian – came to the Iberian Peninsula via North Africa, hence Egypt, separating themselves from the mainstream of Roma migration somewhere in Central Asia. So this could not explain the application of the name Egyptian to the rest of Europe, except that the focus of the exodus was in Egypt or later in Spain. Hence the road to the west unquestionably led through the Balkans – and this holds true for all the Roma of Europe.

19 This seems to have originally referred to the Gnostic sect of the Monarchians of Phrygia, so it is unclear how this was then transmitted to the Roma. This sect spread throughout Armenia and the Balkans in the 9th century. It has been recorded that the members of this sect did not touch other people and did not want to receive food offered from the hand – it had to be left on the ground. This is reminiscent of some dietary rules among Hindus, where members of the higher castes cannot receive water or food directly from the “unclean” lower castes because that would contaminate them. In Central Asia we find the Indian Roma-like group Parya [Sanskrit: Pārya [पार्य] “untouchable”]. On castes see: Crooke [1973].

20 Matras [2012: 1] states that in Ivrit – modern Hebrew in Israel – the Roma/Gypsies are called tso’anim in connection with the biblical Hebrew tso’an, “Egypt”, and the biblical-Hebrew verb tsa’an “to wander”, which was also taken over by Yiddish [the German speech of Eastern European Jews]. It could possibly be the source of the Greek name Athingan, from which the name Cigan probably originated, and then Zigeuner and so on. Then it would also mean “Egyptian” and the rest would be the Greek translation and its adaptations in other languages: Gopti, Jedupi, Gypsy, etc. This would mean that the name in Greek was conveyed through the Hebrew language, which was then also known to many Greek theologians.

21 Tcherenkov and Laederich [2004] discuss these claims in extenso.

22 The Indo-Aryan Roma-like language communities in Tajikistan and the surrounding countries were researched by the Russian linguist and ethnographer Oransky [1977]. For more detail on Gypsies of Central Asia see: Günther [2008, 2016] and Marushiakova and Popov [2016].

In short, it was difficult for the Roma to explain where they came from, and it was even more difficult for the Europeans to understand this since they did not have any frame of reference. Egypt was certainly a familiar and clear concept, and the people there were known to have darker skin.

### 3.1.1. Language as a clue

The first and decisive evidence of the Indian origin of the Roma was offered by researchers of the Romani language.<sup>23</sup> Romani was found to be a clearly<sup>24</sup> Indian or Indo-Aryan<sup>25</sup> language, such as Sanskrit and its descendants Hindi/Urdu, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Punjabi, Sindhi, Bengali, Marathi, Sinhala, Kashmiri and other modern Neo Indo-Aryan languages. Numerous characteristics of Romani indicate distinct proximity to the Hindi-Urdu complex. In India, we have the favorable situation that we know the proto-language [as with the Romance languages in Europe] from which today's languages have evolved – namely Old Indian or Sanskrit. Furthermore, there is a large number of written languages from the transitional Middle Indian period [Prakrits, i.e. spoken languages],<sup>26</sup> which help us to determine the temporal and spatial context of Romani during its Indian period and to some extent reconstruct the Proto-Romani, i.e. the Indian proto-language from which Romani evolved.<sup>27</sup> The ancient Indian period ends around the 2nd century AD when various Sanskrit languages of the Middle Indian period began to develop from Sanskrit, from which from the 9th century AD modern Neo Indo-Aryan languages would emerge, such as today's Romani. Proto-Romani originated in the central part of the Indian Plain as a Middle Indo-Aryan language – and this is the intermediate stage of development between Sanskrit [Old Indian] and today's Neo

23 On the history of Romani linguistics: Jauk Pinhak (1987) and Rašić (2010) and, with a lot of linguistic and Indological argumentation: Ježić and Katavić (2016) and recent syntheses Matras (2002), Matras and Tenser (eds.) (2020) and Willems (1995, 1997) and Ruch (1986).

24 The name of the language in Romani is: *romaní* or *rromaní*, or *romané* or *rromané*, and with a final *s* or *h* [depending on the dialect] – *romanés* / *romanéh*; *rromanés* / *rromanéh*. *Romaní* is an adjective and the abbreviated from the full phrase *romaní čhib* meaning “Romani language”. *Rromané/s, h/* adverb “Romani, in the Romani way, in Romani”. The noun *čhib* thus [with aspirated consonant] reads in the Gurbet dialect as *tjhib*, and in the Kalderash and Lovari dialects there is no aspirated consonant, so that it reads “shib”, and in some Arlia dialects “chib” or “chip”, “ship” and similar. Here we call this language simply Romani or sometimes *Romaní*. Only this Indo-Aryan language is “Romani”. The Bayash Roma, for example, speak Romanian and there is no point in calling their language Romani.

25 The Indo-Iranian languages of India are referred to as Indo-Aryan to distinguish them from other Indian languages that are also Indian but non-Indo-European: Dravidian [in the south], Austroasian i.e. Munda [east and middle] and Tibeto-Burman [north, below the Himalayas]. These languages have a completely different grammatical structure.

26 For more details on the development of the Middle Indian languages see: Bubeník (1996), for more details on the modern Indian languages see: Masica (1991) and Comrie (2003). With many examples and texts: the inevitable Grierson (1906), today a slightly outdated but still irreplaceable work.

27 Sanskrit was brought to India from Central Asia around the 15th century BC in the course of the conquests of the Aryans, light-skinned people speaking the Indo-European language, to countries then inhabited by somewhat darker speakers of the languages Dravidian and Austro-Asian [especially the Munda family], which are still spoken in South and East India today. The word “rom” [abbr. *Ḍomba-*, *ḍoma*] probably also entered Sanskrit from a Munda language (“drum”).

Indo-Aryan languages, which are all Indo-European, as are most European languages,<sup>28</sup> including Slavic Croatian.

Proto-Roma remained in this central area of North India until about the 6th or 7th century AD. In the later stage of its evolution, Romani shows phonetic and grammatical developments that bear witness to the strong influence of the Dardic languages, spoken in the Himalayan hills and in the northwest of the subcontinent, from northern Punjab and Kashmir to eastern Afghanistan. Here Proto-Romani would develop as a typical Neo Indo-Aryan language, which now exhibits dual features: both the older Central Indian and the newer Dardic, corresponding to the division into early and late Proto-Romani.<sup>29</sup> Such a Neo Indo-Aryan language would be brought to Europe by the Roma and would later become the main guideline for determining the origin of the Roma.

The Neo Indo-Aryan period of development of Indo-Aryan languages took place around 800 to 1000 AD. It is therefore undoubtedly terminus ante quem non, a period before which it is difficult to speak of the beginning of the departure of the Roma from India. It could not have been much later either, because in 1054 we find the Roma on the eastern borders of Byzantium. If the departure had taken place earlier, the Roma would not have shown the characteristics of the Neo Indo-Aryan period.

### From India to the West

The Ghaznavid conquests, which began in 971, are often cited as a reason for Roma migration. Before 1054, there are no written sources about the Roma, unless we include statements about the Luri in Persia [Ferdowsi 1957], which – if they are historical at all – probably do not refer to today's European Roma but to some other of a number of Indian migrations to the West. In the Middle East<sup>30</sup> there is a Roma-related group of the Dom, blacksmiths and musicians speaking Domari, also a language of the Indo-Aryan group, but different from Romani [Matras 2012]. In the Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey, there is a Roma-like group Loma [Lomavren, Armenians call them Poša], who have already lost the Romani language, although their Armenian ethnolect has preserved many Indo-Aryan words similar

28 All European languages have the same Indo-European roots, except for some on the edges of the continent: Basque [the only living Pre-Indo-European language of old Europe] and Turkic [Turkish, Tatar, Gagauz, Yörük] and Finno-Ugric languages such as Hungarian, Finnish, Estonian and Sámi [Lappish]. There are many Ural-Finno-Ugric, Turkic and Caucasian languages throughout Russia, all of which are special non-Indo-European groups, and at the same time, they have a completely different grammatical structure. Some of these languages – mainly Estonian, Finnish, Basque, Turkish, Tatar and Hungarian – have had a major influence on Romani dialects in their respective areas, and sometimes mixed Para-Romani languages have emerged [Basque-Romani Erromintxela, Estonian-Romani Liause or Finnish-Romani Kaale].

29 Further details on the concepts of Proto-Romani and Early Romani can be found in: Matras 2002 and more precisely Beníšek [2020: 18].

30 Israel, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, Turkey and Azerbaijan. They once inhabited Egypt and Sudan [Aleppo].



to those found in Romani and Domari. This language is not the same as Romani either. In Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and neighboring Central Asian countries, there are other Roma-like groups,<sup>31</sup> but these are all different Indian migrations of similar social groups (sometimes even of the same name!) to the West. Although they have similar origins, European Roma and their language are unique among them: the language, the paths they took and the time of the exodus are different.

### **Caste and jati as the primary communities – the Đom, Dumi, Domari, Lomavren and Roma**

It is easy to notice that the names Rom, Dom and Lom are phonetically congruent, and they are also part of the Indian heritage. They are derived from the Sanskrit *ḍomba-*, *ḍoma-* “member of the musician caste” [Hindi: *ḍom* [b], *ḍomṛā*], which does not seem to be an Indo-Aryan word but comes from a language of the Mund group, and would probably mean “drum”. *Dumāki*, musicians and blacksmiths in northern Pakistan, belong to the same etymon, and speak a language from Central India, which is not spoken in the Hunza Valley in Pakistan and Baltistan, where the *Ḍumāki* live surrounded by Dardic languages [Shina] and Burusha isolate, which is unrelated to other languages of the world [Lorimer 1939].

In Indian society, there are several thousand subdivisions (abbr. *Jat*, *jati*) within the four basic castes.<sup>32</sup> Each caste has its own internal rules, rights, duties, customs and codes of conduct towards other castes and their subdivisions. *Jati*, castes and subcastes<sup>33</sup> determine in practice the social division of labor, i.e. the occupations of their members. It follows that social groups are essentially determined by their place in the hierarchy of occupations and their social status. The European Roma are also strongly tied to certain occupations, so that numerous Roma groups are formed around a certain craft, especially among the otherwise more conservative Vlach Roma. This is reflected in the names of Roma sub-ethnic groups [*kovači* – blacksmiths, *koritari* – trough-makers, *kotlari* – cauldron-makers, *košaričari* – basket weavers, etc.].<sup>34</sup> The relationship between the linguistic and social community in India is important here. Given the dominant importance of caste and *jati*, language is a relatively irrelevant feature of social identity in India. Members of the same caste or *jati* can exist throughout India and speak completely different languages. Castes are the social institution that unites India, and languages are what divides it. In addition to the *Đom*, there are many other nomadic communities of

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31 Parja, Afgoni, Mughat, Mazang, Lyuli, Jughi, Tavoktarosh, Agha, Kavol, Chistoni, Balyuj and others.

32 These are Brahmins (priestly class, rulers), Kshatriyas (soldiers and ruling class), Vaishyas (farmers and merchants) and, finally, Shudras (citizens and workers). At the very bottom, there are various groups of untouchables, Pariahs, who are so despised that they are in fact outside the caste system, that is, they form the fifth group.

33 Crooke's (1973) introduction to ethnic groups and castes in India is popular, and the literature on this topic is otherwise endless.

34 “Tribes” as non-Roma say [Uhlík 1955, 1956a and 1957] or “nation” and “*vīca*/Romanian *vița*” among the Vlach Roma.

the caste type in India, which today, following the English non-Roma tradition, are called Gypsies: in Croatian Cigani. Abraham Grierson [1922] collected language samples from about twenty Indian and Pakistani nomads of service occupations and found that there is no similarity with the language of European Roma,<sup>35</sup> but there are often socioeconomic and status similarities.

### On the way to Europe – Iranian-Armenian stopover and entry into Byzantium

After the Indian phase in the Romani language, there are several more indications of early Romani history. All Romani dialects in Europe – from Turkey, Romania and Russia to Spain, Wales or Scandinavia – contain about eighty Iranian words,<sup>36</sup> a handful of Armenian words and a smaller number of words from other Caucasian languages [Georgian, Ossetian] and early loanwords from Byzantine Greek.

The Georgian Life of St. George of Mt. Athos [1009–1065] contains an event from the year 1054 in which magicians called Athingani are mentioned. Saint George opposed these sorcerers who enchanted the emperor Constantine IX himself. It is possible that this is the first mention of Gypsies [Cigani] and the encounter of their culture with European and Christian cultures. In any case – and this is a very tricky issue on which there is no agreement among researchers<sup>37</sup> – since then we have more and more news about unusual groups of foreigners, who seem to be the first Roma in Europe. Byzantine life at that time was all about religious issues, the relationship between orthodoxy and heresy: everything was interpreted within that framework. The Roma, too, were interpreted as Egyptian apostates – that is, Christian Copts converted to Islam – who lived their penance of homeless wandering because of this sin. In any case, this was a discourse that could have been met with the understanding and support of the church and contribute to the acceptance of newcomers among the pious Byzantines. This may also explain the Egyptian ethnonym.

### Greece as a new [linguistic] homeland

From the 11th century onwards, the Roma are mentioned in Greece under various names, the most common of which is Kypti [Κυπτοί] – and this is the same name as for the Copts: Egyptians – from which variants that can be reduced to the name of Egypt would later develop, brought to Dubrovnik and to the [now extinct] Gopti of Lika. Contacts with the Greeks would be crucial for the emergence of the exonyms Egyptians and Gypsies [Cigani], as others call the Roma. Their stay

35 Apart from the general Indian features inherent in all these languages, of course.

36 Hancock [1995] discusses in detail Iranian loanwords in Romani, Domari and Lomavren concluding that this is a matter of various migrations and different Indo-Aryan language backgrounds. For more details see: Boretzky [2012].

37 Tcherenkov and Laederich [2004] provide a detailed overview, as do the websites of the University of Graz, an important center of Romology [along with Manchester, Prague, and Nitra]. Available at: <http://rombase.uni-graz.at/cgi-bin/art.cgi?src=data/hist/origin/byzanz.en.xml>. [Retrieved 11 February 2020]

in the Greek environment was so far-reaching for the further development of the Romani language that Greek words and athematic patterns are encountered in all Romani dialects in Europe, all the way to Spain, Scotland or Finland.<sup>38</sup> In the Greek stage, the Romani language became used to coexisting with other languages, which would later become its second nature. After that, all adult Roma became always and everywhere bilingual.

The period that follows is called Early Romani, and refers to the state of the language from the end of the stay in Greece around the middle of the 14th century, when dispersal began in all European directions. Everything else that would come later would simply be an upgrade of the Early Romani foundations.<sup>39</sup> Romani was still in many ways a basic Neo Indo-Aryan language, but it would later develop some features typical of the languages of the Balkan Language Area,<sup>40</sup> which means that we could perhaps most precisely define Romani as a [partially] Balkanized Neo Indo-Aryan language. These Balkan features are modest in the western and central dialects of Europe, and in those remaining in the Balkans they are considerable and vary depending on the immediate linguistic environment or the previous center of migration.<sup>41</sup> Balkanisms differ according to varieties and dialects, and Vlax dialects also adopted a layer typical for Romanian Balkans. Romani joined the Balkan “Sprachbund” as a marginal member, as did Sephardic Spanish [Ladino] and the Balkan Turkish dialects. These processes are still going on in the Balkan Romani area, both in Vlax and non-Vlax dialects, taking place right in front of us.

### From Greece to the Balkans: away from the Turks, but still with the Turks

New masses of Roma began to arrive in the Balkans with the Turks, appended to them and Muslim. Since then, religious duality would become a permanent feature of the Roma people in these areas. In Croatia, the Roma are first mentioned in Dubrovnik in 1362 in a legal dispute as Egyptian craftsmen and citizens of Dubrovnik, but with Croatian names, so it is probable that they arrived there much earlier, even before the Greek troubles with the Turks. They are mentioned in Zagreb, again as Egyptians, in 1373. Here, of course, we cannot be sure that they were really Roma, but we also cannot imagine what other Egyptians could they have been. The connection with the Turks was manifested later because in Western Europe they would be called that, and even by the names of Tatars, Sar-

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38 It is true that the Roma appeared earlier in North Africa, but they arrived in Morocco either from Spain [and there from the Balkans] or from other parts of the Ottoman Empire, and in Egypt and Sudan there were Syrian Domari (Halebi) as well.

39 More details on the concepts Proto-Romani and Early Romani can be found in Matras [2002] and Benišek [2020: 18].

40 Balkan Language Area [in German *Sprachbund*] is a term from areal and typological linguistics, and refers to the phenomenon that genetically diverse languages [Albanian, Greek, Romanian and Slavic] show great similarities in grammatical patterns.

41 On the relations of Romani with the languages of the Balkan Language Area see: Uhlik [1973, 1968] and Friedman [2000].

acens or simply pagans [heidens]. In Scandinavia, it is still common today for the Roma to be called Tatars. But the name Egyptians was already common almost everywhere, and in eastern and northern Europe it was also the name Gypsies.

### In the Balkans: among South Slavs and Romanians (Vlachs)

Two streams of Roma would diverge from the Slavic south: one turning to the Vlach lands, where the Roma fell into a long period of slavery<sup>42</sup> and thus entered intensive interactions with the Romanian language, which later gave rise to the so-called Vlax dialects of the Romani language [Kalderash, Lovari, Gurbet-Jambazi, Leyash, Chergar]. All other dialects were non-Vlax, and they share a number of common structural features from the Early Romani period in Greece.

After the abolition of slavery in the middle of the 19th century, mass migrations from the Vlach lands<sup>43</sup> began in all directions, so that today the Vlach Roma have spread throughout Europe, from where they have reached overseas countries. Many have tried to avoid slavery by fleeing to neighboring countries, so that Vlach Roma are now found in all parts of Russia and the former Soviet Union, but also in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and southern Poland, Austria, Hungary and most of the Balkans. Contemporary migrations took them to all Western European countries, so that they are perhaps the most numerous Roma of the old continent. Most often it is the Kalderash, a conservative Roma group that has preserved a lot of old customs that go back to Indian roots. The northern branch of the Kalderash are the Lovari, whose language differs little from that of the Kalderash, although the micro group culture is different, Hungarian-oriented, marked by horse trade and free movement, and Uhlik describes them as audacious thieves despised by the Bosnian Roma. Among the Vlach Roma, clan and quasi-tribal divisions would develop by occupations: the Kalderash [pot makers], Lovari and Jambazi [horse traders], Aurari [goldsmiths], Ursari [bear hunters], Khanjari [chicken keepers], Lavutari [musicians] and numerous others. The Bayash, who only speak Romanian, and are former miners by name [out of which the ethnonym Ludari appeared], have their own subclasses according to their main activity, which is most often the production of wooden household items [pot makers, spoon makers/lingurari, etc.].

In Bosnia and Montenegro – where most of the speakers of Vlax-Romani dialects in Zagreb and larger cities in Croatia came from – all Roma are Gurbeti<sup>44</sup> and speakers of the Western Gurbet dialect, which is separated from all other Vlax dialects by numerous peculiarities. Macedonian Jambazi and Kosovo Gurbeti in Zagreb and Rijeka [to a lesser extent elsewhere in larger Croatian cities] speak South Gurbeti dialects similar to those in northern Serbia and western Vojvodina, which in some

42 On slavery and on the history of the Roma in Romania in general, see: Achim [2004].

43 It is today's Romania with Moldova, and without the once Hungarian countries of Transylvania and Banat and once the Turkish [and later Bulgarian] Dobruja.

44 Lapov [2009] wrote an excellent must-read paper on the Gurbet ethnonym.

places are close to Lovari and Kalderash. Croatian Lovari from the Bjelovar area are linguistically close to them, but in almost all other aspects not so much and the same is true for Khanjari and Leyash groups. These Roma are predominantly Catholic [or sometimes Orthodox], and all others are Muslims. The Muslim Arlia from Macedonia, Kosovo and southern Serbia are the only speakers of non-Vlax dialects in Croatia [along with some Bugurji speakers],<sup>45</sup> but they are often also the most educated among the Roma and enjoy a high reputation and lead in many cultural activities, not only in Croatia.

### **Loss and replacement of the Romani language. Para-Romani languages.**

During the migrations, the Roma came into contact with various languages and became bilingual and multilingual. The Roma usually speak all the languages they need and are probably the biggest European polyglots. This would inevitably affect the Romani language, which began to be divided into numerous dialects. This was influenced by the passage of time and the separation of Roma groups, but mostly by bilingualism involving the surrounding languages and abundant borrowing of words and formation structures. This would sometimes lead to the loss of language and the development of some Para-Romani idioms,<sup>46</sup> which are mixed languages with the grammar of the majority language and [partly] Romani vocabulary.

In some places the process of replacement was completed, so that there was a complete replacement of Romani with other languages, with almost no traces of the earlier language. In Hungary today, most Roma only speak Hungarian. For us, the most interesting case is the replacement with the Romanian language, as it is spoken by the Croatian Bayash Roma. This process began quite early in the Vlax countries where the Roma lived in close contact with the Romanians [Vlachs, Moldavians], especially among the so-called “household Roma”, in fact, household slaves. After the abolition of slavery, these Romanian-speaking Roma also moved to the surrounding countries, but they had also fled before. Except in Romania and Moldova, Bayash and other Romanian-speaking Roma are found in Russia and other former Soviet countries, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia [interestingly, not in Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo!], Croatia, Hungary, Bosnia, Slovakia, Slovenia and elsewhere, and as migrants they can be found all over Europe.

Croatian Bayash Roma live for the most part in areas that were once part of the Hungarian state [Međimurje and Baranja] – which saved them from the mass destruction that affected the rest of the Roma in Croatia during the Independent State of Croatia [NDH] – as well as in Slavonia and further north in Northern Croatia. They arrived in Croatia spreading from Hungary, and to a lesser extent from

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45 In the neighboring Slovenia, on the other hand, various non-Vlax dialects are mostly used: Doljenski-Gopti, Sinte, Prekmurski and later immigrated Arlia (and perhaps Bugurji). Communication between these groups is difficult. There are also some Vlax Roma and Bayash in Slovenia.

46 On Para-Romani languages see: Bakker and Courthiade [1991].

Serbia. In Hungary, the Bayash [Beások] are well organized and have a cultural center in Pécs. Dictionaries and grammars of their language, modest literature and publishing, and especially school textbooks, also appeared.<sup>47</sup>

### Quasi-Roma and pseudo-Roma groups – “Gypsies” who are not Roma

Most social measures refer to the Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali, as already announced in their title, with the latter two groups being seen as Roma.<sup>48</sup> Rarely do they start from the desires and self-perceptions of the Egyptians and Ashkali, who declare themselves as non-Roma. If an ethnic group does not feel Roma, there is no point in recognizing that identity as an integral part of a non-Roma ideology based on ignorance of relevant facts. It is a sociologically very interesting process of changing an ethnic identity and forming new ethnic communities, and at the same time it is an indicator of the need to escape the Gypsy fate and the stigma it carries. Social interaction between Roma and these two groups is present because their common feature is unenviable social marginality, therefore in Croatia there are mixed Roma-Ashkali marriages in places where they live together. The Egyptians have a clearly developed self-perception of themselves as non-Roma, while in Croatia there are none or very few of them.

### 3.1.2. Roma in Croatia – data and groups

The way of life and social situation of Roma communities differs from country to country, from province to province, from settlement to settlement, and hence the great diversity between Roma groups. This diversity is often great even within one country or region. In Croatia, like elsewhere in Europe, the process of language assimilation is underway, abandoning the language of the Roma community (Romani or Bayash) and taking on the language of the environment as the main or only language of the family and household. Often, older family members also speak Romani, Romanian, Albanian, Macedonian or some other language, but younger generations only use Croatian, and there are communities, groups and families where this process has long been completed. Ethnic awareness of belonging to the Roma people is still present, but the language has already been replaced. These Roma are now only an ethnic, and certainly [often only] a social group within the Croatian society. Similar processes are taking place in other countries where the Roma live, and in some they have been completed [Spain, Portugal, Scandinavian countries, etc.], but with the immigration of the Roma from the European East, in some places they are starting again.

47 In Croatia, too, efforts are being made to implement something along these lines. One of the currently most distinguished Croatian Roma experts, Petar Radosavljević, earned his doctorate with a thesis on the Romanian vernaculars of the Bayash group. See: Radosavljević [2007, 2009, 2010 and 2013].

48 Zemon [1996, 2013], Marushiakova et al. [2001] and partly Marushiakova and Popov [2007]. Of the German authors, the Egyptians and authors are dealt with by C. Lichnofsky [2013]. Zemon is a prolific author on the subject and an Egyptian from Struga.

A category in which there is no doubt about their ethnic and linguistic identity are Roma who nurture their ethnic self-awareness and speak a language that is undoubtedly Romani, that is, the language brought from India to Europe some thousand years ago. As we have seen before, other Roma, according to various criteria – non-Roma and intra-group Roma – are undoubtedly members of the Roma people and heirs of Roma culture in its various forms, regardless of the [sub]ethnic name they use and the language that they speak. However, those Roma who also speak Romani are the most complete in the ethnic sense, so often all attention is paid to them, which is not justified. The Roma people are an unusually diverse collection of groups and subgroups, which is linguistically, religiously, culturally and historically extremely heterogeneous, but they are undoubtedly branches of the same people.

In Croatia, the following groups could be clearly distinguished:

1. The Bayash, who are geographically, dialectally and religiously divided into Međimurje, Baranja and Slavonia/Central Croatia, and Catholic and Orthodox groups, and in Slavonia and Central Croatia according to occupation or former occupation [Kaloperi, Lingurari, Koritari, etc.]
2. City Roma in Zagreb and Rijeka, speakers of Romani, who are mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to a lesser extent from Macedonia and Kosovo [in Zagreb], and are mostly of the Islamic faith, and by profession: blacksmiths or collectors of raw materials, cleaners, traders and workers in the industry. Among them, there is a smaller Chergar group, who keeps separate even from “their” Bosnians. In Rijeka, the ratio of Bosnians and others is equal, if not already in favor of Macedonians and Kosovars, while Egyptians and Ashkali can also be found. A special group are those in Vodnjan from Macedonia and Kosovo, who are a pious Dervishi group, and now speak Croatian and the younger members local Italian [Dignanese] as well.
3. Lovari in the vicinity of Bjelovar, Catholics and permanently residing today, and
4. Smaller groups of Vlach Roma in Baranja, Slavonia and elsewhere, mostly Orthodox Khanjars and Leyash, about whom little is known and they can be very nomadic.

All of them will declare themselves first as Roma, and only then as members of some groups. Everything else is only interesting to ethnologists and anthropologists, and is truly secondary. However, it is important that in Croatia we have a good overview and insight into the distribution of these characteristics.

As can be seen, most of these groups immigrated outside Croatia after World War II as Croatian Roma ended up in Ustaše persecutions. It is still an insufficiently told and mourned tragedy, which only the people of Međimurje and Baranja were

spared because those provinces were located in Hungary, and there were no Roma in Dalmatia. Several studies have been written about this topic, and here we mention only Acković [1994], Lengel-Krizman [2003] and Vojak [2018b], whose book also contains an extensive bibliography on this subject, including his other works.<sup>49</sup>

According to the most recent census from 2011, there are 16,975 Roma who live in Croatia, and estimates obtained by mapping as part of the 2017 baseline study show that 22,486 members of the Roma national minority live in 12 Croatian counties [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018: 15, 69]. Regarding the presence of Roma sub-ethnic groups in the Republic of Croatia, the latest data show that out of 1,538 households in which the question was asked on which group of Roma their family belongs to, only in one case no answer was received, and the remaining data indicate the aforementioned heterogeneity, which is visible not only between various regions but also within individual regions.

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<sup>49</sup> With Danijel Vojak, Croatia got its excellent and first national historian of the Roma. One [minor] part of his opus is listed in the introductory part. Vojak also deals with the suffering of the Roma in World War II, the so-called Samudaripen [complete killing/extermination]. The term, as Vojak himself says [2018a: 252–253], is similar to the Holocaust, and refers to the Nazi genocide of the Roma. He states that in Croatia the term Porajmos was first used for the suffering of the Roma in World War II, “which was used to mark the 2nd of August in Jasenovac as the International Day of Remembrance for Roma victims of the Porajmos/Holocaust in memory of 2 August 1944, when about 3,000 Roma were killed in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Since 2016, the term Porajmos has been replaced by the term Samudaripen in the title of this commemoration, which is in line with the recommendation of the International Romani Union from August 2016.”



TABLE 3. Regional representation of Roma groups

To which Roma group does your family belong?	Region												TOTAL	
	Medimurje		Northern Croatia		Zagreb and its surrounding area		Central Croatia		Slavonia		Istria and Primorje		n	%
	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Ashkali	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	13	6.2%	1	0.5%	3	1.0%	28	22.6%	46	3.0%
Bayash	489	86.5%	140	89.7%	2	1.0%	87	44.8%	127	43.8%	1	0.8%	846	55.0%
Lovari	1	0.2%	2	1.3%	7	3.3%	8	4.1%	5	1.7%	0	0.0%	23	1.5%
Koritari	22	3.9%	5	3.2%	0	0.0%	60	30.9%	3	1.0%	0	0.0%	90	5.9%
Chergar	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	26	12.4%	5	2.6%	9	3.1%	4	3.2%	45	2.9%
Kolompari	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.0%	1	0.5%	3	1.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.4%
Egyptians	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ghagar	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Other	8	1.4%	7	4.5%	137	65.6%	16	8.2%	89	30.7%	49	39.5%	306	19.9%
None	19	3.4%	1	0.6%	14	6.7%	3	1.5%	22	7.6%	21	16.9%	80	5.2%
Refuses to answer	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Does not know	24	4.2%	0	0.0%	8	3.8%	12	6.2%	29	10.0%	21	16.9%	94	6.1%
TOTAL	565	100.0%	156	100.0%	209	100.0%	194	100.0%	290	100.0%	124	100.0%	1538	100.0%

More than half of the Roma who live in the Republic of Croatia belong to the Bayash group [55.0%], of which the majority [57.8%] live in Međimurje, and the rest are almost evenly distributed in three regions: Northern Croatia [16.5%], Slavonia [15.0%] and Central Croatia [10.3%]. In Central Croatia, the most numerous group are Koritari [Bayash], which make 5.9% of the total Roma population. The Ashkali make up 3.0% of the total share, and they are most numerous in Istria and Primorje [as we have already stated, they express a hesitant identity or distance from other Roma]. The Chergar group makes up 2.9% and predominantly lives in the Zagreb region and its surroundings, and these are the mobile Bosnian Roma, speakers of Western Gurbet. The Lovari make up 1.5% of the total population and can be found in Zagreb and its surrounding area, Central Croatia and Slavonia. Although the respondents were given the option of declaring themselves as members of one of the eight Roma groups offered, almost a fifth of all respondents [19.9%] stated that they belong to some “other” group. In the open-ended part of the questions in which they had the opportunity to state which group it is, in 63 households, or 4.1% of cases, it was stated that their family belongs to the Kaloperi group, 29 families [1.9%] belong to the Muntenians group, 20 of them to Ludari [1.3%], and 36 of them [2.3%] only stated that they were “Roma”.

The misunderstanding that may be suggested by the data, especially regarding 19.9% of the respondents who stated that they belong to some “other” group of Roma, stems not only from the complexity of the Roma ethnic corpus but also the different structure of ethnic identity among Roma. This identity is often layered and multiple. The same Roma can simultaneously declare themselves as Roma, Macedonians, Muslims, Arlia or Jambazi; that is, Roma, Bosnians, Bosniaks, Muslims, Kovači and in other cases as Roma, Cigani, Serbs or Croats, Vlachs, Romanians, Catholics or Orthodox, Erdeljci or Muntenians. Additionally, always as Croats, Catholics, residents of Baranja, Međimurje etc. Some identities are hesitant, some changeable, some are predominantly religious, some Roma, some non-Roma, but they all exist together and at the same time in the same person, so it is logical that they intersect and rearrange in various combinations.

In the pre-research phase, or mapping of the localities, when informants answered questions about Roma who live in 109 surveyed localities, in more than a fifth of localities, more precisely in 21.1% of places where the research was conducted, informants sometimes did not know or did not agree from which country the majority of Roma came to a certain locality or what the Roma in these localities are called. According to the informants, Roma who came from Bosnia and Herzegovina live in 11 localities. Predominantly, in eight cases, these are located in the area of the City of Zagreb, two localities are from the Zagreb County area, and in one case it is the region of Slavonia, i.e. the Nova Gradiška locality. In 20 of the 109 localities, it was stated that they were Roma from Croatia and/or that they were “natives”. In 13.8% of localities, informants stated that the Roma came from Koso-

vo. In the same number of cases – 13.8% and 15 localities, the informants stated that the Roma came from Romania. As for the groups to which they belong, more the names of their groups, in 15 localities it is the Roma Bayash who are the most represented group of Roma in Croatia (cf. Table 3). This identity determinant was found in 12 localities in Northern Croatia: in nine localities in the area of Koprivnica-Križevci County and three in the area of Varaždin County. There are two localities in the Međimurje region, and one in Central Croatia. Of the remaining countries and groups, India and Hungary were stated in two localities, and in one locality the respondents mentioned Serbia. Koritari and Lovari are once again stated as groups, while several groups are stated in two localities in the Bjelovar-Bilogora County – Ghagar and Bajash and Chergar and Ashkali.

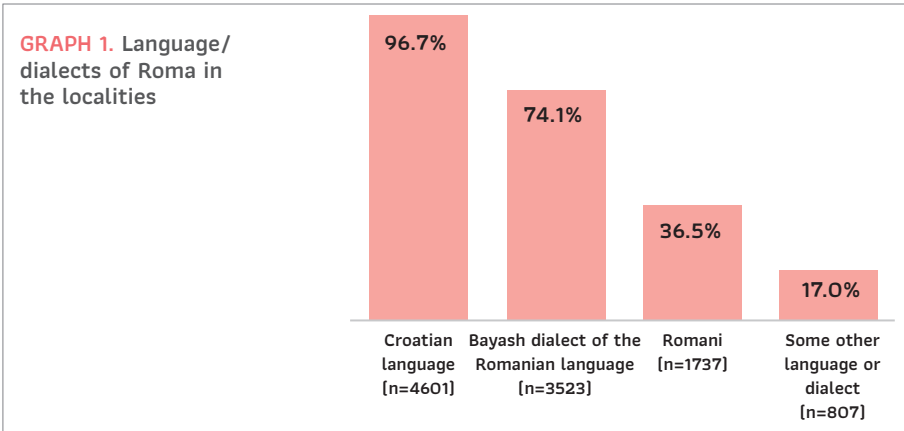
### 3.1.3. Language and dialects of Roma in the Republic of Croatia

It will usually be difficult for a Roma to admit to another Roma that the language he/she speaks is a good Romani language: his/her own variety is always the purest and most natural. This is a serious impediment to efforts to create a common standard language for all Roma, which currently appears to be an insurmountable difficulty. Consequently, various local standards are emerging, of which the best are currently Slovak and Northern Russian and Kalderash-Lovari in Romania, and to some extent Macedonian Arlia dialects. As regards Croatia, this is also felt as a problem: apart from the division into completely different languages such as Romanian, Croatian or Albanian (along with Italian in Istria), the rest of the Romani-speaking population speak Arlia or Vlax, and within Vlax there is a significant division which is difficult to bridge, into Bosnian Gurbet and Lovari (as well as some smaller Vlax dialects, certainly close to Lovari: Khanjar, Leyash, Northern Gurbet from Serbia).

At this point, we will not pay much attention to publications in the field of language and literature, but it should be mentioned that there are two good Romani dictionaries (Petrovski and Cana 2008, Kajtazi 2008) and some Bayash handbooks. Kajtazi's dictionary also contains a summary of the grammar of Romani dialects in Croatia. In fact, it is the first Romani grammar in Croatian (Rašić 2008), but it is unfortunately concise and incomplete (e.g. it does not address the syntax). The grammar of the Romani language was published as a separate book, which rightly received negative reviews (Matišić 2014) and does not address the dialects of Croatian Roma.<sup>50</sup>

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50 We are still waiting for a good grammar of Romani, and Zoran Lapov from Florence, probably the best Romani specialist in Croatia and the author of important works in several languages, has been working on it for a long time.



The data collected through pre-research in the localities point to linguistic heterogeneity, but also to the tendency of the Croatian language to dominate among the Roma population. In the case of language, the informants had to circle all the languages spoken by the Roma in the researched localities. It is evident that almost all Roma in the localities speak Croatian [96.7%]. The distribution of the remaining responses shown in Graph 1 indicates bilingualism among the Roma – they speak at least one other language in addition to Croatian. Among other languages, as mentioned above, two Bayash dialects of Romanian are most common since almost three quarters [74.1%] of the Roma live in localities where this language is spoken. Just over a third of the Roma [36.5%] live in localities where the Roma speak Romani, and a significant share of the Roma population [17.0%] live in localities where a language other than the three mentioned is spoken. It is most often the Albanian language, but in some localities the population speaks Macedonian or Italian.

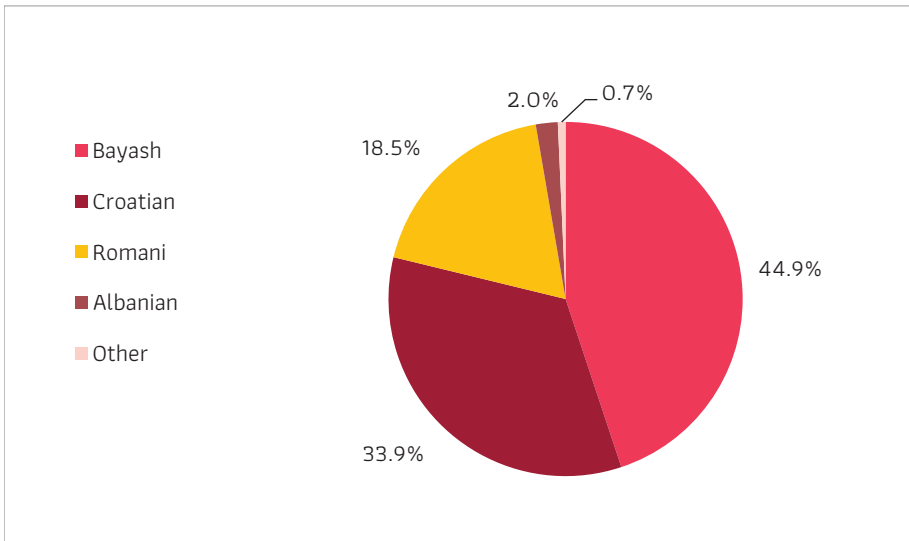
**TABLE 4. The language of the Roma in localities and according to region – Romani**

Region	Romani			
	No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%
Medimurje	14	100%	0	0.0%
Northern Croatia	14	82.4%	3	17.6%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	0	0.0%	17	100%
Central Croatia	12	57.1%	9	42.9%
Slavonia	13	52.0%	12	48.0%
Istria and Primorje	0	0.0%	15	100%
TOTAL	53	48.6%	56	51.4%

**TABLE 5.** The language of the Roma in localities and according to region – the Bayash dialects of the Romanian language

Region	The Bayash dialects of Romanian			
	No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%
Međimurje	0	0.0%	14	100%
Northern Croatia	1	5.9%	16	94.1%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	16	94.1%	1	5.9%
Central Croatia	10	47.6%	11	52.4%
Slavonia	6	24.0%	19	76.0%
Istria and Primorje	14	93.3%	1	6.7%
TOTAL	47	43.1%	62	56.9%

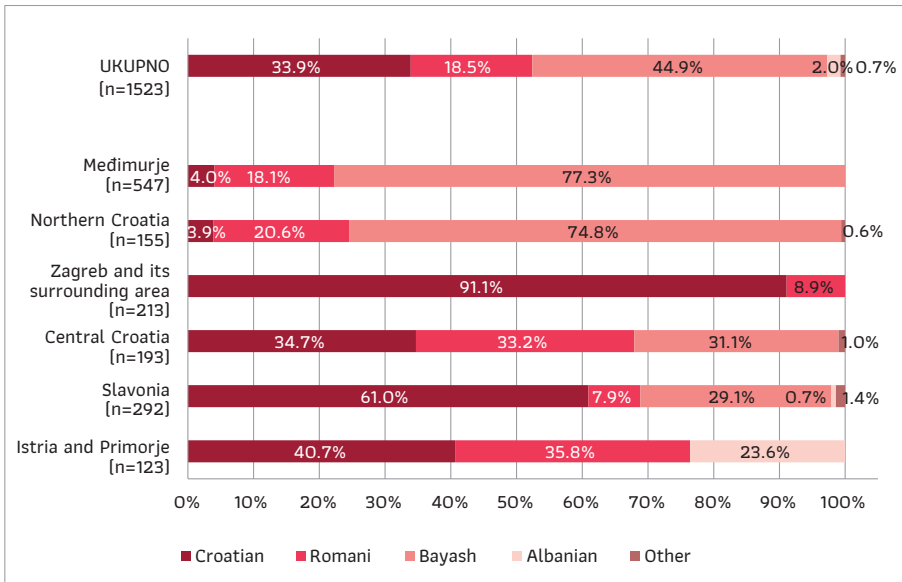
Looking at the regional representation of certain languages and dialects, except for the Croatian language spoken by almost all members of the RNM in all localities, there is a statistically significant connection between regions and languages, i.e. dialects, in the remaining dialects. When it comes to the Romani language and dialects of Romani, the largest representation is in Zagreb and its surroundings and in Istria and Primorje, where the entire population lives in areas or localities where, in addition to the Croatian language, Romani is most represented. Romani is spoken in all 17 localities in the City of Zagreb and its surrounding area, and in 15 localities in Istria and Primorje. On the other hand, Romani is spoken very little or not at all in localities in the Međimurje region and Northern Croatia. It is therefore understandable that statistical indicators show a high level of connection between the region and the language. In Central Croatia, as well as in Slavonia, Romani is used in slightly less than half of the researched localities. The connection is significant and strong when it comes to the regional representation of the Bayash dialects of the Romanian language. The situation here is almost inversely proportional, so it is obviously the most represented among the population living in the localities of the Međimurje region and the Northern Croatia region, and it is also very common in the localities in the Slavonia region. The same dialect is used very little or not at all among the Roma population living in the localities of Zagreb and its surrounding area, as well as Istria and Primorje. In Central Croatia, more than half [11] of the 21 researched localities are inhabited by a Roma population who speaks one of the Bayash Romanian dialects.

**GRAPH 2. The language most commonly spoken in households<sup>51</sup>**

Although the Croatian language is represented and known to almost all Roma who live in the surveyed localities, when it comes to the language most often spoken by Roma in the household, Bayash is most often used in mutual communication [44.9%], while a third of surveyed households [33.9%] usually speak Croatian. Romani is spoken in slightly less than a fifth of the surveyed households, while Albanian is spoken in 2% of households. It is evident that RNM members who speak Romani use their language less in the household than do the Roma who use the Bayash dialects of Romanian.

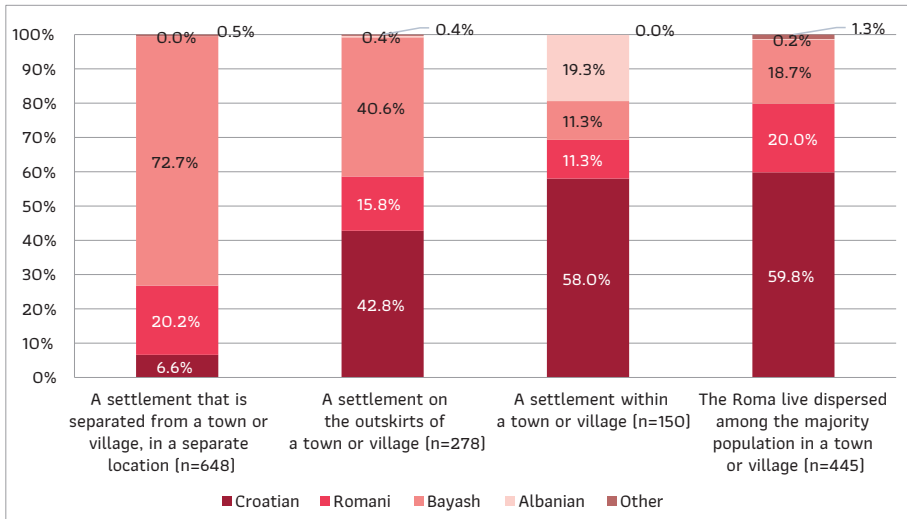
Among other languages spoken in the household, the Roma mentioned Muntenian, Serbian, Romanian and Ardelian. Although the data show that, in the so-called private sphere, Bayash is spoken most frequently and Romani less frequently, it is not negligible that one-third of the Roma mostly speak Croatian within their households, despite the fact that the vast majority of the Roma consider language to be a key component of Roma identity.

<sup>51</sup> The total number of households that answered this question was 1523.

**GRAPH 3.** The language most commonly spoken in the household according to region

Just like in the locality-level analysis, the household-level analysis found a link between the language and the region in which the Roma live.<sup>52</sup> Bayash is mostly spoken in Roma households in Međimurje and Northern Croatia. In Zagreb and its surrounding area, Croatian is the most widely spoken language in households, in as many as 91.1% of them. Croatian is also the most represented language in Slavonia [61.0%]. In Central Croatia, the Roma use Croatian, Romani and Bayash Romanian in their households in equal measure. Croatian is the most represented language in the households of Istria and Primorje. More than a third of households in this region use Romani in their communication with each other, and slightly less than a quarter of households in Istria and Primorje speak Albanian [most likely Ashkali].

52 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 1170.948$ ;  $df = 20$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.438$ .

**GRAPH 4. The language most commonly spoken in households according to the type of settlement**

A connection between the use of a particular language for conversation in the household and the type of settlement in which the Roma live has also been found.<sup>53</sup> As expected, the Croatian language is most prevalent in households that are dispersed among the majority population in towns or villages, and it is equally represented in Roma households within settlements or cities. In concentrated localities, which are separated from towns and villages, a certain Bayash dialect is most often spoken in households [72.7%]. In such localities, Croatian is spoken in very few households [6.6%]. In settlements on the outskirts of a town or village, an equal number of Roma households speak Croatian and Bayash Romanian.

### 3.1.4. Religion

The majority of the South Balkan Roma are of the Islamic faith, which has received the Roma in a much warmer fashion than the Christian countries because Islam does not discriminate on the grounds of ethnic origin. The Roma, however, were an exception in the Ottoman millet and tax system, positioned somewhere between “true” Muslims and the Christian rayah, separated from both, so that they managed to maintain their Indo-Aryan language well. They were protected as Muslims, and the negligent performance of religious duties was viewed with understanding, partly because other Muslims were reluctant to welcome Roma into their mosques.

53 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 736.773$ ; df = 12; p < 0.001; V = 0.402.



In Ottoman countries, most Roma became exemplary Muslims, and some Dervishi and Bektashi orders were particularly well received [Ivezić 2014].<sup>54</sup> Belonging to Islam saved a large part of the Bosnian Roma from extermination, where the Islamic community opposed the Ustaše raids on these pariahs as they were also Muslims. But often that did not help either. The Roma are always somehow on the edge: wherever they arrive, no one is looking forward to them – when they leave, no one misses them.

Roma Muslims are usually called Xorahané Romá [Horahane], i.e. Turkish Roma,<sup>55</sup> after the “Turkish” religion, as Islam, was called in the Balkans. This term is of obscure origin and may be related to the Iranian province of Khorasan [Horahan] through which the Roma probably passed on their way to Byzantium.

In the Balkans, religion affects ethnonyms, so that nationality and religion often overlap to the extent where they became one and the same. The Turks had a system that divided the population into Turks [Muslims] and rayah [non-Turks, non-Muslims], where it is irrelevant for Muslims whether they are Jews, Christians, Druze, etc. The basic division is based on the principle of “us” and “the others”. Today, relations are arranged somewhat differently, but the names also testify to a different situation. However, the basic idea of the division into “us” and “the others” has not completely disappeared. For the Roma, this is a constant principle. If you ask a Roma in Macedonia or southern Serbia what their religion is, you will often get the answer: Roma! The others are Christians [Macedonians], while the Roma are Muslims. According to their direct experience, religion and the people are the same. Although Muslims are Turks or Albanians in Skopje, this is in the same bloc in relation to Christians, but they are still gajos,<sup>56</sup> and Roma are Roma.

Precise data on the religion of Roma groups are not known, given that the Republic of Croatia does not keep special statistics on the religion of national minorities in its census, but only the total records of this criterion regardless of belonging or non-belonging to any national minority. In general, the Roma in the Republic of Croatia are divided according to their religion into believers of the Catholic, Islamic and Orthodox faiths. The largest Roma group in Croatia, Bayash, are mostly Catholics. A small number of them are of the Orthodox faith and live in Baranja and Slavonia, where they probably came from Serbia or even from the Vlach countries.<sup>57</sup>

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54 These are the Dervish Roma in Vodnjan, where they ended up when the Zagreb authorities evicted them prior to the 1987 Universiade. Apparently, they held that the world would not like a city with too many Roma. For more detail, see: Ivezić [2014].

55 Xorahané means “Turkish”, Xorahanó “Turkish person”.

56 Gajo means man, but non-Roma. The basis of Roma society is still a clear and strict division into “us” and “them”. “We” are the Roma (rom, the plural of Roma, meaning Rom, man and husband), and the others are called gajos. Every non-Roma is always a gajo anyway. The exact meaning depends on the context, which is usually unambiguous. The word gajo can also mean “peasant, citizen, boss, gentleman”, although this does not mean that the Roma consider gajos to be better than themselves. On the contrary, the notion of a gajo always contains a grain of irony and a more or less cordial distance. In the Roma world, the Roma come first.

57 They do not differ in name from their non-Roma neighbors, but their surnames often indicate Hungarian or Serbian origin. The personal names of the Roma always indicate a rapid adaptation of the Roma to the new environment.

**GRAPH 5.**  
The religion of most Roma in the locality according to region<sup>58</sup>



<sup>58</sup> In addition to the above categories, the "None" category was also offered as an answer and it was found that only 0.1% of Roma who live in localities in Zagreb and its surrounding area are not of any religious affiliation. The category "Other" was also offered, for which no answer was recorded in the localities, and the same goes for the category "Equally Catholic and Islamic". For the sake of clarity of the graphical representation, the three categories mentioned above have therefore been omitted.

The results of the research conducted in the localities show that the majority of RNM members [60.8%] are predominantly Catholic [Graph 5]. Slightly less than a quarter of the surveyed Roma, 22.6% to be precise, belong to the Islamic religion, and in 10.3% of cases the religion of the majority of Roma in the locality is Orthodox. In some localities, the Catholic and Orthodox faiths are equally represented, and 5.3% of RNM members live in such localities. Less than 1% of the Roma live in localities where the Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic faiths are equally represented. Regionally, it is evident that Roma who declare themselves to be Catholics live in Međimurje and Northern Croatia. In the two mentioned regions, one can speak of homogeneity in terms of religious affiliation since the informants in all localities of the two regions stated that those are exclusively Roma of the Catholic faith. Believers of the Islamic religion live predominantly in the localities of the City of Zagreb and its surrounding area, as well as Istria and Primorje. In Zagreb and its surrounding area, there are 96.1% of believers of the Islamic faith, and in Istria and Primorje this percentage is slightly lower, but still very high – 82.6%. In addition to believers of the Islamic faith, 17.4% of Roma who declare themselves as believers of the Catholic faith live in the localities of Istria and Primorje. In contrast to the four mentioned regions, in Central Croatia and Slavonia the Roma population is more heterogeneous in terms of religion. In Central Croatia, the religion of the majority of the Roma living in the localities of this region is Catholic. This is as much as 58.8% of the population, but members of the Catholic religion live “mixed” with Orthodox believers, i.e. 38.8% of the population of Central Croatia live in localities where the Catholic and Orthodox religions are equally represented. A small share of Roma in the localities of Central Croatia [3.3%] are Muslims. In the surveyed localities of the Slavonia region, the majority of the population [60.5%] are believers of the Orthodox faith, and the share [17.2%] of RNM members who declare themselves as Catholics is also not negligible.

### The possibility of institutional practice of religion

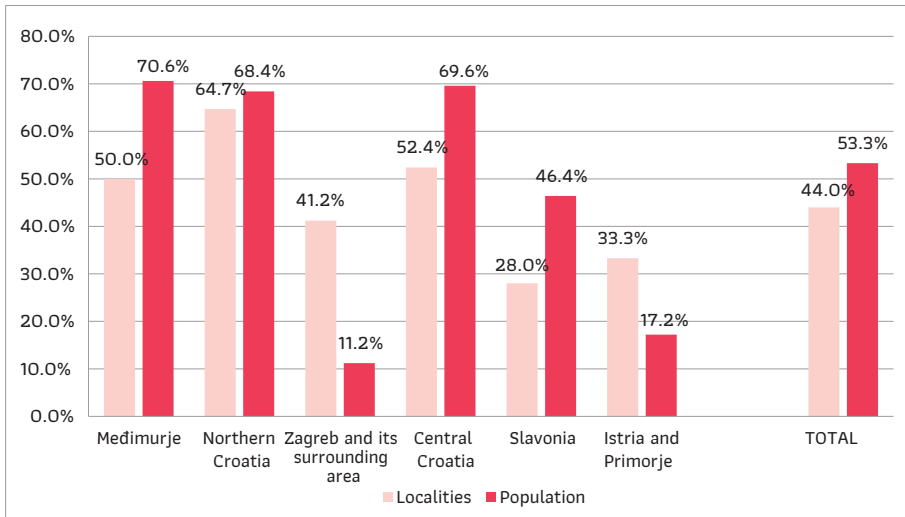
When it comes to the existence of religious facilities in which the Roma would have the opportunity to practice their religion, the data collected through the research here also indicate how much the infrastructure of Roma settlements lacks. If we take into account the entire surveyed Roma population in all localities, it is evident that slightly more than half of Roma [53.3%] live in localities where there is no possibility of institutional practice of religion, i.e. there is no facility intended for this purpose. If regional differences were viewed solely through the existence or non-existence of a religious facility in 109 surveyed localities, the correlation would not be statistically significant,<sup>59</sup> but if the total population living in 109 localities in six regions is taken into account, the differences are evident and statistically significant.<sup>60</sup> More precisely, there is no religious facility in 44%

59 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 7.105$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.213$ ;  $V = 0.255$ .

60 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 1208.610$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.465$ .

of the surveyed localities, and more than half of the Roma population covered by the research, i.e. 53.3%, live in these localities, 48 in total.

**GRAPH 6.** Share of localities and population where there is no religious facility according to region



Although most of the Roma included in the research belong to the Catholic faith, especially those who live in the Međimurje region, the practice of religion in a designated facility is not possible for as many as 70.6%, or for 1293 of 1831 members of the RNM in the localities of Međimurje. Looking at the level of localities, out of a total of 14, seven in the Međimurje region do not have a religious facility. In the regions of Northern and Central Croatia, the practice of religion in a religious facility is not possible for almost 70% of the population in the localities of these regions [Northern Croatia – 68.4% or 362 of 529 members of the RNM; Central Croatia – 69.6% or 361 of 519 members of the RNM].<sup>61</sup> When it comes to predominantly Catholic and Orthodox population, it is obvious that there are no Catholic and/or Orthodox churches in the localities of the three regions where the majority of the Roma population lives. In view of this, the existence of a statistically significant connection between the region in which the Roma live and the possibility of institutional practice of religion, i.e. the existence of a religious facility, was observed.<sup>62</sup> The results in the three mentioned regions [Međimurje, Northern Croatia and Central Croatia], and the results for the region of the City of Zagreb and its surrounding area, as well as Istria and Primorje, contribute the most to this significance.

61 Out of 17 localities in Northern Croatia, 11 of them do not have a religious facility, while 11 of the 21 localities in Central Croatia do not have the possibility of practicing religion in designated facilities.

62 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 1028.610$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.465$ .

**TABLE 6.** Share of the population living in localities where there is [no] religious facility according to the type of settlement

Type of settlement	Religious facility					
	does not exist		exists		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	1642	76.3%	509	23.7%	2151	100%
A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	570	71.6%	226	28.4%	796	100%
A settlement within a town or village	110	25.3%	324	74.7%	434	100%
The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village	211	15.3%	1164	84.7%	1375	100%
TOTAL	2533	53.3%	2223	46.7%	4756	100%

The possibility of practicing religion is not equal according to the type of settlement in which the Roma population lives either. The differences are significant and evidently the highest share of Roma who live among the majority population and those who live in settlements within a town or village have the possibility of institutional practice of religion, and the least possibility have the Roma who live concentrated in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location, as well as those who live on the outskirts of a town or village.

It is interesting to point out that in the case of Zagreb and its surrounding area,<sup>63</sup> as well as Istria and Primorje<sup>64</sup>, the share of the Roma population in localities where there is no religious facility is higher than in localities where there is a religious facility. If we take into account that in the two mentioned regions there are localities for which the informants stated that the Roma population of the Islamic religion predominantly lives in them, it is logical to conclude that there are no religious facilities in these two regions – there are a small number of Islamic centers and mosques – the result is quite understandable.<sup>65</sup> Regardless of the fact that a large share of the population of the two regions lives among the majority population and/or in settlements within towns and villages [see Table 6], most of them do not have the possibility of practicing religion in the religious facilities provided for that purpose.

63 Out of 17 localities in the region of Zagreb and its surroundings, 7 of them do not have a religious facility, and the share of the population that does not have a religious facility available is 11.2%, i.e. 75 out of 669 members of the RNM.

64 Out of 15 localities in the Istria and Primorje region, 5 of them do not have a religious facility available, and the share of the population living in these localities amounts to 17.2%, i.e. 70 out of 407.

65 Of course, the possibility of practicing religion exists in the private sphere, but also in the public sphere within the Medžlisi as local organizations of the Islamic community in Croatia and the Džemati as the smallest organizational units that exist in several cities and settlements in Croatia.

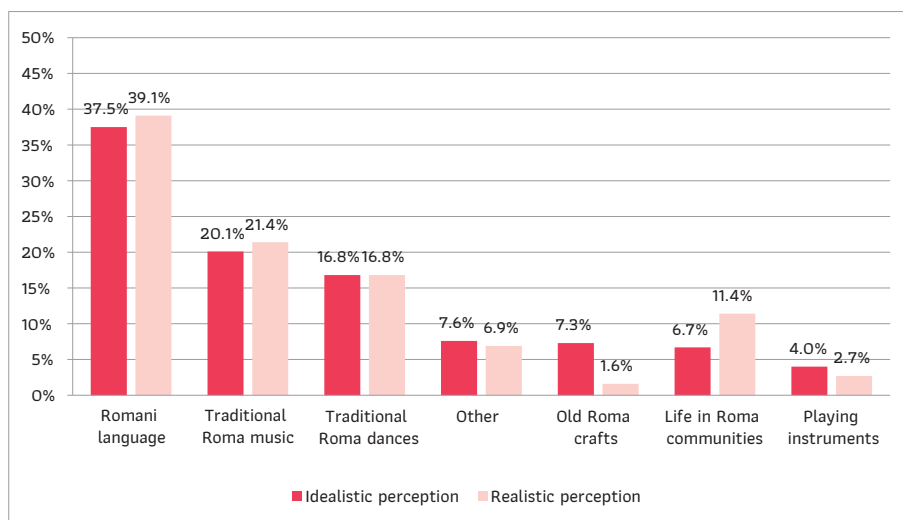
### 3.1.5. Norms and values of the Roma population and the recognizability of Roma culture

Anthropological, sociological and ethnographic research indicates the connection of Roma culture with the peoples of India. Many customs, beliefs, occupations, ways of earning a living and the social organization of the Roma can be convincingly linked to the various Indian social groups and relationships within them. But this is often a slippery slope because there are few anthropologists who know the Roma and Indian peoples equally well. And there is a great diversity among the Roma themselves: some groups have preserved many authentic Indian traditions, while others have been significantly assimilated into the environment in which they live.

It is sometimes difficult to single out specifically Indian elements from cultural phenomenon as a whole: what is Indian, for example, in Spanish flamenco or in Balkan Roma music? The Roma brought everything they gathered on the way to Spain and the Balkans: Indian, Iranian, Armenian, Greek and Turkish, in order to merge it creatively with the original local traditions in which the Roma inevitably participate. This cultural diffusion, as we can see, changed the Roma during their migrations, but also the surrounding cultures.

This diversity is mostly unknown to us in Croatia, and it is important for a better understanding of the Roma, where different groups differ significantly in customs, occupations, social organization, religion, values and language: and because Roma groups in Croatia come from different parts and they carry various traditions, and basic life happens within a wider family or native group and within the boundaries of the same language and dialect. Each group must therefore be interpreted separately, and we do not yet have enough research and data for this. Solidarity and uniqueness play a major role within Roma groups. The family is sacred, children are a blessing, and the elderly are respected. Also, people usually marry within the same group. Contact between the Bayash group and Romani-speaking Roma is minimal. Communities are clearly separated, they often face the same problems, but their cultures are very different. In many groups, there is an attachment to a certain activity or occupation, which seeks to draw boundaries towards other Roma, but also to ensure existence in the labor market.

The Roma group is closed and distrusts the gajos, and vice versa, if not even more so. This is also the reason, aside from attachment to traditional occupations and economic activity within families as economic communities, why Roma are often reluctant to educate their children: even when school is finished, there is no place for Roma because Gypsies remain Gypsies. The main feature of the Roma group is segregation, and it has its roots in Roma society, but mostly in rejection by the non-Roma community. The formula for success and taking a step forward has not yet been found, although there has been progress.

**GRAPH 7. Idealistic and realistic perception of Roma culture<sup>66</sup>**

The research results suggest that three elements of culture are especially important to the Roma – the Romani language, music and dances. Out of the surveyed 698, i.e. 728 members of the RNM, the largest percentage of them singles out exactly these three elements, and the ranking in the “idealistic” and “realistic” perception for these elements is identical and with almost identical percentages.

**TABLE 7. By which element of Roma culture and customs would you like the Roma to be most recognized in Croatia? [idealistic perception]**

Region	Elements of Roma culture						TOTAL	
	Traditional Roma dances		Traditional Roma music		Romani language			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Međimurje	29	14.9%	39	20.1%	126	64.9%	194	100%
Northern Croatia	4	6.5%	7	11.3%	51	82.3%	62	100%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	14	25.5%	26	47.3%	15	27.3%	55	100%
Central Croatia	35	47.9%	14	19.2%	24	32.9%	73	100%
Slavonia	23	23.5%	38	38.8%	37	37.8%	98	100%
Istria and Primorje	12	32.4%	16	43.2%	9	24.3%	37	100%

<sup>66</sup> The idealistic perception was observed through the question: By which element of Roma culture and customs would you like the Roma to be most recognized in Croatia? The realistic perception was observed through the question: What are the elements by which the culture and tradition of the Roma is most recognized today among the majority population in Croatia?

If only three key elements of Roma culture are taken into consideration according to the idealistic perception [language, music, dances], it can be found that some determinants of culture are more important in some regions. For example, in Međimurje, and especially in Northern Croatia, language is a key element of Roma culture by which Roma would like to be recognized by the majority population. In Central Croatia, it is traditional dances, and in Istria and Primorje, it is traditional Roma music.<sup>67</sup> It is particularly interesting to note the strong devotion to the mother tongue among the speakers of Bayash Romanian, as it is much more pronounced than among the speakers of the Romani language, where the process of language replacement has obviously already advanced. The term “Romani language” here obviously means “the language of [my] Roma” – in this case Bayash [Romanian], and not Romani, which no one speaks in Međimurje anyway.

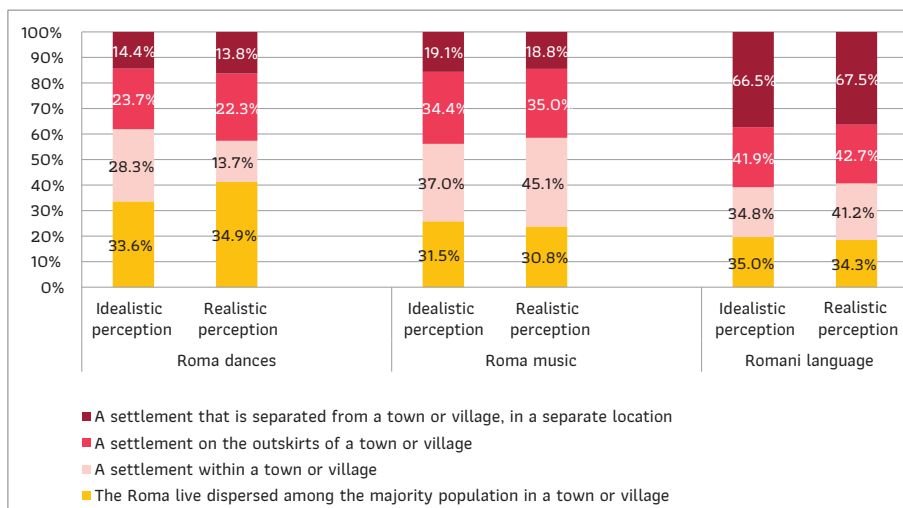
**TABLE 8.** What are the elements by which the culture and tradition of the Roma is most recognized today among the majority population in Croatia [realistic perception]

Region	Elements of Roma culture						TOTAL	
	Traditional Roma dances		Traditional Roma music		Romani language			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Međimurje	30	14.8%	32	15.8%	141	69.5%	203	100%
Northern Croatia	1	1.7%	9	15.3%	49	83.1%	59	100%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	34	39.5%	42	48.8%	10	11.6%	86	100%
Central Croatia	27	32.9%	18	22.0%	37	45.1%	82	100%
Slavonia	24	24.0%	35	35.0%	41	41.0%	100	100%
Istria and Primorje	6	18.2%	20	60.6%	7	21.2%	33	100%

As regards the question: “What are the elements by which the culture and tradition of the Roma is most recognized today among the majority population in Croatia?”, i.e. the part related to the realistic perception of Roma culture by the majority population, the results are very similar to those of the idealistic perception. This also shows how in some regions the Roma consider one element of their culture to be better perceived than the other two. In Međimurje and Northern Croatia it is the language, in Istria and Primorje and Zagreb and its surrounding area it is the music.

67 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 101.568$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.313$ .



**GRAPH 8. Idealistic and realistic perception of the three elements of Roma culture according to the type of settlement<sup>68</sup>**

According to the type of settlement in which the Roma live, their treatment of the importance of the perception of a particular element of Roma culture, both idealistic and realistic, is different. Language as a key cultural determinant of recognizability was mostly chosen by those Roma who live in concentrated settlements, primarily those in a settlement separated from a town or village, or on the outskirts of the city where the use of language is also more intensive. The Roma who live in settlements within a city largely feel that others need to recognize them and do recognize them through their traditional music, while for the Roma who live dispersed among the rest of the population, dance, music and language are equally important. This is probably due to the fact the original language is already retreating, so that other factors gain in importance, while the language loses its otherwise absolute predominance as an indicator of ethnic group identity.

Although at the declarative level the Roma consider it important to preserve the Roma tradition, i.e. elements of Roma culture, the data collected by qualitative research show that the activities which should be carried out with this objective in mind are insufficient. This is supported by the statements of some Roma representatives, as well as representatives of institutions and non-Roma figures, who say that little is being done to preserve the tradition.

*Cultural life is not very good because neither culture nor tradition is nurtured. They used to dig here those... They used to make toys, it's all gone today. Today, there are possibly one or two who know how to do it... [RNM representative, Međimurje region]*

<sup>68</sup> The total number of respondents [n] who answered the question about idealistic perception was 518, and about realistic perception 563. The number of responses is identical for all three elements.

*There is no preservation of tradition, culture, language, script, dance, costumes, objects originating from Roma history. No. [RNM representative, Zagreb and its surrounding area]*

One RNM representative said that in the absence of activities aimed at the Roma tradition, the Roma were “forced to take over [...] the social life of the majority population”.

*Social and cultural life is very bad. The fact is that there is simply nothing to preserve tradition, culture, or to play sports. I mean, it's very bad. To put it simply, as far as the Roma themselves are concerned, they are forced to adopt, in a way, to the social life of the majority population, if they can. And as for the Roma themselves, to organize something together, to participate in something together – that does not exist. [RNM representative, Central Croatia]*

### The importance of preserving the characteristics of Roma life

In order to determine which features of the Roma way of life members of the Roma minority consider important, the research examined the importance of six features of Roma life: Roma dances, Roma music, playing instruments, language, life in the Roma community and Roma crafts.

**TABLE 9.** The importance of preserving the characteristics of Roma life

How important is it for you to preserve the following features of the Roma way of life?						TOTAL		
	It is not important at all	It is mostly not important	It is neither important nor unimportant	It is mostly important	It is extremely important	n	%	average
	%	%	%	%	%			
Traditional Roma dances	15.0%	7.0%	13.3%	16.3%	48.4%	774	100%	3.76
Traditional Roma music	10.6%	6.2%	8.9%	15.7%	58.6%	775	100%	4.06
Playing instruments	13.0%	6.6%	10.0%	16.1%	54.3%	770	100%	3.92
Romani language	7.9%	2.3%	5.5%	15.5%	68.8%	775	100%	4.35
Life in the Roma community – to have Roma neighbours	17.2%	6.7%	15.1%	14.5%	46.5%	774	100%	3.66
Old Roma crafts	18.4%	8.0%	15.1%	12.8%	45.6%	748	100%	3.59

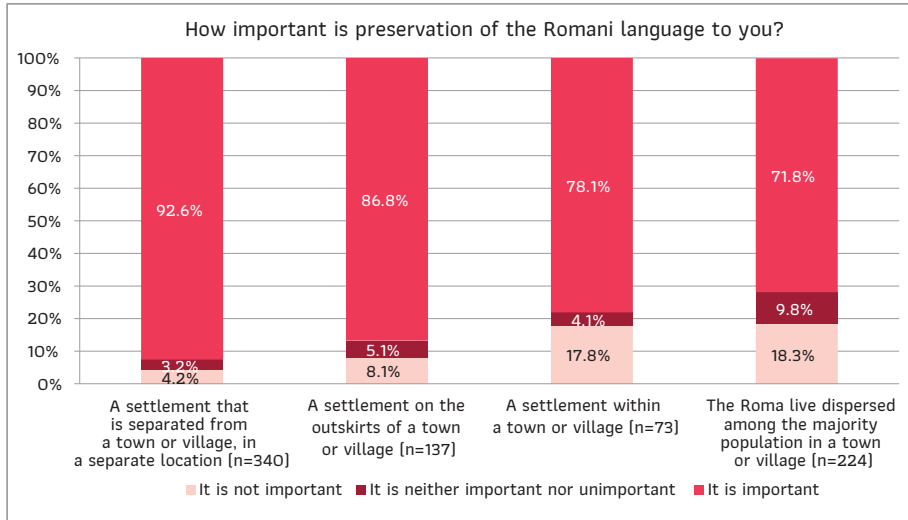
That Romani language and music are the most important elements of identity for most Roma is also shown by the fact that 84.3% of them say that preserving their language is mostly or extremely important for them, and two thirds of them [74.3%] believe that it is important to preserve Romani music. Interestingly, in this case, playing instruments is the third most important element of identity for the Roma, although in indicating the element by which they want to be recognized and by which they feel recognized by the majority population, traditional Roma dances were listed, after language and music. Meanwhile, playing instruments was emphasized by a very small number of RNM members.

**TABLE 10. The importance of preserving the Romani language according to region**

Region	How important is it for you to preserve the Romani language?										TOTAL	
	It is not important at all		It is mostly not important		It is neither important nor unimportant		It is mostly important		It is extremely important		n	%
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Međimurje	6	2.1%	5	1.7%	8	2.8%	40	13.9%	229	79.5%	288	100%
Northern Croatia	0	0.0%	2	2.7%	5	6.7%	21	28.0%	47	62.7%	75	100%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	27	25.7%	3	2.9%	13	12.4%	16	15.2%	46	43.8%	105	100%
Central Croatia	8	7.6%	7	6.7%	6	5.7%	22	21.0%	62	59.0%	105	100%
Slavonia	14	9.7%	1	0.7%	10	6.9%	17	11.8%	102	70.8%	144	100%
Istria and Primorje	6	10.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.7%	4	6.9%	47	81.0%	58	100%
TOTAL	61	7.9%	18	2.3%	43	5.5%	120	15.5%	533	68.8%	775	100%

Although language was always a key determinant of Roma culture for the vast majority of respondents, for a small proportion of respondents, about 10%, it was not such an important element. Differences in the average evaluation were also found between the regions: the respondents in the City of Zagreb and its surrounding area gave a statistically significantly lower rating when it came to assessing the importance of language preservation as a key feature of Roma life.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> ANOVA,  $F = 17,777$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; City of Zagreb and its surrounding area [average=3.49, sd=1.659]; Međimurje [average=4.67, sd=0.796]; Northern Croatia [average=4.51, sd=0.742]; Istria and Primorje [average=4.48, sd=1.246]; Slavonia [average=4.33, sd=1.257] and Central Croatia [average=4.17, sd=1.259].

**GRAPH 9.** The importance of preserving the features of the Romani language according to the type of settlement

In addition, the preservation of language is considered more important by Roma living in settlements separated from a town or village, or in separate concentrated localities, than by Roma living concentrated in a town or village or those who live dispersed among the majority population either in a town or in a village. A difference was also found between members of the RNM who live on the outskirts of a town or village and those who live dispersed among the majority population, for whom the importance of preserving the Romani language is the least important. However, it cannot be considered unimportant because on a scale of 1 to 5, the average rating was 3.92.

Another interesting finding is that the preservation of the Romani language is more important to those who work temporarily, occasionally or seasonally than to those who have a permanent job.<sup>70</sup> They probably spend more time in an environment where the language is spoken and its use feels more natural. Furthermore, those who perform permanent paid jobs in 68.8% of cases said that the preservation of the Romani language is important to them, those who perform temporary, occasional or seasonal jobs in 84.4% of cases emphasize the importance of preserving the Romani language, while 85.8% of those who never do paid jobs indicate the importance of preserving this feature of Roma culture. If the importance of preserving the Romani language in certain types of settlements inhabited by the Roma is taken into account, it is possible to see differences that are also statistically significant.<sup>71</sup>

70 ANOVA,  $F=5,146$ ;  $p < 0.007$ ; temporary, occasional or seasonal jobs (average=4.40,  $sd=1.171$ ); permanent job (average=3.74,  $sd=1.517$ ).

71 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 64.463$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.167$ .

For RNM members living in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location, language preservation is most important, and it is least important for those who live dispersed among the majority population. It is easily possible that a third hidden variable also intervenes here. These results regarding the type of paid work, as well those regarding the type of settlement in which the Roma live, affect their perception of the importance of preserving the Romani language. They suggest an understandable fact that “mixing” with the majority population weakens some identity features, even the fundamental ones such as language. Moreover, in its *Atlas of World Languages in Danger*, UNESCO points out that the Romani language in Croatia is “very endangered” [EP 2018: 2]<sup>72</sup>. The NRIS also states that previous surveys conducted among young Roma and their families have shown “a rather poor situation where this concerns knowledge and use of the Roma language in everyday life” and pointed to the fact that “some Roma communities in Croatia do not even speak the language of their forefathers and have no habit of using it, particularly in places where Roma families desire the quickest and least painful integration into Croatian society” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 92].

The results of binary logistic regression are slightly different, but here too the region proved to be a significant predictor for determining the importance of preserving the Romani language as one of the features of Roma life. In addition to the region, a number of other predictors were included in the regression model [type of settlement, age, i.e. age group to which the respondents belong, gender, literacy, level of education, employment status, i.e. form of paid work and socioeconomic status]. Besides the region, the age and gender of the respondents proved to be significant predictors. Assuming that all other variables included in the model are constant, the chances of respondents claiming that language preservation is important to them are 14.2 times higher in Northern Croatia than in Zagreb and its surrounding area.<sup>73</sup> The chance that in Međimurje members of the RNM will claim that it is important for them to preserve the language is 6.4 times higher than in Zagreb and its surrounding area.<sup>74</sup> In Istria and Primorje it is 5.3 times higher,<sup>75</sup> in Slavonia 3.8 times,<sup>76</sup> and in Central Croatia this chance is 2.7 times higher than in Zagreb and its surrounding area.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, older RNM members will be more likely to argue that the pres-

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72 It is stated that, besides Croatia, the Romani language is equally endangered in Bulgaria, while in Greece, Italy, France, Poland and Romania it is “definitely endangered” [EP 2018: 2]. But there are many “shades of gray” – it all depends on the specific location and relationship. The Romani language is more vulnerable due to its low status and limited scope than to the number of speakers. Moreover, languages other than Romani are rarely taken into account, and in our country, Bayash is certainly the subject of ethnic identification and an important part of Roma identity, and is passed on to new generations in a high percentage.

73 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.001$ .

74 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.009$ .

75 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.011$ .

76 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.010$ .

77 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.036$ .

ervation of the Romani language is important to them. The chances that those aged 30 to 55 will advocate the importance of preserving the language are 2.8 times higher than those of members of the RNM aged 14 to 29,<sup>78</sup> and the chances of those aged 56 or above claiming that preserving the Romani language is important are 4.2 times larger than in the youngest group, i.e. among those aged 14 to 29.<sup>79</sup> The chances that men, as opposed to women, will claim that preserving their language is important to them are 96% higher.<sup>80</sup> It is interesting to note that literacy and the level of education have not proven to be important predictors, nor has the type of settlement in which the Roma live. Therefore, there are great chances that the respondents will advocate the importance of preserving the Romani language as an important element of the Rom identity in all five regions except Zagreb, and the chance increases if older male members of the RNM are concerned. Although the type of settlement did not prove statistically significant in this analysis, it is quite obvious that language is more important in those regions where the Roma generally live concentrated and dislocated from the majority population, and the type of settlement is certainly an important predictor of understanding<sup>81</sup> not only this but also many other research results.

Conducted statistical univariate and multivariate analyses suggest that language undoubtedly remains a key determinant of Roma culture and an element of the identity that Roma hold most dear. This is confirmed by the open-ended question posed to the Roma who participated in the survey: “What is the most important element of Roma culture and customs for you personally?” Although a large number of respondents – 23.4%, i.e. 180 out of 770 – did not answer that question or said they did not know, most of those who answered again stated language as the element they personally consider most important. Nearly one third of the answers of those who answered the question [31.5%] mentioned language as the most important element. The second most commonly mentioned element is dance, followed by music. It is precisely these three elements that are singled out in the idealistic and realistic perception of Roma culture.

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78 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.003$ .

79 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.010$ .

80 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.030$ .

81 This is confirmed by the previously presented results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA), which showed that the preservation of language is considered more important by Roma living in a settlement separated from a town or village than the Roma living concentrated within a town or village, or those who live dispersed among the majority population, either in a town or in a village.

## Norms of the Roma population

Although the data show a low level of education among the Roma population<sup>82</sup> and a particularly low proportion of RNM members who completed secondary school [14.5%] or RNM members with higher education [0.4%] [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018: 87], for a vast majority of the Roma included in the research [88.6%], the most acceptable is the norm relating to the need for higher education of young people.

**TABLE 11. Norms of the Roma population**

Norms of the Roma population	Not acceptable at all	Partly acceptable	Acceptable	TOTAL	
				%	n
Young people enroll in universities.	5.2%	6.1%	88.6%	100%	765
A woman earns money.	9.5%	13.5%	77.0%	100%	778
Divorce due to the husband's physical violence against the wife.	17.0%	8.4%	74.7%	100%	766
Divorce due to the wife's physical violence against the husband.	20.8%	8.5%	70.7%	100%	765
Divorce due to wife's infidelity.	22.6%	13.0%	64.4%	100%	767
Divorce due to husband's infidelity.	23.0%	13.3%	63.7%	100%	768
A woman earns more than a man.	23.7%	15.9%	60.5%	100%	769
A woman with children has a job.	22.4%	17.5%	60.1%	100%	767
A couple lives together without getting married.	22.6%	19.3%	58.2%	100%	779
Divorce.	45.7%	19.8%	34.6%	100%	764
A boy of primary school age works.	67.0%	9.4%	23.6%	100%	764
A girl of primary school age works.	71.3%	8.5%	20.2%	100%	767
Parents arranging a marriage for their son.	75.4%	7.6%	17.0%	100%	772
Parents arranging a marriage for their daughter.	77.3%	6.3%	16.3%	100%	772
Not paying taxes.	72.7%	11.4%	15.9%	100%	747
Using government reliefs and benefits that one is not entitled to.	83.0%	8.4%	8.6%	100%	725
An official accepting a bribe.	90.0%	3.5%	6.5%	100%	749
A citizen offering a bribe.	90.5%	3.7%	5.8%	100%	754
Children begging.	97.3%	0.8%	1.9%	100%	779

<sup>82</sup> According to the most recent data, as many as 85% of RNM members over the age of 14 have completed only primary school, or even less [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018: 86].

Moreover, more than two thirds [77.0%] consider it acceptable for a woman to be the one who earns, although the data show that the share of employed Roma women is very low. There is a very high share of those members of the RNM who consider divorce acceptable in various cases, for example when the husband is physically violent towards the wife [74.7%], when the wife is physically violent towards the husband [70.7%], when the wife cheated on the husband [64.4%] and when the husband cheated on the wife [63.7%]. The Roma consider the following patterns of behaviour to be the least acceptable: when children beg, when bribes are given or accepted, or when government reliefs and benefits that one is not entitled to are being used. Statistically significant relationships between gender and acceptance or non-acceptance of certain social norms were found in six cases. More specifically, men to a greater extent accept the norm related to parents arranging a marriage for their daughter,<sup>83</sup> citizens offering bribes<sup>84</sup> and officials accepting bribes.<sup>85</sup> On the other hand, it is more acceptable for women when women earn more than men,<sup>86</sup> when women with children also have a job,<sup>87</sup> and they also find it a lot more acceptable to get a divorce when a woman is physically violent towards her husband than men do.<sup>88</sup>

Given the high share of members of the RNM leaving the education system, namely the part of primary education<sup>89</sup> that is compulsory according to the *Act on Primary and Secondary Education* (OG 07/17), a multivariate analysis was conducted to verify whether there are and what are the predictors by which it is possible to describe the group of Roma who consider it acceptable for male and female children of primary school age to work. For this purpose, a binary logistic regression was performed where the following variables are included in the model: region, type of settlement, age, gender, literacy, level of education, employment, i.e. the form of paid work that an individual performs or does not perform, and an indicator of socioeconomic status, i.e. total household income in the previous month. The region, type of settlement and level of education proved to be significant predictors in both cases. Assuming that all other variables in the model are constant, the chances that Roma from Northern Croatia will say that it is acceptable for them that a boy of primary school age works are 5.3 times higher, and that a girl of primary school works are 5 times higher than those of RNM members living in Central Croatia. Furthermore, the chances that Roma who live in settlements with-

83 T-test,  $t = 2.710$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

84 T-test,  $t = 2.303$ ,  $p < 0.03$ .

85 T-test,  $t = 3.186$ ,  $p < 0.03$ .

86 T-test,  $t = -2.124$ ,  $p < 0.04$ .

87 T-test,  $t = -3.392$ ,  $p < 0.02$ .

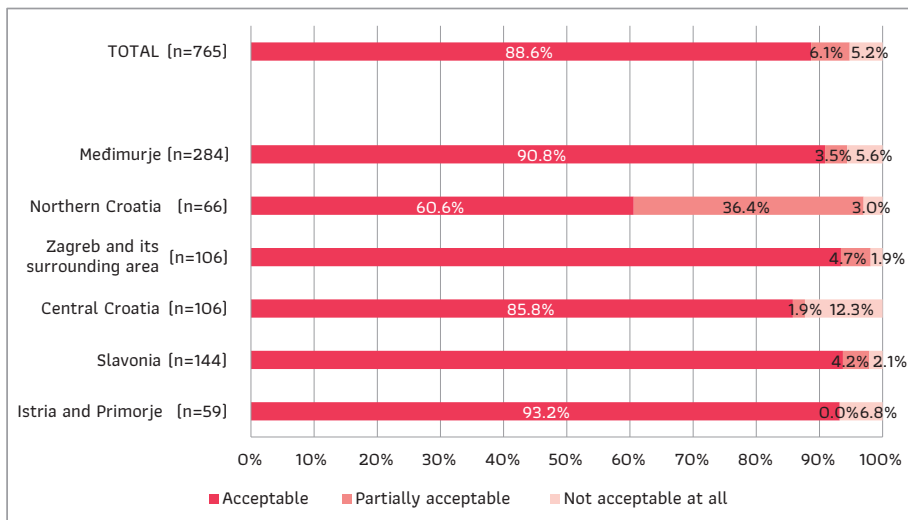
88 T-test,  $t = -2.349$ ,  $p < 0.02$ .

89 The results show that 38.3% of RNM members over the age of 16 have not completed primary school. 17.3% of them finished up to four grades, and 21.0% dropped out of school between the 5th and 7th grade. For more detail, see: Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić [2018: 87].



in a town or village find it acceptable for a boy of primary school age to work are 2.8 times higher than in dispersed settlements, i.e. where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village. The chances that Roma who live in a settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location consider it acceptable for a girl of primary school age to work are 2.8 times higher than those who live in dispersed settlements, i.e. where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population, either in a town or village. The third predictor that has proved to be significant was the level of education. Unlike those who have completed secondary school and above, the chances that Roma who are without education consider it acceptable for a boy of primary school age to work are 5.1 times higher, and for those who have not completed primary school 5.5 times higher. In contrast to those who have completed secondary school and above, the chances that Roma who have not completed primary school, as well as those who have completed primary school, consider it acceptable for a girl of primary school age to work are 3.4 times higher. In conclusion, it can be said that Roma in Northern Croatia, as well as those who live in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location, those on the outskirts of towns and villages and those with incomplete or only with completed primary school will consider it more acceptable for boys and girls of school age to work.

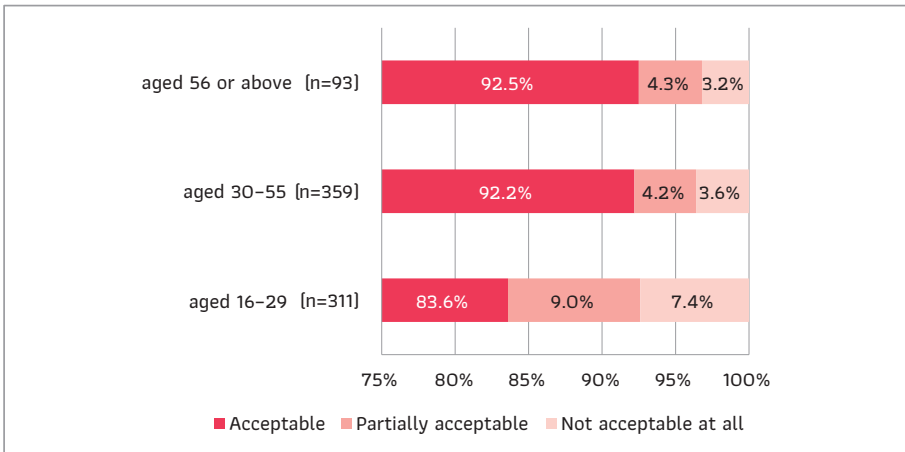
**GRAPH 10.** Acceptance of the norm related to higher education of young people according to region



Given that the 5th specific objective of the NRIS in the field of higher education was: “to increase the number of members of the Roma minority who enrol into higher education and those who complete higher education and continue to graduate studies by 2020” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 44], the

following results indicate some sociodemographic specifics related to the acceptability of the norm when it comes higher education of young Roma. Although at the normative level it is acceptable for the vast majority of Roma for young members of the RNM to enrol in universities, differences have been identified at the regional level,<sup>90</sup> where the Northern Croatia region stands out, with the highest percentage of those to whom this norm is only “partially acceptable”. There are more than a third of them [36.4%] in that region, so it is statistically significantly different from all the others, except for Central Croatia, which has the largest percentage of those for whom higher education of young Roma is not acceptable at all [12.3 %].

**GRAPH 11. Acceptance of the norm related to higher education of young people according to age**



The level of acceptability of the university enrollment norm is not marked by the type of settlement in which Roma live, but there is a certain difference between age groups. It is interesting to note that this norm is considered the least acceptable by the youngest respondents, i.e. those aged 16 to 19 who differ from the other two age groups. Although it is acceptable for the vast majority of young people for young members of the RNM to enrol in university, for 7.4% of them it is not acceptable, and for 9.0% it is only partially acceptable. It is interesting to note that all those Roma who stated that they had not earned any household income in the previous month pointed out that it was acceptable for them for young Roma to enrol in university. Regardless of whether they are doing some form of paid work or not doing any work at all, it is equally acceptable for Roma for young members of the RNM to enrol in university.

90 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 54.900$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

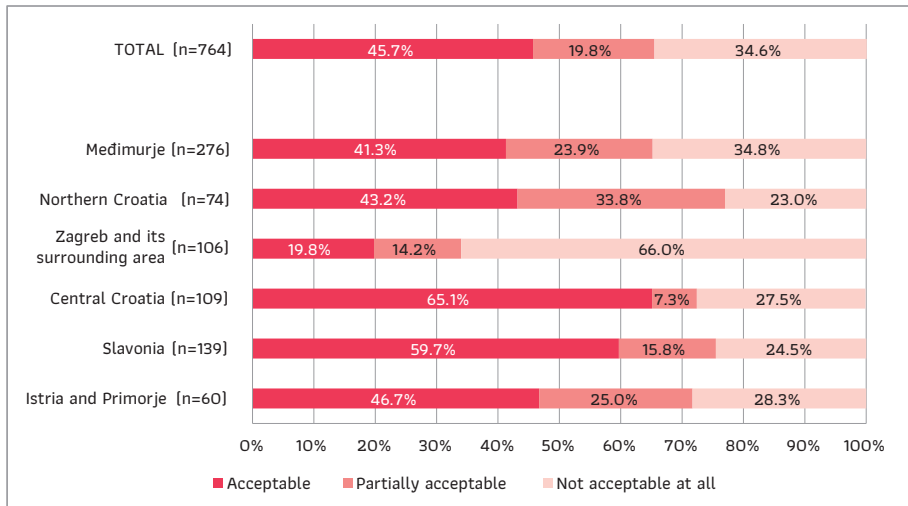
In order to identify whether there are significant predictors by which it is possible to determine the probability that certain groups of RNM members will to a greater or lesser extent accept the value of higher education, i.e. the importance of opportunities for young people to enrol in university, a binary logistic regression was performed. The following variables were included: region, type of settlement, age, gender, literacy, level of education, employment, i.e. the form of paid work that an individual performs or does not perform, and an indicator of socioeconomic status, i.e. total household income in the previous month. Only the region variable proved to be a significant predictor. Assuming that all other variables in the model are constant, the chances that Roma who live in the region of Zagreb and its surrounding area will find it acceptable for young people to enrol in university are 8.9 times higher than in the Northern Croatia region.<sup>91</sup> It is interesting to note that the odds ratio for accepting the value of higher education does not increase with a higher level of education, nor with higher income. When looking at the declarative level, it can be said that the majority of Roma equally, and mostly positively, perceive the importance of higher education. However, the reality shows something completely different: only 0.4% of members of the RNM have completed higher education [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018: 87].

In order to determine how the Roma population perceives some norms associated with liberal, modern values, the norm related to divorce was specifically considered. When it comes to the norm that presupposes the possibility of divorce, the results differ depending on the reasons for the divorce. Roma are declaratively largely permissive in the event that the reason for divorce is physical violence against a woman or violence by a woman against a man. For most Roma, infidelity, both by the husband or wife, is also an acceptable reason for divorce. That this is a declarative permissiveness is perhaps best shown by the result where divorce is acceptable for just over a third of Roma [34.6%], and not acceptable for 45.7% of them. Against this background, the following findings speak of the sociodemographic aspects of the (in)acceptance of divorce among the Roma population. Aspects such as age and gender are not important for the acceptance or non-acceptance of divorce in the Roma population, but considering the region in which the Roma live, there is a difference in the acceptance of the norm related to divorce.<sup>92</sup>

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91 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.029$ .

92 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 65.684$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

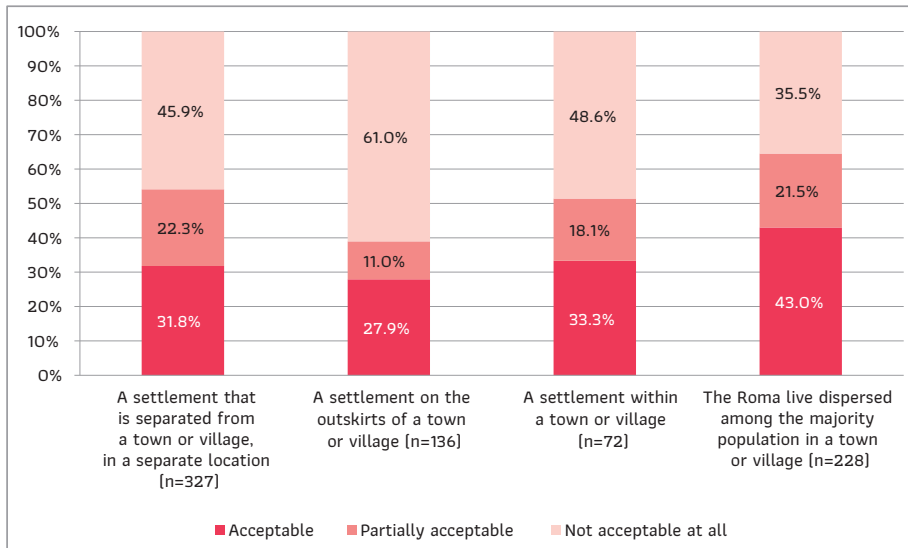
**GRAPH 12.** Acceptance of the norm related to divorce according to region

In Zagreb and its surrounding area, the level of acceptance of divorce is far higher than in other regions, since here as many as two thirds [66.0%] of respondents consider divorce acceptable. The lowest level of acceptance of this norm is found in Northern Croatia, Slavonia, but also in Central Croatia, where at the same time there is the highest number of those, as many as two thirds [65.1%], for whom divorce is not acceptable at all. Moreover, there is a difference in the acceptance of divorce with regard to the level of education of the Roma population. For more than half of those with no education [51.8%], as well as those who have not completed primary school [51.1%], divorce is not acceptable at all. Those who have completed school in 43.3% of cases consider divorce to be acceptable, and for 41.7% of those with completed secondary school or higher education divorce is acceptable. It is interesting to note that the permissiveness of the Roma towards divorce is different with regard to employment, i.e. the form of paid work they perform, as well as the type of settlement in which they live.<sup>93</sup> Roma who have a permanent job statistically accept divorce more than Roma who have temporary, occasional or seasonal jobs, as well as those who never do paid jobs. Also, there is a connection between socioeconomic status and acceptance of divorce. Those Roma whose households had higher incomes in the previous month,<sup>94</sup> i.e. those with incomes from HRK 7,500 to 12,000 and those with incomes higher than HRK 12,000, show greater acceptance of the divorce-related norm.<sup>95</sup>

93 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 12.109$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.003$ .

94 Socioeconomic status was checked through the income scale in the previous month, and the scale consisted of five classes: 1) no income; 2) HRK 1 – 1,500; 3) HRK 1,501 – 4,500; 4) HRK 4,501 – 7,501; 5) HRK 7,501 – 12,000; 6) more than HRK 12,000.

95 Kruskal-Wallis test  $\chi^2 = 20.136$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.002$ .

**GRAPH 13.** Acceptance of the norm related to divorce according to the type of settlement

When looking at the type of settlement in which the Roma live and the acceptance of the norm related to divorce, it can be found that Roma who live dispersed among the majority population, whether in urban or rural areas, accept divorce to a greater extent than those who live in concentrated settlements. At the attitude level, divorce is not acceptable for the vast majority [61.0%] of members of the RNM who live within towns or villages, but in concentrated areas.

### Values of the Roma population

In addition to the norms that are important to members of the RNM, efforts were made to detect the values to which the Roma attach greater importance. The NRIS also states that the Roma originated in a “cultural/civilizational sphere that is fundamentally different from that of Europe” and that they brought with them a system of values “in which Western materialism was not the supreme value” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 31]. Through coexistence with the majority population, they have obviously adopted some of their value orientations.



<sup>96</sup> The graph shows the extremely high importance of most values, so that the categories "it is mostly not important" and "it is not important at all", especially for some values, are not visible, and values lower than 3.0% are not shown numerically.

Money is thus one of the most important values for the Roma after family and health. Of course, these are values at the declarative level, but the results are certainly indicative. After these three values, education and faith in God are most important to RNM members. There is a significant difference by gender regarding only one value, which is the least important for all Roma, but not unimportant. This is physical activity, which is slightly more important to men than women. Statistically significant differences in the average importance of individual values with respect to age group were found in the following values: 1) education, which is least important for people over 56, and most important for people aged 30 to 55 and 2) faith in God, which is least important for young people between the ages of 16 and 29, and most important to those aged 56 and above. Although there is a high valuation of all these values, when regional characteristics are taken into account, it is still possible to establish a smaller but significant connection for all but three values – health, faith in God and education. When it comes to money, the connection between the importance of this value and the region in which the Roma live exists and it is most evident in the fact that in Zagreb and its surrounding area there are most of those to whom this value is not important. The results for faith are very similar, where again the majority of Roma for whom this value is not important live in Zagreb and its surrounding area. In Northern Croatia, most people do not care about privacy [21.1%] or a varied diet [21.2%]. Physical activity is not important for more than a third of respondents in Northern Croatia [36.9%] and in Zagreb and its surrounding area [36.3%].

### 3.2. Chapter summary

According to the latest comprehensive research on the Roma population, conducted in 2017, 22,486 members of the Roma national minority live in Croatia. This is a very heterogeneous population in terms of identity, which is also a characteristic of the Roma population in many other European countries. Bayash are the most numerous Roma group in Croatia [55.0%]. They predominantly live in the Medimurje region, where they make up 86.5% of the total Roma population in that region, and in Northern Croatia, where they make up 89.7% of Roma in that region. Heterogeneity is pronounced in the remaining regions, where no Roma group makes an absolute majority. Central Croatia is home to the largest group of Koritari in Croatia, who make up 5.9% of the total Roma population. Kaloperi make up a total of 4.1%, Ashkali 3%, Chergar 2.9%, Muntenians 1.9%, Lovari 1.5%. In addition to these groups, the Ludari group also lives in Croatia, as well as a group of those who only call themselves Roma, and others.

To a certain extent, there are Roma who do not know the determinants of their own identity, which is evident from the lack of knowledge about the group to which they belong. Just over 6% of respondents said they did not know which group they belonged to, and many said they were “just Roma”. Furthermore, they did not know their origins, i.e. the country from which they came to Croatia, since in more than a fifth of the localities the informants stated that they did not know the country from which the Roma who live in that locality came. The explanation for these data may be the same as for other peoples: that they do not care about various sub-ethnic divisions; they identify with the Roma people as a whole and these divisions are not relevant in a given population; the data are affected by lower education and unfamiliarity with the topic; or the typical Roma orientation towards here and now.

Almost all Roma in the Republic of Croatia know and speak Croatian, and of the Romani languages, the most common is the Bayash dialect of Romanian, which is mostly spoken in Međimurje and Northern Croatia, but also in most localities of Slavonia and Central Croatia. The second most common Roma language is Romani [Romaní Čhib], which is most often spoken in Zagreb and its surrounding area, as well as in Istria and Primorje. It is the Romani language that most members of the RNM point out as the most important element of Romani culture and a feature by which they want to be recognized by the majority people, although in the context of the research, the Bayash perceive their Romanian language as a feature of their Romani ethnic identity, which it objectively is, seen as it is one of the most important Roma languages in Croatia.

Considering other elements of Roma culture, apart from language, music and dances are emphasized. In Central Croatia, traditional dances are the most important, and in Istria and Primorje this is traditional Roma music. Although language is undoubtedly a key determinant of Roma culture and a component of identity, its preservation is not equally important to everyone. The preservation of the language is less important to the Roma in Zagreb and its surrounding area than to those in Northern Croatia and Međimurje. The Bayash are obviously much more attached to their language, which is a topic for more detailed research. Also, language is somewhat more important to older members of the Roma national minority than to younger age groups and to those who do not do permanent jobs. The results that suggest that the type of settlement in which Roma live, the type of work they perform, and in some cases their age have an impact on the perception of the importance of preserving the Romani language, indicate an understandable fact that “mixing” with the majority population weakens some identity features, even the fundamental ones such as language. This is certainly one of the key identity issues for the Roma community in Croatia, given that the NRIS has already warned that young Roma, especially in some areas, have little knowledge of or



rarely use the language of the Roma community in everyday life. That the Romani language in Croatia is “very endangered” was also pointed out in the UNESCO *Atlas of World Languages in Danger*. The Bayash language is completely neglected, and often ignored in the context of the Romanian language in general, indisputably because it is spoken by the Roma and not ethnic Romanians. Our research shows that Bayash Romanian is currently not endangered in terms of its survival, but this could happen if its domains of use and functions are not expanded.

When it comes to religious affiliation, the majority [60.8%] of RNM members live in localities that are predominantly Catholic. Just under a quarter of the surveyed Roma live in localities where Islam is predominant, and 10.3% of Roma live in localities where the Orthodox faith is most represented. Regionally, it is evident that Roma who declare themselves as Catholics live in Međimurje and Northern Croatia, and these are mostly Bayash and Lovari. Believers of the Islamic religion live predominantly in the localities of the City of Zagreb and its surroundings, as well as Istria and Primorje, and these are Roma and Ashkali immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Macedonia, who are speakers of Romani [and rarely Albanian]. In Central Croatia, the majority of the population is Catholic, but the share of Orthodox believers is not negligible. In Slavonia, the majority of the population lives in localities in which the majority of Roma declare themselves as believers of the Orthodox faith, and this also applies to the majority of Bayash and the majority of Vlach Roma, speakers of the Romani language [Leyash, Khanjari, etc.]. As far as the total population is concerned, more than half of Roma [53.3%] live in localities where there is no possibility of institutional practice of religion, i.e. there is no facility intended for this purpose, which indicates the lack of infrastructure in localities where Roma live. Unfortunately, the acceptance of Roma in non-Roma religious communities of the same religion has not been researched, as well as trans-confessionalism typical of the Roma: Islamic Roma often go to churches and celebrate religious holidays or perform some rituals, come to confession, communion and so on. The presence of some proselytizing Evangelical groups, otherwise very active among the Roma, has not been noticed in our country.

Generally accepted social values and norms are also highly acceptable among the Roma population. There are three values that the Roma singled out as the most important, namely family, health and money, followed by education and faith. The most acceptable norm speaks of the need for higher education of young people, and it is mostly accepted by Roma in Zagreb and its surrounding area, and the least by those in Northern Croatia. There is a very high share of those members of the RNM who consider divorce acceptable in different cases. The Roma consider the following patterns of behaviour to be the least acceptable: when children beg, when bribes are given or accepted, or when government reliefs and benefits that

one is not entitled to be being used. Although the norm related to higher education of young people is generally very acceptable to all Roma, it should be noted that for some Roma it is acceptable for boys and girls of school age to work. To a greater extent, this is acceptable to members of the RNM in Northern Croatia, those who live in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location, as well as those on the outskirts of towns and villages, and those with incomplete or completed primary school. It is precisely with these groups of people that targeted educational programs must be implemented to raise awareness of the importance of education at all levels, from kindergarten and preschool to university.

Based on all the above, one could get the impression that the Roma are extremely particular and divided into groups, which is true, and this is the reality of the Roma situation, but not only the Roma. In that sense, the Roma are a people like any other. But the Roma are also a very multilingual people, dialectally fragmented, religiously separated and nuanced in terms of region and origin, and at the same time different in their occupations. But so are other nations, of course in a different way.

It should also be understood that, as with Croats and other peoples, there is a clear hierarchy among Roma ethnonyms: they are all Croats, of course, but then there are various provincial and intra-provincial divisions and names for it, names for various religious and status groups, foreigners and so on. When we take this into account, there is no obstacle to looking at the Roma as a single group, although not unique, as no nation is. The Roma are, therefore, again, a people like any other. In conclusion, it can be said that the Roma are a European people of Indian origin and language [but also other languages], and often with a special socioeconomic status. The Roma should be seen as an ethnic, linguistic and social group. Each of these aspects has its own specifics, and taken together they give a relatively complete picture of the Roma population in general.



# 4.

## Social distance and inclusion in social life



# 4. Social distance and inclusion in social life

## 4.1. The position of members of the Roma national minority

It is a great sociological challenge to answer the question of why the Roma – like most other immigrant peoples – have not assimilated to the surrounding populations even after thousands of years of coexistence. The answers lie precisely in the sphere of sociology and anthropology, and are to a large extent related to Indian origin, i.e. inherited social values and views towards non-Roma, which the Roma want to preserve and pass on to new generations.

The second part of the answer should be sought in the attitude of European nations towards others as such, and especially towards the Roma. Roma are sometimes unwilling or unable to integrate into surrounding groups if they feel it would undermine their own social system and values. The Roma – like most other nations – want to remain exactly who they are, for which they often pay a high price. Sometimes the neighboring communities do not want or cannot accept them as they are, and often they do not even try to assimilate them. If they do assimilate them, then they are again marginalized and segregated. Assimilation does not mean acceptance but rejection of a foreign identity. And the Gypsy stigma remains.

Vanjić-Tanjić [2008: 15] also draws attention to the aforementioned stigma, stating that Roma, due to their darker skin color,<sup>97</sup> unknown language and different way of life, were generally not accepted as well-known and common compatriots, but were labeled as fraudsters, arsonists, thieves, disease carriers, and so on.<sup>98</sup>

Marginalization is most often present at the socioeconomic level, and resources are limited even in the richest societies and are distributed hierarchically, as well as by ethnic or national division. Considering that Roma are mostly “foreigners” everywhere, their capacity in relation to the overall “society” is very small, from

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97 Babić, I. [2004: 318] states that the distance towards the Roma population, among other things, is caused by their different physical appearance.

98 On the distance towards the Roma see: Zatreanu and Halwachs [2003], Liégeois [2009], Kupirović [2016], Hrvatić and Ivančić [2000], Hrvatić [2004] and Babić [2004].

which poverty and marginality are perpetuated like some “vicious circles of hell” [Đurić, 1987].

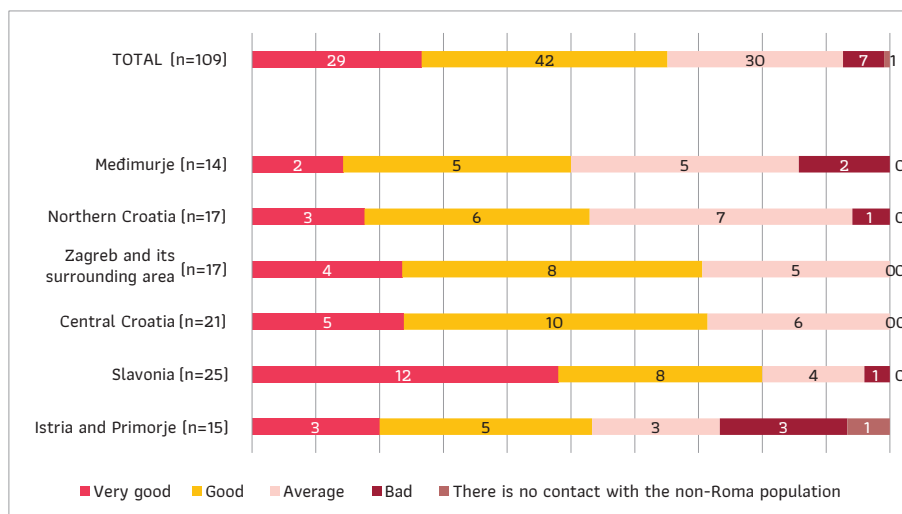
Štambuk [2000: 202] justifiably observes the causes of the marginal social and economic position of the Roma in Croatia through the characteristics of the Roma population on the one hand and the long-term inadequate attitude of the authorities in Croatia towards the Roma on the other. Of course, perceptions of others are created by the internalization of attitudes and opinions previously created in the public, and transferred through primary and secondary socialization.

The research on social distance towards Roma, conducted by Hrvatić among school children, showed “a low level of acceptance of elements of Roma culture [language, art, history, customs], as well as a large social distance towards Roma [modified Bogardus scale], which indicates the need for intercultural education for all students in Croatia” [Hrvatić 2004: 372]. Hrvatić emphasizes that the rights of national minorities in the early 21st century in the case of Roma were only “declaratively” realized in “political life, culture, media, publishing, use of language and writing, and especially in education” [Hrvatić 2004: 373]. As multiple reasons for this, he cites the following: large differences between certain Roma groups “in terms of language, socioeconomic and religious affiliation”, increasingly sedentary lifestyle, weakening of the traditional nomadic lifestyle which caused changes in the economic structure of certain tribal groups, and as a result “the need for some specifically Roma crafts, products and services ceases to exist [small blacksmithing, repairing cauldrons, making troughs, etc.]” [Hrvatić 2004: 373]. Roma thus lose their jobs, become increasingly impoverished and spatially stay out of city centers. At the same time, the process of assimilation binds all national minorities, including the Roma, with the improvement of living standards and change of occupation [certain groups], so that “Roma in cities [outside Roma settlements] almost completely lose their cultural national identity”, says Hrvatić [2004: 272]. As the original culture of their ancestral Indian homeland underwent various changes, the integrative elements of the culture weakened or were completely lost, and some Roma did not even want to identify with members of the Roma national community due to their suffering in the past.

### 4.1.1. Relationship between the Roma and non-Roma population

The relationships between the Roma and non-Roma population in 109 studied localities can generally be assessed as good or even very good, given the fact that informants in 65.1% of localities rated them as such. No significant statistical relationship was found between the region in which the locality is located and the assessment of the relationships within the population of the informed individuals at each locality.

**GRAPH 15.** Relationship of the Roma and non-Roma population in the localities according to region<sup>99</sup>



For only one locality in Istria and Primorje it was stated that there is no contact between the Roma and the rest of the population. The informants stated that the relationship was bad only in 6.4% of localities, i.e. a total of seven out of 109, and it is interesting to point out that out of seven localities for which relationship was defined as bad, three of them are in the region of Istria and Primorje. Relationships are of average quality in slightly more than a quarter of the surveyed localities, i.e. 30 out of 109. When asked to speak openly about concrete relationships and to clarify their assessments of the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma population, the informants most often stated that the cooperation was good and that there were no conflicts. For example, an informant from a locality in the Medimurje region states the following: “Good daily communication, successful integration in everyday life [kindergarten, school, shop, cafes, joint children’s birthday parties].” On the other hand, although in the minority, some informants

<sup>99</sup> The numerical indicators in the graph refer to the number of localities. Data were collected for a total of 109 localities. Considering the small number of localities according to type of settlement, the data in the graph are expressed in absolute amounts, not in percentages.

state that they still notice the distance of the majority population towards the Roma population, which, in their opinion, stems from prejudices and stereotypes. An informant in another locality in the same region [Medimurje] states that there is “prejudice that Roma are lazy, but they would work if given the chance, instead they are kept on 400 kuna of social welfare.”

In general, it can be said that Roma perceive their own relationship with the majority population as good in all regions. Examples in which this relationship was characterized as bad or where there was no contact at all with the non-Roma population were identified in 15 of the 109 localities. They account for 13.7% of localities, which is not a negligible share. Prejudices and stereotypes certainly affect the relationships of various groups and communities, including the Roma, with the majority population. One of the more recent examples, which was also very well covered by the media, is the one from June and July 2019, when the City of Zagreb decided to move 29 Roma families from the Plinarsko naselje locality to the Petruševac locality. This decision of the City provoked reactions and protests of the majority of the population of Petruševac, who most often justified their dissatisfaction in the media by arguing that the buildings they intended to relocate the Roma to were not residential, although some of them openly stated that they do not want Roma in that building due to their “Roma way of life”. It is interesting to note that part of the Roma population was not satisfied with the decision of the City, but the scenes broadcast by many media in Croatia indicate the many problems which the Roma communities face in Croatia – both infrastructure issues and issues regarding the relationship with the majority population.<sup>100</sup>

#### 4.1.2. Perception of one’s own community

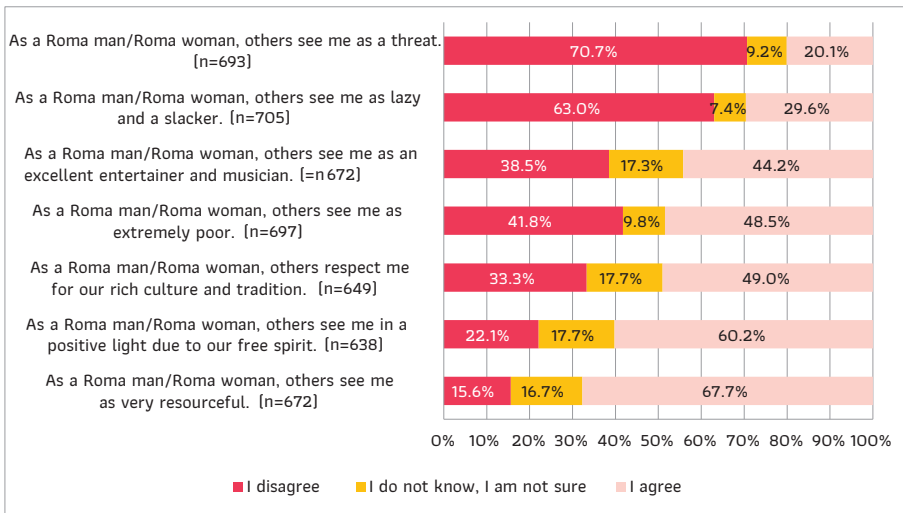
Asked how they think the Roma are seen by the majority population, of the seven options [statement] offered, those who answered the question largely agreed with the statement<sup>101</sup> that they as Roma are perceived as resourceful, as many as 67.7% of respondents. “Free spirit” was stated as the second most important feature by which the Roma believe that the majority people recognize them. On the other hand, the majority of respondents [70.7%] disagree with the statement that others perceive them as a threat.

100 The case of the relocation of Roma families to the Petruševac settlement was reported by most media in Croatia, including public television. More about the case: <https://vijesti.hrt.hr/523664/petrusevec-graa-ni-ne-daju-romima-da-se-usele> [Retrieved 10 November 2019]

101 The agreement scale had a total of 5 ratings [1 – I do not agree at all, 2 – I do not agree, 3 – I do not know/I am not sure, 4 – I agree and 5 – I completely agree]. For processing purposes, the first two categories were merged into one – “I disagree”, as well as the last two – into the category “I agree”. The middle category “I do not know/I’m not sure” remained unchanged. In the table, the variables are sorted according to the average agreement starting with the one with the highest average [the minimum rating is 1 and the maximum is 3], so the average values range from 1.49 to 2.52.

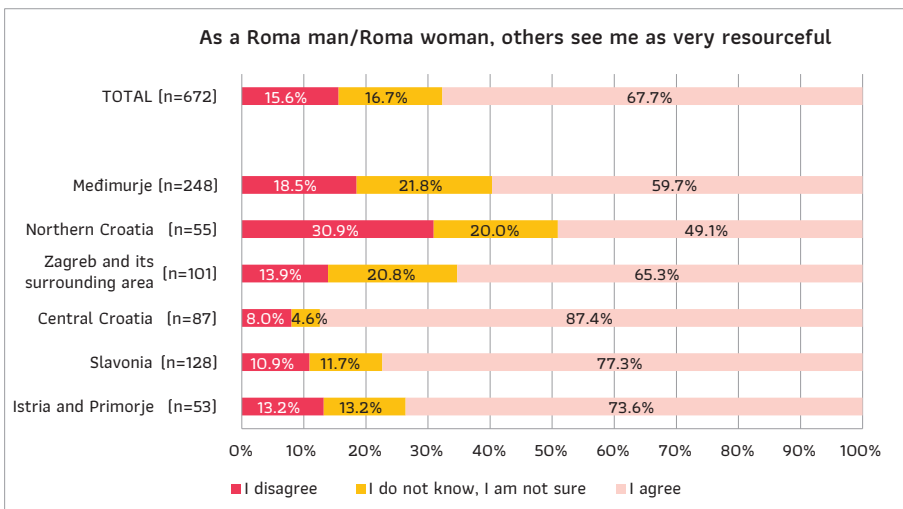


**GRAPH 16. Perception of one's own community among the majority population**



In most cases, the Roma do not agree that connotations of the Roma national minority are negative. This is supported by the fact that the second statement with which the Roma least agree is also the one in which their community is mentioned in a negative context. 20.1% of Roma agree with the statement “As a Roma man/ Roma woman, others perceive me as lazy and a slacker.” 63.1% of the 705 who answered the question disagree.

**GRAPH 17. Perception of one's own community by the majority population according to region [positive perception]**



For comparison at the regional level, two statements were taken – the one with which the respondents expressed the greatest agreement [“As a Roma man/Roma woman, others see me as very resourceful.”] and the one with which the Roma respondents agreed the least [“As a Roma man/Roma woman, others see me as a threat.”]. Regional differences proved to be significant in both cases. Analyzing the regional differences for the statement that indicates a positive perception of their own community among the majority population, it was noted that Roma in Central Croatia and Slavonia largely agree with the statement that the majority population perceives them as resourceful, while respondents in Međimurje and Northern Croatia agree the least, but even in these regions, the acceptance of this statement is very high.<sup>102</sup>

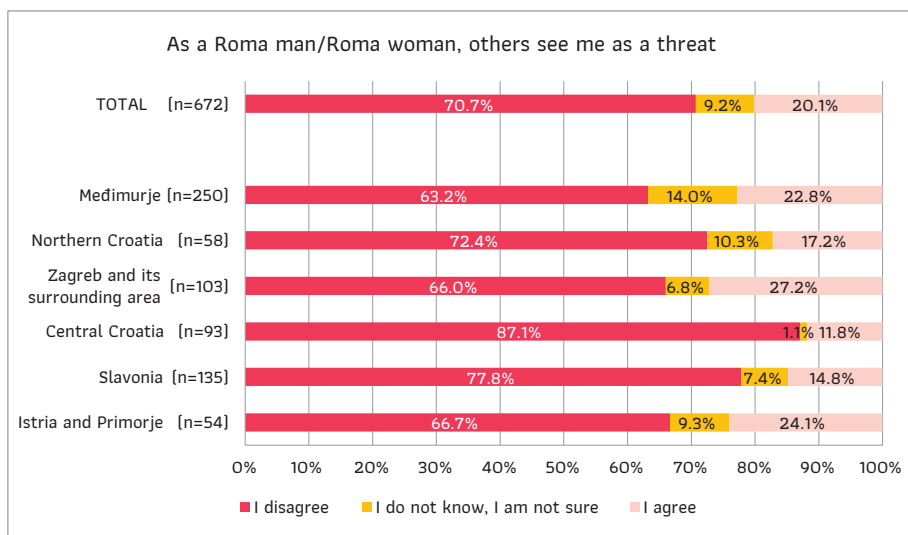
**TABLE 12.** Perception of one’s own community by the majority population according to the type of settlement [positive perception]

Type of settlement	As a Roma man/Roma woman, others see me as very resourceful									
	I disagree		I do not know, I am not sure		I agree		TOTAL			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	average	sd
A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	60	20.3%	60	20.3%	175	59.3%	295	100%	2.39	.804
A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	14	12.0%	13	11.1%	90	76.9%	117	100%	2.65	.686
A settlement within a town or village	6	10.5%	8	14.0%	43	75.4%	57	100%	2.65	.668
The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village	25	12.4%	31	15.3%	146	72.3%	202	100%	2.60	.700
TOTAL	105	15.6%	112	16.7%	454	67.7%	671	100%	2.52	.751

The difference in this statement was also determined with regard to the type of settlement in which the Roma live.<sup>103</sup> The smallest share of those who agree with the statement that as Roma they are perceived as very resourceful lives in concentrated settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location. That the perception of the majority population is positive towards the Roma is most agreed by those who live in concentrated localities either on the outskirts of towns and villages or within them.

102 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 36.750$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

103 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 17.512$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.002$ .

**GRAPH 18.** Perception of one's own community by the majority population according to region [negative perception]

When it comes to the statement that indicates negative connotations about the Roma population among the majority people, as pointed out earlier, the difference was determined according to region,<sup>104</sup> but not according to the type of settlement.<sup>105</sup> More specifically, members of the RNM who live in Central Croatia agree the least with the statement that the majority people perceive them as a threat, and in Zagreb and its surrounding area, Istria and Primorje, and Medimurje, the agreement with this statement is most pronounced. This result coincides with the finding of self-perception by the majority population, but the one that refers to positive aspects as it was the Roma from Central Croatia who mostly agreed with the statement that others see them as resourceful, which is a desirable [positive] characteristic for RNM members.

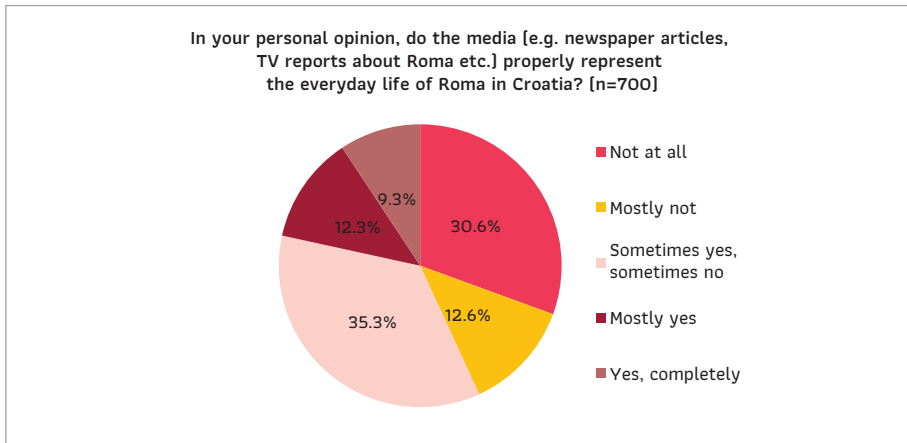
#### 4.1.3. Perception of media coverage

The above findings showed that members of the RNM consider that the majority of the population generally associates them with some positive characteristics, and less with negative ones. The research also sought to determine how Roma perceive media coverage of their own community, i.e. whether they believe that newspaper articles, television reports on Roma, etc., describe the everyday life of Roma in Croatia well.

104 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 21.501$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.002$ .

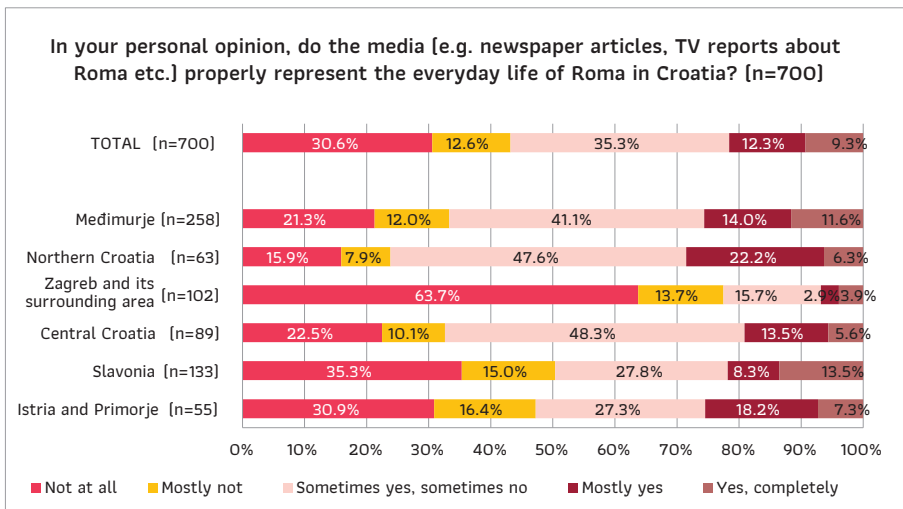
105 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 5.466$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = 0.141$ .

**GRAPH 19.** Perception of media coverage of the Roma



Of the 700 respondents who answered the question about the media presentation of the Roma, 43.2% of them believe that media coverage is not good, with the highest share of respondents [30.6%] believing that media coverage is “not good at all”, and 12,6% of them thinking that it is “not good”.<sup>106</sup> Slightly more than a fifth of respondents [21.6%] positively rate the media presentation of Roma everyday life.

**GRAPH 20.** Perception of media coverage of the Roma according to region

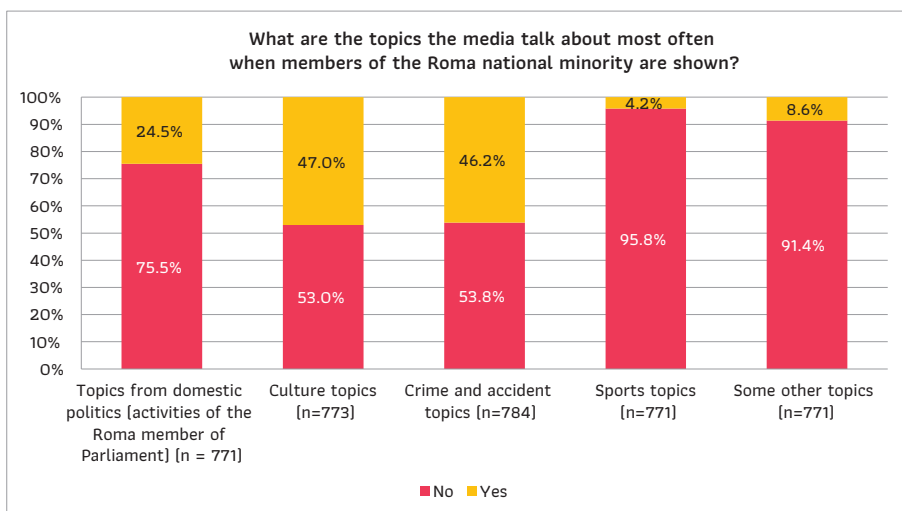


<sup>106</sup> The survey questionnaire did not assess media consumption at the household level, nor at the individual level. Consumption data are known only for the locality level, as the mapping phase looked at which types of media content the Roma consume most often. In almost all localities it was stated that television stations are followed, radio stations are listened to in 90.8% of localities, newspapers are read in 75.2% of localities, while the use of Internet portals is somewhat lower and Internet content is read in 69.7% of localities.

The way in which the Roma perceive their community in different media varies between regions.<sup>107</sup> In Northern Croatia, the rating of the media coverage of Roma everyday life is the highest, followed by Međimurje, while in Zagreb it is convincingly the lowest. In Slavonia too, more than half of the respondents do not view positively the media coverage of Roma everyday life.

The data indicate that the evaluation of media content that depicts Roma everyday life is also related to the type of settlement in which RNM members live.<sup>108</sup> Roma who live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village mostly do not assess the media coverage of Roma everyday life as good. In fact, as many as 45.9% of them think that the presentation is not good at all, and another 12.4% stated that the presentation is mostly not good. The best ratings for media content presenting Roma everyday life were given by those Roma who live in settlements within a town or village, given that more than a third of them, 34.4% to be exact, rate media coverage mostly or completely good. Both men and women give equal ratings to media content, and the difference between them is not statistically significant, nor is the difference between age groups.

**GRAPH 21.** Perception of media coverage of the Roma – the most common topics



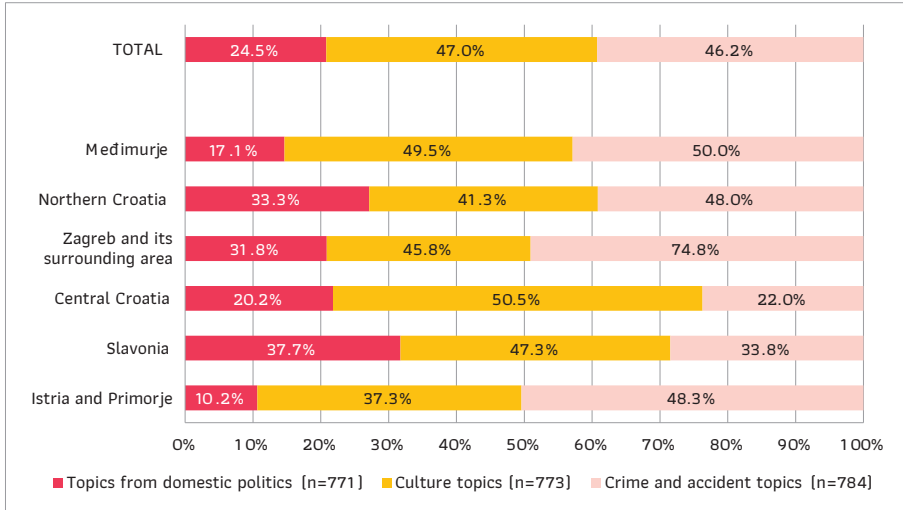
Respondents who answered the question about the most common topics discussed in the media about the Roma equally stated that these were topics from culture [47.0%] and crime and accident topics [46.2%]. According to RNM members, sports topics are the least represented in the media when it comes to Roma

107 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 69.571$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

108 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 49.586$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

everyday life, with only 4.2%. On the one hand, cultural topics can be viewed as those that speak in a positive light about members of the Roma national minority, while the topics of the crime report section portray Roma in a negative light. Precisely these two topics, as well as topics from domestic politics, i.e. those related to the activities of the Roma MP, were singled out in further analyses according to region, type of settlement and other sociodemographic characteristics.

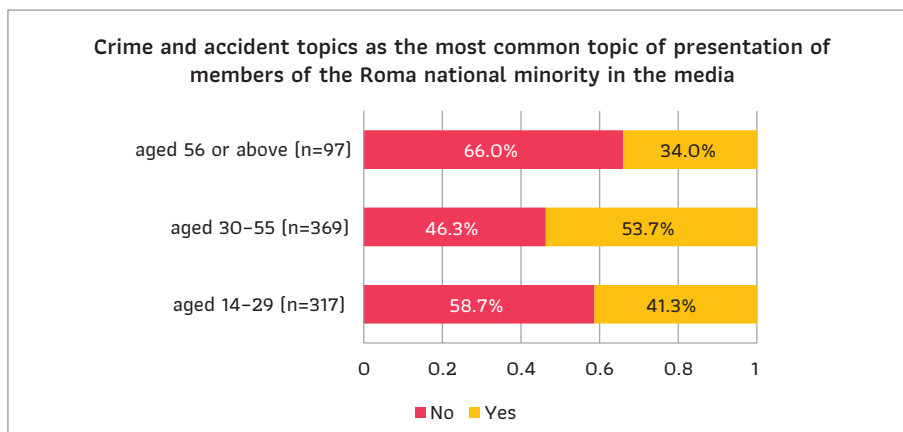
**GRAPH 22.** Perception of media coverage of the Roma – the most common topics according to region



Differences in the perception of the representation of Roma topics in the media according to region were found in the case of topics related to domestic politics<sup>109</sup>, i.e. the activities of the MPs, and crime and accident topics.<sup>110</sup> More specifically, in Istria and Primorje they believe the least that the Roma are portrayed through the topic of the activities of the MPs [10.2%], while in Slavonia 37.7% of respondents believe that this is a topic that represents members of the RNM in the media. RNM members living in Zagreb and its surrounding area, as many as 74.8% of them, hold that crime and accident topics are the contexts in which the Roma are most often mentioned, while those who agree the least with this statement come from Central Croatia [22.0%]. In contrast to the two mentioned topics, regional differences in the perception of the representation of the cultural topics are not statistically significant.

109 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 35.715$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001, V = 0.215.

110 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 71.639$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001, V = 0.302.

**GRAPH 23.** Perception of media coverage of the Roma according to age – crime and accident topics

Differences according to age are significant only when it comes to the perception of the media presentation of the Roma through crime and accident topics. That the Roma are represented in the media through crime and accident topics is mostly believed by respondents of middle age [aged 30 to 55], while this answer is least prevalent in the oldest age category. The perception of media coverage of Roma does not differ between men and women in any of the three singled out topics, and when it comes to employment and education, a connection has been established in some segments. The opinion that the Roma are presented in the media through crime and accident topics is equally held by those who perform permanent work and those who do temporary, occasional or seasonal work. Those who never do paid work mostly [60.2%] claim that the Roma are not presented through crime and accident topics.<sup>111</sup> When it comes to the educational status of members of the RNM and their perception of media coverage of the Roma, a significant connection was found for two of the three analyzed topics – topics from culture and crime and accident topics. By making comparisons according to educational status, it is evident that the most educated Roma, i.e. those who have completed secondary school or college, are more likely to claim that members of the RNM are presented in the media through crime and accident topics, as opposed to those without education, those who have not completed school or have completed only primary school.<sup>112</sup> Members of the RNM who are without education or who have never completed primary education consider that the Roma are represented in the media through cultural topics slightly less than those who have completed primary, secondary or higher education.<sup>113</sup>

111 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 13.651$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.141$ .

112 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 19.512$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.158$ .

113 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 10.822$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.005$ ,  $V = 0.119$ .

## 4.2. Political participation

In the part related to inclusion in social and political life, the NRIS states as a general goal that it is necessary to “empower members of the Roma national minority to participate in social, cultural and public life, in order to bridge the gap between members of the Roma minority and the rest of the population” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 105]. One of the important elements for achieving this goal is certainly the political participation of members of the RNM. One of the specific objectives in this area is to raise the level of inclusion of the Roma minority, with particular emphasis on women, in the public and political life of local communities [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2019: 37]. The political participation of members of the Roma national minority can be observed from two aspects – through representation at the local, county and national levels on the one hand and through the political activity of all members of the RNM on the other. *The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities* [OG 93/11] ensures members of national minorities the right to be represented in the Croatian Parliament, and the *Act on Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament* [OG 98/19] ensures members of national minorities the right to elect eight representatives to Parliament, which is a peculiarity of the Croatian parliamentary system. The Roma are thus represented through their member of parliament.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, participation in representative bodies is ensured at the local and county levels through councils and representatives of national minorities and is laid down in Article 7 of the *Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities* [OG 93/11]. According to the results of the 2017 GAP analysis, the councils and representatives of the Roma national minority were the least familiar with the legal framework of the CRNM institution of all surveyed minorities.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, members of the Roma national minority mostly addressed their councils and representatives for complaints relating to violations of minority rights [Karajić, Japec and Krivokuća 2017]. In addition to activities carried out through councils at the county, city and municipal levels and through the presidencies of the local committee, the Roma are also active in political life through their participation in electoral processes. Data on the latest voting results in the elections for council members and representatives of national minorities in local and regional self-government units,

114 This seat is guaranteed by Article 17 of the *Act on Election of the Representatives to the Croatian Parliament*, according to which members of 12 minorities [Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish] elect one member of Parliament together. Just like in the three previous parliaments, in the current, ninth Croatian parliament, which was constituted in October 2016, these 12 minorities are represented by a Roma representative. For more detail, see: *Act on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament*, OG 98/19]

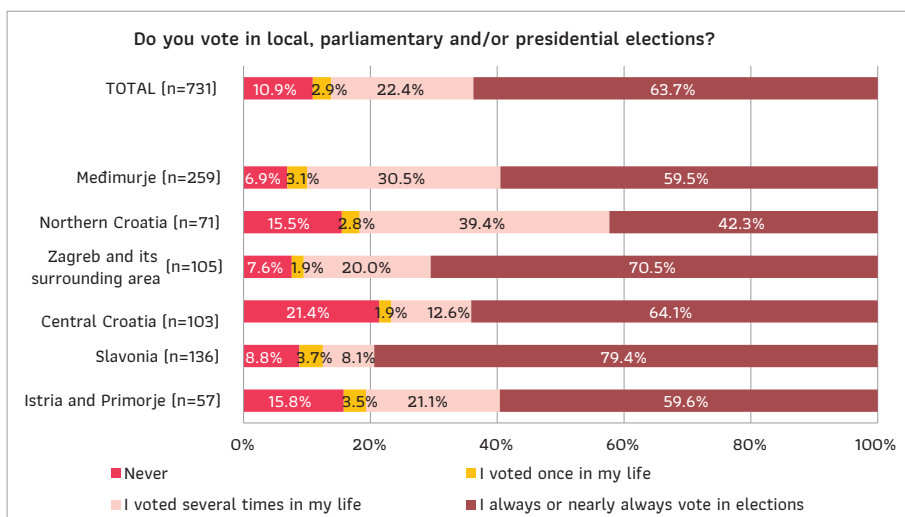
115 According to the results of the GAP analysis, in the councils of representatives of the Roma national minority the dominant groups were males [74%], persons over 50 [almost 60%], of higher and tertiary [48%] and secondary education [46%]. The younger population up to the age of 30 is remarkably under-represented [6%], and there was not a single female representative of the national Roma minority. For more detail, see: Karajić, Japec and Krivokuća 2017.



conducted on 5 and 19 May 2019, show that a total of 491 members of the Roma national minority councils were elected.<sup>116</sup>

The results of the baseline data study show that the share of Roma who vote in elections, regardless of whether it is a local, parliamentary or presidential election, is very high – as many as 63.7% of members of the RNM always or nearly always vote [Graph 24]. If we look at the whole of Croatia, it can be said that the Roma are above the average of the Republic of Croatia in terms of their participation in the electoral processes. For example, a total of 52.59% of voters<sup>117</sup> participated in the last [early] parliamentary elections held in September 2016 in the Republic of Croatia, while only 29.85% participated in the last elections, those for the European Parliament, held in May 2019.<sup>118</sup> Apart from the high share of Roma who always or nearly always vote in elections, slightly more than a fifth of them (22.4%) voted several times during their lifetime, while 2.8% of Roma only voted once. Of the 731 respondents over the age of 18 who answered the question, 80 of them, i.e. 10.9%, have never voted in elections.<sup>119</sup>

**GRAPH 24.** Political participation according to region



116 Turnout in the 2011 minority elections was 31.3% and at that time 314 members of the RNM council were elected, 38 of whom were women. Turnout in the 2015 minority elections was 33.9%, at which time 445 members of the RNM council were elected, 70 of whom were women.

117 State Election Commission, elections for members of the Croatian Parliament, 11 September 2016. More details at: <https://www.izbori.hr/arhiva-izbora/#/app/parlament-2016> [Retrieved 1 November 2019].

118 Results of the 2019 European elections. More details at: <https://izborni-rezultati.eu/> [Retrieved 1 November 2019].

119 Only those members of the RNM who are 18 years of age or older were taken into the analysis of political participation. Considering that local elections were held in the Republic of Croatia in May and June 2017, and the field research was conducted in October and November of the same year, there is a possibility that some respondents who did not have the right to participate in the elections, i.e. did not become adults before the first or second round of local elections (May and June 2017), were also taken into analysis. The assumption is that these participants did not answer the questions, and it was important to include all those who acquired the right to participate in the election process in 2017.

The share of voters according to region varies considerably in some cases, although the strength of this link is not strongly emphasized given that Roma are generally very active in the segment of political participation.<sup>120</sup> The highest share of Roma who have never voted in elections can be found in Central Croatia, and in Northern Croatia the smallest share of those who always or nearly always vote was present. High political participation of members of the RNM was mostly detected in Slavonia and the City of Zagreb and its surrounding area.

**TABLE 13.** Gender differences in the frequency of voting in elections according to age group

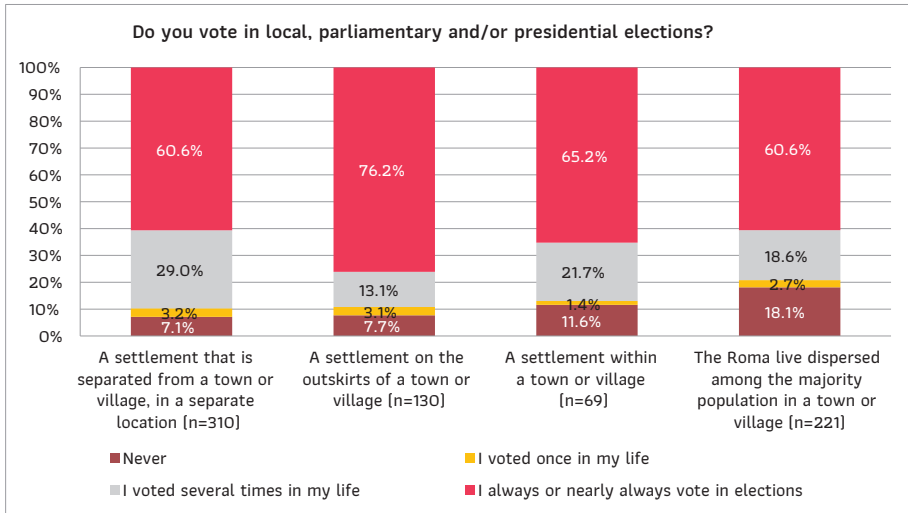
Do you vote in local, parliamentary and/or presidential elections?		Gender			
		Male		Female	
		n	%	n	%
aged 18–29	Never	14	11.3%	31	21.5%
	I voted once in my life	4	3.2%	13	9.0%
	I voted several times in my life	28	22.6%	29	20.1%
	I always or nearly always vote	78	62.9%	71	49.3%
	TOTAL	124	100.0%	144	100.0%
aged 30–55	Never	15	8.2%	17	9.3%
	I voted once in my life	2	1.1%	1	0.5%
	I voted several times in my life	37	20.1%	54	29.7%
	I always or nearly always vote	130	70.7%	110	60.4%
	TOTAL	184	100.0%	182	100.0%
aged 56+	Never	1	2.6%	2	3.4%
	I voted once in my life	1	2.6%	0	0.0%
	I voted several in my life	5	12.8%	11	19.0%
	I always or nearly always vote	32	82.1%	45	77.6%
	TOTAL	39	100.0%	58	100.0%

Looking at age groups, older Roma are the most politically active, and gender differences in the frequency of voting in elections were found only among young Roma men and women,<sup>121</sup> according to which young Roma men go to the polls more often than young Roma women. For example, 11.3% of young men and 22% of young women have never voted, while 63% of young men and 50% of young women vote regularly. On the other hand, no statistically significant differences in the frequency of voting in elections between men and women were found in the middle and older generation.

120 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 65.162$ ;  $df = 15$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.172$ .

121 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 10.097$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = 0.018$ ;  $V = 0.194$ .

**GRAPH 25. Political participation according to type of settlement**



Roma living in settlements on the outskirts of a town or village use their voting rights to the greatest extent. The highest share of members of the RNM who never vote in elections lives dispersed among the majority population, which is a logical finding given the previously presented data on total participation in the last few elections in the Republic of Croatia.

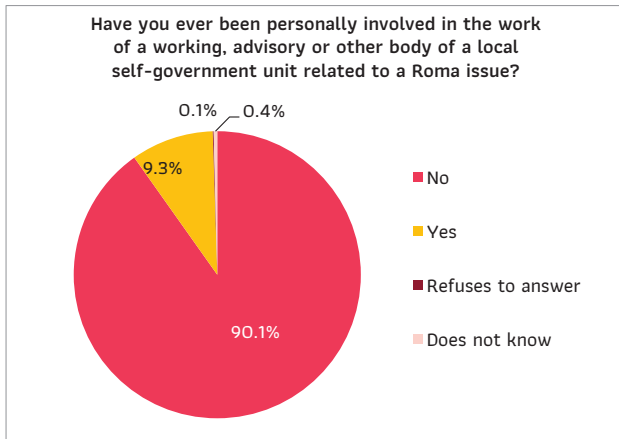
In terms of the relationship between political participation and socioeconomic status, which was assessed through the total household income in the previous month, no statistically significant difference was found. It is evident that those with the lowest incomes, i.e. those who stated that they had no income in the previous month,<sup>122</sup> use their voting rights the least, while the vast majority of those with the highest incomes state that they always or nearly always participate in election processes, i.e. go to the polls. On the other hand, regardless of what kind of work the Roma do or if they do not perform any paid work, the level of political participation is quite equal, i.e. very high. Regardless of whether they are literate or not, or whether they can read and write or not, Roma are equally politically active and equally involved in the electoral process as voters. The political participation of the Roma was described in an interesting way by some of the interviewees who participated in the research. One of the RNM representatives pointed out that the Roma must “dance” to the “politicians’ tune”, primarily because they are uneducated and thus, it is easier to influence them, manipulate them and use them as, as some participants in the research pointed out, a negative political factor, i.e. the “political machinery” that is being traded for political purposes.

122 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 24.417$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $p < 0.02$ ;  $V = 0.109$ .

So, [...] politics shape our future and our present ... [...] I don't know, or even to be a little arrogant, the master of life and death. Because politics is such and it all goes around, they call the shots, we must dance to their tune, and especially us Roma here who are uneducated, ignorant about it. Then they can easily run over us however they want. [RNM representative, Međimurje region]

You already know that they are a piece of political machinery that serves only to collect votes. I have no problem with that nor did I use their services in the elections because their representative is a very problematic person, at the level of our county, a man against whom charges have been filed for various things. [KNF, Northern Croatia region]

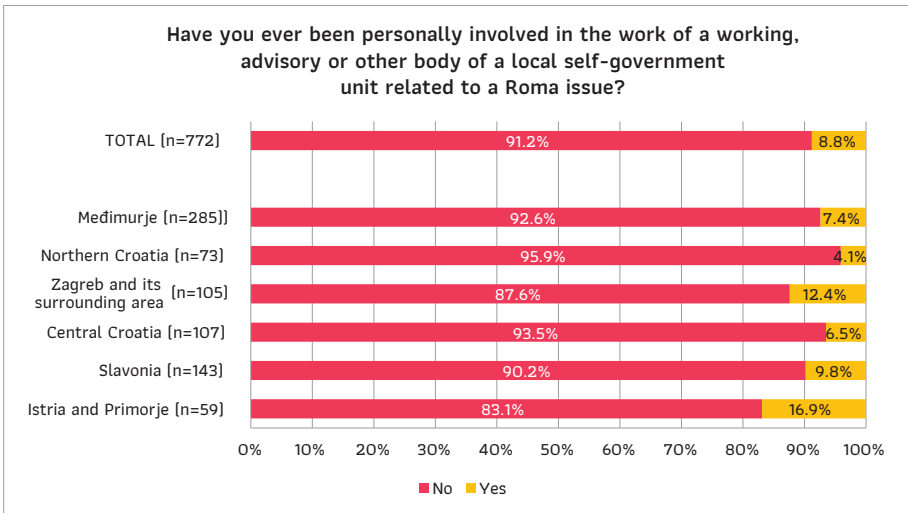
**GRAPH 26.** Political participation – involvement in the bodies of local, regional and regional self-government units



The high level of political participation among the Roma population is largely “reserved” for voting in elections, while the involvement in the work of different bodies of public, local and regional self-government units is very low. Of the 730 respondents aged 18 and over, three did not know how to comment on this type of political participation, while one respondent refused to answer the question. Less than 10% of members of the RNM participate in the work of different unit bodies at different levels. Regional differences have not been identified, which is to be expected given that the vast majority of Roma are not active in this form of political participation, but men are still more active than women.<sup>123</sup>

123 Fisher's Exact Test,  $p < 0.001$ .

**GRAPH 27.** Political participation – involvement in the bodies of local, regional and regional self-government units according to region



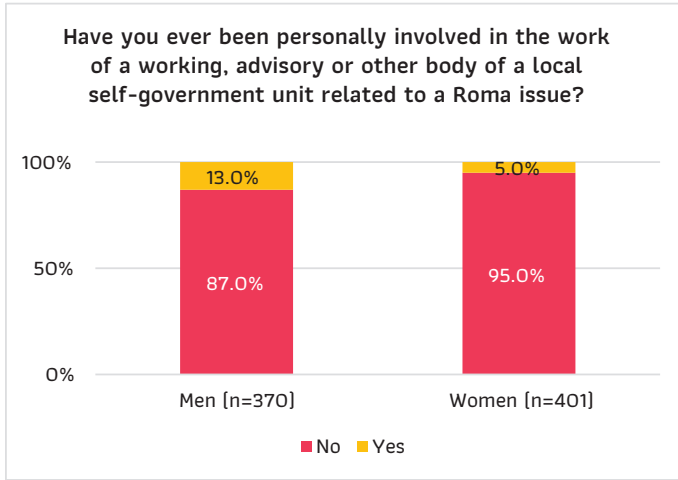
The findings of qualitative research from the Međimurje region also show that the views on political participation and the role of the Roma in local politics are quite contradictory. For example, the interviewed non-Roma figure emphasizes the positive role of the Roma representative and his political engagement:

*There is a representative of them in the Municipal Council, who has been elected (stated identity) and who is actively involved in issues not only related to the Roma but all the issues of the municipality. In my opinion, there are indications that more of them could be actively involved. After that, there is a local committee, which has six members. Two examples already. The president of the Roma Council, of their settlement, Mr (stated identity), he is with us in public works, he comes every day with ideas to do something. There is progress, unlike in previous years.” [KNF, Međimurje region]*

One of the representatives of the RNM pointed out that politics “means a lot” to him and that is why he got involved in politics and sees qualitative and quantitative changes in the field of Roma political engagement.

*At the political level, we monitor the situation in the country and work on improving the Roma. Today, the Roma follow politics well, very well, compared to 10 years ago... Let’s say that about 15% of the Roma are active. [RNM representative, Međimurje region]*

**GRAPH 28.** Political participation – involvement in the bodies of local, regional and regional self-government units according to gender



The question “Have you ever been personally involved in the work of a working, advisory or other body of a local self-government unit related to a Roma issue?” was answered by 370 men, of which 13.0% answered in the affirmative, while the share of women was statistically significantly smaller. More specifically, out of 401 that answered the question, only 5.0% stated that they were part of the above-mentioned working bodies. Although the difference is statistically significant, it should be said that, in general, the share of members of the RNM who participate in the work of advisory or other local self-government bodies in resolving Roma issues is very small, regardless of whether they are women or men.

It is interesting to note that of the three age groups [18 to 29, 30 to 56 and 56 and older], young people are the least active. Only 4.9% of surveyed young Roma men and women aged 18 to 29 participate in the work of these bodies. Regardless of the type of settlement in which the members of the RNM live, participation in the work of local and regional self-government units is very low and does not vary if they live in concentrated settlements separated from a town or village, in concentrated settlements on the outskirts of a town or village, within a town or village, or dispersed among the majority population. Also, literate Roma, i.e. those who can read and write, participate to a greater extent in the work of various bodies at the level of units of either local or regional self-government.<sup>124</sup> It is interesting to note that negative comments on Roma political activity are very often associated with the fact of the low level of education of the entire Roma population, especially those who politically represent the Roma. Such comments mostly come from RNM members.

124 Fisher's Exact Test,  $p < 0.001$ .

*Politics is a disaster for the Roma, it is a natural disaster. The problem is not that the Roma are involved in politics, but that illiterate people, paid to do so, are involved in politics. They do not want to engage in politics, they are paid to destroy our people. [RNM representative, Međimurje region]*

*Politics, for us, is murder. For the Roma politics is murder. Why? A great hatred is created between. Now they all act like some sort of politicians, but they are clueless. The Roma are being exploited for political purposes. They are put on lists and so on and so forth, and they have no idea that they need to do something, that they need to take care of their people. It only matters that they are on the list and the story is over. Will he get a crate of beer, no, I don't know. Will he get a thousand kuna a year, no, I don't know that either, but he's in politics and then they provoke each other, that's awful, that's awful. Politics is not for us who don't have an academic education. For politics, a politician needs to know the essence, he needs to know the document. Our Roma, 99% in the whole of Croatia do not know that there are 4 strategic documents, not to mention. [RNM representative, Slavonia region]*

In order to determine whether there are significant predictors of RNM activities in working, advisory or other bodies of local self-government units related to some Roma issues, a binary logistic regression was performed. The following variables were included in the model: region, type of settlement, age, gender, literacy, level of education, employment, i.e. the form of paid work that an individual performs or does not perform, and an indicator of socioeconomic status, i.e. the total household income in the previous month. Significant predictors were: gender, age, level of education and socioeconomic status, i.e. household income in the previous month. Assuming that all other model variables are constant, the chance of participating in such bodies is 2.6 times higher for men than for women.<sup>125</sup> The older Roma group, i.e. those over 56 years of age, are much more likely to participate in working bodies. For example, members of the RNM aged 30 to 55 are 4.8 times less likely,<sup>126</sup> and those aged 14 to 29 even 20.1 times less likely<sup>127</sup> to participate in working, advisory or other bodies of local self-government units related to some Roma issues than the oldest Roma group, i.e. those aged 56 or above. Unlike those who have not completed primary school, those who do attend school are 5.3 times more likely to be part of a body of a local self-government unit dealing with some Roma issues.<sup>128</sup> Those who have completed primary school are 4.2 times more likely,<sup>129</sup> while those who have completed secondary school or higher are as

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125 Level of statistical significance -  $p=0.01$ .

126 Level of statistical significance -  $p<0.001$ .

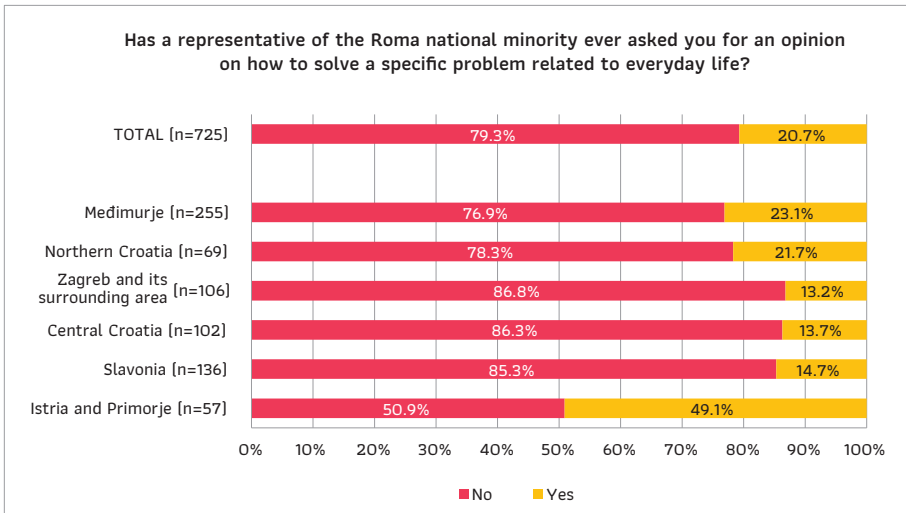
127 Level of statistical significance -  $p<0.001$ .

128 Level of statistical significance -  $p=0.016$ .

129 Level of statistical significance -  $p<0.002$ .

much as 12.5 times more likely to do so than those who have not completed secondary school<sup>130</sup>. In addition, those with the highest household incomes are 19.8 times more likely than those with no income at all to be active in various working, advisory or other bodies of local self-government units dealing with some Roma issues.<sup>131</sup> This finding is interesting as it shows that the differences, i.e. the likelihood of participating in different working bodies for RNM members with lower incomes is not significant and that it does become significant, i.e. very high only for those RNM members whose households have the highest monthly incomes. Finally, it should be noted that the likelihood of involvement in the work of a working, advisory or other body of local self-government units related to Roma issues is not affected by the region or the type of settlement in which RNM members live.

**GRAPH 29.** Cooperation of RNM representatives with the local population according to region



As regards the cooperation of representatives of the Roma national minority with the Roma population, respondents were also asked whether they were ever asked for their opinion on how to solve a problem related to their daily lives. Out of a total of 725 respondents aged 18 and over, 150 of them, i.e. 20.7%, stated that they were asked for their opinion. Regional differences proved significant in this case.<sup>132</sup> In most cases, RNM members who live in Istria and Primorje were asked for their opinion and solution to a specific problem, since almost half of the respondents from that region [49.1%] answered the following question in the affirmative: “Has a representative of the Roma national minority ever asked you for an opinion on

130 Level of statistical significance -  $p < 0.001$ .

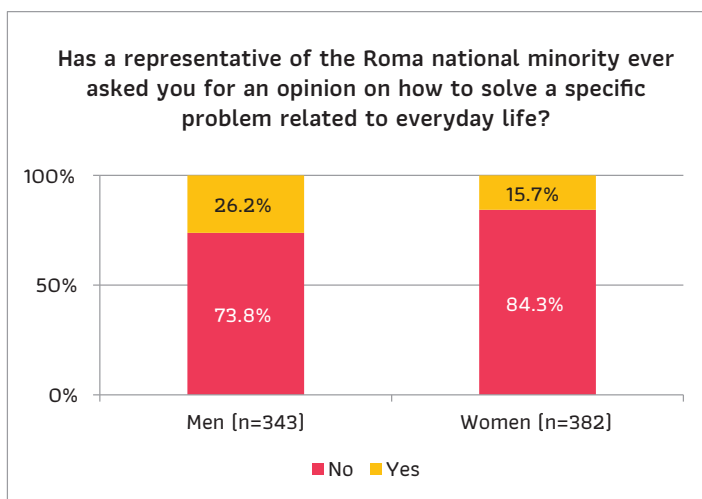
131 Level of statistical significance -  $p = 0.048$ .

132 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 38.659$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.231$ .



how to solve a specific problem related to everyday life?”. On the other hand, in three regions [Zagreb and its surrounding area, Central Croatia and Slavonia], the smallest share of adult residents stated that they were asked for their opinion. RNM representatives who were asked for their opinion the least were those who live dispersed among the majority population, and the most those who live in concentrated localities, but within a town or village.<sup>133</sup> This is a completely logical finding because many problems of Roma who live dispersed among the majority population are also problems of the majority population, so the role of RNM representatives in such cases is mostly of secondary importance, unlike typical or concentrated Roma settlements where the role of RNM representatives in solving some daily problems should be very important.

**GRAPH 30.** Consulting representatives of the Roma national minority according to gender



The difference is also significant when it comes to gender, so only 15.7% of women were asked for their opinion, while 26.2% of men who were asked: “Has any representative of the Roma national minority ever asked you for your opinion on how to solve a specific problem related to everyday life?” answered in the affirmative.<sup>134</sup> It was also shown that those who were asked for their opinion, in contrast to those who were not asked, on average have a higher socioeconomic status, i.e. that their total income in the previous month was higher.<sup>135</sup> The related and logical finding is the one that says that those who have a permanent job or who work temporarily, occasionally or seasonally are asked for an opinion to a greater extent than those

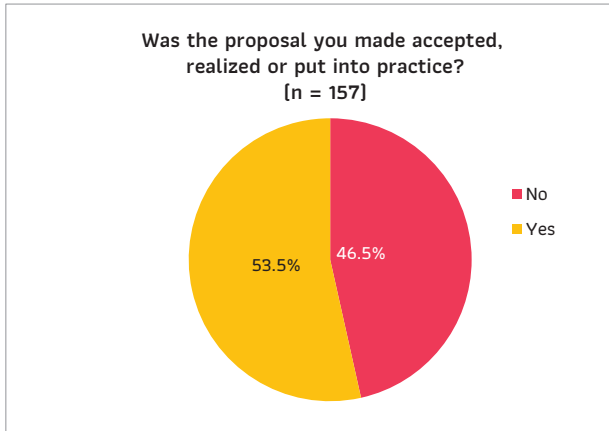
133 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 12.724$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.006$ ;  $V = 0.133$ .

134 Fisher's Exact test,  $p < 0.002$ .

135 T-test,  $t = 3.451$ ,  $p < 0.002$ .

who never perform paid jobs.<sup>136</sup> When it comes to the level of education of the Roma, those who have completed secondary school or more were asked for their opinion to a greater extent, precisely 29.7% of them, and RNM members who are without education or who never finished school were asked the least (18.0%).<sup>137</sup> The age variable, as well as the variable concerning the level of education of RNM members, did not prove significant here.

**GRAPH 31.** Cooperation of RNM representatives with the local population – acceptance of proposals



When asked whether the proposal given to the RNM representatives was accepted, one respondent did not want to answer the question, 11 of them said they did not know the outcome, 73 stated that the proposal was not accepted, and 84 that it was accepted. Taking into account only those who knew the outcome, that is, who knew whether their proposals were accepted or not, in more than half of the cases [53.3%] RNM representatives accepted the opinions and suggestions on solving some of the everyday problems of the Roma.

Although divided when it comes to certain attitudes towards Roma political participation and pointing out the problems that exist in this area, it is evident that many RNM representatives see the importance of political participation, not only at the level of voting in elections but active involvement and action through various political bodies with the aim of resolving the problems faced by the Roma and achieving the interests and goals of the Roma national minority in Croatia. Perhaps the best indication of this is the statement of a RNM representative from Northern Croatia.

136 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 11.900$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.004$ .

137 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 7.128$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.03$ .

*Ha, look, today without politics, if the Roma don't get involved in it, I don't think they would move from the deadlock. Because I am involved in politics for the well-being of the Roma. Well sooner or later at least they will have a decent life so that they can still function like the majority nation. [RNM representative, Northern Croatia region]*

### **4.3. Participation in cultural, artistic and sports life**

The customs and culture of the Roma changed over time and took on elements of the communities in which they lived, while their traditions, myths and legends were transmitted orally. Also, their music, which they always carried with them and developed, was subject to the influences and characteristics of the countries to which they immigrated. In the cultural sense, the Roma have, as Hrvatić [2004: 379] states, “a specific way of life in everyday behaviour, attitude towards other people and institutions and a value system”, and spatial mobility as a way of life has preserved them from assimilation and loss of ethnic identity throughout history. Some of their cultural patterns of behaviour, such as begging, are adopted during socialization, which is an “obstacle to more intensive participation” in the dominant culture of society [Hrvatić 2004: 379].

Roma in the Republic of Croatia express their culture and customs through initiatives and activities of civil society organizations and through the work of amateur societies, as stated in the NRIS. In Croatia, there are several Roma cultural and arts societies that seek to bring Roma culture and customs closer to the community in which the Roma live, and the Roma seek to bring their culture and traditions closer to the rest of the community by performing at various events and festivals, such as International Roma Day, promoting Roma music and dances, as well as Roma poetry, contributing to the preservation of Roma culture and customs.

Given the previously mentioned general goal of the importance of empowering Roma to participate in social, cultural and public life and specific objectives that indicate the importance of achieving a positive perception of Roma culture and identity both within the Roma national minority and within the majority population and society as a whole [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 97–98, Government of the Republic of Croatia 2019: 37], the research sought to determine how active the Roma are in the field of culture and sports, and what obstacles they face in these areas. To this end, it was assessed how much access RNM members have to certain facilities, whether the infrastructure allows them to participate in cultural, artistic and sports life and so on.

### 4.3.1. A gathering place for community members

The mere fact of the availability of space for the Roma to gather is evidence that there are barriers to their integration into cultural and social life in general. In just over a quarter of the localities [28.4%], the Roma have premises for community members to gather. However, when it comes to the share of the population that has the opportunity to use the gathering space, this figure is somewhat different. Regionally, the highest share of localities where there are premises for gathering can be found in Međimurje, and the smallest in Northern Croatia and Zagreb and its surrounding area. In the region of Istria and Primorje, the share of localities where there is a place for gathering is quite low, only 25%. Looking at the share of the population, the shares are slightly different, so that 44.6% of the Roma population lives in localities where such a possibility exists.

**TABLE 14.** Premises for the gathering of community members in the localities according to region

Region	Is there a place in the settlement for the gathering of community members such as a community center or similar?		TOTAL
	does not exist	exists	n
	n	n	
Međimurje	8	3	14
Northern Croatia	14	3	17
Zagreb and its surrounding area	14	7	17
Central Croatia	14	9	21
Slavonia	16	3	25
Istria and Primorje	12	3	15
TOTAL	78	6	109

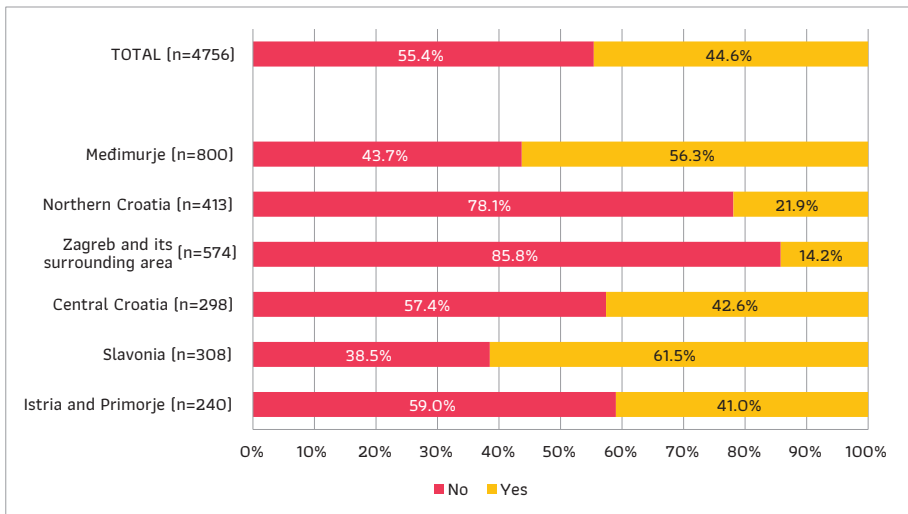
Some interviewed RNM representatives also spoke about the problem of premises for gatherings, pointing out that the lack of adequate space is related to the fact of poorly and weakly organized social life.

*Cultural life here? This is the only room we have, we have been here for 5–6 years. In my opinion, when the multifunctional center starts working, that will be a different matter. [RNM representative, Međimurje region]*

The RNM representative from Zagreb and its surrounding area highlighted the fact that the Roma mostly gather in family houses, i.e. private rather than public spaces, and that the problem of paying for space is what often leads to conflicts among the Roma community itself.

*The premises where the associations operate are mostly private centers, houses and so on. They get all of them. But they need to be paid for. There is no help. You know when someone recognizes someone, so now we'll have 10–15 contracts, let's all work together. Everyone is looking into each other's pockets to take their eyes out, and the city and the government are looking at it in their own way, we will throw a bone and let them bite each other. This is a typical situation that exists... [RNM representative, Zagreb and its surrounding area]*

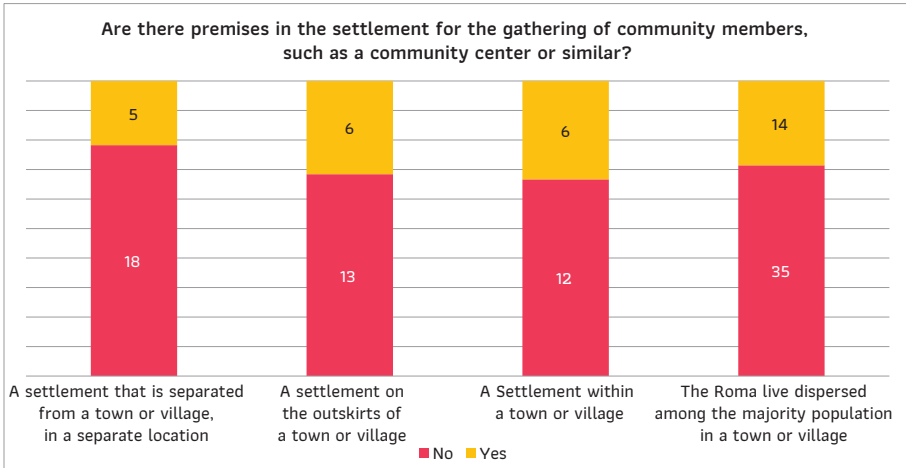
**GRAPH 32.** Premises for the gathering of community members – share of population in localities according to region



If only the level of the localities is taken into account, no statistically significant difference was found regionally. In other words, spaces such as community centers are equally available or unavailable in most localities in the region, but if the population in certain localities in six regions is taken into account, the difference is evident and statistically significant.<sup>138</sup> In Slavonia and Međimurje, there is the highest share of residents who live in localities where they have the opportunity to use spaces such as community centers. The localities in Zagreb and its surrounding area have by far the highest share of the population who do not have the premises where community members could gather. Also, the share of the population of Northern Croatia who live in localities where there is no possibility of using premises such as a community center is high.

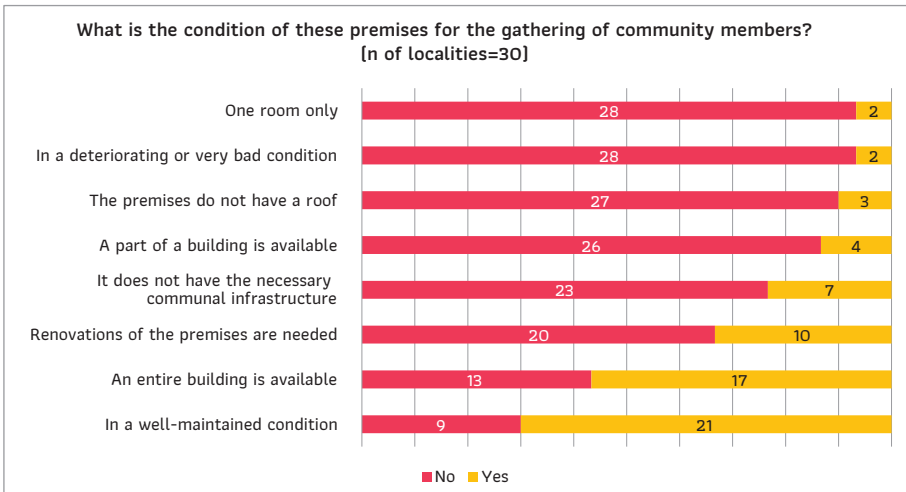
<sup>138</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 557.822$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V=0.342$ .

**GRAPH 33. Premises for gathering of community members in localities according to the type of settlement<sup>139</sup>**



Although no significant difference was detected in this case, it is interesting to note that, regardless of the type of settlement in which members of the RNM live, a gathering space such as a community center is equally available or unavailable to them. There is a slight, but not statistically significant difference for Roma settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location.

**GRAPH 34. The state of the premises for the gathering of community members in the localities<sup>140</sup>**



139 The numerical indicators in the graph refer to the number of localities. Data were collected for a total of 109 localities. Given the small number of localities according to the type of settlement, the data in the graph are presented in absolute amounts, not in percentages.

140 The numerical indicators in the graph refer to the number of localities, 30 of them. Considering the small number of localities, the data in the graph are expressed in absolute amounts, not in percentages.

Although it was initially stated that there were premises for gatherings of community members in 31 localities, when asked about the condition of the space itself, data were collected for 30 localities, judging by which in the vast majority of cases, more precisely in 21 cases, the space was in a good condition. Therefore it is logical that the need for renovation was emphasized for 10 localities. Most of the spaces have the necessary communal infrastructure, in two of the 30 localities the informants stated that this is a space that is in a dilapidated or very poor condition, and in two localities it is stated that it is only one room, measuring 27.5 square meters, and for the second locality 40 square meters. Of the nine localities for which it is stated that the gathering places are not well maintained, there are two localities in Međimurje, Central Croatia, Istria and Primorje, and three localities in Slavonia. According to the collected data, the most difficult situation is in the region of Istria and Primorje, where only three of the 14 localities have a gathering space, and it is stated that out of the three spaces, only one is in a well-maintained condition. Of 30 localities where there are premises for community gatherings, in 17 localities the informants stated that members of the RNM have the entire building at their disposal, while in 13 localities this is not the case. In Zagreb and its surrounding area, in two localities for which it is stated that there is a gathering space, this is only a partially available space, i.e. the entire building is not available to the Roma. In Slavonia too, in more than half of the localities, five out of a total of nine where there is a gathering space, not the entire building, but only a part of it is available. In Istria and Primorje as well, of the three spaces available to Roma, two are partial spaces, which means that members of the RNM do not have the entire building at their disposal. In Međimurje, in four out of six localities members of the RNM have the entire space at their disposal, and in Northern Croatia, out of a total of three locations where there is a gathering space, the Roma can use the entire building for these purposes in all three cases. In Central Croatia, in five out of seven premises used by the Roma it is possible to use the entire building for community gatherings.

#### **4.3.2. Organized sports and/or recreation**

In less than half of the researched localities where the Roma live, there are organized sports and recreational activities. No significant difference was found according to region,<sup>141</sup> but the share of such activities is slightly more prevalent in the City of Zagreb and its surrounding area and Međimurje, and in Northern Croatia, this share is the smallest. Furthermore, depending on the type of settlement in which the Roma live, a difference was found in the existence of organized sports and/or recreation.

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141 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 0.713$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = 0.164$ .

**TABLE 15. Organized sports and/or recreation in localities according to region**

Region	Organized sports and/or recreation		TOTAL
	does not exist	exists	n
	n	n	
Međimurje	6	8	14
Northern Croatia	11	6	17
Zagreb and its surrounding area	7	10	17
Central Croatia	12	9	21
Slavonia	13	12	25
Istria and Primorje	9	6	15
TOTAL	58	51	109

In the localities where Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village, there is the greatest possibility [69.4%] of organized sports or recreation. This share is the lowest [21.7%] in concentrated settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, in concentrated settlements on the outskirts of a town or village, just over a third of the localities, i.e. seven out of 19, have organized sports and recreational activities. In settlements within a town or village, this share is even smaller, i.e. in five of the 18 localities or 27.8% there is a possibility of organized sports and recreation.

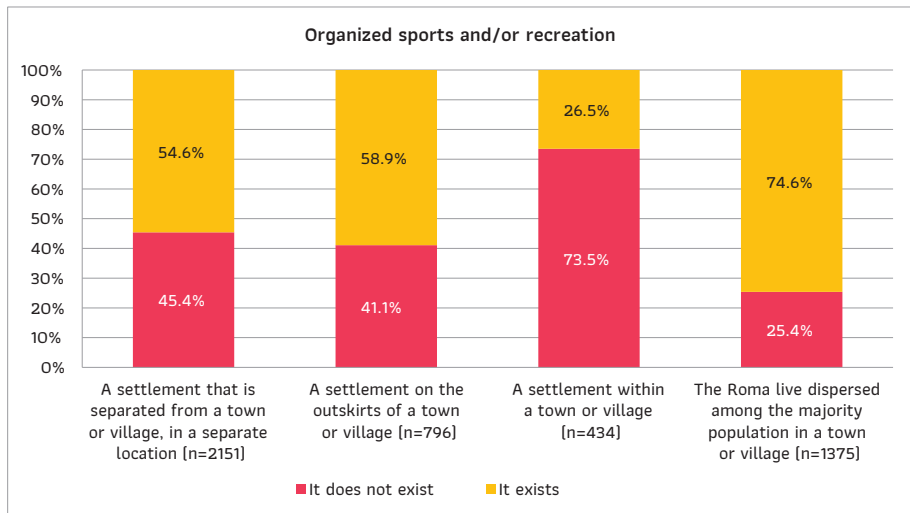
In interviews with RNM representatives and non-Roma figures, it was found that organized social life, including sports, is mainly associated with activities in schools or kindergartens, which are an integral part of their programs, but not part of the organized life of the Roma population. A RNM representative from Central Croatia stated the example of involving children in sports and other activities at different educational levels.

*As far as social life is concerned, they are involved in some sporting and cultural events through majorettes, through handball school, through football school, where children get involved in these activities. Even in the kindergarten they have a coach who is practically the teacher in the kindergarten, who works with children, both boys and girls, they prepare these sports competitions in the kindergarten, so they use our sports facilities and go to practice, preparations, etc. [KNF, region Northern Croatia]*

142 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 19.216$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.420$ .



**GRAPH 35.** Proportion of the population living in localities where there are organized sports and/or recreation according to the type of settlement



When the situation is observed from the aspect of the population living in certain localities and in certain types of settlements, the data shows a slightly more positive picture. More specifically, although such activities exist in less than half of the localities [46.8%], more than half of the Roma population [58.6%] live in localities where there are still organized sports and/or recreational activities. By far the smallest share of the population that have the opportunity to play sports in an organized manner live in concentrated settlements within a town or village. This is just over a quarter of the population living in these localities, or 26.5% of them, and as expected the situation is most favorable for those Roma who live dispersed among the majority population.

Table 16 shows the results, i.e. the answers to the open-ended question from the locality mapping phase where the informants were asked to state whether there is an organized engagement in sports and/or recreation, and state which one. The results show the activities according to the type of settlement in all six regions covered by the research. Just a glance at the table reveals that most sports and recreational facilities can be found in dispersed settlements, in all six regions. In other types of settlements, the offer is far scarcer, and evidently, the most common sports activity that the Roma participate in is football.

When talking about the types of activities that existed as reported by Roma informants, in Međimurje, in all cases where activities exist it is football, although some responses show that it is not always a formally organized activity, as the responses are “children arrange it among each themselves”, “football on a rough

field” and the like. In one case in Međimurje, it was stated that a football club used to exist, but that it no longer exists. In one locality, it is stated that football is organized through an association. In addition to football, which is practiced as an activity in all localities, basketball was found in three localities in Međimurje, and in one case there were karate and card games. The situation in Northern Croatia is very similar since football is practiced in all localities where there is some kind of sport and recreation. There are football clubs in two localities, and in addition to football, there is also an equestrian club in one locality, and in some there are the possibilities of playing handball, tennis, basketball, badminton, fishing, chess, dancing and exercising in the gym. Football is also most common in Zagreb and its surrounding area, and in some localities table tennis and gym, basketball, martial arts, volleyball, etc. are listed. It should be noted here that some informants in the localities of the Zagreb region and its surrounding area stated that these are mostly organized activities within schools, while for some activities they stated that membership fees need to be paid, for which the Roma do not have the resources. Football is most common in the three remaining regions as well, with the possibility of using swimming pools in Central Croatia, i.e. swimming, as well as bowling, handball in several localities and martial arts, basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc. in some localities in this region. Slavonia is in the lead when it comes to the number of football clubs in which the Roma have the opportunity to train and play. In some localities, table tennis, gym, various activities within schools and similar were also listed. In Istria and Primorje, it was pointed out that these are recreational activities, but that there are local football and other clubs in which the Roma have the opportunity to participate.

TABLE 16. Sports and/or recreational facilities in localities according to the type of settlement and region

TYPE OF SETTLEMENT		TYPE OF SETTLEMENT		TYPE OF SETTLEMENT	
REGION	A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	A settlement within a town or village	The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village	
Medimurje	- football (on a landscaped or rough field, there was a football club) - karate, basketball, card games	-	-	- football (organized through an association or unorganized) - basketball	
Northern Croatia	- football	- football (organized in a club or unorganized) - karate, handball, basketball	-	- football (organized in a club or unorganized) - equestrian club, fishing, gym, tennis, basketball, badminton, table tennis, chess, dancing	
Zagreb and its surrounding area	-	- football	-	- football - handball, table tennis, gym, basketball, martial arts, playrooms for children, table tennis, volleyball	
Central Croatia	- football in the street	- swimming	- football - handball - basketball	- football (organized in a club or unorganized) - gym, tennis, bowling, basketball, volleyball, handball, taekwondo club	
Slavonia	- football	- football (organized in a club or unorganized) - school gym activities	- none in the settlement (not far from the settlement there is a possibility of practicing football, tennis, basketball, bowling, gymnastics, kayaking, firefighters)	- football (organized in a club or unorganized) - other sports clubs	
Istria and Primorje	-	-	- gym	- football (organized in a club or unorganized) - basketball, majorettes, boxing	

**TABLE 17.** Distance of the locality from organized sports and/or recreation according to region

Region	Distance in km		
	Minimum distance	Maximum distance	Average distance
Međimurje	0.2	3.5	2.0
Northern Croatia	0.7	7.3	3.2
Zagreb and its surrounding area	.	.	.
Central Croatia	3.0	15.0	8.1
Slavonia	0.5	2.8	1.3
Istria and Primorje	12.0	50.0	31.0

In settlements where there is no organized sports or some form of recreation, informants were, among other things, asked about the distance of nearest such activity. The differences are visible both between different regions and within the regions themselves. For example, the shortest average distance was noted in Slavonia, and the longest in Istria and Primorje. Considering differences between localities within individual regions, it is evident that in most regions such differences are very large. For example, in Northern Croatia, the distance of organized sports and/or recreation in some localities is less than one kilometer, and in some the distance is over seven kilometers. Large differences are also visible in Central Croatia, where informants stated that in some localities the distance is three kilometers, and in some it is 15 kilometers. In Slavonia, these differences within the region are the least pronounced, and with an average of 31 kilometers, Istria and Primorje is the region in which these distances are convincingly longest.<sup>143</sup>

**TABLE 18.** Distance of the locality from organized sports and/or recreation according to the type of settlement

Type of settlement	Distance in km		
	Minimum distance	Maximum distance	Average distance
A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	0.7	50.0	7.3
A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	1.0	15.0	5.0
A settlement within a town or village	0.2	2.8	1.2
The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village	.	.	.

143 Although it was stated for seven localities in Zagreb and its surrounding area that there are no organized sports or recreational activities, no reliable and consistent answers or no information whatsoever was given as regards the proximity of the nearest such opportunity.

The longest average distance from the opportunity to practice organized sports and/or recreation is in those localities that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location [7.3 km]. The average distance of such facilities is slightly shorter in those localities which are on the outskirts of a town or village [5 km], and it is by far the shortest in settlements within a town or village – 1.2 kilometers. Such facilities are mostly available to Roma who live dispersed among the majority population, so there is no data on distance here. It is worth noting the great differences between localities within the same type of settlement in this case as well. For example, in a settlement in a separate location, this distance varies from 0.7 km up to 50 km, in a settlement on the outskirts of a town or village from 1 up to 15 km, and in settlements within towns from 0.2 up to 2.8 km.

The importance of participating in sports activities, as well as the problem of non-existence of sports activities and places where Roma could participate in some sports activities, was emphasized by the representatives of RNM from almost all regions.

*Huh, if only children were more involved in sports, some sort of a cultural center.* [RNM representative, Slavonia region]

*It would also mean a lot if we were included in the social life, culture, sports, it would really mean a lot.* [RNM representative, Central Croatia region]

One representative of the RNM also mentions an example of how, in the absence of such events, they have organized events themselves.

*So we decided to have darts and a sports field for them to run a little so that they are not constantly glued to the computer.* [RNM representative, Medimurje region]

### **4.3.3. Culture and arts societies (CAS)**

Only in 29.4% of the localities where the Roma live there is a culture and arts society. No statistically significant differences were found regionally, although the share of localities in which there is a culture and arts society is slightly higher in Zagreb and its surrounding area and Slavonia compared to other regions. In Istria and Primorje, the share of these localities is by far the smallest, and only in two of the 13 localities in which the research was conducted did the informants state that there was a culture and arts society.

**TABLE 19. Culture and arts societies in localities according to region**

Region	Culture and arts society		TOTAL
	does not exist	exists	n
	n	n	
Međimurje	11	3	14
Northern Croatia	14	3	17
Zagreb and its surrounding area	10	7	17
Central Croatia	14	7	21
Slavonia	15	10	25
Istria and Primorje	13	2	15
TOTAL	77	32	109

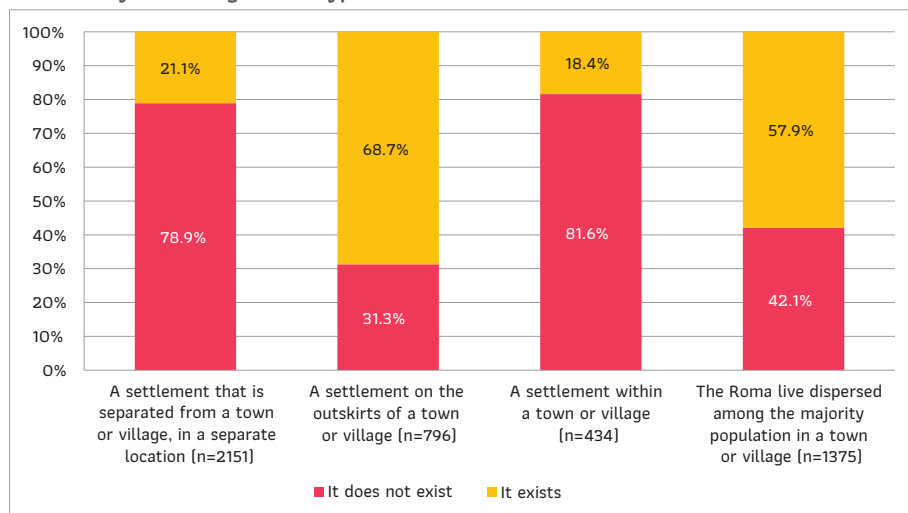
The share of culture and arts societies is the smallest in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location. Of 23 such localities, only one has a culture and arts society. There is a very small share of localities in settlements within a town or village – out of a total of 18 localities, only two have a culture and arts society. Even in the settlements on the outskirts of a town or village, the situation is not much better, since there are culture and arts societies in only six out of 19 such localities. The highest share of localities in which culture and arts societies operate is in dispersed settlements where members of the RNM live among the majority population – out of a total of 49 localities, 23 have culture and arts societies. The difference here, in contrast to regional distribution, is statistically significant.<sup>144</sup> This is an expected finding since, as in the case of all other opportunities – sports, entertainment, etc. – it is an offer that is available to everyone and which is not part of Roma self-organization. An interviewee from the region of Zagreb and its surrounding area also spoke in favor of this.

*There is no preservation of tradition, culture, language, script, dance, costumes, objects originating from Roma history. No.* [RNM representative, Zagreb and its surrounding area]

A non-Roma figure, a representative of an institution in the Međimurje region, pointed out that the passivity of the Roma at the level of settlements in which they live is a problem, and that their activity, both in culture and arts societies and sports, comes down to them participating in activities offered at the level of local self-government units.

*At the level of Roma settlements, they are totally uninterested, but as far as the municipalities are concerned, they participate in the work of culture and arts societies, football clubs.* [RNM representative, Međimurje region]

144 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 17.175$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.002$ ,  $V = 0.397$ .

**GRAPH 36.** The share of population living in localities where there is a culture and arts society according to the type of settlement

The difference is also significant when it comes to the share of population who live in certain localities and in certain types of settlement.<sup>145</sup> Although culture and arts societies exist in slightly less than a third of the localities [29.4%], 39.5% of RNM members who participated in the research live in these localities. It can therefore be said that the situation is a little better because more than a third of the population lives in localities where there is an opportunity to participate in culture and arts societies. It is interesting to note that, as far as the share of residents is concerned, the situation is better in settlements on the outskirts of a town or village than in the localities where culture and arts societies exist, as the results suggest. Although culture and arts societies exist in 31.6% of localities on the outskirts of a town or village, 68.7% of the population to whom such opportunities are available live in these localities, which is a better result than for dispersed settlements where there is 57.9% of the population who have the opportunity to participate in culture and arts societies. By far the highest share of population who do not have the opportunity to participate in culture and arts societies live in settlements within a town or village – as much as 81.6% of the population live in such localities.

Although the number of culture and arts societies is small, especially those that are exclusively related to Roma culture, there are positive examples where Roma strive to preserve their culture and tradition through the preservation of culture and arts societies. One RNM representative from Central Croatia highlights the activities organized by the Roma in the village and states that there are as many as two culture and arts societies.

<sup>145</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 864.352$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.426$ .

*Well, for now, it is not bad, I have to commend it, it is not bad. We socialize a lot, we play football, we have these culture and arts societies. We have two culture and arts societies, we never get bored in the village. [RNM representative, Central Croatia region]*

One interlocutor from the region of Istria and Primorje also states a positive example of Roma organization into “folklore sections” and the commemoration of important Roma dates.

*Within their associations, they have cultural and social activities as part of their holidays, which they organize and celebrate in accordance with their tradition and needs. They participate in those folklore groups. As far as I know, yes, to celebrate holidays those who are in the neighborhood come, they have lived there for years. They come, they are invited and they come, so there are good examples. [KNF, Istria and Primorje region]*

#### 4.3.4. Cultural and entertainment facilities and events

The cultural and entertainment life of Roma in the researched localities is most often reduced to the celebration of some events and important dates for the Roma national minority. This firstly includes the International Roma Day, which is celebrated on April 8. This is one of the most important events in the history of the Roma people,<sup>146</sup> and the Roma in Croatia in all the researched regions mentioned this event as an important cultural event in the community. Asked about cultural and entertainment facilities and events in some localities, the Roma pointed out the existence of libraries, cinemas, events related to the celebration of the day of the city or municipality and so on. Also, in addition to the International Roma Day, some mentioned St. George’s Day and the World Romani Language Day as important Roma events. However, in their evaluations of social, cultural and entertainment life, the vast majority of Roma, but also non-Roma figures, did not express satisfaction.

**TABLE 20.** Cultural and entertainment facilities and events in localities according to region

Region	Cultural and entertainment facilities and events		TOTAL
	does not exist	exists	n
	n	n	n
Medimurje	8	6	14
Northern Croatia	10	7	17
Zagreb and its surrounding area	6	11	17
Central Croatia	15	6	21
Slavonia	14	11	25
Istria and Primorje	8	7	15
TOTAL	61	48	109

<sup>146</sup> This refers to, of course, the first World Roma Congress held in London in 1971, where the key elements of Roma identity were defined.



In more than half of the localities in which the research was conducted, precisely in 61 out of a total of 109 localities, the informants stated that there are no cultural and entertainment facilities or events in the localities. No significant differences have been identified at the regional level, but it should be noted that in this case as well as in the case of the availability of organized sports events and culture and arts societies, the highest share of localities with such facilities and events are located in the region of Zagreb and its surroundings. Central Croatia is the region with the smallest share of localities with cultural and entertainment facilities and events. On the other hand, depending on the type of settlement in which a particular locality is located, the number of localities with available cultural and entertainment facilities and events differs significantly.<sup>147</sup> The availability of cultural and entertainment facilities and events is greatest in localities where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village. Out of a total of 49 such localities, the informants stated that there are cultural and entertainment facilities and events in 31 localities. The smallest number of such facilities and events are recorded in settlements within a town or village, where in four out of 18 localities some kind of cultural and entertainment facility or event can be found. The situation is not significantly different in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location. In such localities, only six of the 23 localities have some kind of cultural and entertainment facility or event, and in settlements on the outskirts of a town or village, just over a third of the localities offer some kind of cultural and entertainment facilities and events.

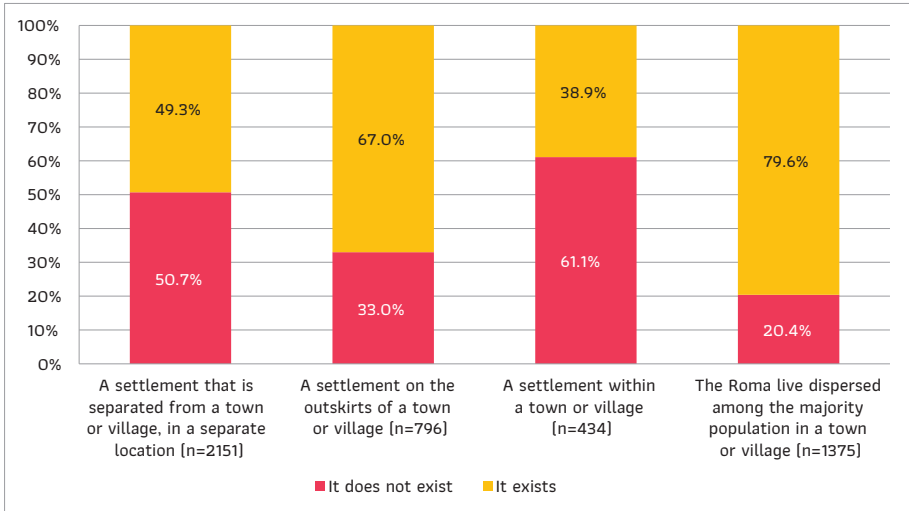
Qualitative data support quantitative data. For example, while some respondents assessed the cultural life as positive, several interviewees assessed the cultural and entertainment offer and the general social life of the Roma as lacking, due to the impossibility and lack of institutional support from government units, as well as from the Roma themselves who do not show sufficient interest in such facilities and events. Some who speak positively about cultural life point to the “friendliness” of the Roma people and the connection with the majority.

*It is good, we take part in those events, socializing. Good. Yes. Well, of course. People socialize there. Everyone is friendly and the non-Roma population participates as well when something... When events take place. The whole city is included, everyone who wants to come. [RNM representative, Slavonia region]*

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147 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 14.233$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.004$ .  $V = 0.361$ .

**GRAPH 37.** The share of population living in localities where there are cultural and entertainment facilities and events according to the type of settlement



Considering the share of the population living in localities where different cultural and entertainment facilities and events exist or do not exist, a statistically significant difference was found.<sup>148</sup> Expectedly, the largest number of cultural and entertainment facilities and events are available in localities where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village. The smallest number of such facilities is found in concentrated Roma settlements within a town or village. Although the findings for the localities show that only in 44.0% of them some cultural and entertainment facilities or events are available, the results on the share of the population are somewhat different. According to them, 60.1% of the population lives in localities where such facilities and events are available. It is interesting to point out again a very high proportion of residents who live in settlements on the outskirts of a town or village who have such facilities and events available. Although in only 36.8% of localities such facilities and events are available, they make for 67.0% of the population to whom such facilities and events are available. Most residents to whom such facilities and events are not available live in concentrated settlements within a town or village – as many as 61.1% of the population of such localities do not have access to cultural and entertainment facilities and events.

Several non-Roma figures stated in conversation that the poor social life, and therefore poor cultural and entertainment facilities and events, are due to the fact that the Roma people are “self-contained”, or rather orientated towards themselves. In addition to being self-contained, a representative of an institution from

148 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 417.900$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.296$ .

Central Croatia emphasizes the problem of some associations and the way they spend the funds which they receive to mark important dates, but at the same time points out the positive work of three associations from the Sisak-Moslavina County.

*I think they are orientated towards each other. Their social and cultural life is... They are not orientated outwards so much, it's more within their own settlement, their own community. There are three serious associations which deal with Roma issues, be it Roma culture or the rights of the Roma. There is a number of associations. These are more associations which exist for themselves, for the purpose of using certain financial benefits. These three associations definitely participate in the celebration of Roma Day together with the City. We try not to celebrate this Day in our settlement, but to take it out of the settlement to celebrate it in the city center. For years it has been like that, so. [...] Their cultural life is primarily conditioned by their way of life. [...] It would be good primarily for young people to become involved in the social life of the community. [KNF, Central Croatia region]*

The fact that the Roma community is self-contained and unwilling to cooperate with the majority population, especially when it comes to social and cultural life, was pointed out by the interviewees, i.e. representatives of institutions from the Istria and Primorje region, to the greatest extent.

*Their social and cultural life happens exclusively within their own community. Within the existing and within their own communities, whether in the area of Rijeka, then around Gospić, they are connected with them, Delnice, Gospić, Delnice, this part around Rijeka and Glina. Those are exclusively their own communities. [KNF, Istria and Primorje region]*

Just like non-Roma figures, the representatives of the Roma national minority also spoke about the poor social and cultural life, passivity and self-containment in the Istria and Primorje region, where one representative pointed out that socializing was reduced to weddings, and another stated that in the settlement there was no content or facilities to mark events which are important for the Roma community.

*Is it because the times are what they are, so people barely make a living and enough for a meal, so we all somehow shut ourselves in our houses, there is no more of that socializing as there used to be. [...] We used to celebrate St. George's Day together, Eid al-Adha. [...] When there are weddings, we are more or less all together. [RNM representative, Istria and Primorje region]*

*The social life in the community is an issue. Our life together, we do not have a place in the settlement to go to, where we could do something. We should have a couple of shops in the settlements, a café or two. We should have a sports facility where children could practice sports. There should be*

*a platform where something could be held for St. George's Day, for Eid al-Adha, some sort of stage, for something to happen.* [RNM representative, Istria and Primorje region]

An interviewee from the Međimurje region holds that the Roma are not interested in participating in and organizing cultural and entertainment events on the level of their own settlements. The interlocutor also gave an example in which the local government worked on starting some cultural and entertainment events within the settlement, but this was not successful due to the low interest of the Roma population. Still, he gave a positive example of the inclusion of Roma in such events, which are also offered to the majority population outside the Roma settlements.

*They are totally uninterested at the level of Roma settlements, but as far as the municipalities are concerned, they participate in the work of culture and arts societies, football clubs. Through the one project that I mentioned, I thought we would start some projects ourselves through a festival of Roma music, they were an organization, they got involved, we had professional dancers who taught them, we would buy costumes, three days of celebration, and then nothing happened.* [KNF, Međimurje region]

Table 21 shows the results, i.e. the answers to the open-ended question from the phase of locality mapping, where the informants in certain localities were asked about the cultural and entertainment facilities and events offered in the localities where RNM members live. The results show the facilities and events according to the type of settlement in all six regions covered by the research. Here, just like with sports and recreational activities, the largest number of facilities and events is found in dispersed settlements, in all six regions. In all such settlements, in all six regions, libraries and cinemas are available, and in localities which are parts of large cities, theaters are available too, along with the facilities and events usually available in big cities. It is interesting to note that for the majority of the researched localities the informants stated the International Roma Day as the key cultural and entertainment event and the central happening for the majority of Roma. In some localities, the Romani Language Day was stated as an event of that type. For some localities in some regions, the informants stated that there were no facilities or events. These were most often concentrated localities in a separate location, but also concentrated localities within a town or village. From this qualitative overview, a difference can be noted for the Međimurje region where the informants listed quite a few cultural and entertainment facilities and events even for the settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location.

**TABLE 21. Cultural and entertainment facilities and events in localities according to the type of settlement and region**

Region	Type of settlement			
	A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	A settlement within a town or village	The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village
Medimurje	- cinema - library - International Roma Day	- Municipality Day - Roma futsal tournament - outdoor cinema	-	- library - International Roma Day - Municipality Day - carnival
Northern Croatia	- library	- International Roma Day	-	- Bibliobus - Bread Day - firefighters games
Zagreb and its surrounding area	-	- library - cinema	-	- Bibliobus - Municipality Day - cinema - library - shopping center - local events - swimming pool
Central Croatia	- library - International Roma Day	-	- library - cinema - annual events	- Municipality Day - library - firefighters games - annual events - Romani Language Day
Slavonia	- library - cinema - theater	- library - cinema - Roma Day - St. George's Day	- library - cinema - theater	- library - cinema - theater - International Roma Day - annual events
Istria and Primorje	-	- cinema - library	- library	- International Roma Day - annual events - City Day

The data collected in the qualitative research confirms the fact that the International Roma Day, celebrated on April 8, is the central event of the Roma community in Croatia.

*We had a couple of events that took place in previous years and when we have International Roma Day or something happening, then everyone is invited. Not only the Roma, but also the non-Roma population is invited. We also had the evening of national minorities for which we invite all the minorities who live here and Croatian people, and they are all invited. [RNM representative, Central Croatia region]*

In one part of Brod-Posavina County, it was stated that they only recently started marking the International Roma Day, and have expressed satisfaction with the support they received for its organization.

*And last year we organized for the first time the celebration of the International Roma Day. We were satisfied, both with the funds we received from the city administration and the response of everyone who was invited. [RNM representative Slavonia region]*

Aside from the International Roma Day, there is also the World Romani Language Day, and in some cases the celebration of St. George's Day is mentioned as an important element of Roma culture and tradition. A representative of an institution from Northern Croatia stated that he responds to the Roma invitation to celebrate St. George's Day, when their musicality and tradition are in the spotlight.

*I go there on St. George's Day for their performances and celebrations. They like to socialize, sing, recite, they care about the Roma tradition. I think it's right that they care for their customs, their... They always take part in their songs and I think that's the right way. [KNF, Northern Croatia region]*

In the region of Zagreb and its surrounding area, the celebration of St. George's Day is mentioned, but the low turnout of the Roma when celebrating both this and other events is also stated.

*In the County itself – they don't organize it personally, except when the representative organizes something for them, for St. George's Day or the International Roma Day or something like that, then they gather and respond, but not in large numbers. [KNF, Zagreb and its surrounding area]*

In general, the low ratings of the state of social and cultural life and therefore a poor offer of cultural and entertainment facilities and events is supported by the data on the distance of such facilities and events.

**TABLE 22.** Distance of localities from cultural and entertainment facilities and events according to region

Region	Distance in km		
	Minimum distance	Maximum distance	Average distance
Međimurje	0.2	15.0	6.9
Northern Croatia	0.5	20.0	11.2
Zagreb and its surrounding area	.	.	.
Central Croatia	2.5	15.0	7.8
Slavonia	0.3	15.0	5.3
Istria and Primorje	12.0	50.0	31.0

The differences are apparent between the regions, but also within regions. Within localities where there are cultural and entertainment facilities and events, this distance is minimal, while in some it is 15 or more kilometers. Looking at all six regions, the average distance of cultural and entertainment facilities and events in the region of Istria and Primorje is by far the longest. The shortest distance stated by the informants in that region is also extremely long [12 km], while the longest is 50 kilometers.

**TABLE 23.** Distance of localities from cultural and entertainment facilities and events according to the type of settlement

Type of settlement	Distance in km		
	Minimum distance	Maximum distance	Average distance
A settlement that is separated from a town or village, in a separate location	0.5	50.0	11.5
A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	0.3	15.0	4.8
A settlement within a town or village	0.2	15.0	5.6
The Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village	2.0	11.0	6.0

The type of settlement determines the average distance of cultural and entertainment facilities and events from the localities. It is interesting to note that, according to the informants, for the Roma living dispersed among the majority population in a town or village the average distance of such facilities and events is longer than for the Roma who live in localities on the outskirts of a town or village or within a town or village.

## 4.4. Chapter summary

The fact that a distance towards RNM members still exists and that it is greatly influenced by prejudices and stereotypes is perhaps best supported by the example from the summer of 2019, which was widely reported by the Croatian media. It concerns a case involving the relocation of Roma families from one part of Zagreb to another when the majority population protested against the arrival of the Roma in their neighborhood.<sup>149</sup> Although it can be generally stated that the Roma perceive their own relationship with the majority population as good in all regions, in 13.7% of localities the relationship was characterized as bad, of which in one there is no contact with the majority population, while the highest share of localities in which the relationship is not good can be found in the region of Istria and Primorje. Nevertheless, the Roma generally disagree with the claim that connotations of the Roma national minority are negative. They do not believe that they are seen as a threat by the majority population, although in Zagreb and its surrounding area, Istria and Primorje and Međimurje a significant share of the population holds that the majority population has a negative view of them, that is, sees them as a threat. However, there are examples of horizontal mobility and some Roma families have moved away from the localities in the last four years. According to estimates, these were more than 300 Roma families, while most relocations were recorded in the Istria and Primorje region. It should be noted that in conversations with the Roma and representatives of relevant institutions a trend was identified that has been widespread among the majority population in recent years – the emigration of Roma abroad, particularly from Slavonia. Economic migration of the Roma has been recorded in other regions as well.

The political participation of members of the RNM is mostly reserved for voting in elections. Looking at age groups, older Roma are the most politically active, while gender differences in the frequency of voting in elections were found only among young Roma men and women, where young Roma men vote more often than young Roma women. Roma living in settlements on the outskirts of a town or village use their voting rights to the greatest extent. The highest share of members of the RNM who never vote in elections live dispersed among the majority population, so it can be said that in this segment, too, Roma adopt the patterns of behaviour of the majority population, who vote less than the Roma population. A very small share of the Roma, in particular Roma women, is involved in a working, advisory or other body of a local self-government unit. It was established that the chances to participate in such bodies were the highest for those members of the RNM whose monthly incomes were the highest and that the region and type of

<sup>149</sup> See the chapter *Relationship between the Roma and non-Roma population* and the case of the relocation of the Roma population to the Petruševac settlement.



settlement were not predictors which would increase the chances of that type of political participation. When it comes to cooperation with RNM representatives, the Roma were asked for their opinion only in one fifth of the cases.<sup>150</sup> The ones who are asked the most were men in concentrated settlements and the best cooperation was recorded in Istria and Primorje.

The data on the availability of space where the Roma could gather suggests that there are obstacles for the inclusion of RNM members in cultural and social life in general. To be precise, 55.4% of the Roma population lives in localities in which this is not a possibility. The share of Roma who do not have spaces for gatherings is especially large in Northern Croatia and in Zagreb and its surrounding area. In localities where gathering spaces for the Roma do exist, the conditions are often poor or the possibilities of using the spaces are limited. The overall organized cultural, entertainment and sports life of the Roma, in particular of the younger age groups, is mostly related to activities in schools or kindergartens that are an integral part of their programs, but not part of the organized life of the exclusively Roma population. In less than half of the researched localities where the Roma live, there are organized sports and recreational activities. Most sports facilities can be found in dispersed settlements, and the offer in concentrated settlements is much scarcer or non-existent, and in some localities the distance from the facilities is several tens of kilometers. The share of culture and arts societies is the smallest in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location – out of 23 such localities, there is only one with a culture and arts society. In more than half of the localities where the research was conducted the informants stated that there are no cultural and entertainment facilities in the localities and that the cultural and entertainment life of the Roma is mostly reduced to celebrating some events and dates important for the Roma national minority. Firstly, there are the International Roma Day, which is celebrated on 8 April, the World Romani Language Day and St. George's Day. Roma who live dispersed among the majority population are in a much better position than those who live in concentrated settlements as they have access to most of the facilities available to the majority population.

Although Roma in general hold that the majority population sees them in a positive light, the same could not be said for the media. A large share of Roma hold that the media representation is not good, and only slightly more than a fifth of members of the RNM evaluate the media presentation of Roma everyday life as

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150 It should be added to these findings that earlier empirical research from 2017 on CRNM showed that for the activity and efficiency of councils and representatives of the Roma national minority a statistically significant predictor is their ability to perform advisory functions, in which a significant under-capacity, or rather a low level of competence of Roma CRNMs was noted. It is reflected, for example, in the lowest familiarity of Roma councils and representatives with the legal framework of the CRNM institution, the poorest fulfillment of obligations towards their respective self-government units, a low number of computers and a low rate of use of computers and e-mail at work, etc. (Karajić, Japec and Krivokuća 2017).

positive. It is interesting that Roma who live among the majority population are more critical of the media presentation of their own community. The Roma believe that they get presented in the most media content through topics from domestic politics, i.e., the work of a member of parliament. The Roma see crime and accident topics, which often involve RNM members, as a negative media presentation. The media presentation of the Roma through crime and accident topics influences attitudes about the Roma, which is one of the problems that RNM members who participated in the research pointed out, in particular the more educated Roma and Roma who do either permanent or temporary jobs. These are most often Roma in dispersed settlements who are often very well integrated into society and who are particularly affected by the negative media images of the Roma and the generalizations that they influence.



# 5.

Experience of  
discrimination of  
RNM members



# 5. Experience of discrimination of RNM members

Since combating discrimination against the Roma and the inclusion of RNM members into Croatian society are among the strategic objectives of the NRIS, this research sought to gain a deeper insight into the experience and perceptions of discrimination against Roma themselves, in order to, as previously emphasized, more effectively address the achievement of the set objective. The analysis of the data obtained in this research regarding the experience and perceptions of discrimination against members of the RNM, especially in the areas of work and employment, education, social welfare, health care, police conduct and judiciary, together with the opinions of key representatives of relevant institutions, showed that there are still many unresolved issues, in particular in some Croatian regions.<sup>151</sup>

## 5.1. Theoretical framework for the study of discrimination

### 5.1.1. Prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination – sociological interpretations

In order to better understand the phenomenon of discrimination in society, especially towards RNM members, who are the subject of this research, we will first explain some basic notions and reasons which lead to discrimination. Actions by individuals and social groups alike are conditioned by complex forms of social relationships characterized by different types of positive and negative opinions about other individuals and groups. In such situations, we usually talk about stereotypes<sup>152</sup> and prejudices.<sup>153</sup> Stereotypes are thus associated with mental images

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151 The team of authors especially thanks Sara Lalić from the Centre for Peace Studies for all the advice and comments that were essential for the creation of this study, more precisely the chapter related to the issue of discrimination.

152 “The term *stereotype* was coined in 1798 by the French printer Didot referring to the printing process used to create reproductions. In 1922, the journalist Walter Lippmann associated stereotypes with *images in our heads* or mental reproductions of reality, which led the term to meaning excessive generalizations about members of a certain group. As is the case with prejudices, these generalizations can sometimes be positive [...], but they are mostly negative and resistant to change.” [Plous 2003: 3]

153 Psychological research on prejudices emerged in the 1920s, backed by European and American racial theories that sought to prove the superiority of the white race [Plous 2003, Richards 1997, Garth 1925]. After the Holocaust, in line with the development of human rights, prejudices against other races were described as pathological. Adorno et al. found that the key to prejudices lies in the “authoritarian personality” of rigid individuals who humbly follow authority and see the world as black or white and encourage strict submission to social rules and hierarchies by retaining prejudices especially against groups of lower social status [Adorno et al. 1950].

of individuals and groups which do not change easily, and most often relate to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc., while prejudices are associated with positive or negative opinions about social groups in a rigid way [Calhoun, Light and Keller 1994, Plous 2003, Giddens et al. 2014, Hurst, Fitz Gibbon, & Nurse 2017; Dovidio et al., eds. 2013, Blank, Dabady, & Citro, eds. 2004].

Prejudices operate mainly through stereotypes, which most sociologist and psychologist researchers refer to as “thinking in terms of inflexible categories” [Giddens et al. 2014: 248; Dovidio et al., Ed. 2013]. The rigidity of prejudices refers to pre-established judgments that are independent of the facts. Such, mostly negative and rigid opinions, can be based on real or imagined characteristics of groups and individuals, and among them racial and ethnic prejudices stand out, often towards the Roma as well. Allport defined prejudices as “antipathy” based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization that can be “felt” or “expressed” [Allport 1954: 9]. Prejudices can be directed at an individual who is a member of a group or at the group as a whole, for example at an African-American or African-Americans, a Chinese or the Chinese, at a Roma individual or Roma people, but also members of religious communities, women or men, sexual minorities, and so on. Most researchers define prejudices as “negative attitudes”, i.e. “antipathy” [Dovidio et al., Ed. 2013: 6]. What is worrying about prejudices is that they can have strong consequences for human actions, creating emotionally motivated discriminatory forms of behaviour and actions towards certain groups in society, including the Roma. However, prejudices do not only mean individual attitudes but also cultural norms [Calhoun, Light and Keller 1994: 246] that are transmitted through the education system, through learning from adults, from the media, from other cultural sources and so on. Prejudices are most often maintained because people rarely have direct experience with members of a devalued minority, but uncritically adopt pre-created patterns of opinions about others, accepting prejudices against the Roma often without their own [negative] experience with that social group. Intergroup prejudices generally mean a systematic tendency for members of a group to be judged more positively than those who are not members of that group [Dovidio et al., Ed. 2013: 3]. Giddens et al. [2004: 247] point out that social prejudices as “views of pre-conceived beliefs are often based on hostility and are resistant to change even when confronted with different evidence and new information”.

Racial prejudice is certainly one of the most significant types of social prejudice, i.e. preconceptions on human groups based on some of their external biological characteristics. However researchers point out that “there are no clear-cut races”, but only “levels of certain variations among human beings” [Giddens et al. 2014: 245], i.e. that race “as a biological entity does not exist” [Richards 1997]. However, racial prejudices are widespread, and the process by which people classify individuals or groups according to race Giddens et al. call “rationalization”, emphasizing

that one's life chances for education, employment, household, health care, legal representation, etc. are "shaped by racial attribution and racial hierarchies within that system" [Giddens et al. 2014: 246].

Discrimination based on race or ethnicity occurs when a person is treated unfavorably in relation to the treatment others received or would receive in a similar situation, and the reason for rejection is precisely their racial or ethnic origin. Discrimination, therefore, refers to important social decisions about people based on their assumed racial, ethnic, religious, gender or other identities, to practical actions and actual behavior towards other groups, which are most often based precisely on social prejudices. If prejudices are a series of culturally-based opinions and preconceptions, then discrimination is a series of social actions and practices based on those opinions and preconceptions. Discrimination includes not only actions that subordinate another group, but also those that unfairly favor one's own group [Dovidio et al., ed. 2013: 9]. However, attitudes burdened by prejudices, although often associated with discriminatory behaviour, do not necessarily lead to discriminatory treatment and may exist separately.

The word discrimination itself "comes from the Latin *discriminare*, which means to separate, differentiate on some basis such as gender, race, ethnicity, religious or political belief, disability, sexual orientation, social status, education or some other characteristic" [Vasiljević and Balen 2009: 213]. Prejudices and discrimination can, however, lead to a circular form of reasoning in which causes and consequences are mismatched or confused. Discriminatory treatment does not only occur in individual relationships but can also be institutionally mediated,<sup>154</sup> especially when it comes to racial and/or ethnic discrimination.

As a rule, institutional discrimination<sup>155</sup> continuously poses more obstacles to certain ethnic and other groups compared to others. The institutional and cultural forces of certain social groups and political elites maintain intergroup differences, prejudices, and institutional policies toward certain groups of people, e.g., immigration policies, etc. [Dovidio et al., Ed. 2013: 10]. Laws and policies then justify certain practices, e.g. "immigration policies in many parts of the world favor white immigrants over immigrants belonging to a racial minority" [Dovidio et al., ed. 2013: 10]. The same authors emphasize that institutional discrimination can act independently of individual discrimination as it does not require the support of individuals or their conscious intention to discriminate because institutional practices have a discriminatory effect through long and ritualized practices that seem "normal", as long as ideologies "justify the way in which things are happening" [Dovidio et al., ed. 2013: 10–11].

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154 The concept of "institutional racism" was developed in the United States in the late 1960s by activists Stokeley Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, as a resistance to white supremacy in the structure of social relationships [Giddens et al. 2014: 247].

155 The effects of institutional discrimination most often, according to Dovidio et al. appear in the fields of economics, education, media, the justice system, and mental health [Dovidio et al., ed., 2013: 11].

In social sciences, especially in sociology, it is researched how certain groups are treated through existing social practices [e.g. employment, practices in the health care system, etc.]. In addition to institutional discrimination in society, there is also “cultural discrimination”, where a privileged group defines societal values. It involves not only privileging the culture, heritage and values of the dominant group but also imposing culture on other, less dominant groups. According to this, cultural discrimination is defined as “the belief in the superiority of the cultural heritage of the dominant group over other groups and the expression of such beliefs in individual actions and institutional policies” [Dovidio et al., ed. 2013: 10–11].

When it comes to the Roma, discrimination against them is manifold and to a considerable extent due to their socioeconomic status, but also to indirect and institutional discrimination since the specific nature of the difficult living situation of the Roma population is not always taken into account when drafting regulations, and prejudices against the Roma are often covertly or even overtly practiced. An important aspect of the fight against discrimination is the fight against prejudice by employers, civil servants, educators, medical staff, social workers, police and judges, and service providers, in order for them not to act on the basis of prejudice and thus treat individuals or groups less favorably based on the group they belong to. Since discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity disables the equal participation of the Roma in the social life of the wider community, the fight against discrimination is, as mentioned above, one of the strategic objectives of the NRIS.

### **5.1.2. Legal framework for combating discrimination**

The prohibition of discrimination in Croatia is determined by legal regulations and documents of the UN, the Council of Europe, the EU and the national legislation. At the level of the United Nations, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* guaranteed the freedom and equality of all people in 1948 and the exercise of all rights “without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status” as laid down in Articles 1 and 2 [UN 1948]. Furthermore, Article 7 states that “all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law” [UN 1948]. Aside from this, a special document prohibiting racial discrimination was adopted, the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* of 1966, which in Article 1 defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”. Under this *Convention*, states undertake to pursue a policy of support for the understanding and equality of all races and to abolish all forms of racial discrimination, segregation or apartheid [UN 1966a]. In Article 2



of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, states also undertake to respect and ensure civil rights “without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” [UN 1966b].

The basic documents of the Council of Europe on human rights are the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* [1950], the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* [1992], the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* [1995] and the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine* [1997] [Šimonović Einwalter, ed. 2009]. The Council of Europe specifies discrimination and racism against the Roma under the special term “Anti-Gypsyism”. It is defined as a “specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanization and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization and the most blatant kind of discrimination” emphasizing that “anti-Gypsyism is an especially persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace form of racism, and convinced of the need to combat this phenomenon at every level and by all means” [ECRI 2011: 3].

At the level of the European Union, the key anti-discrimination documents are the *Treaty on European Union* [TEU] and the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* [TFEU], which define as the core values of the EU legal order the principles of equality, the prohibition of discrimination and the obligation to combat discrimination “based on gender, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” [Selanec and Barać-Ručević 2017: 11]. In addition, the EU anti-discrimination law consists of directives that more precisely regulate non-discrimination. More specifically, there are seven directives on equality between women and men and two directives<sup>156</sup> prohibiting discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation.

Pursuant to Article 3 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*, the highest values of the constitutional order and the basis for the interpretation of the Constitution are “freedom, equal rights, national and gender equality, peace-making, social justice, respect for human rights, inviolability of ownership, conservation of nature and the environment, the rule of law and a democratic multiparty system” [Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, OG 85/10].

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<sup>156</sup> The first *Directive 2000/43/EC* refers to the implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, and the second *Directive 2000/78/EC* deals with the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and at work. The two directives therefore prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation.

In addition to the *Constitution*, discrimination in Croatia is prohibited by two organic laws – the *Anti-Discrimination Act* and the *Act on Gender Equality*. Pursuant to Article 1 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act*, which has been in force in the Republic of Croatia since 1 January 2009, discrimination means “placing in a less favorable position” any person on the grounds of “race or ethnic affiliation or color, gender, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, property, trade union membership, education, social status, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, gender identity, expression or sexual orientation”, as well as placing in a less favorable position any “person related to that person by kinship or other relationship” [Anti-Discrimination Act 85/05, 112/12]. In Article 2, *the Act* defines forms of discrimination as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, segregation, encouragement to discrimination and failure to make reasonable accommodation. However, despite good legal solutions, the problem of their application in practice remains, including in the context of discrimination against the Roma in Croatia.

## 5.2. Discrimination and anti-Gypsyism in EU countries

According to reports from the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – FRA*, it is impossible to present a reliable overall picture of progress in the fight against racial discrimination, given that EU governments do not collect “ethnically disaggregated data” [FRA 2012, FRA 2018]. Therefore, according to the same source, it is impossible to determine whether the extent of discrimination in areas such as employment, housing or education has improved over time, especially in conditions where some Member States prohibit statistics on racial or ethnic minorities by law. An additional problem is that some EU Member States do not even keep statistics on complaints filed specifically for discrimination [FRA 2012, 2018].

With the aim to investigate the incidence of discrimination against minorities in the EU, in 2016 the FRA conducted a research titled *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II)*. This was the second wave of a survey conducted among Roma, which collected information on almost 34,000 people who live in Roma households in nine Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain [FRA 2018: 9].<sup>157</sup> The *EU-MIDIS II* analysis was based on the research on discrimination against Roma and anti-Gypsyism as a key structural driver of Roma exclusion that undermines Roma integration in EU countries. FRA reports on Roma show that at the level of the EU discrimination and hate crimes against Roma continued in 2016,

<sup>157</sup> Previously conducted *FRA - EU-MIDIS I* research from 2008 and the *Survey on Roma* from 2011 did not cover Roma in Croatia [FRA 2016: 44].

confirming that hatred of Roma remains an important obstacle to Roma inclusion in EU countries, while the social and economic situations of Roma across the EU have not changed significantly. The data show that almost every other Roma [41%] felt exposed to discrimination due to their ethnicity in the last five years at least once in one of the areas of life such as education, work, housing or health, while every fourth [26%] stated that the last incident involving discrimination occurred in the previous 12 months prior to the research [FRA 2016: 11]. In the previous 12 months, the Roma most often experienced discrimination while using public or private services [19%] and while looking for work [16%], but only 12% reported their experiences of discrimination to the authorities, while “27% of surveyed Roma do not know of any law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin”, and “the majority of Roma [82%] do not know that there is any organization offering support to victims of discrimination” [FRA 2016: 11].

In terms of harassment, a 2016 survey found that almost one in three Roma respondents [30%] had experienced some form of harassment based on their ethnicity in the previous 12 months, with similar rates for women [29%] and men [31%]. The highest levels of harassment of Roma were recorded in the Czech Republic [56%], Greece [50%] and Slovakia [37%]. According to these data, Croatia was around the average of the surveyed countries with 31%, together with Spain [30%] and Romania [27%]. A slightly lower share was recorded in Portugal [20%], and the least harassment based on their Roma origin in the previous 12 months was recorded among the Roma in Hungary [18%] and Bulgaria [12%] [FRA 2018: 21].

Anti-Gypsyism has a strong impact on all aspects of Roma life and also contributes to inequalities in key areas such as education, employment, living standards, health and housing. High poverty, low-skilled jobs, education in separate classes and/or schools are not good ways to mitigate and solve this phenomenon. However, given that Roma have historically faced the hardships of discrimination, marginalization, exclusion and intolerance, such deprivation is often even seen as “normalcy”, which in fact further contributes to their stigmatization and social exclusion. This leads to a vicious circle in which the social exclusion of Roma intensifies, resentment towards them grows, and their marginalization becomes socially acceptable and enables a further strengthening of anti-Gypsyism [FRA 2018: 25].

In 2018, the FRA produced a special report entitled *A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion* in which it summarizes the findings collected by research conducted in 2016 and 2011 [FRA 2018]. A comparative analysis of these data showed that the aims of reducing the poverty of Roma, improving their access to employment, ensuring their right to adequate housing and quality education, and combating anti-Gypsyism were not achieved in accordance with the EU framework for Roma integration [FRA 2018: 3]. Unresolved issues still remain, such as harassment of the Roma, hate crimes, poor housing, unavailability of electricity and

drinking water, lack of food and health insurance, showing that the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism is still present [FRA 2018]. Given that equality and respect for human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minorities, are fundamental values of the EU, then the fight against discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma continues to be set as an EU priority [FRA 2018: 7]. In its latest *Fundamental Rights Report*, the FRA states that EU Member States should revise their Roma integration strategies and “acknowledge anti-Gypsyism as a form of racism, which can lead to forms of structural discrimination” [FRA 2019: 118].

Ethnic discrimination and discrimination against the Roma within the EU are also shown by the latest results of the *Special Eurobarometer 493* survey, where discrimination based on skin color and ethnic origin is perceived in a significant average. To be precise, 61% of the population of the 28 EU countries believe that discrimination against the Roma is present in their country, while large differences between countries are apparent as well [Special Eurobarometer 2019: 5]. The perception of discrimination against the Roma ranges at as much as 82% in Sweden and Greece, 79% in Italy, 77% in France and so on, while the results are much lower, for example, for Latvia and Malta, where 35% of respondents perceive discrimination against the Roma in their country, as well as Estonia where that share is 23%. In Croatia, the perception of discrimination against the Roma is present among 41% of respondents [Special Eurobarometer 2019: 5].

### 5.3. Discrimination against the Roma in Croatia

Roma in Croatia share the experience of discrimination in many ways similar to some other EU countries, as shown by the results of the *EU-MIDIS II* survey [FRA 2016] where 37% of the Roma surveyed in Croatia stated that they felt exposed to discrimination based on their origin in the previous 12 months, and 50% of respondents stated that they had such experience in the previous five years. Compared to other countries covered by the research, Croatia was slightly above the average for all 9 European countries covered by the research. For example, in Bulgaria the share of Roma who experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months was 14%, and in Romania and Hungary it was 21%. Worse results than Croatia were only found in Greece, where 48% of respondents stated that they experienced discrimination, and Portugal, where 47% of surveyed Roma stated that they experienced discrimination based on their Roma origin. Results similar to those in Croatia were recorded in Spain [35%], the Czech Republic [32%] and Slovakia [30%].

*The Ombudswoman’s 2016 Survey on Attitudes and Level of Awareness on Forms of Discrimination* shows that Roma [20.2%] are the group most likely to experience discrimination in the Croatian society [Ombudsman 2017: 30]. In terms of

social distance, the same survey confirmed the continued presence of stereotypes and prejudices especially against the Roma – “48% of respondents think that they live off social assistance and do not want to work, and 27% that Roma employed in service industries would turn clients away” [Ombudsman 2017: 7].

A certain decline in discrimination and xenophobia against Roma in Croatia is seen to some extent in the research report titled *Prevalence and Indicators of Discriminatory and Xenophobic Attitudes in the Republic of Croatia in 2017*, which was prepared by the Center for Peace Studies to determine the attitudes of the general population in Croatia towards multiculturalism, immigration of foreigners and xenophobia [CPS 2017: 5]. The survey showed that compared to 2013, when it was found that 41.4% of Croatian citizens believed that Roma presented a certain type of “threat” to their security, property and interests of the country, in 2017 this percentage dropped to 25.2%, indicating a decline in xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes against the Roma. The fragile and uncertain shift in the decline of xenophobia against the Roma, which this survey found, has not yet been measured long enough to allow more confident conclusions about a more stable trend. However, in order to integrate the Roma into Croatian society, work should be continued to facilitate and accelerate that integration, taking into account the experiences of discrimination that were also identified in this study.

The 2018 study titled *Roma Inclusion in Croatian Society: A Baseline Data Study*, which was based on the results of the 2017 survey, i.e. the results on which this study was based, showed that last year, 23.3% of RNM members experienced discrimination several times, while 5.2% experienced discrimination once [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018: 249].

*The Ombudswoman’s 2018 Report* shows that in 2018 the most reported were cases of discrimination based on national and ethnic origin, mostly concerning national minorities of the Roma and Serbs as well as migrants [Ombudsman 2019: 2]. In her *Report*, the Ombudswoman pointed out that “an anti-minority spirit is still encouraged in the Croatian society and stereotypes are maintained towards members of certain national minorities, especially Roma and Serbs” [Ombudsman 2019: 34]. She also states the problem of non-reporting hate crimes that threaten fundamental human rights and freedoms as these crimes are “not sufficiently acknowledged” or “their persecution is sometimes inadequate” [Ombudsman 2019: 32]. A brief overview of the results also shows that Roma in Croatia, as well as in Europe, are exposed to discrimination. Detailed data on discrimination against the Roma in Croatia are presented below, and in some places these results have been compared with those of the 2016 *EU-MIDIS II* survey, which covered eight countries in addition to Croatia.<sup>158</sup>

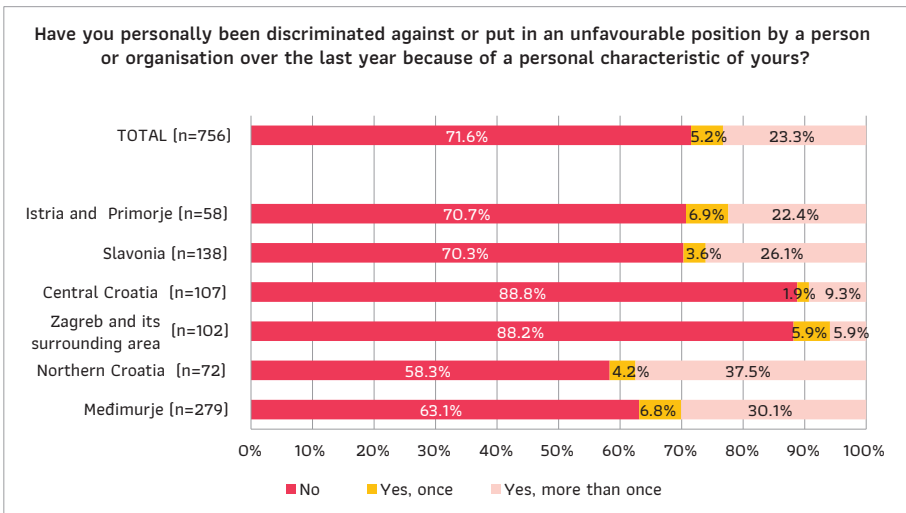
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158 The countries in question are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

### 5.3.1. Experience of discrimination – research results

When asked about their personal experience of discrimination<sup>159</sup> in the last year, 756 respondents answered, out of which 23.3% stated that they experienced discrimination more than once, and 5.2% stated that they had such experience once in the last year. The highest share of respondents [71.6%] stated that they did not have such an experience. When taking into account the region in which the RNM members live, it is possible to note differences that are also statistically significant.<sup>160</sup>

**GRAPH 38.** Experience of discrimination in the last year according to region

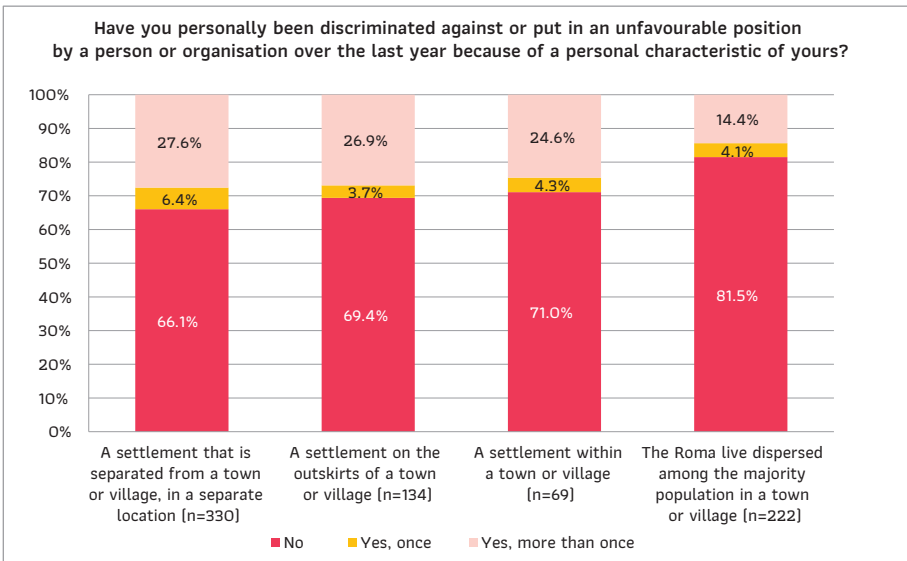


The highest share of respondents who stated that they have been discriminated against several times in the last year lives in Northern Croatia and Međimurje. In Zagreb and its surrounding area and Central Croatia the smallest share of RNM members who have experienced some form of discrimination in the last year was recorded, i.e. RNM members who were put in a less favorable position by an individual or an organization due to some personal characteristic.

159 The data analyzed in this chapter do not speak about the actual presence of discrimination, but about the experiences and perceptions of research participants.

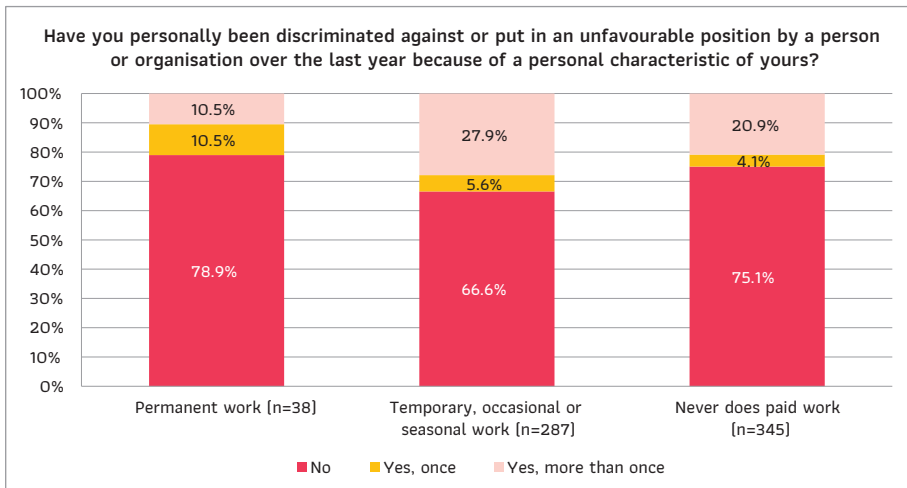
160 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 52.441$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.186$ .

**GRAPH 39.** Experience of discrimination in the last year according to type of settlement



Differences in the experience of discrimination in the last year have been determined according to the type of settlement as well.<sup>161</sup> Members of the RNM who live dispersed among the majority population, as opposed to Roma who live in concentrated Roma settlements, stated to a lesser extent that they were put in a less favorable position by an individual or by an organization in the last year due to some personal characteristics.

**GRAPH 40.** Experience of discrimination in the last year according to the form of paid work



161 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 17.552$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p < 0.008$ ,  $V = 0.108$ .

It was found that the experience of discrimination is not related to age, gender or education of RNM members who answered the question about discrimination that they experienced in the last year. However, there is a connection between the employment status of an individual, or their position in the labor market, and their experience of discrimination.<sup>162</sup> Those who never do paid work and those who work temporarily, occasionally or seasonally stated that they experienced discrimination more often in the last year than those RNM members who have a permanent job.

**TABLE 24. Areas of discrimination experienced in recent years according to region**

Area of discrimination		REGION													
		Medimurje		Northern Croatia		Zagreb and its surrounding area		Central Croatia		Slavonia		Istria and Primorje		TOTAL	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Work and employment	No	229	80.9%	59	78.7%	102	95.3%	105	96.3%	126	86.3%	52	86.7%	673	86.3%
	Yes	54	19.1%	16	21.3%	5	4.7%	4	3.7%	20	13.7%	8	13.3%	107	13.7%
Education	No	264	93.6%	65	86.7%	107	100.0%	105	96.3%	135	92.5%	56	93.3%	732	94.0%
	Yes	18	6.4%	10	13.3%	0	0.0%	4	3.7%	11	7.5%	4	6.7%	47	6.0%
Social welfare	No	252	89.4%	62	82.7%	104	97.2%	104	95.4%	126	86.3%	52	86.7%	700	89.9%
	Yes	30	10.6%	13	17.3%	3	2.8%	5	4.6%	20	13.7%	8	13.3%	79	10.1%
Health care	No	258	91.5%	66	88.0%	107	100.0%	105	96.3%	135	92.5%	55	91.7%	726	93.2%
	Yes	24	8.5%	9	12.0%	0	0.0%	4	3.7%	11	7.5%	5	8.3%	53	6.8%
Judiciary	No	270	95.7%	74	98.7%	107	100.0%	108	99.1%	140	95.9%	57	95.0%	756	97.0%
	Yes	12	4.3%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%	6	4.1%	3	5.0%	23	3.0%
Public administration – administrative proceedings	No	273	96.8%	72	96.0%	106	99.1%	108	99.1%	137	93.8%	57	95.0%	753	96.7%
	Yes	9	3.2%	3	4.0%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%	9	6.2%	3	5.0%	26	3.3%
Rental and sale of flats	No	280	99.3%	75	100.0%	106	99.1%	108	99.1%	142	97.3%	56	93.3%	767	98.5%
	Yes	2	0.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%	4	2.7%	4	6.7%	12	1.5%
The media	No	269	95.4%	74	98.7%	107	100.0%	107	98.2%	138	94.5%	58	96.7%	753	96.7%
	Yes	13	4.6%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%	2	1.8%	8	5.5%	2	3.3%	26	3.3%
Commerce and other service industries	No	245	86.6%	69	92.0%	105	98.1%	106	97.2%	130	89.0%	53	88.3%	708	90.8%
	Yes	38	13.4%	6	8.0%	2	1.9%	3	2.8%	16	11.0%	7	11.7%	72	9.2%
Membership in civil society organizations	No	281	99.6%	75	100.0%	107	100.0%	107	98.2%	135	92.5%	59	98.3%	764	98.1%
	Yes	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.8%	11	7.5%	1	1.7%	15	1.9%
Participation in cultural and artistic creation	No	282	100.0%	75	100.0%	107	100.0%	107	98.2%	140	95.9%	59	98.3%	770	98.8%
	Yes	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.8%	6	4.1%	1	1.7%	9	1.2%
Police conduct	No	252	89.4%	65	86.7%	103	96.3%	104	95.4%	134	91.8%	54	90.0%	712	91.4%
	Yes	30	10.6%	10	13.3%	4	3.7%	5	4.6%	12	8.2%	6	10.0%	67	8.6%
Other	No	274	97.2%	70	93.3%	101	94.4%	107	98.2%	142	97.3%	55	91.7%	749	96.1%
	Yes	8	2.8%	5	6.7%	6	5.6%	2	1.8%	4	2.7%	5	8.3%	30	3.9%

162 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 11.076$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.03$ ,  $V = 0.091$ .



Overall, the most numerous cases of discrimination happen in the area of work and employment, where 13.7% of respondents stated that they have been put in a less favorable position by an individual or an organization in the past year due to some personal characteristic. The results of the 2016 *EU-MIDIS II* survey show a similar representation of surveys by area. Considering that in the cited research “looking for work” and “employed” are separate categories, if we look at them together, as is the case in this research, then we would also notice that this is the area where the Roma experience discrimination most often. In Croatia, according to the results of *EU-MIDIS II* from 2016, 38%<sup>163</sup> of surveyed Roma stated that they were discriminated against in this area. In this segment of the surveyed countries, only Portugal had worse results [58%] than Croatia, while the Czech Republic and Greece were very close with 34%. A slightly lower share of discriminated Roma in these areas was found in Slovakia [27%], and out of all nine surveyed countries, the least recorded cases of discrimination in the field of labor and employment happened in Bulgaria [10%], Romania [16%], Hungary [17%] and Spain [18%] [FRA 2016: 37].

The results show that the area of social welfare is the one in which, after work and employment, Roma are most often discriminated against. To be concrete, 79 respondents or 10.1% of them stated that they experienced discrimination in the area of social welfare in the past year. As regards the *EU-MIDIS II* survey from 2016, a comparison with this data is not entirely possible, *inter alia* because the categories that were used are not comparable.<sup>164</sup> However, it is possible to make a “rough” comparison taking into account the category “other public/private services” included in the *EU-MIDIS II* survey. In this area of life, 27% of surveyed Roma in Croatia stated that they experienced discrimination in the previous year [FRA 2016: 37]. The category “other public/private services” covers a much broader spectrum of areas of life<sup>165</sup> than the category “social welfare” which was used in this research. However, if “social welfare” [10.1%] is paired with the categories “commerce and other service industries”, where 9.2% of respondents experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months and “public administration and administrative proceedings” where 3.3% members of the RNM experienced discrimination in the last year, we get 22.6% of members of the RNM who experienced discrimination in an area that can be conditionally named “other public/private services”. In 2016, Croatia was again slightly above the average of the nine countries covered by the survey. The highest share of persons who were discriminated against was found in Greece, where 43% of Roma

163 The percentages shown for Croatia, as well as for the other eight countries, represent the combined categories “looking for work” and “employed”. For original values for each individual category of all nine countries see: FRA [2016: 37], *Table 6*

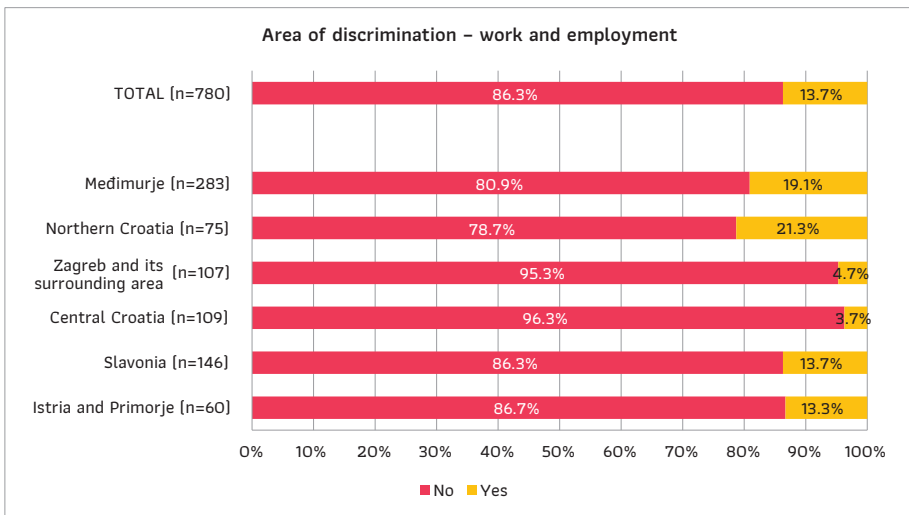
164 In addition to the above-mentioned categories “looking for work” and “employed” in the *EU-MIDIS II* survey, the following categories were used: “education [own or as a parent]”, “accommodation”, “other public/private services” and “health”. For more detail, see: FRA 2016: 37.

165 According to the methodology of the *EU-MIDIS II* survey, other public/private services include nightclubs, cafes, restaurants, hotels, administrative offices or public services, public transport and trade. For more detail, see: FRA 2016: 37.

experienced discrimination in the area of “other public/private services” in the last year. This was followed by Portugal with 38% and Spain with 30%, while the lowest results were recorded in Bulgaria 10%, Hungary 15 % and the Czech Republic and Romania 17%, while in Slovakia this share was 23% [FRA 2016: 37].

After work and employment, social welfare and commerce and service industries, the fourth most common area of discrimination was police conduct, where 67 respondents [8.6%] stated that they were discriminated against in the last year.

**GRAPH 41. The area of experienced discrimination according to region – work and employment**



And just as the regional difference in the experience of discrimination was found at the general level, the share of respondents who experienced discrimination in certain areas appears to vary between regions. In the areas of work and employment, the highest share of those who experienced discrimination live in Northern Croatia and Međimurje, and those who had the least such experiences are those living in Central Croatia and Zagreb and its surrounding area.<sup>166</sup> When it comes to work and employment, there is a noticeable difference in the number of women and men who stated that they experienced discrimination.<sup>167</sup> The experience of discrimination is not related to age groups, and no connection was found according to the type of settlement in which the Roma live. The proportion of those who experienced discrimination in the last year also does not differ significantly regardless of whether they completed secondary school or more, if they completed primary school or are without education i.e. they only completed primary school.

166 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 27.254$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001, V = 0.187.

167 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 14.458$ ; df = 1; p < 0.001, V = 0.136.

The fact that the field of work and employment is one of the areas where discrimination against members of the RNM is most visible is also confirmed by the data collected in the qualitative part of the research. RNM representatives, as well as non-Roma figures from all regions, listed examples from which it was evident that the Roma were placed in less favorable positions precisely due to the fact that they were Roma.

*[...] a lot of companies take him in a telephone conversation, when he gets there and when they see that he is Roma, then they say “we will call you” and that’s it. [RNM representative, Istria and Primorje region]*

An interviewed RNM representative in the Central Croatia region also stated that a problem arises when the employer realizes that a member of the RNM is the one looking for work.

*Yes, as soon as they see you when you come looking for work, even though you heard from another person that the company is looking for workers, but as soon as they see that you are Roma they immediately say they don’t need workers, but if we should need them, leave your personal information and we will call, but they never call. [RNM representative, Central Croatia region]*

The problem of discrimination in employment was pointed out not only by RNM members but also by non-Roma interlocutors who encountered examples of discriminatory practices against RNM members or heard about them in their work.

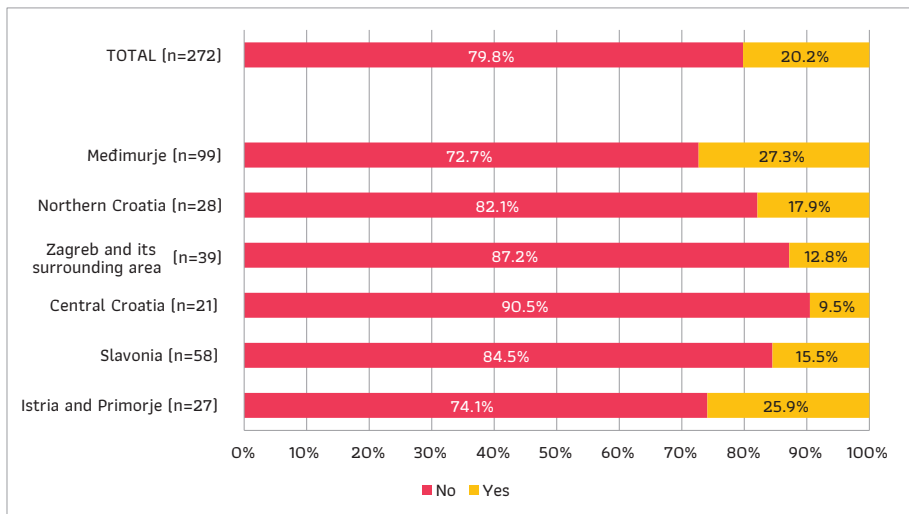
*A colleague from the Bureau said that there are employers who do not want Roma workers. It is probably not officially stated that they do not want a Roma person, but that the employer himself does not want them. [KNF, Central Croatia region]*

**TABLE 25. Experience of discrimination in the last 12 months [RNM members who worked for money]**

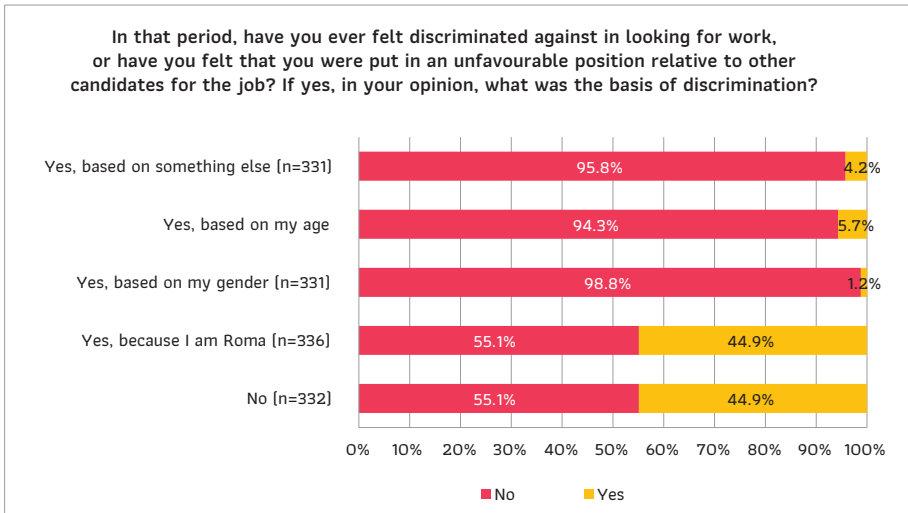
During this time, did you ever feel discriminated against at work, or did you feel that you were put in a less favorable position compared to other employees?						
If yes, in your opinion, what was the basis of discrimination?	No		Yes		TOTAL	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No	25.3%	68	74.7%	201	269	100%
Yes, because I am Roma.	79.8%	217	20.2%	55	272	100%
Yes, based on my gender.	98.9%	265	1.1%	3	268	100%
Yes, based on my age.	99.6%	267	0.4%	1	268	100%
Yes, based on something else.	97.8%	262	2.2%	6	268	100%

Questions about the experience of discrimination were additionally posed to those RNM members who had worked for money in the last 12 months. Out of 753 respondents, 273, or 36.3% of them stated that they worked for money in the last 12 months and they were asked questions about discrimination in the workplace. Three-quarters of the respondents said that they felt like they were put in a less favorable position compared to other employees, and a fifth of those who worked for money in the last year, 55 out of 272 members of the RNM who answered the question, said that they were put in a less favorable position due to the fact that they are Roma.

**GRAPH 42.** Experience of discrimination in the workplace in the last 12 months according to region



Although the differences between the regions are not significant, the share of Roma who stated that they experienced discrimination in the workplace in the last 12 months because they are Roma is slightly higher in Međimurje and Istria and Primorje. In this case as well, the share of Roma who stated that they experienced discrimination in the workplace in the past year because they belong to the Roma national minority was the lowest in Central Croatia. The data collected through qualitative research also suggest that a larger number of interviewees in Međimurje and Istria and Primorje pointed to the problem of discrimination than in other regions. One interlocutor, a KNF from the Međimurje region, answered the question about the experiences of discrimination very decisively: “Discrimination? Discrimination is present in all areas!”

**GRAPH 43.** Experience of discrimination in the last 12 months while looking for work

Those who were looking for work in the last 12 months were also asked about the experience of discrimination. Of the 769 respondents who answered the question whether they had been actively looking for work in the last 12 months, 337, i.e. 43.8% of them answered in the affirmative. After that, they were asked additional questions about their experiences while looking for work. Of the 336 respondents who answered the question, 44.9% of them answered that they experienced discrimination based on the fact that they were Roma.

**TABLE 26.** Experience of discrimination in the last 12 months while looking for work according to region

Region	Yes, because I am Roma				TOTAL	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
Međimurje	51	38.1%	83	61.9%	134	100.0%
Northern Croatia	17	43.6%	22	56.4%	39	100.0%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	22	71.0%	9	29.0%	31	100.0%
Central Croatia	24	82.8%	5	17.2%	29	100.0%
Slavonia	54	71.1%	22	28.9%	76	100.0%
Istria and Primorje	17	63.0%	10	37.0%	27	100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>55.1%</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Regionally, the highest share of RNM members who reported having experienced discrimination while looking for work in the last 12 months live in Međimurje. Of

the 134 respondents who answered the question, as many as 61.9% of them stated that they had that experience. This is followed by Northern Croatia, where 56.4% of those who were looking for work in the past year experienced discrimination because they are members of the RNM. The smallest number of Roma who experienced discrimination while looking for work live in Central Croatia.<sup>168</sup> An interviewee from Slavonia testified about the discrimination against two young Roma women who were unable to get an apprenticeship.

*Two girls went to school to become patissiers, that was their life's dream. In the end they couldn't because no one wanted to take them as apprentices. [RNM representative, Slavonia region]*

A Roma woman from Međimurje also pointed out a problem she had in finding an apprenticeship.

*I was supposed to complete an apprenticeship to become a cashier and they didn't accept me. I went everywhere because I saw and I went, knocked... It is a custom, when I say my last name, then it is over. [...][RNM representative, Međimurje region]*

It is interesting to emphasize that the Rijeka region was characterized through interviews as unproblematic in the context of discrimination, which is confirmed by the following example where a representative of the RNM expresses his anger at the emphasis on the problem of discrimination, which in his opinion does not exist, or at least not in the extent in which it is talked about.

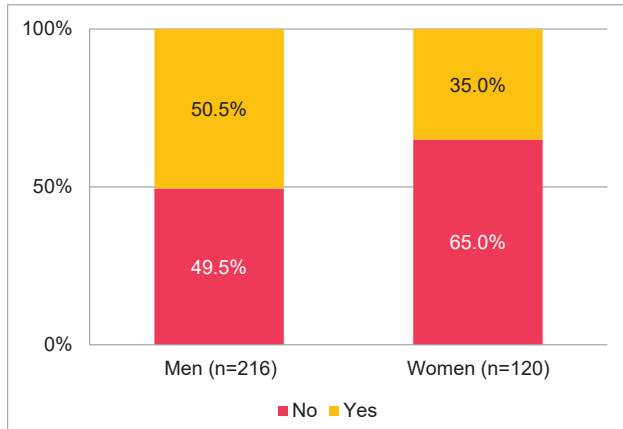
*And then it made me very angry when these intellectuals, supposedly intellectuals, said that there was great discrimination against the Roma in the city of Rijeka, which is not true at all, at all. The reason is that I, who have been here all my life, have never experienced from the people of Rijeka belittling or insults in that way or that they have some sort of aversion towards me, no, never. That is pure lies. They, I don't know why, what was the reason, interviewed some high school children, I don't know which, and those children from the majority people allegedly said that they would be happiest if Roma were deported from Rijeka. After that, we went to investigate all that and found nothing, found no truth in that. [RNM representative, Istria and Primorje region]*

On the other hand, a negative example comes from Istria, where an RNM member stated that some Roma in Istria change their names or nationalities in order to be able to exercise their rights.

168 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 38.424$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.338$ .

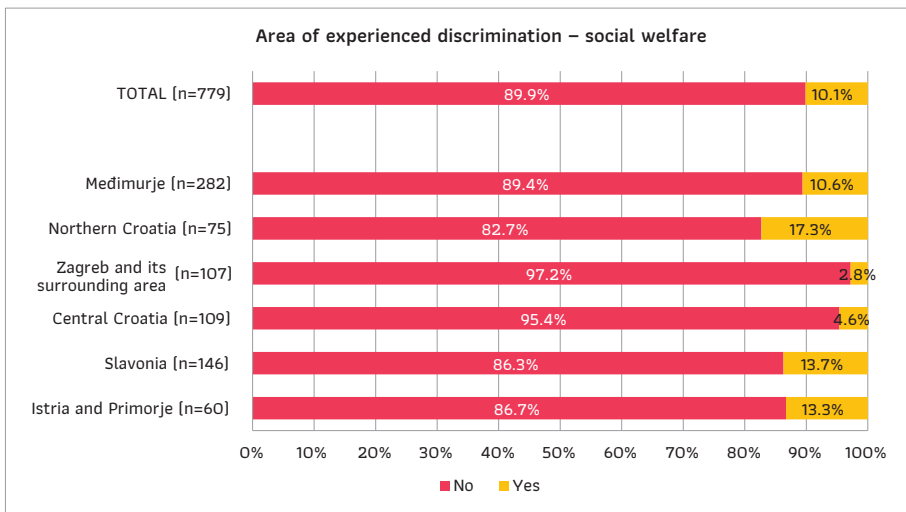
*We had a problem recently with a girl who is finishing nursing school, her father, I think the entire Istria knows that he is Roma, that he is, his father was the first president of the Roma and I, um, when I went to get the certificate I saw that he was declared Italian. [RNM representative, Istria and Primorje region]*

**GRAPH 44.** Experience of discrimination in the last 12 months when looking for work by gender



Men reported to a greater extent than women that they experienced discrimination while looking for work.<sup>169</sup> Half of the surveyed men [50.5%] stated that they experienced discrimination, while 35.0% of women stated that they experienced discrimination while looking for work in the last 12 months.

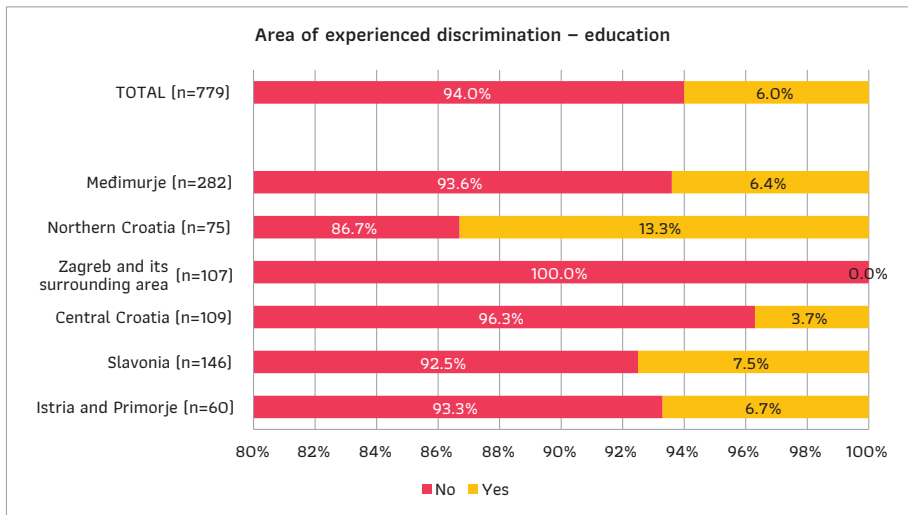
**GRAPH 45.** Area of perceived discrimination according to region – social welfare



<sup>169</sup> Fisher's Exact Test,  $p < 0.009$ .

When it comes to data on discrimination in the area of social welfare, the smallest share of Roma who experienced discrimination live in Zagreb and its surrounding area and Central Croatia. On the other hand, the highest share of Roma who experienced discrimination in this area live in Northern Croatia, followed by Slavonia and Istria and Primorje, where there is a higher share of those who experienced discrimination in this area than in Međimurje.<sup>170</sup> In the area of social welfare, no difference was found according to gender, age groups or the type of settlement in which the Roma live. A smaller but still significant connection was found with the level of education. There are slightly more of those who are without education and who have never finished primary school that stated that they experienced discrimination in this area in the last year.<sup>171</sup>

**GRAPH 46. Areas of experienced discrimination – education**



Although education is only in the sixth place according to the share of members of the RNM who stated that they experienced discrimination in this area in the past year, due to the importance of the education sector, it has been isolated and analyzed at the regional level. In Zagreb and its surrounding area, no respondents stated that they experienced discrimination in this area in the past year, while in Northern Croatia again, the highest share of respondents was noted who stated that they were put in a less favorable position.<sup>172</sup> These results also indicate that even to members of the RNM who answered the questions in the survey it is not entirely clear what discrimination entails, considering that in the qualitative part

170 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 17.043$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.005$ ,  $V = 0.148$ .

171 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 6.179$ ; df = 2;  $p < 0.05$ ,  $V = 0.090$ .

172 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 15.677$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.009$ ,  $V = 0.142$ .



of the research many interviewees [RNM representatives] listed examples of discriminatory practices in the education system.

The fact that discriminatory practices exist in other areas as well, and not only in employment, is also demonstrated by an example from Northern Croatia. One RNM representative described an example of discrimination in the area of health protection in detail, specifically the refusal of primary care doctors to accept the registration of Roma patients, but also pediatricians who did not want to register a Roma child, which is why it could not be vaccinated. However, in that case, the RNM representative stated that the Roma spoke to state institutions, specifically the Social Welfare Centre, the County and the Ministry, after which they managed to exercise their rights.

*I can say that it happened in our county, it was a big problem that no general practitioner wanted to register a Roma patient, it happened on several occasions. The latest example involves pediatricians who did not want to register a child who was already six months old and did not get any vaccines. Then the Social Welfare Centre got involved, they attacked the Roma asking why the child was not vaccinated, and then he came to me and explained that he went both to a general practitioner and a pediatrician and none of them wanted to register and then, of course, I took out the list of free places for us to know where and how and then, of course, we went public, we wrote to the Ministry and the County and we succeeded that way to barely have that one child registered. After that, we didn't have any more such problems because we shook it all up. People realized that they have someone to speak to, that I will make sure they exercise their rights.*  
[RNM representative, Northern Croatia region]

According to the results of the research, 6.8% of members of the RNM experienced discrimination in the area of health protection in the last year. This is a slightly lower percentage than the one that the *EU-MIDIS II* survey showed in 2016, where 10% of Roma in Croatia stated that they experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months in the area of health care. In this research, Croatia was slightly above the average of all nine surveyed countries. The Czech Republic was at the average level [8%], Spain [7%], Portugal [5%] and Hungary [4%] were below the average, while Slovakia [11%], Romania [12%] and Greece [20%] were above the average [FRA 2016: 37].

Finally, in order to determine whether there are significant predictors for putting members of the RNM in a less favorable position based on some personal characteristics, i.e. predictors for discrimination, a binary logistic regression was performed. The following variables were included in the model: region, type of settlement, age, gender, employment, i.e. the form of paid work that an individual performs or does not perform, the level of education and an indicator of

socioeconomic status, i.e. the total household income in the previous month. The region, the type of settlement and gender were determined as significant predictors. Assuming that all other variables included in the model are constant, the members of the RNM who live in the Međimurje region are 5.9 times more likely to experience discrimination than those who live in Zagreb.<sup>173</sup> Also, those who live in Northern Croatia are 4.2 times more likely to be put in a less favorable position due to some personal characteristics than those Roma who live Zagreb and its surrounding area.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, those who live in dislocated settlements on the outskirts of a town or village are 97% more likely to become victims of discrimination than Roma who live dispersed among the majority population.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, the chances of being put in a less favorable position based on some personal characteristic are 51% higher for men than for women. It is interesting to note that the position on the labor market, i.e. the form of paid work that an individual performs or does not perform, as well as their level of education and socioeconomic status, did not stand out here as predictors that increase or decrease the chances of discrimination.

### 5.3.2. Perception of discrimination

In addition to the experience of discrimination, the Roma were also asked about their views [perceptions] of discrimination and especially changes in the last four years. As regards the question whether in the last four years they believe that discrimination against Roma, i.e. putting Roma in a less favorable position compared to other people in the same situation in different areas of life has decreased, remained the same or increased, the highest share of the respondents [57.5%] stated that the level has remained the same, an equal share thought it has decreased [21.2%] as those who saw an increase in discrimination [21.3%].

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173 Level of statistical significance –  $p < 0.001$ .

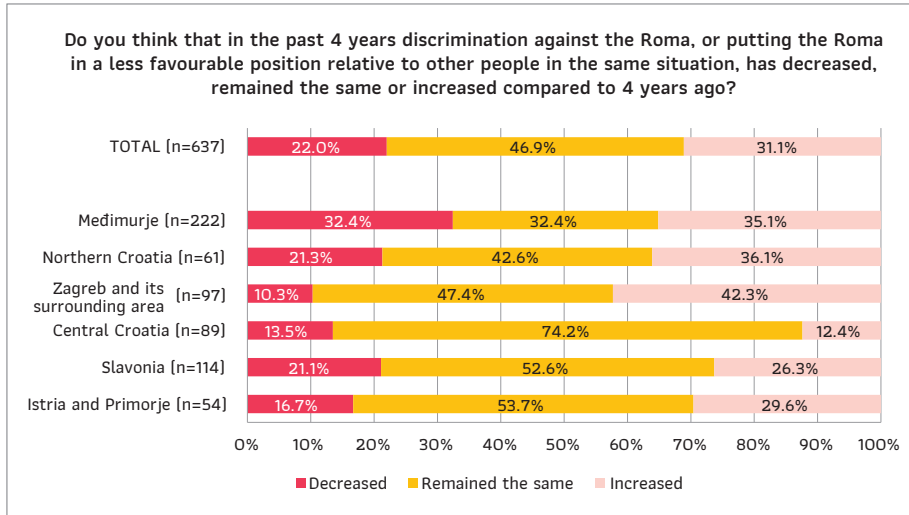
174 Level of statistical significance –  $p < 0.005$ .

175 Level of statistical significance –  $p = 0.048$ .

**TABLE 27.** Perception of discrimination against the Roma in the last 4 years according to areas

Area of discrimination	Decreased	Remained the same	Increased	TOTAL	
	%	%	%	n	%
Work and working conditions	22.0%	46.9%	31.1%	637	100%
Education, science and sports	24.3%	50.2%	25.6%	602	100%
Social security, including social welfare, pension and health insurance and unemployment insurance	17.9%	58.4%	23.6%	592	100%
Health care	21.8%	58.8%	19.3%	600	100%
Judiciary	19.3%	64.7%	16.1%	498	100%
Public administration – administrative proceedings	17.8%	66.0%	16.1%	471	100%
Rental and sale of flats	23.9%	54.5%	21.7%	457	100%
The media	17.7%	58.5%	23.8%	521	100%
Commerce and other service industries	20.4%	58.9%	20.6%	548	100%
Membership in civil society organizations	20.3%	64.7%	15.0%	433	100%
Participation in cultural and artistic creation	24.4%	60.0%	15.6%	430	100%
Police conduct	19.2%	52.2%	28.6%	563	100%
Other	26.7%	53.3%	20.0%	15	100%
TOTAL	21.2%	57.5%	21.3%		

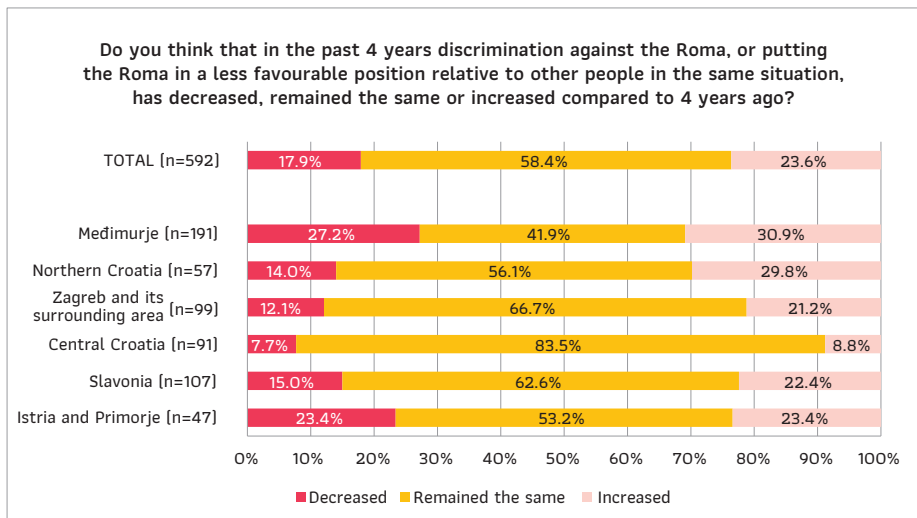
For each of these areas, a difference was determined between some regions. For the purpose of comparison according to region, six areas were singled out for which RNM members stated most often that they experienced discrimination in the last year. These were work and employment; social security, including the area of social welfare, pension and health insurance, and unemployment insurance; commerce and other service industries, police conduct, health protection and education.

**GRAPH 47.** Perception of discrimination in the last four years according to region – work and working conditions

When the area of work and employment is concerned, in Zagreb and its surrounding area the highest share of respondents [42.3%] believe that discrimination against members of the RNM increased in the last four years. The largest number of respondents believe that the situation has remained unchanged, 299 out of 637, or 46.9%, the highest share of which is located in Central Croatia. In Međimurje, there is an equal share of respondents who see the situation as the same as four years earlier, those who see the situation as better claiming that discrimination has decreased, as well as those who believe that discriminatory practices have increased in the last four years.<sup>176</sup> In Northern Croatia as well, more than a third [36.1%] of respondents hold that the level of discrimination in the field of work and employment has increased in the last four years.

176 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 62.754$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.222$ .

**GRAPH 48.** Perception of discrimination in the last four years according to region – social security, including social welfare, pension and health insurance and unemployment insurance



When the area of social security is concerned, which includes the area of social welfare, pension and health insurance and unemployment insurance, regional differences are statistically significant. For example, in Međimurje most respondents who claim that discrimination in this area has decreased can be found, but at the same time, the highest share of members of the RNM who claim that discrimination has increased in this area can be found in Međimurje and Northern Croatia.<sup>177</sup>

Some non-Roma interviewees who are familiar with the work of institutions spoke about discrimination in the field of social security as one of the key areas. For example, a representative of an institution from Central Croatia emphasizes the problem of self-stigma among the Roma population.

*That they are mostly discriminated against when exercising their social rights. Individuals certainly blame themselves for the situation they are in. To some extent, they are to blame, but we cannot generalize on the basis of one Roma and apply that to all the Roma. [KNF, Central Croatia region]*

When asked about the experience of discrimination in the past year, the area of commerce and other service industries was, in terms of frequency, cited immediately after work and employment and social welfare. Asked about changes in the last four years, of the 548 RNM members surveyed, 323 or 58.9% of them said that the level of discrimination in commerce and other service industries remained the same. The fact that this level has increased in the last four years was

<sup>177</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 52.660$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.211$ .

mostly stated by Roma from Međimurje and Istria and Primorje.<sup>178</sup> That there is less discrimination in this area than four years ago was most often stated by RNM members from Northern Croatia, 26.5% of them.

In Northern Croatia, arguably the highest share of Roma believe that the situation remained the same as it was four years earlier – 77.8% of all respondents from that region. As regards police conduct, the highest share of RNM members who believe that the level of discrimination has increased was found in Međimurje, as many as 41.1% of Roma in the region. In Istria and Primorje, a third of respondents find that the situation is worse than four years ago, i.e. that there is more discrimination against the Roma. The highest share of respondents who believe that the level of discrimination in the area of police conduct towards the Roma remained the same can be found in Central Croatia – 79.5%.<sup>179</sup> Although the highest share of Roma in Međimurje claim that the situation is worse than four years ago, at the same time, compared to all other regions, the highest share of Roma in that region stated that discrimination today is at a decrease compared to four years ago. Considering that this is the perception of discrimination and not a direct experience of discrimination, and that there are possible differences in some localities, this finding is not illogical.

When looking at health care, again, the highest share of members of the RNM who believe that there is more discrimination than four years ago live in the Međimurje region [25.5%]. More than a fifth of Roma in Northern Croatia [21.7%], as well as in Zagreb and its surrounding area [20.6%] believe that the level of discrimination is higher than four years ago. Central Croatia has the highest share of Roma who believe that the level of discrimination in the area of health care remained the same [81.6%]. In Slavonia, the share of those who believe that discrimination in this area has decreased and those who think that it has increased is almost equal [21.0% and 18.1%, respectively].

In the field of education, science and sports, Roma who live in the region of Zagreb and its surroundings mostly believe that the level of discrimination increased.<sup>180</sup> Here, as in many other cases, the Roma from Central Croatia mostly believe that the level of discrimination remained the same, namely 79.5% of them. In Istria and Primorje, the highest share is made up of those who believe that the level of discrimination has decreased and it amounts to 41.2%. The problem related to the labor market, but also to education, was emphasized in several cases. This is a problem of secondary school apprenticeships which was stated by the interviewed Roma representatives, but also by non-Roma actors.

178 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 28.532$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.002$ ,  $V = 0.161$ .

179 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 52.809$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.002$ ,  $V = 0.217$ .

180 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 70.004$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.241$ .

*Then we have a problem; a student attends secondary school and has to find an apprenticeship but no business owner will accept them because they are Roma. They never say “this is because he is Roma”, but they accept all other children, and they do not accept him. [KNF, Northern Croatia region]*

Analyzing the perception of discrimination in the last four years, i.e. the changes that have happened in different areas, it can be generally said that a very large share of members of the RNM who live in the Međimurje region stated about almost every area they were asked about that the situation changed, either positively or negatively, unlike Roma in the remaining five regions.<sup>181</sup> One fifth of all surveyed Roma believe that the situation with discrimination is worse than it was, and approximately an equal share of members of the RNM believe that the situation has become more favorable in the last four years, i.e. that the discriminatory practices have decreased. One interviewee agrees with this, a non-Roma actor from the Slavonia region, who emphasizes integration as the only correct and long-term solution.

*I think that the situation is better, that the attitude towards the Roma has been raised to a higher level, but I say that we need cooperation on both sides and we need better cooperation and better relationships and relying on each other, getting used to these children coming to school. And those projects of separating Roma children and individual studying are not good. They did not produce good results. It is best to integrate all the people together, integrate them into equal classes where they can be together and children can simply get used to each other from the earliest age. This will be the best long term solution. [KNF, Slavonia region]*

### **5.3.3. Who to contact in case of discrimination**

When a young Roma woman was asked if she had contacted anyone and who that was, when she could not find a compulsory secondary school apprenticeship, which she assumed was due to the fact that she was a Roma woman, she replied that she only spoke to her subject teacher.

*Yes. To the school. [...] to the teacher who taught a sales-related subject that we had. [...] she said that she would speak to the principal and that she would grant me an apprenticeship, and about that problem – nothing happened. [RNM representative, Međimurje region]*

The presented example shows that there are cases in which the Roma are either unaware that these are discriminatory practices or do not know where to turn in

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181 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 51.988$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.208$ .

the event of discrimination. This is confirmed by data from studies according to which almost a third [31.0%] of the Roma claim that they do not know who to speak to if someone is discriminated against because they are Roma.

**TABLE 28. Who to ask for help in case of experiencing discrimination**

Who do you think should be contacted first if someone is discriminated against because they are Roma?	n	%
the police	270	35.4%
does not know	236	31.0%
Roma representative	35	4.6%
no one	33	4.3%
social welfare centers	30	3.9%
Roma national council	21	2.8%
The media	19	2.5%
Office for Human Rights	18	2.4%
Roma associations	15	2.0%
we have no one to speak to	10	1.3%
prefect, mayor	10	1.3%
ministries	8	1.0%
refuses to answer	8	1.0%
member of parliament	8	1.0%
ombudsman	7	0.9%
other	33	4.3%

Still, the highest share of the Roma who answered the question: “Who do you think should be contacted first if someone is discriminated against because they are Roma?” stated that in such cases the police should be contacted. More than a third of the respondents said this, precisely 270 out of a total of 762 members of the RNM who answered the question. The remaining third of the respondents stated that a Roma representative in their place of residence, social welfare centers, the Roma National Council, the media, or the Office for Human Rights should be contacted [*Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities*, author’s comment], Roma associations, etc. A share of the respondents, precisely 4.3% of them, stated that they would not speak to anyone in such cases, and a dozen respondents stated that they had no one to speak to.

It should be noted here that the results obtained in the general population of the Republic of Croatia in the *2016 Survey on Attitudes and Level of Awareness on Forms of Discrimination* to some extent coincide with the findings stated



above, especially in the part concerning ignorance. This research also showed that almost a third [29.4%] of respondents did not know who to turn to in case of discrimination. The difference is apparent in the share concerning the police as only [17.6%] of the surveyed citizens of the Republic of Croatia stated that in case of discrimination they would contact the police, while 12.7% of Croatian citizens would contact the Ombudswoman [OM 2017: 37].

The cases of reported discrimination were not verified in this research, but it is worth noting that the results of the *EU-MIDIS II* survey from 2016 showed that in all nine EU Member States surveyed only in 12% of cases have the Roma reported discrimination [FRA 2016: 40]. In Croatia, this share was higher than the average for other countries [18%]. Still, less than one fifth of cases are reported. According to the same survey, only 22% of Roma in Croatia knew of an organization that provides support or advice to victims of discrimination, while 46%<sup>182</sup> of them were not familiar with the law which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of skin color, ethnic origin or religion [FRA 2016: 41]. It is therefore obvious that experiences of discrimination exist in all areas, but there is insufficient information or awareness about the possibility of reporting or prosecuting discrimination.

#### 5.3.4. Experience of hate crimes and police conduct

As one of the specific objectives of the NRIS, more precisely its fourth objective in the field of combating discrimination is to “reduce instances of violence against Roma through police activity” through “professional training of police officers of the Ministry of Interior in implementing measures to combat the instances of violence against Roma, as well as their sensitization when working with members of the Roma community” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 116], the Roma were asked about their experiences of hate crimes, changes over time in this area and police conduct.

Pursuant to Article 87[21] of the *Criminal Code*, hate crime is defined as “a criminal offence committed on account of a person’s race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity”. The *Criminal Code* states that any conduct motivated by hatred shall also be taken as an aggravating circumstance in the commission of criminal offences if the *Criminal Code* does not prescribe more severe punishment for such conduct [Criminal Code, OG 126/19].

The 2016 survey conducted in nine EU countries found that 4% of the surveyed members of the RNM were victims of physical violence based on their Roma origin, while 13% knew about such cases within their families or circles of friends [FRA 2018: 23]. Croatia was in that survey above the average of the surveyed countries, with 7% of those who personally experienced physical violence motivated by ha-

<sup>182</sup> The percentage represents the sum [32%] of respondents who stated that such a law did not exist and [14%] respondents who stated that they did not know about the law in question, see: FRA 2016: 41.

tred and 22% of those who knew about such cases in their surroundings. In the Czech Republic [5% and 34%],<sup>183</sup> Slovakia [11% and 25%] and Greece [5% and 21%] the situation is also above the average of other countries, while in the remaining five countries the share of such cases is lower – Spain [2% and 8%], Hungary [2% and 7%], Romania [3% and 6%], Portugal [0% and 7%] and Bulgaria [0% and 5%] [FRA 2018: 23].

**TABLE 29. The experience of hate crimes – according to region**

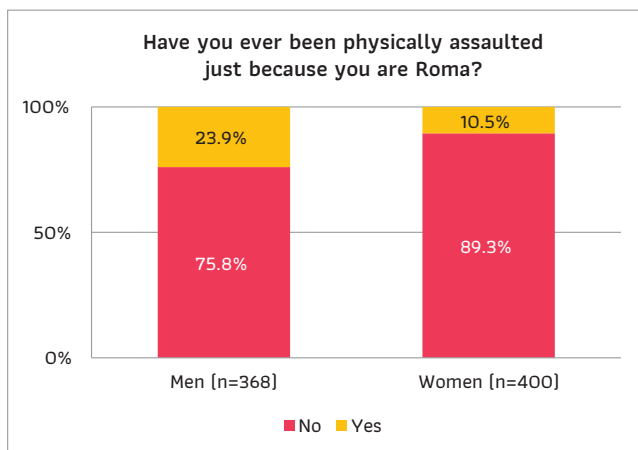
Region	Have you ever experienced that someone physically attacked you just because you are Roma?						TOTAL	
	No		Yes		Does not know			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Medimurje	229	80.4%	55	19.3%	1	0.4%	285	100%
Northern Croatia	65	87.8%	9	12.2%	0	0%	74	100%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	79	79.0%	21	21.0%	0	0%	100	100%
Central Croatia	101	93.5%	7	6.5%	0	0%	108	100%
Slavonia	115	80.4%	27	18.9%	1	0.7%	143	100%
Istria and Primorje	48	81.4%	11	18.6%	0	0%	59	100%
TOTAL	637	82.8%	130	16.9%	2	0.3%	769	100%

The data collected by the research show that 16.9% of RNM members experienced hate crime, precisely 130 out of a total of 769 respondents, which is a much higher share than that from the 2016 survey. However, should be emphasized that these figures cannot be compared due to differences in defining the issue. In the 2016 research, the period of the previous 12 months was considered, while in this research the time frame was not defined, and the respondents could state any case of hate crime they experienced in their lives. Although regional differences are not significant, the smallest share of those who stated that they had such experience live in Central Croatia, and the highest share is found in Zagreb and its surrounding area.<sup>184</sup> Respondents stated that the police acted in 56 cases out of 130 cases of physical attack, while in 26 of them the police recognized that it was a hate crime and protected the victim.

<sup>183</sup> The first percentage in parentheses illustrates the share of those who personally experienced physical violence motivated by hatred, and the second the share of familiarity with cases within families and/or circles of friends of the respondents.

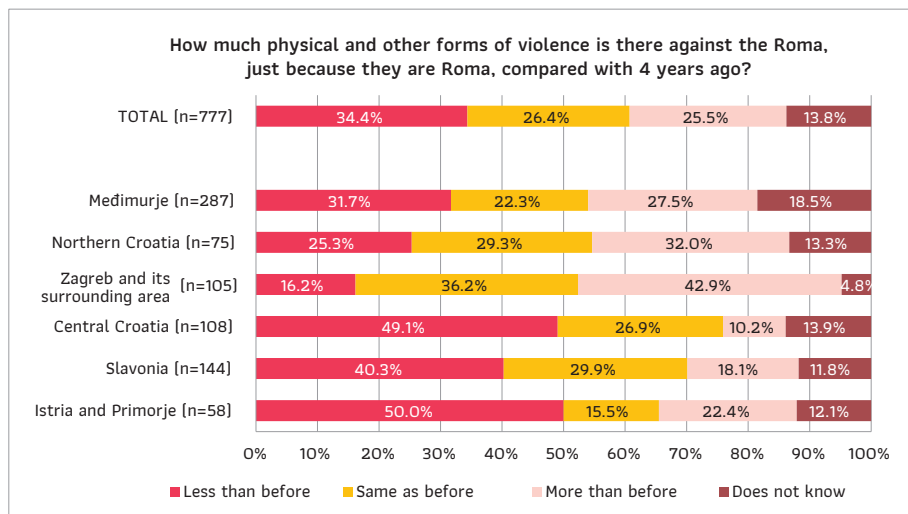
<sup>184</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 14.575$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p = 0.148$ .

**GRAPH 49. Experience of hate crime according to gender**



As with the experience of discrimination, the difference by gender in the experience of hate crimes is significant, and men are the ones who more often stated that they were physically assaulted because they are Roma.<sup>185</sup>

**GRAPH 50. Perception of the occurrence of hate crimes in the last four years**



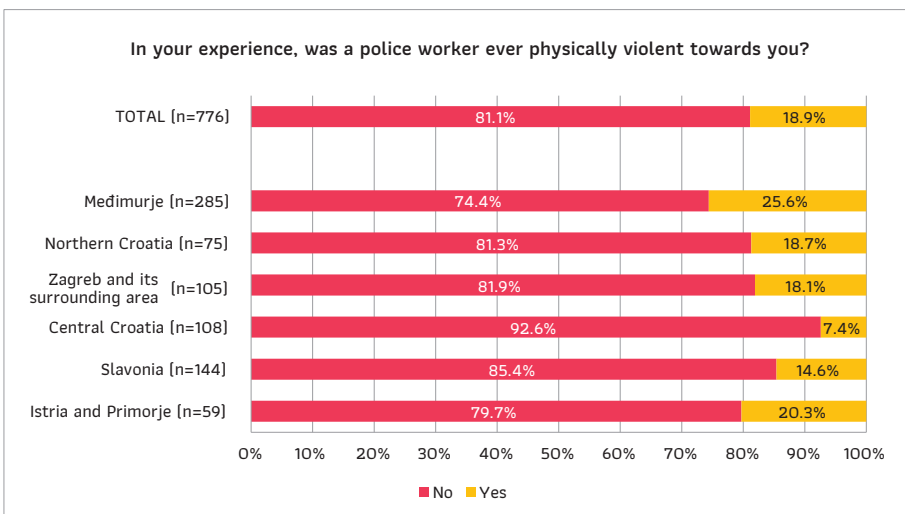
As regards the question about the amount of physical and other forms of violence against Roma today based on their Roma origin, compared to four years ago, a third of the respondents [34.4%] stated that there is less violence now than four years ago. A quarter of the respondents [26.4%] consider that the incidence of vi-

185 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 24.552$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.179$ .

olence against the Roma is the same today as it was four years ago. An equal share is made up of those who believe that there are more physical and other forms of violence against the Roma than four years ago. Regionally, most of those who believe that there are more physical and other forms of violence against Roma today than four years ago live in Zagreb and its surrounding area. 42.9% of respondents from the region of Zagreb and its surroundings think so, and in Istria and Primorje, Central Croatia and Slavonia there is a very high share of those who believe that there is less violence against the Roma today than it was four years ago.<sup>186</sup>

As regards the question on police conduct today compared to four years ago when it comes to recognizing such violence as a hate crime and protecting Roma as victims of such violence, overall, those who believe that the situation is the same as four years ago make up the highest share. This is more than half of the respondents, precisely 52.7%. Less than a quarter of the respondents think that the situation is worse, and 9.5% of them consider the situation slightly worse than four years ago, while 14.6% think that the situation is much worse than four years ago. Regional differences are evident as well. The highest share of those who think that the situation is much worse today than it was four years ago was found in Međimurje. In Zagreb and its surrounding area, Central Croatia and Slavonia, half of the respondents think that the situation is the same as four years ago. In Central Croatia, the highest share of respondents think the situation is much better than it was four years ago.<sup>187</sup>

**GRAPH 51. Personal experience of police conduct – according to region**



186 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 72.738$ ;  $df = 15$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $V = 0.177$ .

187 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $\chi^2 = 18.915$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.003$ .

18.9% of Roma stated that they had a negative experience with the police who were physically violent towards them, most of them in Međimurje, followed by Istria and Primorje. The smallest share of those who had such experiences with the police live in the Central Croatia region. The difference determined between the regions is also statistically significant.<sup>188</sup> It was also found that Roma living in localities that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location had negative experiences with the police slightly more often than those living dispersed among the majority population.<sup>189</sup>

## 5.4. Chapter summary

The data show that the Roma are still a discriminated group in the Croatian society. 5.2% of the surveyed members of the RNM stated that they had one experience of discrimination in the year preceding the research, and 23.3% of the respondents had such an experience several times in the last 12 months. Overall, the most numerous cases of discrimination happen in the areas of work and employment, followed by social welfare. Next are commerce and other service industries, followed by police conduct, health protection, education, etc. The experiences of discrimination are different when looking at the regional level, and the highest share of RNM members who stated that they experienced discrimination in the last 12 months while looking for work live in the Međimurje area. Also, men reported to a greater extent that they experienced discrimination when looking for work than women. Those who never do paid work and those who work temporarily, occasionally or seasonally stated that they experienced discrimination several times in the past year than those members of the RNM who have a permanent job.

In the area of education, in Zagreb and its surrounding area no respondents stated that they faced discrimination in the last year, and in Northern Croatia the highest share of respondents stated that they were put in a less favorable position by an individual or an organization, not only in the area of education but also in social welfare. The findings of the multivariate analysis indicate that in Međimurje and Northern Croatia the possibility of discrimination is higher than in some other regions, especially in Zagreb. Furthermore, the chances for Roma who live in settlements on the outskirts of a town or village to become victims of discrimination are higher than for Roma who live dispersed among the majority population. Men are more likely to be put in a less favorable position due to some personal character-

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188 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 19.530$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.003$ ,  $V = 0.159$ .

189 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 8.284$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ,  $V = 0.103$ .

istic than women. More than half of Roma believe that the level of discrimination remained the same in the last four years. One fifth of all surveyed Roma believe that the situation regarding discrimination is worse than it was, and approximately an equal share of RNM members believe that the situation has become more favorable in the last four years, i.e. that the discriminatory practices have decreased. It is worrying that almost a third of Roma do not know who to speak to when discrimination occurs. Moreover, the data show that 16.9% of the surveyed members of the RNM experienced hate crime. Although regional differences are not significant, the smallest share of those who stated that they had such experience live in Central Croatia, while the highest share was found in Zagreb and its surrounding area. This is an interesting finding considering that in Zagreb and its surrounding area the lowest number stated that they experienced discrimination. Of the 130 cases of physical assault, in 26 of them the police recognized that it was a hate crime and protected the victim. Generally, the Roma believe that police conduct did change in the last four years in terms of recognizing hate crimes.



# 6 The position of RNM members in the judiciary





## 6. The position of RNM members in the judiciary

According to a 2011 research study, the unregulated civil status of RNM members was “one of the most important problems associated with this ethnic community” [Burić and Bagić 2014: 84]. The unresolved status entails a number of other problems and prevents members of the RNM from exercising their rights in different areas. Therefore, one of the general goals of the NRIS up to 2020 refers to status issues. Its aim is to completely solve this problem, that is, in accordance with the legal framework to fully regulate the status of all “Roma who have a firm tie to Croatia [or former SRC]” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2012: 116]. The final chapter addresses the issue of unresolved status and sociodemographic characteristics of those members of the RNM who still face these problems. Moreover, the chapter discusses the use of the institute of free legal aid, and the last part provides indicators on members of the RNM who were convicted of criminal and misdemeanor offences and the sanctions imposed on minors for committing criminal or misdemeanor offences.

### 6.1. Status issues

A research study from 2017, whose data are also presented in this study, used the categorization of types of unregulated status of the Roma in Croatia from the 2011 research. The seven types of unregulated Roma status in the Republic of Croatia include: [1] persons without identity; [2] persons with an established identity who reside in the Republic of Croatia illegally without a regulated status according to the *Foreigners Act*; [3] persons with unregulated temporary residence; [4] persons who meet the criteria for permanent residence but have not regulated it; [5] persons who meet the criteria for acquiring citizenship but have not regulated it; [6] persons whose status has significantly deteriorated due to administrative errors and [7] persons who are unable to acquire a travel document [Burić and Bagić 2014: 85]. Referring to the data from the 2011 research conducted within the *Decade of Roma Inclusion* project, Burić and Bagić projected the findings on the total Roma population and established that “between 1,500 and 2,000 members of the Roma community face problems concerning documents and statuses of foreigners or citizens” [Burić and Bagić 2014: 84–85].

*The Croatian Citizenship Act* [OG 102/19] prescribes that Croatian citizenship can be acquired in one of four ways: by origin, by birth on the territory of the Republic of Croatia, by naturalization and by international agreements. The results show that, of the 4,730 members of the RNM for whom data were collected, 4,310 or 91.1% were born in Croatia. The highest share of the remaining members of the RNM was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina [3.1%]. 103 [2.2%] respondents were born in Kosovo, and 69 respondents [1.5%] were born in Serbia. At the time of the research, 86 of the surveyed RNM members did not have Croatian citizenship, while one person stated that they did not know whether or not they had Croatian citizenship. Of those who did not have citizenship, 22 stated that they do not even have a residence in the Republic of Croatia. In Northern Croatia there were no such cases, while the largest number of them were found in the regions of Međimurje and Zagreb. If the data collected for 4,730 people is taken into account, the number of 86 respondents without citizenship indicates that the share of Roma without citizenship in the Republic of Croatia is 1.8%.

**TABLE 30. Number of RNM who do not have Croatian citizenship and/or residence**

Region	Does not have Croatian citizenship	Does not have residence in the Republic of Croatia
Međimurje	29	12
Northern Croatia	0	0
Zagreb and its surrounding area	21	8
Central Croatia	8	0
Slavonia	13	1
Istria and Primorje	15	1
TOTAL	86	22

Data collected in field interviews with Roma representatives and representatives of relevant institutions indicate a very small number of Roma who have an unresolved citizenship issue, but some interviewees still emphasized the existence of such cases and the slowness in resolving this status issue.

*There are seven or eight families who do not have citizenship here in Bjelovar. Because they are foreigners. They are trying to solve it, but they have been waiting seven or eight years and it has not been solved yet.*

[RNM representative, Central Croatia region]

*There is something, there are two families who don't have citizenship. [...] Well, to be honest, they didn't take care of themselves from the beginning, they didn't register on time, they didn't ask for citizenship and that's it. And when the new rules came, they were affected by the new law, they*

*don't have documents and that's it.* [RNM representative, Central Croatia region]

One interviewee from the Slavonia region, Osijek-Baranja County, stated that several people did not have citizenship but had residence, while a representative of a relevant institution from the same region and the same county pointed to the problem of unresolved status as well.

*I think two people, two, yes. But they have, that, what do you call it, they have residence.* [RNM representative, Slavonia region]

*Not everyone has citizenship, birth certificates, health insurance card, documents.* [KNF, Slavonia region]

In Vukovar-Srijem County, one RNM representative stated that there were slightly more Roma with no citizenship and stated the ways in which Roma temporarily solve the issues of unregulated status and citizenship.

*Over 20. When I left, over 20 of them were without paperwork. Some do not have temporary residence, some have some other citizenship and after 3 months, they have to leave Croatia. They stay in Serbia for 2-3 days and then come back.* [RNM representative, Slavonia region]

In the Istria and Primorje region, one RNM representative also pointed to the slowness in the process of resolving citizenship statuses and stated that there were about eight RNM members in the Rijeka region who do not have Croatian citizenship.

*[...] To acquire Serbian or Kosovo citizenship, to come here with that citizenship, to come here with that citizenship and they will give you some kind of residence, and then you will win the battle in 10 years, you know, those things happened, there are still, eight...* [RNM representative, Istria and Primorje region]

**TABLE 31. Unregulated status according to region**

Unregulated legal status	Region						TOTAL
	Medimurje	Northern Croatia	Zagreb and its surrounding area	Central Croatia	Slavonia	Istria and Primorje	
Person without established identity.	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Resides in the Republic of Croatia illegally without regulating their status according to the Foreigners Act.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Does not have any citizenship.	14	0	0	6	2	1	23
Unregulated temporary residence	7	0	1	1	0	2	11
Meets the conditions for permanent residence, but has not regulated it.	0	0	2	0	1	2	5
Meets the conditions for citizenship, but has not regulated it.	0	0	8	0	2	3	13
The status was worsened significantly through administrative errors.	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Unable to acquire a travel document.	7	0	3	0	1	1	12

Apart from not having regulated their status in the Republic of Croatia, some members of the RNM are stateless, precisely 23 of them. A share of them meets the conditions for acquiring citizenship, but they have not regulated that issue. Cases of unregulated status can mostly be found in Međimurje, which is expected given that the majority of the Roma population lives in that region.

**TABLE 32. Unregulated status of household members according to region**

Region	Have any members of the household had an unresolved status in the Republic of Croatia, but have resolved it during the last four years [from 2013 until today]				TOTAL	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
Međimurje	1419	97.3%	40	2.7%	1459	100%
Northern Croatia	483	99.6%	2	0.4%	485	100%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	600	98.0%	12	2.0%	612	100%
Central Croatia	398	98.8%	5	1.2%	403	100%
Slavonia	440	97.6%	11	2.4%	451	100%
Istria and Primorje	337	95.2%	17	4.8%	354	100%
TOTAL	3677	97.7%	87	2.3%	3764	100%

When asked whether any of their household members had an unresolved status in the last four year period and resolved it in the meantime, in 2.3% of cases the answer was yes. The highest share of such people live in Istria and Primorje, while the smallest number was found in Northern Croatia.<sup>190</sup>

Even though the share of Roma who do not have a resolved status is not large, the problem still exists. With the NRIS stating that this problem is being addressed in its entirety, for the fulfillment of this goal, it is necessary to put in additional efforts to have one of the general objectives of the NRIS fully realized.

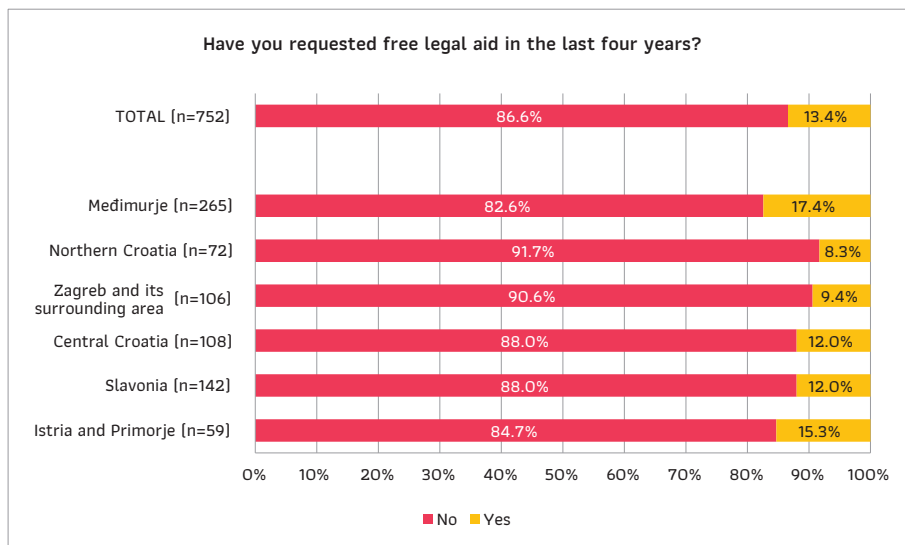
190 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 21.081$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.002$ ;  $V = 0.075$ .

## 6.2. Free legal aid

By providing legal aid through the *Free Legal Aid Act*, Croatian citizens, as well as foreigners in the Republic of Croatia, are enabled to “achieve equality before the law, ensure effective legal protection and access to court and other public bodies” [Central Government Portal 2019]. Free legal aid [FLA] is obtained as primary or secondary. According to the *Free Legal Aid Act* [OG 98/19], primary legal aid includes: general legal information, legal advice, preparation of submissions before public law bodies, the European Court of Human Rights and international organizations in accordance with international treaties and rules of operation of these bodies, representation in proceedings before public bodies and legal assistance in non-judicial amicable settlement to disputes, while secondary assistance includes legal advice, drafting of submissions in the procedure of protection of workers’ rights before the employer, drafting of submissions in court proceedings, representation in court proceedings, legal assistance in amicable settlement to disputes, exemption from payment of court costs and exemption from payment of court fees.

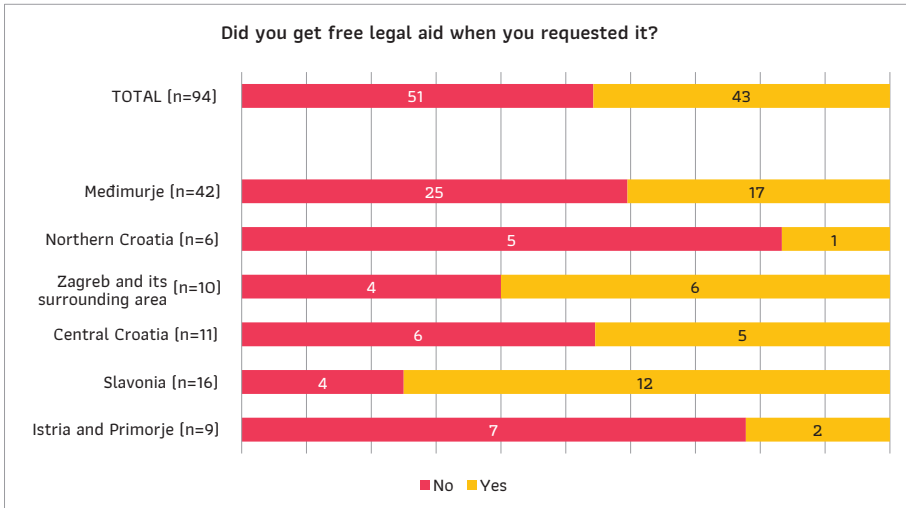
The fifth report of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, in the part addressing the use of free legal aid by RNM members, states that several Roma associations are registered with the Ministry of Justice who are authorized to provide primary legal aid. It was also emphasized that in areas where the Roma live, there are associations aimed at promoting and protecting minority rights and providing primary legal aid to vulnerable social groups, including the Roma. Another emphasized fact was that some Roma associations keep records on the number of provided services of primary legal aid and that the Ministry of Justice “acknowledges the costs of promotion and informing potential beneficiaries about the implementation of the primary legal aid project as justified costs for authorized associations and legal clinics” [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2019b: 41]. As stated in the same Report, data on secondary legal aid to members of the RNM are unknown, considering that legal aid is provided under the *Act* for all socially and economically vulnerable citizens of the Republic of Croatia, as well as those residing in the territory of the Republic of Croatia under equal conditions, regardless of their nationality [Government of the Republic of Croatia 2019b: 42].

**GRAPH 52. Requests for free legal aid according to region**



The data collected by the research show that the share of Roma who exercised their legal right in the last four years and requested free legal aid does not differ significantly between regions.<sup>191</sup> In all regions, 80% or more of members of the RNM have not requested free legal aid in the last four years. Requests for free legal aid are not connected to a particular type of settlement either. Regardless of where they live, whether in concentrated or dispersed settlements, most Roma stated that they have not requested free legal aid.

<sup>191</sup> The survey question did not assess whether the Roma asked for primary or secondary free legal aid, the question rather referred to both types of aid.

**GRAPH 53. Exercised right to free legal aid according to region<sup>192</sup>**

Of the 94 members of the RNM surveyed who stated that they had requested free legal aid, more than half [54.3%] were not granted free legal aid. Regional differences are not significant here. It is important to note that in Northern Croatia out of 6 cases only in one was the right to free legal aid exercised, while in Slavonia out of 16 cases requesting legal aid, in 12 of them this right was exercised. Significant differences in exercising the right to free legal aid were not found according to the type of settlement either. The share of those who requested and exercised free legal aid does not differ significantly between concentrated and dispersed Roma settlements, nor within concentrated settlements.

Findings related to requests for free legal aid, which show that one fifth of RNM members requested free legal aid, suggest that the Roma are not sufficiently aware of the rights they have and/or insufficiently use those rights. However, the facts related to the legal right to free legal aid are not specific only to the Roma national minority as some research, as well as reports on the *Free Legal Aid Act*, indicate that Croatian citizens generally do not use this institute much. In her *2018 Report*, the Ombudswoman also pointed out the non-functionality and limitations of the FLA system, since “those who live in isolated and remote areas” are in an especially difficult position concerning the possibility of use, i.e. access to the system of FLA [Ombudsman 2019: 18].

<sup>192</sup> Considering that the total number of respondents who answered this question was relatively small [N=94], especially in some regions, the data in the graph are expressed in absolute amounts and not in percentages.



### 6.3. Convictions for criminal and misdemeanor offences, including minors

Out of 3,165 members of the RNM aged 14 or above for which data was collected, 15.3% of them were convicted for a misdemeanor. 6.9% of them were convicted for a criminal offence, while for 109 minors a sanction for a criminal or misdemeanor offence was imposed. It should be emphasized here that the research did not assess the type of criminal or misdemeanor offence, so it should be kept in mind that in these categories misdemeanors and criminal offences of different severity are shown in the table. In all three cases the share of men is statistically significantly higher than the share of women,<sup>193</sup> which is apparent in the results for the general population as well [CBS 2019].

**TABLE 33.** Convictions for criminal and misdemeanor offences, including minors according to region

Region	Convicted for a criminal offence				Convicted for a misdemeanor offence				Sanction imposed on a minor for a criminal or misdemeanor offence			
	No		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Medimurje	1029	92.0%	89	8.0%	945	84.5%	174	15.5%	1071	95.8%	47	4.2%
Northern Croatia	268	83.8%	52	16.3%	240	75.0%	80	25.0%	301	94.1%	19	5.9%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	490	97.0%	15	3.0%	455	90.1%	50	9.9%	500	99.0%	5	1.0%
Central Croatia	360	96.8%	12	3.2%	339	91.1%	33	8.9%	368	98.7%	5	1.3%
Slavonia	527	93.9%	34	6.1%	451	80.4%	110	19.6%	543	96.8%	18	3.2%
Istria and Primorje	273	94.8%	15	5.2%	250	86.8%	38	13.2%	273	94.8%	15	5.2%
TOTAL	2947	93.1%	217	6.9%	2680	84.7%	485	15.3%	3056	96.6%	109	3.4%

As for the frequency of committing misdemeanors or criminal offences according to region, differences were observed in the number of cases in which members of the RNM were convicted for committing a criminal offence.<sup>194</sup> The largest number of those convicted for such offences live in Northern Croatia, and the smallest number live in Zagreb and its surrounding area and Central Croatia. Regional dif-

<sup>193</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2= 107.621$ ; df = 1; p < 0.001; V = 0.185. Chi-square test,  $\chi^2= 223.851$ ; df = 1; p < 0.001; V = 0.266. Chi-square test,  $\chi^2= 45.510$ ; df = 1; p < 0.001; V = 0.120.

<sup>194</sup> Chi-square,  $\chi^2= 67.732$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001; V = 0.146.

ferences were determined in misdemeanors as well.<sup>195</sup> Again, the largest number of those convicted of such offences was found in Northern Croatia and Slavonia, and the lowest in Central Croatia and Zagreb and its surrounding area. The number of sanctions imposed on minors for committing a criminal or misdemeanor offence is the lowest of all three categories, but regional differences were noted here as well.<sup>196</sup> The smallest number of such cases was found in Zagreb and its surrounding area and Central Croatia. The highest share of minor members of the RNM onto whom sanctions were imposed for misdemeanor or criminal offences live in the Northern Croatia region.

As regards convictions for either criminal offences or misdemeanor, or sanctions imposed on minor RNM members for the same type of criminal offences, a difference was found according to the type of settlement. For example, the number of convictions for criminal offences as well as sanctions imposed for misdemeanor and criminal offences by minors was the highest in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location. In those places where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population, the share of such cases is lower for criminal offences, misdemeanor or offences by minors.<sup>197</sup> Considering that in the region of Zagreb and its surroundings the highest share of the population lives in dispersed localities, it is logical that in this region the smallest number of convictions and sanctions for these behaviors was recorded. On the other hand, in Northern Croatia the highest share of the population lives in concentrated settlements, so the reasons for such a statistically significantly higher number of convictions for criminal and misdemeanor offences, as well as sanctions imposed on minors, should be sought within such types of settlements with the aim of combating the practices that cause damage to the Roma population in general. It is precisely these cases that are frequent topics in the media, which feeds stereotypes and prejudices about all members of the RNM.

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195 Chi-square,  $\chi^2 = 55.458$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.132$ .

196 Chi-square,  $\chi^2 = 24.822$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.089$ .

197 Chi-square test [criminal offence],  $\chi^2 = 24.822$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $V = 0.089$ ; chi-square test [misdemeanor],  $\chi^2 = 11.084$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.012$ ;  $V = 0.011$ ; chi-square test [cases including minors],  $\chi^2 = 13.712$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.004$ ;  $V = 0.066$ .

## 6.4. Chapter summary

At the time of the research, 86 of the surveyed members of the Roma national minority did not have Croatian citizenship, while one person stated that they did not know whether or not they had Croatian citizenship. Overall, 1.8% of the surveyed respondents did not have a resolved status. Of those who did not have citizenship, 22 stated that they did not even have a residence in the Republic of Croatia. The largest number of Roma with unresolved citizenship issues live in Međimurje and Zagreb. Apart from unregulated issues of Croatian citizenship, the status of some members of the RNM is completely unregulated, with 23 Roma with no citizenship. Some of them meet the criteria for acquiring citizenship but have not regulated the issue. The cases of unregulated status are the most numerous in Međimurje, which is expected as the highest share of the Roma population lives in that region.

Moreover, concerning the use of the institute of free legal aid, as many as four fifths of Roma have not requested free legal aid in the last four years, and this is not in connection with the region or the type of settlement in which Roma live. Of the small share of members of the RNM who requested free legal aid, more than half of them [54.3%] did not get it.

The largest number of Roma convicted of both criminal or misdemeanor offences, as well as sanctions imposed on minors for a criminal or misdemeanor offence, was found in the area of Northern Croatia. The smallest number of such cases was found in Zagreb and its surrounding area and in Central Croatia. An important link also exists between the number of convictions for these types of offences and the type of settlements in which Roma live. The share of such cases is the highest in settlements that are separated from a town or village, in a separate location. In those places where the Roma live dispersed among the majority population, the share of such cases is lower for criminal offences, misdemeanor or offences by minors. Considering that the region of Zagreb and its surroundings has the highest share of dispersed localities, it is logical that in this region the smallest share of convictions and sanctions for these behaviors were recorded. Criminal and misdemeanor offences, whether committed by adult Roma or minors, significantly contribute to unfair and unjustified generalizations that ultimately lead to discrimination against the Roma national minority in Croatia.

# 7 Conclusion and recommendations: Inclusion and equality of the Roma as the outcome



## 7. Conclusion and recommendations: Inclusion and equality of the Roma as the outcome

Finally, let us conclude what the diagnostic results of this and a number of previous publications on the Roma tell us. First of all, almost all research studies and analyses of the position and way of life of the Roma population will highlight certain difficulties linked to poor knowledge and lack of systematic insight into the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of their daily lives. Considered this way, the reports on Roma in the Republic of Croatia do not deviate in any way from such a pattern of judgment. Even though this is partly true given the inaccuracies which can occur during the immediate collection of data to a considerable extent [dispersion of respondents, seasonal oscillations and migrations, lower education of interlocutors, hiding of ethnic identity, etc.], there is no doubt that in the last two decades the efforts for improving the status of Roma and their more successful integration into society resulted in progress in recognizing the state and specifics in certain areas of the life of Roma communities.

We could therefore say that among the most general insights, considering the efforts made in that direction, is the growing awareness that the living conditions and status of the majority of Roma can be described as multiply disadvantaged and marginalized. So as to reduce or avoid ambiguous definition of this phrase, some authors [Šučur 2000: 211] focus on the analysis and closer elaboration of key dimensions and indicators of the marginality of the Roma: economic [tendency for certain occupations and involvement in formal forms of work], spatial [segregation and “quality” of living space], cultural [value system and way of life] and political dimension [political participation and civil status]. The changes that are taking place and indicating the marginalization of the Roma in certain dimensions of marginalization are partly a result of ethnic prejudices and intolerance of a certain group of the majority population towards another, usually a minority community.

Today, immigrants and refugees from areas affected by war in the Middle East are in this situation, and the most comprehensive empirical data on minorities and immigrants are the EU Fundamental Rights Agency’s [FRA] surveys: EU-MIDIS

I from 2008 and EU-MIDIS II from 2016. According to these data, Roma, who at the very least have centuries of experience of living in different environments, are certainly at the forefront of communities that have experienced, and continue to experience, a higher level of ethnic intolerance and social insensitivity than the rest of the population.

Although it is normally very difficult to combat prejudice and intolerance effectively, it is a fact that many strategic and action documents have been drafted and well structured over the last decades, both at European and national level. Numerous conventions and declarations have been ratified, action plans have been adopted, and international and national mechanisms and instruments for monitoring and implementing anti-discrimination principles have been established. The largest number of such documents also contain recommendations, which explain in great detail the conditions and stakeholders required to implement the recommendations in practice. However, wishes are usually not sufficient to ensure their successful realization, just as the plan is not yet an implementation. In this context, it should not be underestimated that the effective implementation of different solutions for inclusion of the Roma population in the general society requires much more than ratified conventions, declarations, plans and “laws in theory”. If they are not fully implemented in practice, their impact is limited.<sup>198</sup>

Therefore, only a few proposals aimed at overcoming the marginalization of Roma will be presented here in a very limited way, keeping in mind the template from which they are derived, which is the interconnectedness of identity, social distance and discrimination against the Roma. We believe it is very important that all proposals and activities aimed at improving the position of the Roma are dimensioned on three interconnected and almost inseparably linked perspectives or levels. Those are: [1] residents of dispersed and concentrated Roma settlements (members of the national minority); [2] Roma associations and other civil society organizations, as well as councils and representatives of national minorities (CRNM) and [3] local and regional self-government units (LRSGU). All these levels are necessary and interconnected in everyday life, and the systematic implementation of plans and activities aimed at improving the everyday life of Roma during inclusion in non-Roma social flows must happen and act on each of them. As a consequence of the insight into the results of this study, certain immediate recommendations can be emphasized, which should be considered for the improvement of living conditions and the integration of Roma into Croatian society.

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198 As examples of attempts to independently measure the impact of the implementation of strategic or legal documents in practice, we can mention two recent projects designed in the (G)OHRNM. These are: *Evaluation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy in the Republic of Croatia from 2015* and the project *Support to National Minority Councils on Local Level*, which aimed to assess the capacities of councils and representatives of national minorities to fulfill the role provided by the *Constitutional Law on National Minority Rights on Regional and Local Level*. For more details on the results, see Karajić, Japec and Krivokuća (2017).

1. From the perspective of central and local governments, when designing development projects and programs intended for the Roma population, it is desirable to take into account the manner in which they will be implemented. The success of the implementation of such projects and their progress from preparation to full realization to a great extent depends on their common understanding and cooperation between those who design them and those for whom they are intended. It can be assumed that projects involving the Roma population from the outset, despite the relatively low level of their education and professional skills, will receive more positive responses and more support.<sup>199</sup>
2. A cooperative approach is particularly important given that newly designed Roma development programs should not suppress or completely ignore the traditional determinants of Roma identity. On the contrary, it is more likely that by respecting and accumulating them within certain parts of Roma communities, the sense of belonging to the Roma national minority and its revitalized cultural heritage will be strengthened.
3. It should also be borne in mind that the expansion of programs and investment in multidirectional development projects targeting different sociodemographic groups of the Roma population [youth, women, children] will reduce the risk of their failure and complement the specificities aimed at raising awareness about the importance of the identity of one's own community by preserving the language, culture and customs of the Roma people. The design and [co]creation of targeted content and activities that will be more accessible to a heterogeneous population such as the Roma should therefore be emphasized. This especially refers to Roma youth and those who live dispersed among the majority population.
4. Moreover, taking due account of desegregation measures, it is essential to improve the infrastructural conditions for the possibility of associating and conducting cultural, entertainment and sports activities, especially in concentrated Roma settlements, and to strengthen mutual cooperation between Roma and non-Roma populations in these areas. By planning and realizing targeted investments in the infrastructure of Roma settlements, it is necessary to create additional opportunities for employing members of the Roma national minority and the rest of the population.<sup>200</sup>

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199 Compared to the last decade, some progress has been determined empirically, but the Roma in Croatia are still unable to reach their full educational potential (due to weaker inclusion in the education system and poorer educational outcomes and achievements compared to the general population). The reasons for this are multiple and reflected primarily in their poverty, discrimination on the grounds of nationality (and multiple discrimination against women and children), [self]marginalization and lack of confidence and slowly changing patterns of the daily functioning of Roma communities, as well as attitudes and behaviour of the majority people towards the Roma. These obstacles are indicated by the results of the baseline data study (Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić 2018), as well as the NRIS [2012], especially in its general goal and the seven specific objectives and defined measures for mitigating the disadvantaged position of the Roma in education.

200 The assumption can be made that more Roma participation in the labor market would improve economic productivity, reduce the number of beneficiaries of state social benefits (as social policy measures) and increase income tax revenues. In addition to economic effects, it would affect cooperation and cohesion processes within the community in the long term.

5. To achieve more effective results of the inclusion of Roma in social life, we consider it important to also emphasize the need to additionally strengthen local and regional self-government units for which adequate financial, logistical and personnel support for working with Roma and other national minorities should be ensured.
6. From the perspective of Roma associations and other civil society organizations, it is desirable to act more strongly on the disinterest and inadequate awareness of the Roma population about the exercise of their rights. In addition, it is necessary to encourage Roma associations as well as various advisory and other bodies to include wider strata of the Roma population, especially women and youth, in formal organizations with the aim of resolving certain issues and problems of the Roma minority in Croatia. It is also important to keep emphasizing the need to not hide and declare one's nationality so as to preserve one's own identity, culture and tradition.
7. Finally, it is necessary to systematically and timely point out and condemn all phenomena of nationalist and anti-minority rhetoric in public and political speech and in the media at all mentioned levels, and to work on eliminating structural and infrastructural barriers and presumptions for segregation and discrimination of the Roma in all areas of life.

After all, by its very nature, the Roma issue must and can only achieve its full reception by acting outside monologue ethnic boundaries, in a full and more active dialogue with all other members of national minorities and the majority people and their culture. The Norwegian social anthropologist Frederik Barth [1998] reminds us of this when he claims that identity is fully formed only in interaction with other groups. Although it might be a cliché, we conclude that Roma social dynamics and integration cannot be completed without a two-way interaction between Roma and other non-Roma groups. And this firstly requires a change in the mindset of most people, as well as the Roma themselves. Such action remains a challenge.



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### **Acts, strategic documents, reports, and online resources**

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