

## ROMA RIGHTS FORUM “ARKA”

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FORUMI ROMANE NIJAMENGORO”ARKA”



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### Monthly Report for the situation of the Roma Rights in Macedonia ( May 2010)

The Roma Rights Forum “ ARKA” with the help of Balkan Trust Democracy started with permanent following of the situation of the Roma in Macedonia , making monthly reports distributed to all relevant institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations which take care for the protection of the human rights. The project will be in touch with the Institutions and will inform them and the medias about cases with elements of offending the human rights.

#### 1. Press Realized

##### Press-Conference

On 28 of May within the project “Roma Monitor” supported by Balkan Trust Democracy was held the planned activity of the project – Press Conference in Info Center NVO in Skopje.

On the Press-Conference there were journalist from several TV companies ( Sitel Tv, Channel 5, Telma TV) and News Agency Max Fax. On the Press Conference was presented the semi-annual report about the achieved results during the six months of permanent monitoring of the Roma rights in Macedonia.

In the monthly reports that Forum for Roma Rights “Arka” sent to all relevant competent institutions there have been reported about 16 cases of violating rights of Roma and in several areas of social life: a court case in which a woman was physically injured by the surgeon at reckless and unprofessional surgery intervention and the result led to a permanent disability in one eye, one in the area of housing, two cases of selective law enforcement, protection of industrial property, 12 cases from the police of which one case of conflict of special police units with the market traders from Shuto Orizari, eight cases in which police abused their duty and in the police procedures victims were injured as well as their fundamental rights, kidnapping of two minor children for which the Ministry still hasn't got any traces.

After the presentation of the report by the Executive Director of the FPR “ARKA”

Mr. Kamberovski, the journalists had the opportunity to ask questions of the representatives of the organization.

Interesting questions were asked such as questions about human rights, the treatment of Roma children in the educational system of the country and why the number of Roma children who attend regular classes in elementary and secondary education is very low and what are the main reasons for this.

The answer lies primarily in the lack of education, Lack of knowledge, but also the reluctance of Roma parents themselves about the importance of education of their children. Another obstacle is the fact that a large number of Roma families are very poor, so the high rate of unemployment and poverty of parents who lack the resources to provide food, let alone education. Unprecedented access of Roma children to education lies in the lack of necessary personal documentation, on which issue we work for years and we try to provide basic personal documents for mothers and children, as they would have access to health care and education. When it comes to the help topic they are often not interested, even unreliable, and that is why most of the institutions reject them when they ask for help.

Another problem for emphasizing that was also set as the question is why much of Roma children instead of going to school they beg on the streets and are subjected to cruel treatment and relentless conditions which the street life brings. The high rate of poverty in the country especially affects Roma and this is the reason why many children with their parents or themselves beg on the streets. Poverty is the result of the high rate of unemployment among the Roma who do not enjoy equal conditions and treatment in employment, there is still discrimination and prejudice, employees always employ people from their own nationality.

The information from the held press conference was published in national media, TV Sitel, Kanal 5 TV, Telma TV.

## **2. Education**

On 16.05.2010 in several national daily newspapers in Macedonia an article appeared under the title "Not a single Roma child is enrolled in first grade" with comments also that in primary school in the settlement Sredorek in Kumanovo where these children usually enroll very few children enrolled.

Such a phenomenon does not occur only in this city but it is a regular occurrence in cities where there is greater concentration and especially where Roma live in ghettos called Roma. Of course most of the blame is on parents for not enrolling their children on time. But we believe that the institutions responsible for education are also the ones to be blamed for not doing their job when it comes to detecting and sanctioning those parents who for a number of reasons do not enroll their children in the educational system.

It is important to say that these institutions do not sufficiently take account of this population in terms of failing to send courier services to record the Roma children who have a school-age for enrollment as an additional method to remind and encourage them to enroll their children. It is an uneducated community for the most part they do not enroll their children because of tradition and not having a habit to go to school. Competent institutions should have additional activities and projects to address these problems that occur each year in all settlements, even though NGOs are trying to do something but without the commitment of

the institutions that are responsible for this the results are very weak.  
We appeal to the Ministry of Education and the inspection services together with schools to start an action to eliminate this problem because there is a possibility of a whole generation of kids not be involved in the educational system, which is not allowed for a society that declares that it cares equally for all citizens regardless of their ethnic, religious and racial backgrounds.