



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

FLASH REPORT

Country:	Slovakia
Title:	A new research report provides extensive data concerning health of Roma living in segregated communities and their discrimination in Slovak society
Date:	12 August 2020
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake	Current situation concerning exclusion and discrimination of persons living in marginalised Roma communities
Grounds of discrimination:	Racial or ethnic origin
Field of application:	Education, Goods and services, Social protection, Social security, Other field (healthcare)
Source:	Policy development
Applicable law:	n/a

Content

Policy development: In 2018 - 2019 *the Healthy Regions* - a state contributory organisation of the Ministry of Health of Slovakia - initiated an extensive field research with an aim to assess social determinants of health in segregated Roma communities in Slovakia as well as the health needs of people living in these communities. It was primarily carried out for the purposes of the National Project Healthy Communities (NP HC) that aims at systematic improvement of the extremely poor health status of people living in segregated Roma communities via community health work and is financed mostly by European Structural and Investment Funds via its Operational Programme Human Resources. The research had rigorous academic character and was carried out by a team based at the Faculty of Medicine of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. The final research report was publicly presented in July 2020.¹

The field research commenced in March 2019 with a total census of residents, buildings and selected material conditions in 450 segregated Roma communities in the territory of the 255 target municipalities covered by the NP HC project. Subsequently, more than 13500 structured interviews were carried out in samples of households recruited in the segregated communities according to the given sampling plan ensuring that the research is representative. Later on, additional almost 1200 interviews were conducted in additional 38 segregated Roma communities that are not covered by NP HC project. The research can be considered remarkable in the context of Slovakia for a number of reasons:

- a. It took participative approach as, according to the report, residents of segregated Roma communities were continuously engaged in specifying research objectives,

¹ Belák, A.(2020). Úrovne podmienok pre zdravie a zdravotné potreby vo vylúčených rómskych osídleniach na Slovensku [Social determinants of health and health needs in excluded Roma communities in Slovakia], Košice: Univerzita P. J. Šafárika.

- preparation of research procedures, in field work implementation as well as in the preparation and interpretation of the research results.
- b. Collected data and observed quantitative indicators are exceptionally extensive and in detail describe the health situation of residents in the segregated Roma communities for each of the municipalities included in the research. They, for instance, indicate which Roma communities are subject to health-endangering exposures, what are these exposures and how they affect the health of Roma residents. This may provide valuable basis for designing targeted measures for improvement the situation and for monitoring the future progress.
 - c. In addition to assessing the determinants of health in Roma communities and health status of their residents, the research also explored current occurrence of direct discrimination against Roma in healthcare, which was reported by respondents. Moreover, it also gathered extensive data on prevalence of discrimination against Roma in covered localities in the areas of education and public services.

The research results, among others, concluded or showed that:

- Substantial parts of Roma living in segregated communities are exposed to critical levels of health-endangering exposures and that such exposures lead to an extremely poor health status of the population. In this regard, there are considerable differences between particular segregated Roma communities though.
- Despite the extremely poor availability of all related means and preconditions (e.g. infrastructure, income, education, services access), the majority of its residents manage to keep most of their health-related practices outside critically risky levels in most other respects.
- Most residents are constantly exposed to environmental hazards.
- Apart from geographic distance, significant shares of the Roma community' residents face many problems with accessing healthcare services, especially in terms of their organisation and quality, including ethnic discrimination. In this regard, 16 % of respondents for instance reported that in the last year they experienced ethnic discrimination in ambulance of their attending doctor and over 25 % reported discrimination on a gynaecology ward. Similarly, 25 % of respondents reported that they tend not to solve their health problems, because of difficulties in accessing available healthcare services.
- Over 23 % of respondents reported that themselves or someone in their household in the last year experienced direct discrimination in schools, over 24 % in shops, over 27 % in public offices and over 23 % in access to public services (e.g. restaurants, pubs, hotels). Number of localities where reportedly exist restaurants or pubs denying to serve Roma from segregated communities strikingly reaches to almost 30 %.
- The existence of segregated Roma-only schools or classes was reported in almost 70 % of covered localities.

The research results presented in the report are limited to averages across larger geographical units, explanations of all used indicators and summaries due to its considerable extent as well as the fact that they could eventually contribute to further stigmatisation of the segregated Roma communities residents.

Key points of analysis: The new research that has been recently published considerably extend the previous knowledge of health conditions and health needs of Roma living in marginalised segregated communities. Its results clearly indicate ongoing systemic discrimination and lack of government measures that would effectively address serious health risks faced by Roma living in these communities and their discrimination in healthcare. It also provides valuable information about current prevalence of discrimination against marginalised Roma in other areas of public life such as education and public services.

Internet link source: The research report includes summary in English and is available at:

https://www.zdraveregionny.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ZK_potreby_e-verzia.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1WuWEsHmLYh8sGiJQmCeMraNaw3N9wlyFXGxKXc5eO7IMzUJnzkNry-Tw.